

visiting an old friend--a friend with slight flaws, like anyone, but a friend nonetheless.

The year is 2075. The Moon has been colonized, but the three million inhabitants are either criminals who have been shipped up

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from Earth (like Britain used to send convicts to Australia), or descendants of such criminals. The Earth is still nationalized, but with a world government called the Federated Nations, one department of which is the Lunar Authority--which runs what little organization exists on the Moon. The major role for the Authority is to ensure nothing disrupts the flow of lunar-grown wheat to the hungry people in places such as India. The Authority generally leaves the Loonies alone, although all communications, inter-warren travel, the meager militia, and the grain economy, are all controlled by the "Warden" without any representation from the inhabitants.

The story is the first-person narrative of Manuel O'Kelly Davis, a one-armed jack-of-all-trades. Mannie is a modest, apolitical Loonie who is friendly with several interesting characters, such as Professor Bernardo de la Paz, (a political exile with a social philosophy of "rational anarchy"), Wyoming Knott (a typical Heinleinesque heroine--good-looking, smart, and self-confident), but most interestingly of all, Mike (a self-aware computer that controls virtually everything on Luna, from the telephones to the ballistic catapult that shoots the grain down to Earth). At the beginning of the story, Mike has been "awake" for less than a year, is lonely because only Mannie talks to him, and has the disposition of a genius six-year-old.

The novel has been described as a retelling of the American Revolution, set on the Moon, and there are certainly some vague parallels. A unique aspect of the book, though, is the pivotal role Mike plays. As the central, but under-noticed, fact of Loonie life, he is well-placed to coordinate communications among Mannie and the other revolutionaries, when they decide to overthrow the Authority. The drawback, of course, is whether anyone, organic or computerized, have *that* much power....

T_h_e_M_o_o_n_I_s_a_H_a_r_s_h_M_i_s_t_r_e_s_s is more than a novel about the politics and ugly realities of revolution. One of the most stimulating aspects of the book is that Heinlein continually challenges us to question why we do things. Family roles, the purpose and structure of government, the meaning of "soul"--all come under scrutiny. Furthermore, although the characters in the novel offer answers to these issues that are tremendously different from modern-day answers, the Loonie answers are plausible (for their culture), creative, and thought-provoking. The novel is a classic Heinlein story with strong plot, competent people, unobtrusive writing style, and a well-thought-out environment. It is also significant for being a story in which Heinlein is willing to have major characters die.

I first read T_h_e_M_o_o_n_I_s_a_H_a_r_s_h_M_i_s_t_r_e_s_s in high school, and I've been influenced to this day by its "question authority, value freedom" context. Mike is perhaps the most memorable computer in

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SF, and the novel regularly appears at or near the top of surveys on "the best SF novel of all time." Give yourself a treat; read, or reread, this book. [-jrrt]

2. I was watching a mummy movie the other night. You know, one of those old Universal films where a mummy comes to life and kills people. These things were always a lot of fun in spite of some of the obvious absurdities. First of all, Egyptians were very short by today's standards. How scary is a monster about 55 inches high? If you have seen real mummies, that is about the average height. What is he going to do--grab you around your waist? Then there is the fact that ancient Egyptians almost never wrapped the legs separately. There is one mummy I have seen with the legs wrapped separately and some Hammer Films makeup artist really did model one of their mummies on the real thing, but the mummies in Universal's movies in the 1930s and 1940s were wrapped like no real mummies ever were. Uh, one exception there. Boris Karloff loses his bandages almost immediately in the original 1933 film T_h_e_M_u_m_m_y, but he was the mummy Im-ho-tep. All the other films were about a

mummy named Kharis. Incidentally, just for your edification, like Dracula there really was an Im-ho-tep. He has been nearly forgotten but he was one of history's geniuses. He was a great physician for the time. He also was a great architect who invented the idea of placing tapering mastaba (burial vaults) one on top of another. In doing so, he invented the pyramid and the step pyramid at Saqarra--the first of all pyramids--was built by him. He later became deified like the Pharaoh he built for and was worshipped far longer. I have heard there were still cults who worshipped him in the Middle Ages.

However, most of the old Universal mummy movies are about Kharis, who is a never-was character. Im-ho-tep was brought back to life with a magical scroll. Kharis never died due to the use of a sort of soup made from secret tana leaves. Tana is also a literary invention and, I can tell you, there were not a whole lot of leaves that were secret in Egypt. Everything green lives in a narrow strip on either side of the Nile.

The idea is that the mummy gets three of these leaves during the cycle of the full moon to keep him alive. Nine leaves and he can actually walk. More than nine leaves and he will do the funky chicken all over the head and body of anybody who gets in his way. (Incidentally, while he walks at about one mile an hour and drags a foot, somehow he manages to catch the fleeing heroine.)

Anyway, it occurred to me to wonder how many of these leaves were needed. There are about 13 cycles of the full moon per year and they seem to give the leaves to the mummy about 4 nights each

cycle. That is, each cycle of the moon is about 4 weeks, but each cycle of the f_u_l_l moon, whatever that is, seems to last about 4 nights. So the mummy will usually get 12 leaves per cycle of the moon. There are 13 cycles per year, so just maintenance to keep a mummy alive will cost you 156 leaves per annum per mummum. Now say once a decade you have to raise Kharis to polish off the odd tomb desecrator or misguided Egyptologist. Maybe you have to raise your mummy 2 nights in that decade. That is 18 tana leaves per annum, if we spread the cost out. Just as a round figure, let's say you will disperse 160 tana leaves per year. Now Egypt fell as a major

power about 2000 years ago after having been among the top three world powers for 3500 years. It would be safe to estimate Kharis was first placed in his case about 1500 B.C., or 3500 years ago. That would imply he has consumed something like 550,000 tana leaves so far. Figuring 10 leaves to the ounce, 16 ounces to the pound, Kharis has already consumed 3400 pounds of leaves (or 1545 kilograms, if you prefer). They show these leaves being kept in a little box. It is possible that 1-3/4 tons of leaves are hidden in other boxes in the tomb, but it seems like a task that would be difficult to keep a secret.

3. THE AWFUL EGG by Kenneth Robeson (June 1940) and ESCAPE FROM LOKI by Philip Jose Farmer (August 1991) (two book reviews by Dale L. Skran):

As a long time Doc Savage fan, I looked forward with anticipation to the "first all-new Doc Savage adventure since 1949," especially one written by Farmer. Farmer, perhaps the greatest, or at least the hardest working Savage fan, has produced a number of books on or related to Doc Savage, including D_o_c_S_a_v_a_g_e: H_i_s_A_p_o_c_a_l_y_p_t_i_c_L_i_f_e (a "biography"), and T_h_e_M_a_d_G_o_b_l_i_n and A_F_e_a_s_t_U_n_k_n_o_w_n (tales of a "Doc Caliban" who is basically Doc Savage updated to modern times). The Doc Caliban stories and the related Lord Grandrith book L_o_r_d_o_f_t_h_e_T_r_e_e_s operate on the pulp level, with A_F_e_a_s_t_U_n_k_n_o_w_n adding a generous dollop of the blood and sex usually left out of 40s pulp magazines. Overall, the Farmer books are engaging and entertaining, with interesting villains in the form of the Immortal Nine, and a set of revisionist biographies of "Doc" and "Grandrith"(who is really Tarzan).

Thus, when I saw E_s_c_a_p_e_f_r_o_m_L_o_k_i at a huckster table at Worldcon, I snapped it up immediately. I also decided to read one of the original "Doc" novels that I hadn't read before (T_h_e_A_w_f_u_l_E_g_g) to provide a comparison. L_o_k_i tells the never before written story of Doc as a sixteen-year-old fighting in World War I, how he met the fabulous five, and the experiences that formed the basis of his life-long battle against evil. Unfortunately, Farmer, who added so much color to Doc Caliban, seems unable to do the same with the

original character. Part of the problem is that great heroes require great villains. The Joker and the Catwoman provide at least half the interest in a Batman story, and the same is true of Doc. Unfortunately, Von Hessel, the immortal German commander of "Camp Loki" never quite springs off the page, and the reader stumbles through an oft-told tale as allied POWs attempt to escape from a German prison camp that is "escape-proof." Robeson did far better with Doc's nemesis "John Sunlight" and fantastic dangers such as "The Living Fire Menace."

In T_h_e_A_w_f_u_l_E_g_g, we see minor Robeson. However, even this less than memorable story of the original Doc has more life than L_o_k_i, and is especially interesting in the way it presages J_u_r_a_s_s_i_c_P_a_r_k. The main plot element concerns a villain who finds a frozen dinosaur egg and (apparently) embarks on a reign of terror after the egg hatches.

Robeson is no literary genius, and his alternating fists and guns plots will not impress you with their deep character insights, yet Doc Savage is one of the truest reflections of the American Spirit of the 20s and 30s, with an optimistic faith in the power of technology and education to produce a superman capable of overcoming a world full of evil-doers. Is it overly fanciful to see in America's crusade overseas to end the horror that was the Third Reich more than a little of Doc Savage? A lot of that faith was diminished by the 60s, by Vietnam, and the eternal gray of the Cold War that found us more and more like our adversaries. Yet it is Americans who are hunting warlords in Somalia as I write this. Hope springs eternal that we can apply our technology and our strength as a force for good, if necessary by destroying evil directly. Yes, I know that George Bush doesn't resemble the ragged-shirted bronze behemoths that grace the covers of Bantam's reprints of the Savage novels, but in his heart, George must have had just a little of Doc's desire to crush evil for its own sake, hidden in along with the Machiavellian schemer who let the Kurds twist in the wind.

So what can we learn from all this? The hubris that led to Vietnam shows up in Doc's conviction that he can "cure" criminals with an amnesia producing operation, the same hubris that saw the frontal lobotomy as a cure for mental illness. Yet the opposite of that hubris is a cynical resignation, of the sort exhibited by Chamberlin in WWII, and which we see today as Europe and, indeed the world, turns a blind eye to "ethnic cleansing" in Bosnia. Clinton, as the current embodiment of America, seems constantly torn between the desire to build a better world (seen in his health care reform program) and a miserable and cowardly cynicism shown by his brush-off of the Bosnians and his apparent abandonment of his promise to open the military to gays and lesbians. On the whole, we could stand a little more faith and hope, along with some courage and hard work, not to mention a few more wonderful gadgets!

I don't think Doc would be pleased with everything that America has done, but I don't think he'd quit either.

Recommended mainly to fans of the original Doc Savage stories, and to Savage completists. Readers should keep in mind that although A
 F e a s t U n k n o w n is loads of fun, it has some heavy duty violence and sex, as well as sex-n-violence.

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None can love freedom but good men; the rest love not
freedom but license, which never hath more scope than
under tyrants.

-- John Milton

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(Part 3 of 5)

Panel: W W W Wi i i il l l ll l l lt t t th h h he e e e
F F F Fu u u ut t t tu u u ur r r re e e eL L L Lo o o oo o o ok k k k
L L L Li i i ik k k ke e e et t t th h h he e e e
M M M Mo o o ov v v vi i i ie e e es s s s

Saturday, 12 noon

Martin Brenneis (m), Evelyn Leeper, Bill Warren

[Much thanks to Mark for again taking copious notes during this panel, as I can't be on a panel and take notes at the same time.]

"If a present-day cinematic art director could fast-forward to the future, how disappointed would he or she be?": Well, I think the conclusion was that he or she would not see anything like what was portrayed, but probably wouldn't expect to either.

One of the things we noted at the start was that what was portrayed in films didn't actually have to work. The automatic sliding doors in S t a r T r e k were actually operated by people behind the set pulling and pushing on them, and the blinking lights on computer panels are often just someone sitting under the panel randomly pushing buttons. Of course, sometimes it's real: C o l o s s u s:

_ T_ h_ e_ F_ o_ r_ b_ i_ n_ P_ r_ o_ j_ e_ c_ t used the studio's payroll computer for the title

character. Warren noted that in the movies, computers had large tape reels long after it ceased in real life (no pun intended) because viewers expected it. And no one really predicted PCs. (For that matter, you have at least half a dozen computers in your house in some form or other.)

It was agreed that in general the future goes at a pace nobody can comprehend. I noted that Bob Lucky (a director of research at Bell Labs) has been quoted as saying that scientists creating the future have no idea what is coming. They thought the Picturephone would be popular years ago, but it was a complete flop (even though the way they showed future in movies in the past was with Picturephones). On the other hand, they totally missed out on how FAX machines and cellular telephones would catch on. Nobody knows what will be popular.

Someone mentioned that the future is often too clean. Brenneis liked the idea that the hydraulics in _ S_ t_ a_ r_ W_ a_ r_ s leaked, leaving spots on the hanger floor. Warren commended Rob Cobb for his work on _ A_ l_ i_ e_ n and _ L_ e_ v_ i_ a_ t_ h_ a_ n, saying Cobb understood the objects he was working with better than the director.

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As far as objects go, I commented that they are frequently designed more with an eye for style than with any notion of utility.

Citing Donald Norman's book, _ T_ h_ e_ P_ s_ y_ c_ h_ o_ l_ o_ g_ y_ o_ f_ E_ v_ e_ r_ y_ d_ a_ y_ T_ h_ i_ n_ g_ s (a.k.a. _ T_ h_ e_ D_ e_ s_ i_ g_ n_ o_ f_ E_ v_ e_ r_ y_ d_ a_ y T_ h_ i_ n_ g_ s), I noted that this is

somewhat true even in actual objects in use (like clock radios with flush, identical buttons for all functions), but said that even so, the idea of putting the planetary "blow-up switch" in a child's classroom in _ F_ o_ r_ b_ i_ d_ d_ e_ n_ P_ l_ a_ n_ e_ t seemed like a bad idea. Warren agreed, but felt that _ F_ o_ r_ b_ i_ d_ d_ e_ n_ P_ l_ a_ n_ e_ t (credited to Cedric Gibbons) was in general a good depiction of a future house and seemed to look

like someplace a human being might want to live. Most other films, he felt, showed something totally unlike what a human being would want. Someone in the audience asked when we would see ergonomic designs, such as the pyramidal keyboard--I suspect the pyramidal keyboard will be about as popular as the Picturephone was.

There was also discussion of crazy architecture designs in real life. In Texas there is a building shaped like a dollar sign. I said that reminded me of the old June Taylor Dancers on T_h_e_J_a_c_k_i_e_G_l_e_a_s_o_n_S_h_o_w, who did synchronized routines that made sense only when viewed from above; to the studio audience they much have looked like random motion. I also remarked that someone at Chicon V had commented that with the shopping mall connected to the hotel connected to the office complex, the "domed city" of the future had arrived. We just don't always recognize the old ideas from science fiction when we meet them in real life. Brenneis said that future cities will be a blend of the old into the new. For example, the Marriott near the convention center looks like a 1950s jukebox. He felt that the future will always have some element of the past, and this was often lacking in films. Too often, everything looks as though it were constructed in the two years immediately preceding the time of the film. Brenneis said it was fun to see holdouts from the past in real life: a CPM computer does as well for typing in as a Cray, so you have a blend of old and new. The old will not go away.

One person noted that they are waiting for roads to look like they do in the movies. Brenneis said he had a friend who worked in a building that had been built to fit into a curve of an old Los Angeles freeway. After the freeway was torn down, the building had a very odd futuristic look to it! I noted that films always seem to have a lot of working mass transit, in spite of the fact that the sorts of things they show (e.g., moving sidewalks) would break down very quickly under heavy use. Althea McMurrian commended B_l_a_d_e_r_u_n_n_e_r on doing a good job of portraying a future city, and Bill Warren said that Sid Mead deserved the credit for that. Someone else mentioned D_e_m_o_l_i_t_i_o_n_M_a_n and Warren said not to expect a lot from that, though it seems to have the idea of the megalopolis: Santangeles, which runs from Santa Clara to Los Angeles. (I assume there has been some earthquake that wipes out the cities north of Santa Clara on the peninsula.) W_i_l_d_P_a_l_m_s was

interesting and maybe not too unrealistic, though the technology seemed a bit too advanced.

Someone said that people who make films actually have a strong influence on the future. For example, everyone who saw an LED watch in a James Bond film wanted one. (Of course, just because everyone wanted the jetpack in T_h_u_n_d_e_r_b_a_l I didn't mean everyone was going to get it.) Sometimes the futuristic items are current technology, used as product placement (though sometimes the set designer will use them without being paid by the company).

On the whole, clothing predictions are wrong, though Warren reminded us that F_o_r_b_i_d_d_e_n_P_l_a_n_e t did predict the mini-skirt. I remember a "predictor" on T_h_e_J_o_h_n_n_y_C_a_r_s_o_n_S_h_o_w predicting that sometime around 1979 all the women in St. Louis would shave their heads. They didn't, but that was the year S_t_a_r_T_r_e_k--T_h_e_M_o_t_i_o_n_P_i_c_t_u_r_e came out, with a leading actress with a completely bald head. Someone claimed that clothing was very conformist--we were all wearing jeans. This was not entirely true, but it is true that skirts seemed largely to have gone away. I noted that Arcosante, a "planned community," succeeded only by making money from groups of visitors touring it--people wanted to be individuals and a planned community made everyone's homes and lives look alike.

If the future does look like the movies, in part that will be because the movies influence the people designing the future. Or occasionally the people making the movies will do real research (such as for 2_0_0_1: A_S_p_a_c_e_O_d_y_s_s_e_y). When it was noted that this didn't carry through to 2_0_1_0, Warren said this is because Kubrick is a genius and the director of 2_0_1_0 is a hack.

I said I expected to see a more global view of things in the future. John Carpenter does a good job, for example, of showing that not everyone is white in the future--his film's casts reflect the diversity one sees in daily life. (T_i_m_e_T_r_a_x did this also, but failed on many other counts.) Also, different countries have different views of the future. A Third World country's view of the future would undoubtedly differ from ours.

Panel: L L L La a a an n n ng g g gu u u ua a a ag g g ge e e e : : :
B B B Ba a a ar r r rr r r ri i i ie e e er r r ro o o or r r r
B B B Br r r ri i i id d d dg g g ge e e e
Saturday, 1:00 PM
Thorarinn Gunnarsson, Gay Haldeman (m), Michael Kandel,
Yoshio Kobayashi, Maureen F. McHugh

"Translation helps bring works to audiences who can't read them in the original, but how are works affected when the words and the grammar change?": The panelists had some commentary on why they

thought they were chosen for the panel and what their _ r _ e _ a _ l qualifications were. Gunnarsson said, "I've never done translation work, but I've been annoyed by enough of it." McHugh said that she thought she was on the panel because so many of her stories were

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about China that people thought she spoke Chinese. She claimed she didn't, but it was clear from things said during the rest of the panel that her Chinese was certainly more proficient than most folks' second languages are.

The first, and perhaps obvious, point made was that translating is not a one-to-one thing. You can't sit down with a dictionary and a grammar and hope to get any sense of what the original meant in the translation. Kandel noted, for example, that objects (nouns) in some languages can have gender, which can lead to interesting word-play if these objects are animate. If "wall" in Spanish is masculine ("el muro") and in German is masculine ("der Wand"), then if a Spanish author writes, "The wall said to her, 'Wake up, dear,'" that will have a different connotation than it would in German (or in English). (I should note that going in the other direction, there _ i _ s a masculine word for wall in Spanish ("la pared"), so that translator would have a way out.)

Kobayashi said that in Japanese there is no swearing (or certainly not the variety we have in English), so translating strong language into Japanese can be a problem, particularly when the literal and figurative meanings of the words are both important. And often etiquette is tied up in language, according to Kandel--for example, whether the formal or familiar "you" is used matters in other languages, but there is no such distinction in English. Sometimes the difference is even more subtle: someone mentioned that Anne Frank's diary was much "livelier" in Dutch than in English, but was unable to explain just quite how.

Other, non-translation-specific, changes can creep in. McHugh said that when the German rights for her novel _ C _ h _ i _ n _ a _ M _ o _ u _ n _ t _ a _ i _ n _ Z _ h _ a _ n _ g were sold, her agent wondered whether all the characters would sit down to a nourishing bowl of Brand Something soup. When McHugh asked what he was talking about, he explained that in Germany, they

sell product placements in books, so the characters might all stop their conversation to sit down to a bowl of their equivalent of Campbell's Soup, and then resume their discussion. (This apparently is the case in the German edition of Kim Stanley Robinson's PacificEdge.) Speaking of product placements, Gunnarsson thinks they are one reason that historical films aren't as popular any more--you can't sell product placements in them.

Sometimes a knowledge of other languages can affect the English original as well. McHugh said that since in Chinese everything is in the present tense, with a "tense marker" at the end of the sentence to say whether it is past, present, future, or what, she wrote ChinaMountainZhang in the present to give it that feel. She also thought that, while science fiction may be partially global, it's not yet Chinese. Many concepts which we assume are understood around the world--such as faster-than-light travel and time travel--are unknown outside of science fiction circles and perhaps not

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known even there.

Science fiction poses its own special pitfalls for the translator. A translator needs to know some science, otherwise you get something like "brown movements" for "Brownian motion." But in Japan (and other countries, no doubt), translators are not educated in science, and scientists are not educated in languages. The result is that it is very difficult to find someone who can translate science fiction well. One thing Kobayashi said was that good style and characters are not important to Japanese science fiction readers (this is undoubtedly a result of the division of education as well), and that the literati hate science fiction. I suppose this makes translating a bit easier--one needn't spend as much time searching for just the right phrase.

Someone of course noted that sometimes it may be necessary to translate English into American or vice versa. "He was left standing outside her door in his pants and vest" means one thing to an Englishman and another to an American.

The panelists agreed that the best translations are the ones

you do yourself, but that it was impossible to learn that many languages and translate your work into them and still have time to write anything new. The translators on the panel said it took them about six months to translate the average novel. Kobayashi said Lucius Shepard's L_i_f_e_D_u_r_i_n_g_W_a_r_t_i_m_e took him a year, due no doubt to Shepard's heavy use of stylistic devices. A film novelization might take only one month.

While most translators don't talk to the authors whose work they are translating, sometimes it can be very helpful, as when Joe Haldeman's Japanese translator called up to ask just what he meant by "Unitarians on quaaludes."

Kandel noted that in Italian there is a proverb: "To translate is to betray." Ironically, the words in Italian for "translate" and "betray" are very similar ("tradurre" and "tradire"), forming a word-play that is entirely lost in English.

Panel: T T T T i i i i m m m m e e e e
T T T T r r r r a a a a v v v v e e e e l l l l i i i i n n n n H H H H
G G G G W W W W e e e e l l l l l l l l s s s s a a a a n n n n d d d d
M M M M a a a a r r r r k k k k T T T T w w w w a a a a i i i i n n n n
Saturday, 2:00 PM

Poul Anderson, Mark Twain, Lili Tyler (m), Connie Willis

"Twain sent his Yankee back in time and Wells sent his adventurer forward. Why did each chose the approach he did? Are the conventions of literary time travel still set by these early examples?": I guess I have to explain Mark Twain as a panelist. ConFrancisco found someone (Jon DeCles, if I interpret N_o_r_t_o_n_R_e_a_d_e_r #9 correctly) who could imitate Mark Twain (much as Hal Holbrook is known for doing) and had him as the "Dead Guest of Honor" for the convention, during which time he officiated at functions, served on

panels, and gave speeches. The speeches and officiating would be fairly straightforward--write a script and stick to it. But the panels are much more demanding, and Mr. Twain was well up to the task of not only remaining in character as Mark Twain but also of discussing the topic and answering questions that were raised. In

this case, for example, when Poul Anderson said, "I have been writing longer than most of you have been in this world," Twain responded, "I've been dead longer than Poul Anderson has been alive." His performance is going on my list of Hugo nominees for Best Dramatic Presentation next time around.

Twain noted that time travel stories get involved with the fact that people believe that they are the end of evolution and the pinnacle of achievement. So backward time travel usually focuses on how ... well ... "backward" people were, and forward time travel often assumes that technology will change but people won't improve.

This is probably less true now than in Twain's time--or is that just my making the same error? Willis said this reminded her of

W_h_a_t
H_a_p_p_e_n_e_d_t_o_E_m_i_l_y_G_o_o_d_e_a_f_t_e_r
t_h_e_G_r_e_a_t_E_x_h_i_b_i_t_i_o_n by Raylyn Moore;

a woman attending the Great Exhibition in 1876 finds herself suddenly a hundred years in her future in 1976. But contrary to what people might think, she wasn't thrilled with being in 1976 and really wanted to return to her own time, when things were much better. All this proves is that there is a certain inertia to people, and whether or not what they are accustomed to is better (on some absolute scale, assuming there is one), it i_s what they are accustomed to. As Tyler noted, the most important thing in life to you are y_o_u_r problems. What happens to you if you time travel and discover that they don't matter any more?

The panelists pointed out that time travel has many uses. It can be just a puzzle, or a romp, or a study. Tyler said she thought there were more stories about going forward in time than backward, but I doubt that.

Connie Willis said that she used the time travel to the past in

D_o_o_m_s_d_a_y_B_o_o_k to cast light on the present (which is, of course, just what Twain did in A_C_o_n_n_e_c_t_i_c_u_t_Y_a_n_k_e_e_i_n
K_i_n_g_A_r_t_h_u_r's_C_o_u_r_t).

Willis said that we are often blind to something right in front of us, and that rather than looking directly at a problem, we need to look at it with peripheral vision.

Someone noted that we are, of course, all travelers into future at one second per second. But there have been legends of people sleeping into the future even before Rip Van Winkle and even before Sleeping Beauty. Mark Twain, however, is thought to be the first author to send his character back into the past.

A brief discussion of changing the past ensued, with people saying that the theory that time is constantly branching can get you out of a lot of paradoxes. Someone proposed the idea of an

expanding spatial field of effect, where a change in San Francisco doesn't have an effect in New York until some period of time later (presumably longer than is demanded by Einstein's theories on simultaneity).

Twain felt that time travel should also include those moments when we suddenly realize that time has passed and we are old, or those other moments when we find ourselves pushed back in time (like when as an adult you visit your parents and when you come to the dinner table they ask you if you washed your hands).

Various stories were noted and recommended including T_i_m_e_s_c_a_p_e by Gregory Benford, T_i_m_e_O_u_t_o_f_M_i_n d by Pierre Boule, "The Yehudi Principle" by Frederic Brown, "A Little Something for Us Tempunauts" by Philip K. Dick (Willis's all-time favorite--on reading it, I can see why), "Child by Chronos" by Charles Harness, "All You Zombies" and "By His Bootstraps" by Robert A. Heinlein (the two classics of the genre in short fiction), T_h_e_D_o_o_r_i_n_t_o_S_u_m_m_e_r by Robert A. Heinlein, "Sideways in Time" by Murray Leinster, "Vintage Season" by C. L. Moore and Henry Kuttner (made into the film T_h_e_G_r_a_n_d_T_o_u_r; it has also appeared under various combinations of their names and their many pseudonyms), P_o_r_t_r_a_i_t_o_f_J_e_n_n_y by Robert Nathan (which weaves back and forth in time), "Compounded Interest" by Mack Reynolds, M_i_l_l_e_n_n_i_u_m by John Varley, and the backwards-flowing-time section of the film Z_a_r_d_o_z. Anti-entropic (time running backward) stories that were mentioned included the legend of Merlin, T_i_m_e's A_r_r_o_w by Martin Amis, C_o_u_n_t_e_r-C_l_o_c_k W_o_r_l_d by Philip K. Dick, and "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button" by F. Scott Fitzgerald. T_h_e A_l_e_x_a_n_d_r_i_a_Q_u_a_r_t_e_t by Lawrence Durrell gives a "multiple view" of time (much as the film R_a_s_h_o_m_o_n did). And the "Back to the Future" films were full of ideas about time travel.

(In regard to different theories of time, I h_i_g_h_l_y recommend Alan Lightman's E_i_n_s_t_e_i_n's_D_r_e_a_m_s.)

Presentation: B B B Ba a a an n n nt t t ta a a am m m m
B B B Bo o o oo o o ok k k ks s s s
Saturday, 3:00 PM

There was a large room curtained off into smaller rooms for presentations by artists, publishers, etc. The sound-proofing left much to be desired, with the result that I also learned a lot about

shading faces in sketches as well as what was upcoming from Bantam.

I have to say that Bantam (Spectra) is my favorite publisher (imprint). Rare is the month that they don't have at least one book I am very interested in, and often it's two or three. (Others seem to agree, since Bantam also had a good percentage of the nominees this year. Only Tor did as well, and it's my second favorite.)

Most of this presentation was just a description of what was coming up in the next year or so from Bantam. There's _ A _ P _ l _ a _ g _ u _ e _ o _ f

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_ A _ n _ g _ e _ l _ s by Sheri Tepper (the presenters noted that a review in _ A _ n _ a _ l _ o _ g had called her "one of the greats of human literature," which says as much about _ A _ n _ a _ l _ o _ g as it does about Tepper). Coming up for the holiday season is _ T _ h _ e _ A _ r _ t _ o _ f _ M _ i _ c _ h _ a _ e _ l _ W _ h _ e _ l _ a _ n (priced at \$60, it's something you ask your _ g _ o _ o _ d friends to buy for you). Daniel Keys Moran has _ T _ h _ e _ L _ a _ s _ t _ D _ a _ n _ c _ e _ r coming out around the same time, for those Moran fans. Already on the stands is _ T _ h _ e _ D _ e _ a _ t _ h _ a _ n _ d _ L _ i _ f _ e _ o _ f _ S _ u _ p _ e _ r _ m _ a _ n by Roger Stern (\$20 for a novelization of whatever caused the big fuss in the comics). Along with that there is also _ T _ h _ e _ F _ u _ r _ t _ h _ e _ r _ A _ d _ v _ e _ n _ t _ u _ r _ e _ s _ o _ f _ S _ u _ p _ e _ r _ m _ a _ n, an anthology in paperback, probably edited by Martin H. Greenberg. David Zindell's second novel, _ T _ h _ e _ B _ r _ o _ k _ e _ n _ G _ o _ d, gets its American release in December in mass-market paperback.

All sorts of new "Star Wars" novels are coming out: Timothy Zahn's third comes out in mass-market paperback in February and Kathy Tyers has one coming out in hardback in January, with a mass-market edition in December 1994. These have been selling so well that Bantam is accelerating their "Star Wars" program. (Oh, well, they have to pay the bills somehow.)

Connie Willis's second collection, _ I _ m _ p _ o _ s _ s _ i _ b _ l _ e _ T _ h _ i _ n _ g _ s, appears in January, chock full of great stories (I've seen a galley). Robert Silverberg has a major new ecological novel, _ H _ o _ t _ S _ k _ y _ a _ t _ M _ i _ d _ n _ i _ g _ h _ t, appearing in hardback in February. (But then, any new Silverberg is a major novel.) In February, we also get the long-awaited _ R _ a _ m _ a _ R _ e _ v _ e _ a _ l _ e _ d by Arthur C. Clarke and Gentry Lee in hardback

and _ F _ u _ l _ l _ S _ p _ e _ c _ t _ r _ u _ m _ 4 in mass-market paperback. (Someone in the audience said that _ T _ h _ e _ E _ c _ o _ n _ o _ m _ i _ s _ t had reviewed one of the _ F _ u _ l _ l _ S _ p _ e _ c _ t _ r _ u _ m anthologies and found it "too literary.")

March has a new, extremely thick novel by a new author, _ R _ h _ i _ n _ e _ g _ o _ l _ d by Stephen Grundy. This is a retelling of the tale of the Nibelungen. Even better (as far as I'm concerned), in March Bantam issues _ G _ r _ e _ e _ n _ M _ a _ r _ s by Kim Stanley Robinson in a trade paperback edition. (This is the novel, not the novella of the same name and author.)

Further down the line is an alternate history/time travel novel by Lisa Mason titled _ S _ u _ m _ m _ e _ r _ o _ f _ L _ o _ v _ e, in which someone goes back to June 21, 1967, in Haight-Ashbury, and Stephen Bury's _ I _ n _ t _ e _ r _ f _ a _ c _ e. Stephen Bury is a pseudonym for Neal Stephenson and J. Frederick George; Stephenson wrote the fascinating _ S _ n _ o _ w _ C _ r _ a _ s _ h, so I'm looking forward to this one. There's also a new John Crowley coming out, _ L _ o _ v _ e _ a _ n _ d _ S _ l _ e _ e _ p, and Michael Bishop's baseball fantasy _ B _ r _ i _ t _ t _ l _ e _ I _ n _ n _ i _ n _ g _ s.

On a more general note, their novella series (which includes Frederik Pohl's Hugo-nominated _ S _ t _ o _ p _ p _ i _ n _ g _ a _ t _ S _ l _ o _ w _ y _ e _ a _ r and the I-hope-to-see-nominated _ D _ e _ u _ s _ X by Norman Spinrad) seems to be doing fine. The latest is _ O _ u _ t _ o _ f _ T _ i _ m _ e by James P. Hogan, coming in November. The Bantam Spectra "Special Editions" line has been discontinued,

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though the books that would have appeared there are still being published, just without the special label.

And on an even more general note, Barnes & Noble reported that business was up in 1993 over 1992, even after discounting the Michael Crichton--John Gresham phenomenon. What's even more interesting is that the increase is almost entirely due to an upswing in science fiction sales.

By the way, if you like the artwork on Bantam's books, thank Jamie Warren, who is the art director.

Panel: E E E Ec c c co o o on n n no o o om m m mi i i ic c c es s s s
a a a an n n nd d d dD D D Da a a ai i i il l l ly y y y
L L L Li i i if f f fe e e ei i i in n n n
E E E El l l li i i iz z z za a a ab b b be e e et t t th h h ha a a an n n n
T T T Ti i i im m m me e e es s s s

Saturday, 4:00 PM

Hilary Ayer (m), William Foss, Josepha Sherman,
Karen Shearer Voorhees

"The age of Elizabeth I serves as a model for many cultures we imagine in other universes or on other planets. What was it really like to live in the time of Shakespeare": Well, of all the panels I went to, this certainly classifies as "the panel title most likely to surprise someone who has never been to a science fiction convention." While there was some mention of science fiction (or more accurately, fantasy), this was mostly a background panel on the history of the period so that writers would understand it better before they used it willy-nilly as background in their stories.

The Elizabethan Age was described as an age of transition. It marked the rise of the middle class. Though in many ways we look on it negatively now, it was a society that worked. The whole system of formal social rank resulted in a sense of belonging and a sense of being in place. This sense of belonging was also mentioned by Kim Stanley Robinson in his lecture on Post-modernism and in the "Gender-Bending" panel, so it seems to be a common concern now. I would propose this is because we are a much more mobile society now than ever before and people don't feel they belong anywhere particular. This supposition is somewhat supported by what the panelists talked about a little later: that in Elizabethan times people did not move around very much--in fact, often never went more than ten miles from their village in their entire lives--and that meant that your reputation was important and long-lasting. If you cheated someone in business, you couldn't just pick up and move to the next county and start fresh. A woman's chastity was important because of this life-long reputation, but also, of course, because before contraception, sex usually produced babies. So people cared about what other people thought of them, more than they do now. And people felt that they belonged where they were.

The class system led to a lot of the fashions carried through even until today. Long nails meant that you had someone else to do your manual labor. White skin meant that you didn't work out in the

sun. It also meant that you covered your face with a lead-based make-up and probably died of lead poisoning, but what's a little thing like that in the name of fashion? When most work moved indoors during industrialization, suddenly a dark tan became the sign of the upper class--people who had enough spare time to sit around outside and get a tan. Now, of course, a tan means that you're not worried about skin cancer. Women may have followed all these fashion fads, but they were beginning to gain power in the Elizabethan Age as well. In London, the head of the Bakers' Guild and the head of the Brewers' Guild were both women. (One of the panelists recommended W_o_m_e_n_o_f_A_c_t_i_o_n_i_n_T_u_d_o_r_E_n_g_l_a_n_d by Pearl Hogrefe for more on this subject. I couldn't find that title in B_o_o_k_s_i_n_P_r_i_n_t, but I did find one by Hogrefe titled T_u_d_o_r_W_o_m_e_n: C_o_m_m_o_n_e_r_s&_Q_u_e_e_n_s, so perhaps the panelist mis-remembered the title.)

The best-seller of the time was Erasmus's etiquette book, which suggested (among other things) that people dull their dinner knives so that guests couldn't stab each other. This is why we have dull dinner knives to this day, and also tells us that there was some reasonable chance that guests w_o_u_l_d try to stab each other.

The Elizabethan Age also marked a move from intolerance to tolerance (more or less). There was a break-up of the power of the Church which led to a wider range of opinions being tolerated. This was not an all-encompassing toleration; the Jews, who had been expelled from England in 1290, were not permitted to return until the 1650s under Cromwell, and I don't know if the expulsion order was ever formally repealed.

The economy of the period was an economy of scarcity. Clothes were re-fashioned, cut down, re-used, and so on. The largest person in the family got the new shirt, because that way it could make its way down through all the sizes.

The Elizabethan Age was when empires were extended beyond Europe. (This, of course, is a very Eurocentric view of things. The Mongols might have had a few comments here--or even the Romans.) Before Elizabethan times life was collective; in Elizabethan times it became individual. This means that the Elizabethan Age is really the first period we can understand, or at least that there is a quantum leap in our understanding of it over earlier periods. And this is no doubt why this period serves as a background for so many stories.

Josepha Sherman plugged her book (co-authored with Mercedes Lackey), A_C_a_s_t_o_f_C_o_r_b_i_e_s, set in an alternate Elizabethan era.

(End of Part 3)