Past Presidents of Pulp

Thomas D. Clareson (1970-76)
Arthur O. Lewis, Jr. (1977-78)
Joe De Bolt (1979-80)
James Gunn (1981-82)
Patricia S. Warrick (1983-84)
Donald M. Hassler (1985-86)
William H. Hardesty (1987-89)
Elizabeth Anne Hull (1989-90)

Past Editors of the Newsletter

Fred Lerner (1970-74)
Beverly Friend (1971-74)
Roald Tweet (1974-78)
Elizabeth Anne Hull (1977-78)
Richard W. Miller (1977-78)
Robert A. Collins (1978-81)

Pilgrim Award Winners

J. O. Bailey (1970)
Marjorie Hope Nicolson (1971)
Julius Kagarlitski (1972)
Jack Williamson (1973)
I. F. Clarke (1974)
Damon Knight (1975)
James Gunn (1976)
Thomas D. Clareson (1977)
Brian W. Aldiss (1978)
Darko Suvin (1979)
Peter Nicholls (1980)
Sam Moskowitz (1981)
Neil Barron (1982)
H. Bruce Franklin (1983)
Everett Bleiler (1984)
Samuel R. Delany (1985)
George Slusser (1986)
Gary K. Wolfe (1987)
Joanna Russ (1988)
Marshall Tymn (1990)
Pierre Versins (1991)

Pioneer Award

Veronica Hollinger (1990)
H. Bruce Franklin (1991)
The SFRA Newsletter

Published ten times a year for the Science Fiction Research Association by Alan Newcomer, Hypatia Press, Eugene, Oregon. Copyright © 1991 by the SFRA.

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Note to Publishers: Please send fiction books for review to:
Robert Collins, Dept. of English, Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton, FL 33431-7588.
Send non-fiction books for review to Neil Barron, 1149 Lime Place, Vista, CA 92083.
Juvenile-Young Adult books for review to Muriel Becker, 60 Crane Street, Caldwell, NJ 07006.

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SFRA Newsletter #192 November 1991

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President’s Message:

Hyperdrives Past and Some New Drive Hype

When I first joined the cub scouts back in the fifties, our pack master (the dominant adult male who oversaw us patriarchs-in-training) had just organized the annual paper drive fund-raiser. It was a desultory affair that boys and parents alike did their best to duck. Indeed, at a few dollars per ton for used newspapers, everyone would have been better off if parents had simply donated two or three bucks and blown off the paper drive. Of course, getting people to donate money is even harder than getting them to raise it, so the pack was in a pickle.

But, then, my father became the “leader of the pack.” Now, my father was an American military officer with a chest full of decorations from two wars and he had had plenty of practice in motivating patriarchal hierarchies. Turning that lackadaisical cub scout paper drive into a superdrive—no, a veritable hyperdrive—presented little difficulty for him. He had charge of boys holding the ranks of “lion,” “bear,” and (shades of Jack London) “wolf,” boys being raised in the shoot ‘em up, sock ‘em Hopalong Cassidy world of the fifties. He did the obvious: he set us at each other’s throats. The dens in the pack (subgroups of boys headed up by den mothers) and the parents themselves were put into intense competition with each other, with appropriate prizes bestowed, and the next paper drive netted more than the previous four combined.

In my campaign blurb in the September 1990 issue of this Newsletter, I wrote that “there has been much talk in recent years of increasing the active membership of the SFRA. Short of making major structural changes in the Association to accomplish this (which could well diminish the warmth and sense of inclusion which makes the SFRA so rare among scholarly organizations), this process of growth is necessarily a persuasive process. In the past the officers have been left to do the jawboning—but three hundred jawbones are surely better than four. Beyond opening up to other professional organizations, which may well have the effect of increasing our membership, I promise to orchestrate...your many efforts to raise our membership to six hundred.” The time has come for me to fulfill my campaign pledge—and hold all your noses to the grindstone. Therefore, I announce a six month membership drive based upon the principle of “each one bring one (or two or three).” And as the son of my father, I will introduce an element of competition into the membership drive for the first time. I will pay the member-
ship dues of the two SFRA members who bring in the most new members in the six months of the membership drive. Members induced to rejoin after a lapse in membership of one year will count as new members for the purposes of this competition and new or lapsed members can join or rejoin in any membership category, including our new reduced rate membership category for active members of the Science Fiction Writers of America. Each one of you must do something for this membership drive lest my campaign promise prove hollow—so get to it!

New appointments: Joan Gordon joins Russell Letson and Veronica Hollinger on the Pioneer Award Committee. The Pioneer Committee has asked for the help of the membership in bringing to its attention essays worthy of consideration for Pioneer honors. The members of the newly expanded Publications Committee are Edra Bogle, Thom Dunn, Alan Elms, Fred Erisman, Betsy Harfst and Ernie Harfst. The committee will initially be working to develop a conference volume series, and anyone interested in lending a hand or passing along helpful suggestions are encouraged to get in touch with the committee's members.

Pete Lowentrout

Twenty-Third Annual SFRA Conference

The 1992 SFRA Annual Conference is scheduled for June 18-21, the third week-end of June, at John Abbott College, located on the western tip of the island of Montreal. Suggestions or proposals for topics or panels are welcome. Send them to me at home or at the college: Steven Lehman, 4319 Esplanade Street (2), Montreal, IPQ H2W 1T1 Canada; Box 2000, Ste. Anne de Bellevue, Canada, H9X319.

One idea that might interest you in planning for June is to combine the SFRA conference with your annual family vacation. Although it isn't far, Canada and the province of Quebec in particular (whose standard of living ranks ninth in the world) is, indeed, an international area. For specific information on the various attractions in Montreal, its environs, and in Quebec itself, write to Tourisme Quebec, Quebec (Quebec) CANADA G1K 7X2 or call toll free, from Quebec, Canada and the United States: I 800 363-7777. I had the Tourism office send brochures to Betsy Harfst; so her summary drawn directly from the Tourism Office information about Montreal follows.

Steve Lehman
Conference Director
Montreal

Montreal has a fascinating history. In 1642, according to the Tourisme brochure, the Sieur de Maisonneuve founded Ville-Marie, a small village that would be known as Montreal by the end of the 18th century, on the site named Mont Real (meaning regal mountain) by Jacques Cartier in 1534. A cross was erected on the mountain the following year. This fur trading center, located at the juncture of the Outaouais and St. Lawrence rivers, became the largest inland port in the world as well as a cosmopolitan city planning to celebrate its 350th anniversary in 1992 with different festivities. At present, there are really several sections of Montreal—Old Montreal, Modern Montreal, and Underground Montreal, to suggest only the main ones.

Old Montreal has some of the most remarkable architectural districts in North America. Tall stone houses, churches, ancient warehouses, and neoclassic buildings that formerly housed old banks, and trading companies still exist. Typical rowhouses built in the mid-19th century now showcase restaurants, bars, bistros, outdoor cafes, boutiques and museums and blend with the elegant Victorian residences built at the turn of the century.

East of Boulevard Saint Laurent, a street which divides the city, east from west, ornate facades topped by mansard roofs reflect the Victorian era. On Plateau Mont-Royal, brick houses abutting the sidewalk have baroque gables, dormer windows, and a unique feature: straight or coiled wood and iron outdoor staircases. Cultural communities mingle in this area with Chinese, Greek, Italian, and Portuguese neighborhoods. Nearby, British homes and post-war dwellings provide other views. And on the Riviere des Prairies' shore, old stone houses link the city's rural past to the present.

Modern Montreal has transformed the city's core. While great highways join various parts of the city and skyscrapers shadow the skyline, a vast underground city lies below. A large part of the population goes about its business below the surface, on these brightly-lit indoor avenues. Miles of hotels, boutiques, banks, cinemas, theatres, restaurants, office buildings, universities, train and bus stations and parking facilities are linked by this clean ultra-modern subway system.

Religious and educational attractions abound. Mark Twain wrote, "This is the first time I was ever in a city where you couldn't throw a brick without breaking a church window." According to Tourisme, Montreal has over 400 churches! [One of the most beautiful churches I ever saw—Notre-Dame Basilica with its colored rose windows, is almost breathtaking in its utter simplicity. Its beauty, for me, is far superior to the original Notre Dame in Paris.]
Montreal is home to four universities: two French-speaking and two English-speaking. The Universite of Montreal is the largest francophone learning institution outside of France and McGill's fame is known worldwide. And of particular importance to SFRA is John Abbott College, our host for the conference.

Activities and entertainments interest both young and old tastes. The Planetarium offers the mysteries of the universe. The Old Port offers thematic exhibits, a flea market, shows, a movie with a seven-story-high screen, cruises, and fire-works competitions. The Botanical Garden, third largest in the world, presents orchid, bonsai and penjing collections, a Japanese garden and an insectarium. A close neighbor, Olympic Stadium has sports events [Steve writes, “I would caution people about visiting the Olympic Stadium, the ‘Big Owe’ as it is unaffectionately known in these parts. It appears to be in the process of falling down.”]. Children might enjoy La Ronde, an amusement park on Ile Sainte-Helene, giant water slides at Aqua-Parc or Granby Zoo and Parc Safari. Ideal for fresh air and relaxing is Mount Royal, the flower-studded island park featuring exhibits at the Palais de la civilisation. For sports enthusiasts, in June, there is a famous cycling tour of the island and the Molson Grand Prix Formula 1 car race. Nighthawks can tour bars, bistros, outdoor cafes, discos and jazz clubs. Discriminating gourmets will find more than 2000 restaurants offering menus from over thirty countries. For art connoisseurs, 75 art galleries and 20 art museums exhibit both ancient and contemporary international works/collections. For music lovers, the Lanaudiere International Festival is held from late June to late August, presenting over 100 concerts (classical and other types of music), featuring hundreds of international artists and orchestras. Montreal also has first-run and repertory theater (a dozen troupes and 50 summer theatres) as well as 100 plus movies. Year-round performing arts programs feature the symphony, rock groups, jazz and chamber music ensembles, an opera company, modern dance troupes and ballets. Nearby historical sites offer views into the past lifestyles. And Montreal has shopping! From bargains on the Rue Notre-Dame to exclusive fashions on Rue Laurier, something should appeal to shoppers. The city is known for its silky furs [anathema to animal rights activists], Inuit art and English porcelain.

Plan on mixing business (SFRA Conference) with pleasure (1992 family vacation) in Montreal next June. Send Steve Lehman your proposal or offer to chair a panel on a current interest topic.

Betsy Harfst

All of this summary of Montreal information draws liberally from "Destination Quebec: Summer Holidays." Marketing Department of Tourisme Quebec. 2nd quarter 1991. 2, 9-13.

For your own copy of these colorful books and brochures, write to the address given above in Steve Lehman's letter.
Recent & Forthcoming Books

Year of publication is 1991 unless noted otherwise. (P) denotes publication confirmed. All unconfirmed dates are tentative. Most original books have been or will be reviewed in these pages.

Reference


Jaffery, Sheldon. Double Trouble. Starmont, December


Rogow, Roberta. Futurespeak: A Fan's Guide to the Language of Science Fiction Paragon House (P)

History & Criticism

Davis, Joel. Journey to the Center of Our Galaxy: A Voyage in Space and Time. Contemporary, October


Jones, Stephen, ed. Clive Barker's Shadows in Eden. Underwood-Miller, September

Kendrick, Walter. The Thrill of Fear: 250 Years of Entertainment. Grove Weidenfeld, October

Kies, Cosette. Presenting Young Adult Horror Fiction. Twayne, Jan 1992

Malgren, Carl D. Worlds Apart: Narratology of Science Fiction. Indiana Univ. Press (P)

Mascetti, Manuela Dunn. Chronicles of the Vampire. Doubleday, October

Proulx, Kevin E., ed. Fear to the World: Eleven Voices in a Chorus of Horror. Starmont, Dec 91

Schweitzer, Darrell. Discovering Classic Horror Fiction. Starmont, Nov 91


Wibberly, Leonard. Shamrocks and Sea Silver, and Other Illuminations. Borgo Press, November
Author Studies

[Asimov]. Hassler, Donald M. Isaac Asimov. Starmont House (P)
[Baum]. Shirley, Jean & Angelica. L. Frank Baum: Royal Historian of Oz. Lerner, April 1992
[Campbell]. The Magic That Works: John W. Campbell and the American Response to Technology. Borgo Press, December
[King]. Murphy, Tim. In the Darkest Knight: The Student’s Guide to Stephen King. Starmont, December
[Rice]. Ramsland, Katherine. Prism of the Night: An Authorized Biography of Anne Rice. Dutton, November
[Tolkien]. Day, Donald, ed. The Tolkien Illustrated Encyclopedia. Macmillan, September
[Vonnegut]. Morse, Donald E. Kurt Vonnegut. Starmont, November

Film & TV

Bifulco, Michael. Rocket Men of the Movies. Bifulco Books (P)
Brosnan, John. The Primal Screen: A History of SF Film. Orbit, UK, October
Golden, Chris. Cut! Horror Writers on Horror Film. Berkley, April 1992
Hardy, Phil. [Aurum Film Encyclopedia] Science Fiction. 2d rev ed. Aurum Press, UK, October
Lofficier, Jean-Marc. Terrestrial Index. Doctor Who Books, UK, November
McDonagh, Maitland. Broken Mirrors/Broken Minds: The Dark Dreams of Dario Argento. Sun Tavern Fields, London (P)

Planet of the Apes Revisited. Image Publishing, date uncertain


Van Hise, James. The Addams Family Revealed. Pioneer Books (P)

Illustration

Addams, Charles. The World of Charles Addams. Knopf, October; Hamish Hamilton, UK, fall


Daniels, Les. Marvel: Five Decades of the World's Greatest Comics. Abrams, October

Taylor, Geoff. The Fantasy Art of Geoff Taylor. Corgi, UK, August

Magazines

Bleiler, Richard. The Annotated Index to The Thrill Book. Starmont House (P)

Robbins, Leonard. The Pulp Magazine Index, 4th series. Starmont, July

News & Information

Pulphouse Issues Writer's Chapbook Series

A Series of chapbooks designed to help writers master the craft of writing fiction is being issued by Writer's Notebook Press/Pulphouse Publishing, Box 1227, Eugene, OR 97440. Sixteen of them will be written by Kristine Kathryn Rusch, new editor of The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction. The predictable topics are covered; setting, characterization, how to build a future or a planet, point of view, workshops, writing for younger readers, etc. The booklets other than those by Rusch are written by a variety of professional authors. $3 each, 2/$5, 3/$7, 5/$10. Pulphouse published The Science Fiction Writers of America Handbook (reviewed in Newsletter 188), which at 248 pages for $10 might be a better buy.—NB.
Trekkers! Listen Up!

Simon & Schuster Audio released in September a four CD set celebrating the 25th anniversary of the first *Star Trek* broadcast on 8 September 1966. The 4.5 hours are based on three ST novels: *The First Adventure* by Vonda McIntyre; *Strangers from the Sky* by Margaret Wander Bonanno; and *Final Frontier* by Diane Carey. The excerpts are dramatized and are read by Leonard Nimoy, George Takei and James Doohan, with Shatner serving as host. Originally released as cassettes, they’ve been remastered and feature new sound effects and original music in their CD format.—NB.

Coming Soon to a Theater Near You?

The weekly *Variety’s* film production listing included this entry: *Night of the Day of the Dawn of the Son of the Bride of the Return of the Revenge of the Terror of the Attack of the Evil, Mutant, Hellbound, Zombified, Flesh-Eating, Sub-Humanoid Living Dead—Part 2.*—NB.

Dario Argento Films Subject of New Book

*Broken Mirrors/Broken Dreams* by Maitland McDonagh is the first English language study of Italy’s master of horror films, some of which have been released here, beginning with *The Bird with Crystal Feathers* in 1969, continuing with *Suspiria*, 1977, to *Two Evil Eyes*, 1989, which he co-directed with George A. Romero, for whom he was the associate producer on *Dawn of the Dead*. The brief account in a June *Variety* says there have been a dozen prior studies of Argento, whose films are known for their gory content.—NB.

The Thrill of Fear to be Published on Halloween

Grove Weidenfeld will issue this book, subtitled *250 Years of Scary Entertainment*, at an appropriate time. The author is Walter Kendrick of Fordham’s English department in the Bronx. He says of the book: It sets out to trace the history of “scary entertainment” in all genres, from Graveyard poetry and Gothic novels in the 18th century, through melodrama, true-crime journalism, and ghost stories in the 19th, to horror movies in the 20th. Its thesis (which I don’t push too hard) is that as Western culture has pushed the after-effects of death out of mostmost people’s experience, decay and rot have taken refuge in the imagination, where they provide a steady reservoir of fear that writers and moviemakers have drawn on in a fascinating variety of ways—NB>
New Starmont Editor Sought

After thirteen years and over fifty volumes, I (Roger C. Schlobin) will be retiring from the editorship of the Starmont Reader’s Guides to Contemporary Science-Fiction, Fantasy, and Horror Authors to pursue other interests. To assure a smooth transition for this major and critically well-received series, a search is now being begun for a new editor. Interested parties should send a letter of interest and a current résumé to Roger C. Schlobin, 1915 David Drive, Chesterton, IN 46304-3011 (219-926-7368). Qualifications are as comprehensive a knowledge of the series’ fields as is possible, a thorough knowledge of the MLA method of citation, editing experience, and some administrative experience. Responsibilities include recruiting authors, receiving and copy editing the manuscripts for the publisher, and monitoring due dates and series’ authors’ progress. For each edited manuscript, the editor receives a one-hundred (100) dollar advance toward three (3) percent royalties.

This is an excellent opportunity to enjoy a wide variety of professional contacts, support the quality scholarship through the only series that focuses exclusively on single-author studies, and participate in one of the two largest series of its kind.

Roger C. Schlobin

1992 MLA Call for Papers

MLA Newsletter, Fall 1991, announced a call for papers for the 1991 Convention in New York, in the Children’s Literature Division, based upon Arthurian Legends and Child Readers. Possible topics include examinations of adaptations and retellings of Arthurian legends for children and young adults; fantasy and science fiction based on Arthurian legends; picture-book versions of Arthurian texts. 2-page abstracts or 8-10 page papers due by 1 March, 1992. Send to Joel D. Chaston, Dept. of English, Southwest Missouri State University, 901 S. National Ave., Springfield, MO 65804.

Muriel Becker

Member Achievement

SFRA Newsletter editor, Betsy Harfst, was one of the initial inductees in the State Universities Retirement System Hall of Fame, at a September 14 banquet at the University of Illinois. The SURS Hall of Fame was created as one part of the year-long celebration honoring the Illinois system’s 50th anniversary. Harfst served eleven years as one of the State Board Trustees, representing community college faculty in the state.

Muriel Becker
Peake Studies

The Summer 1991, Vol. 2, no 2 issue of Peake Studies, 53 pages, devoted to the study of Mervyn Peake’s life and work is now available. Write G. Peter Winnington, Les 3 Chasseurs, 1413 ORZENS, Vaud, Switzerland. Subscriptions are on a per page basis. Send a minimum of £12 or $20, or the equivalent in your local currency, and the cost of each issue will be deducted from your payment.

Terminator 2 Script Published

Terminator 2: Judgment Day; the book of the film was published in September by Applause Books, 211 W. 71st St, New York, NY 10023, 1-800-937-5557 (telephone credit card orders accepted) as a 318 page, 8 1/2 x 11 inch trade paperback illustrated with more than 700 photos, 16 pages of color photos, storyboards and production notes, complete credits, along with the complete, final shooting script by James Cameron & William Wisher, including scenes cut from the finished film. Other works in Applause’s screenplay series include Bruce Joel Rubin’s Jacob’s Ladder and The Adventures of Baron Munchausen by Charles McKeown and Terry Gilliam.—NB.

Modern SF: A Reader’s Guide

That’s the title given to John Clute’s survey of SF highlights since the 1960s in the Washington Post Book World, 25 August 1991, p. 11. Here’s a quick summary, without the commentary, of the authors and books he discusses: Dick, The Man in the High Castle, Martian Time-Slip, Dr. Bloodmoney and Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep; Delany, The Einstein Intersection, Nova; Disch, Camp Concentration, 334; Herbert, Dune; Le Guin, The Left Hand of Darkness, The Dispossessed; Niven, World of Ptaavs, Ringworld; Zelazny, Lord of Light; Ballard, The Drought, Crash; Silverberg, Dying Inside (and most anything published 1967-1976); Varley, The Ophiuchi Hotline; Wolfe, The Fifth Head of Cerberus, Peace, and The Book of the New Sun; Gibson, Neuromancer, The Difference Engine; Bear, Eon, City of Angels; Swanwick, Stations of the Tide; Simmons, Hyperion and The Fall of Hyperion. Well worth your time.—NB.
Major Publisher Bibliography Announced

Back in 1966 Jack Chalker’s Mirage Press published *Index to the Science Fantasy Publishers*, a 78 page effort co-compiled with Mark Owings. More recently you may recall the series Chalker wrote for *The Fantasy Newsletter* in 1983/4. Announced for September is *The Science-Fantasy Publishers: A Critical and Bibliographic History*, a Mirage Press title distributed by one of the most innovative specialty presses now active, Pulphouse Publishing, Box 1227, Eugene, OR 97440. From Advent to Ziesing, 147 small presses are covered in detail (points, contents of collections and anthologies, history of each press, etc), with another 46 “fellow travelers” profiled in less detail. Chalker and Owing have obviously spent a lot of time on this 736 page, 8 1/2 x 11 inch $75 hardcover, which is likely to be essential for collectors, bibliographers and larger libraries. If you order by mail, add $3 for shipping.—NB.

Versins SF Museum Reopens

Europe’s only museum of SF and the fantastic, containing the collection of this year’s Pilgrim, Pierre Versins, reopened in May 1991, with two special exhibitions devoted to utopia. The Maison d’Ailleurs [House of Elsewhere, literally] has a large collection of 30,000 volumes in 40+ languages, some dating from the 16th century, plus comics, toys, posters, film stills and other material, collected over many years by Versins. If you’d like to visit the museum, write Maison d’Ailleurs, Place Pestalozzi 14, 1401 Yverdon-Les-Bains, Switzerland.—NB.

Dick Weekend Conference Announced

Too late to attend when you read this is a celebration of St Dick outside of London on 19-20 October. Blessed by the Dick society, the BSFA and the SF Foundation, *Blade Runner* and *Total Recall* will be screened, and the extensive influence of Dick on music, film, drama and illustration will be discussed and debated. Even if you can’t attend you can obtain details from Jeff Merrifield, Connections, Epping Forest College, Borders Lane, Loughton, Essex IG1 3SA, UK.—NB.
Eaton Call for Papers

The 14th J. Lloyd Eaton Conference will be held 10-12 April 1992 with the theme, “Immortal Engines: Life Extension and Immortality in Science Fiction and Fantasy.” Papers may deal with any aspect of the quest for immortality, especially discussions of interdisciplinary connections between SF and other forms of speculation on immortality—scientific, humanistic, or religious. Papers should be 10-12 pages (30 minutes) in length and must be submitted by 1 December to George Slusser, Eaton Collection, UCR Library, Riverside CA 92517, 714-787-3233/fax -3285.—NB.

Publication Opportunities for Cyberpunks, Technologists, Futurists, and Information Scientists

The Library Information Technology Association (LITA) President’s Program at the American Library Association’s annual conference in San Francisco, California, in 1992 (Monday, June 29) will feature internationally renowned roboticist Hans Moravec and highly acclaimed speculative fiction authors David Brin and Bruce Sterling. These brilliant futurists will seek to expand the vision of the audience beyond the use of technology solely for the automation of text and the mechanization of information processing to encompass a future in which the relationships between humans and their information machines will be distinctly personal and symbiotic. The program will cover selected contemporary experiments with relevant technologies and relationships, but it will emphasize concepts and terms of reference that define visions of the future and issues and concerns that are presented by progress toward those visions of the future.

The Imagineering Interest Group (LITA) is sponsoring the program and has begun work to develop an information packet for attendees (over 1,000 persons are expected) and a monograph to be published shortly after the conference which will include the speakers’ presentations. These essays will be three to five pages in length for the information packet, but there will be an opportunity to expand them up to fifteen pages for the monograph. Topics such as artificial intelligence, nanotechnology, virtual reality, cyberspace, adaptive technology, futurism, and information technology as they relate to the program (described above) will be especially welcomed.

If you are interested, please send a brief description of your proposal to both: Milton T. Wolf, Getchell Library, University of Nevada, Reno, Reno, Nevada 89557-0044 (or Internet: SFWOLF@UNSSUN.UNR.EDU) and also to Bruce Miller, The University Library, C-075-G, University of California, San Diego, La Jolla, California 92093-0175 (or RBMILLER@UCSD.EDU). Final draft deadline is 1 March, 1992.

Milton Wolf
Two Chinese SF Awards Announced

On May 20th, at the opening ceremony of the 1991 World SF meeting, two Chinese SF awards were announced by their sponsors.

Larger in scale, smaller in money, the first China SF Constellation Award was given by the National Culture Ministry, China Popular Science Writers' Association and 14 magazines. The jury were 11 famous writers, editors, and critics. 86 stories and novelettes got the prizes. Among them, six works won the Aries Golden Medal. These six stories and novelettes were Chi Fang's "Weaving a Piece of Beautiful Dream;" Liu Xingshi's "The Legend of the Misty Mountain;" Wang Heping's "A Spy Case Outside the World Football Championship;" Wu Yan's "Out-Windows;" Qi Lin's "The Annoying Computer;" and Zhang Jinsong's "The Country of Un-Death." Every winner got 200 (Yan) R.M.B. (The Chinese currency equals nearly 37 U.S. dollars).

The other SF award which was announced at the same time was the third China SF Milky Way Award (Forest Cup). This prize was sponsored by SF World magazine and Guangzhou Forest A/V Factory. Winners of this award were only eight. They are Tan Li & Tan Kai's "Space Convey" (first prize); Liu Xingshi's "The Legend in the Misty Mountain;" Jiang Yunshen's "A Story of an Old Man in 1888" (second prize); Zhang Jin's "Nu Va's Love;" Wu Yan's "In the Day Six: Life or Death?"; and Jin Ping's "Hard to Leave Homeland" (third prize). The first winner got 1000 (Yan) R.M.B. (Equals nearly 187 U.S. dollars).

The next time for both Constellation and Milky Way awards will be in 1993. At that time the name of Constellation will change from Aries to another one. The Milky Way Award will be the fourth time for launch.

Wu Yan

The First Science Fiction Course in China

There is the first time for everything; now China has its own SF course. In March 1991, Wu Yan and Professor Wang Furen began to teach a new class in the famous Chinese university, Beijing Normal. It is called "Science Fiction: Studies and Review. It belongs to the free-choice-classes for undergraduate students all over campus. 102 students who were from eleven departments passed the final exam and got two scores of academic credit. Now the new semester begins, as well as the course.

Before 1991, there was not any academic SF course in China. Several famous writers had been invited to give lectures about their writing in colleges. But these lectures were not systematic courses.
Among two sponsors, Professor Wang Furen, 50, is an expert in modern Chinese literature, especially of the well-known writer, Mr. Lu Shan. Professor Wang Furen is working in the department of Chinese language and literature. Wu Yan, 28, is a lecturer in the Educational Administrative Institute of the university. He began to write SF in 1979. He is now the only young Committee Member in the China Popular Writers' Association. His SF won the Milky Way Award twice and the Constellation Award once. He is educated in psychology. This is the first time that both professors cooperated to launch a new course.

The contents of the course are as follows: 1) Human, Fantasy and Literature; 2) Ancient Chinese Mythology and SF; 3) History of SF; 4) Reviewing the Famous Writers—Lie Yukou, Jin Feng, Cu Junzheng; Zheng Wenguang, Shelley, Verne, Wells, Asimov, Clarke, Heinlein, Aldiss, etc.; 5) Main themes in SF; 6) Definition of the Genre. During the course, one or two SF films were provided to students.

In the new semester, SF writing methods will be added to the contents, as well as other improvements.

Rock Wu

Dear Mr. Harfst,

I am very pleased to write to you.

I had read two issues of SFRA Newsletter. I think maybe I can write something to the Newsletter. I enclosed two little pieces of articles. I apologize about the poor English writing.

If you need some help about Chinese SF field, please write to me. Or maybe you can phone me. My telephone number is China-2031731.

Best wishes
Yours sincerely
Wu Yan

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WU YAN
EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE INSTITUTE OF BEIJING NORMAL UNIVERSITY, BEIJING 100875, CHINA

Oct. 1, 1991

BETSY HARFST
SFRA NEWSLETTER
2357 E. CALYPSO
KDSA AZ 85204
USA.
Ted Dikty Dies

Our sympathies go to the family of Ted Dikty, Starmont publisher and SFRA member, for the sudden and unexpected loss of this long-time member of the science fiction community. Ted suffered a fatal heart attack on October 11, 1991.

Ted’s daughter Barbara who has served as publisher of Starmont House, Inc. since 1990 stated there will be no interruption in the operations of Starmont House, Inc. and Book Builders, Inc. (The short run book production company owned by Starmont and operated by Hypatia Press)—BH/ed.

Letters to the Editor

September 28, 1991
Dear Editor:

It is nice to be mentioned in the Newsletter, but we must advise you that the last two sentences in Neil Barron’s report on SFS (September 1991, pp. 31-32) are in error. SFS since its beginning has retained the right to republish articles in future issues or in anthologies it publishes or sponsors. The “46 weeks” in the last sentence for “reporting time” is presumably a typo for “4-6 weeks”, but the “26 months to publications” comes from I know not where. Submitted articles undergo an editorial process involving at least one editor and two consultants. This takes some time, but eight to twelve months from date of submission to date of publication would be true in most cases. Finally, there is no need to request style guidelines; just read the brief notice now appearing in each issue of the journal.

Best Wishes,
Science Fiction Studies
R.D. Mullen, Managing Editor

[Please accept our apology for the scanner glitch which was explained in Issue 191, removal of hyphens between numbers—“4-6 weeks” reporting time and the “2-6 months to publication,” and for the style guidelines error. BH,ed.]

September 9, 1991
Dear Editor:

I’m grateful for the prompt publication of my Pioneer Award acceptance speech. However, the text contained quite a few errors, including some that completely garbled the first paragraph on p. 26 (even making it seem that the title of Spinrad’s story is “The Four Horsemen”). I’m enclosing a fresh duplicate copy of the text, which has that particular paragraph at the top of p. 4.
Anything that you can do in a subsequent issue of the *Newsletter* to correct the problems would be much appreciated.

Best regards,
Bruce (H. Bruce Franklin)

[Please accept our apology for the errors. Again, you have discovered types of scanner errors (the paragraph you note) about which we were unaware. The July-August issue was the first one to be printed mainly from scanner copy. Consequently, we did not have all its eccentricities noted. Your acceptance speech is being reprinted immediately following this column. BH/ed.]

**The Gulf War as American Science Fiction**

When Peter Lowentrout called in late May to give me the thrilling news that I was going to be given this year’s Pioneer Award, I told him that sadly my schedule made it almost impossible to attend the conference. But as I thought about what this award meant to me personally and about what it implied for science fiction criticism and scholarship in these strange times, I decided that I would just have to do whatever was necessary with my life to get to Denton, Texas, to talk about all this directly with the people who had come to the SFRA conference. So here I am.

When I consider the splendid quality of science fiction criticism and scholarship in 1990, I find myself almost overwhelmed by having my article selected in the midst of so many wonderful and invaluable essays. Truly, when we compare the breadth of knowledge, the ambitiousness, the relevance, the insightfulness, and the seriousness of science fiction criticism and scholarship with other writings about literature, we can all take pride in the achievements of our collective work. To have one’s own contribution singled out among such marvelous work is profoundly gratifying, and I wish to express my deepest appreciation to Takayuki Tatsumi, Russell Letson, and Veronica Hollinger, and to all of you, for this tremendous honor.

But this award also seems to me much more than a personal honor. For it recognizes the importance of the subject of my essay, “The Vietnam war as American Science Fiction and Fantasy,” and our need to face some exceedingly unpleasant reality about this subject. In these days of mindless, feel-good celebration of war, when we are being told that we as a people have been cured of our “Vietnam syndrome” by our great victory in the Gulf, I find it reassuring that the Science Fiction Research Association, an organization of especially thoughtful and knowledgeable people, would choose to honor a work such as my essay, with its far less cheerful and soothing message. This is not to imply that either the committee or the SFRA necessarily agrees with my subversive thoughts, but it does encourage me to apply them to the situation in which we find ourselves in mid 1991.
We seem now to have moved from the era of the Vietnam War as American science fiction to the era of the Gulf War as American science fiction. TV turned the cult of the superweapon, which I described in my essay and whose history I traced in my 1988 book *War Stars; The Superweapon and the American Imagination*, into a national religion. Never during all the many years of the Vietnam War did we witness such mass fetishism of instruments of devastation and death. The frenzied worship of Patriot missiles, stealth fighters, and so-called smart bombs has outdone even the most infantile ecstasies of the old “WOW! Gosh!” school of technophiliac science fiction. The glorification of what William Gibson (the sociologist, not the science-fiction writer) labeled “technowar” has swept through the print media as well. For example, the January 21 *Wall Street Journal* editorialized that “advanced weapons spare civilians” and the February 11 issue of *The New Republic* in an article entitled “Robowar: The Day the Weapons Worked,” hailed the triumph of what it called America’s “wonder weapons,” and predicted that they would produce such a clean victory, so free of civilian blood and misery, that “when correspondents and diplomats eventually tour the areas of Iraq attacked by the U.N. coalition air forces,” they will find no “general destruction,” no “carnage, smoking craters, and blackened obliteration.”

The reality, as at least some of us now realize, was horribly different. The much-exalted “smart bombs” and other precision guided ordnance constituted a mere 7.4% of the enormous tonnage dropped and fired at Iraq and Kuwait. There was no TV ballyhoo about the “Daisy Cutter,” a 15,000-pound bomb so huge that it can only be launched by rolling it out the back door of a C-130 Hercules, or the fuel-air weapons such as the aptly-named MAD FAE (Mass Air Delivery Fuel-Air Explosive) which spreads a highly volatile chemical aerosol over a vast area and then ignites it to explode with blast pressures five times that of TNT, or the anti-personnel cluster bombs that each released thousands of deadly projectiles designed to inflict the most gruesome injuries to the human body. Much of the region has been turned into an alien landscape billowing oily smoke which last month began to add to the smog over Tokyo. The latest estimates are that 200,000 people died in this war, and that another 5 to 6 million were made homeless. As Paul Walker and Eric Stambler put it in last month’s issue of *The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, this was no “antiseptic Nintendo game,” “This was not a surgical war, it was a slaughter.”

Which brings us to the other side of science fiction. In my essay, I explored the science fiction generated by revulsion from the Vietnam War, including Norman Spinrad’s great 1969 story, “The Big Flash.” In Spinrad’s tale, a demonic rock group called “The Four Horsemen” put on a media blitz planned by the Administration and the Pentagon, designed by the TV net-
works, and sponsored by giant aerospace companies. Since the band’s whole repertoire consists of orgiastic numbers that mesmerize their audience into lusting for “the big flash” of America’s ultimate weapons, the military-industrial-political powers want to use their concerts to win over “precisely that element of the population which was most adamantly opposed” to these weapons. Possessed by the Four Horsemen’s overpowering beat and images and command to “Do it!”, American missilemen initiate the annihilation of the human species. Evidently America has not been using but being used by this demonic group, which is no mere rock band with a weird name, but the actual Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. Spinrad suggests that if the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse were actually to arrive, isn’t it plausible that the military-industrial-political powers would collude with them to make us stop worrying and love our bombs, thus helping them hurl the planet into the apocalypse?

The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse are of course War, Disease, Famine, and Death. When we look at the recent romp of these four awful riders through Kuwait and Iraq, Spinrad’s apocalyptic fantasy takes on a ghastly new relevance. Indeed, a U.N. commission reported in mid-March that the damage inflicted on the people and infrastructure of Iraq was almost “apocalyptic.”

Like much of the science fiction I discuss in the essay, Spinrad’s story was an attempt to exorcise the technocratic fantasies that possessed not only the technowarriors of the Pentagon and White House but millions of Americans, including many fans and even writers of science fiction. In fact, one matrix of these fantasies was science fiction itself. The science fiction conceived in reaction to the Vietnam War was offered as an antidote to the science fiction from which it materialized. Now it looks as though we will need much stronger medicine to cure of us our Vietnam disease, which was not, as we are being told every day, the humiliation and shame of losing the war but the sickness that led us into waging that war. Among the main symptoms of that sickness were the fantasies of technowar.

And that leads to our own role as critics and scholars of science fiction. As recent events make clear, we live in an epoch when science and technology are so crucially involved in human destiny that perhaps science fiction is the only literary genre capable of fully exploring the most fateful questions. So the challenge posed to us critics and scholars of science fiction is formidable, acute, and urgent. By bestowing the Pioneer Award on my own undoubtedly controversial and troublesome attempt to fulfill this responsibility, the SFRA shows that we as a community are not afraid to confront the challenge of our times.

H. Bruce Franklin
1. My analysis draws upon two excellent articles in the May 1991 Bulletin of the Atomic scientists: Daniel Hallin's “TV's Clean Little War” discusses the image, while “. . . And the Dirty Little Weapons” by Paul F. Walker and Eric Stambler describes some of the hideous weaponry actually used.


Editorial Matters

First, I would like to welcome a new contributor, Wu Yan, from the Educational Administrative Institute of Beijing Normal University, Beijing 100875, China. I have printed his letter, even to his stationery, so you can share the wonderful international flavor of the heading design. Thanks to our SFRA members who attended the World SF in China, past SFRA president, Elizabeth Anne Hull, Fredrick Pohl, Charles N. Brown, and Jack Williamson, as well as author, Suzy McKee Charnas. They have opened a window into China for SFRA.

Second, back to the mundane: please accept appreciation for bearing with us in the transition period to the new scanner. It has some quirks which we are eliminating as soon as we discover them. One thing all you reviewers can do to help avoid errors and make our job easier is to make sure that your printer/typewriter ribbons are dark. If hard copy is not dark, the scanner is unable to read it; then it becomes necessary to retype the entire review.

Third, remember that the name of the SFRA Newsletter will change to SFRA Review beginning with the January/February issue. Recall, as well, that the December issue will carry the first-ever yearly index.

Betsy Harfst
Non-Fiction:

More Complete List Desired


This pamphlet is less immediately useful than most of the author checklists published by Chris Drumm. The interested reader can find virtually every SF story Cordwainer Smith wrote (plus one or two he didn’t) in four paperback volumes, which Ballantine/Del Rey has been pretty good about keeping in print. There’s not much left for Mike Bennett to do, except to note the finer points of first publication and subsequent reprints of each story. He has made an effort, however, to include other information that may interest the devoted Cordwainer Smith fan: alternate titles for various stories, supplied to editors by Smith but never used; a sketchy biographical chronology; a partial list of Smith’s non-SF publications under other names (including his real name, Paul M. A. Linebarger).

Bennett says he’s going to “leave further exploration into the eternal and dusty halls of research to more intrepid souls.” But a few steps further into those not-so-dusty halls would make a second edition worthwhile. He might note, for instance, that Ballantine’s recent printings of the Smith volumes (dated 1985 and later) correct a number of typos present from first publication of the stories onward, including several significant errors. Bennett does not try to list the numerous translations of Smith’s work into other languages, but one is worthy of note: the 1987 French paperback set, Les Seigneurs de L’Instrumentalite, edited by Jacques Goimard and published by Presses Pocket. Goimard included several items that remain unpublished in English, such as Smith’s 1961 rewrite of his 1928 juvenilium, “War No. 81-Q,” and a story Smith wrote in 1946, “Himself in Anachron,” which Harlan Ellison has kept squirreled away in the Last Dangerous Visions manuscript for over a decade. Finally, another step or two into Linebarger’s publications as a political scientist might prove rewarding. Several of his essays, especially in the SAIS Review, are elegantly written and self-revealing.

Alan C. Elms

[The reviewer is writing a biography of Linebarger/Smith and has consulted the Cordwainer Smith collection of papers at the University of Kansas. —NB]
Nostalgia Writ Large


*The Thrill Book*, March-November 1919, has had a somewhat legendary status, partly because of its scarcity (Bleiler says fewer than five complete sets of the 16 issues are known to exist). Perhaps because of its scarcity erroneous information has been perpetuated over the decades, which Bleiler, with great effort and thoroughness, has corrected. He admits it was a minor magazine: “It did not present much good reading; most of its fiction was weak, with commercially competent work a minority in the sixteen issues. There was little in it that would now repay reading: only Francis Stevens’ *The Heads of Cerberus* has any stature. If that is so, why devote 256 pages to a trivial predecessor of magazines like *Weird Tales*, which began publication four years later? Bleiler answers: “The important point about *The Thrill Book* was its attitude towards a range of literature. It was a magazine that somehow became a symbol to a generation of pulp readers, a magazine that was remembered as something finer than it really was... a seed from which much of the modern non-rational side of our present literature grew.”

Maybe, but I think its rarity created a nostalgic haze which has obscured the judgment of fans—and no one but trufans could possibly be interested in it.

Since you’re unlikely to ever see an issue, Bleiler includes somewhat muddy b&w reproductions of all the covers, complete contents issue by issue, critical/descriptive annotations of all stories, essays, editorials, poetry, filler and more significant letters, and title, subject/motif and illustrator indexes. With this trifle bibliographed at length, can we neglect any longer *Der Orchideengarten* (51 or 54 issues, 1919-1921)?

*Neil Barron*

Latest *Locus* Annual Biggest, Slowest


The 1990 *Locus* annual is the largest yet—by 72 pages—and perhaps for that reason the slowest to appear, not shipping until September. I hope publication by mid-year will be the norm for the future. The format is much like that of earlier annuals (see my reviews of the 1989/1984 and 1988 annuals...
in Newsletter 175 and 180 for details). New this year is an index of book and magazine cover artists, which accounts for 20 pages of the increased length, with modest increases in each of the seven other major sections accounting for the rest. For the third year Hal Hall's subject/author index to nonfiction in books, magazines and other sources provides access to much of the secondary material about fantastic literature and film.

The indexes of books and magazines by author and title are very thorough and account for about 64% of the total length. The appendixes provide descriptive and evaluative summaries of books, magazines (US and UK), films, and useful recommended reading lists by Locus contributors, plus the Locus reader poll results. The multiple viewpoints in these summaries are usefully contrasted with the more detailed evaluations in the Science Fiction & Fantasy Review Annual, published by Meckler for the first two volumes, with Greenwood taking over with the 1990 annual (1989 books), due late in 1991.

Harlan McGhan provides a thorough listing of awards, well-known and notably obscure. He describes the SFRA'S awards accurately but calls both the Pilgrim, unaware that the award for the best journal article is called the Pioneer. The 1990 awards aren't listed, although Brown is a SFRA member, nor were they listed in Locus. There are inevitably a few typos in a book of this magnitude. Bill Contento must know that data takes a plural verb but still begins his preface "data...is." And the second comma in the title is redundant.

Readers who are subscribers to Locus—and all of you should be—will have much of this information already, but this annual cumulation is far preferable for ease of use. It's not too late to buy this and the earlier annu­als. They are essential tools for any scholar or library with a strong interest in fantastic literature.

Neil Barron

Anniversary Guide


1991 is the 25th anniversary of Star Trek, by which time Star Trek: The Next Generation had more episodes than the original series. The compilers of this price guide are owners of the largest firm specializing in Star Trek paraphernalia, Intergalactic Trading Co, Box 1516, Longwood, FL 32752. The market for collectibles, say the compilers, is strong and growing. The guide lists more than 10,000 price ranges for a staggering variety of items,
including dolls, toys, models, coins, posters, mugs, games, trading cards, even something as old-fashioned as books. Many b&w illustrations show the collectibles, and there are 16 color pages showing ST and SW collectibles. If it isn’t listed here, it probably doesn’t exist, at least in this galaxy. Since this information tends to date fairly rapidly, libraries can probably skip, but collectors may find this as essential as the Overstreet guide to comics.

Neil Barron

Essential Dahl Reprinted


These two heavily overlapping reprints remind us of the loss we sustained with Dahl’s death in November 1990 at 74. He may be better known for his children’s books like Charlie and the Chocolate Factory or James and the Giant Peach, and many children name him their favorite writer. Some critics, however, have strongly deplored what they see as gratuitous violence, bigotry and other examples of general morbidity. His personal life exhibited equally stark contrasts. Badly injured as a pilot in World War II, he suffered from this for the rest of his life. A daughter died of measles. His only son was struck by a taxi as an infant, leaving him partially disabled and hydrocephalic. His first wife, actress Patricia Neal, suffered three strokes, from which he nursed her back to health. Yet this cultivated and loving father and husband carried on a longterm affair with one of his wife’s best friends, condemned Salman Rushdie as an opportunist, and was vehemently anti-Zionist to the point, some argue, of anti-semitism. It is therefore not surprising that his books reflect these contrasts.

The first book is an enlarged reprint of the 1978 Vintage paperback, adding 119 pages and six stories. The second collection reprints a 1979 original Vintage collection issued as a tie-in to a TV series dramatizing his stories. There are 25 stories in the enlarged edition, 24 in the reprint, of which 17 are shared.

These stories are neither fantasy nor horror in a traditional sense, and for that reason I—probably mistakenly—excluded Dahl from my guides to fantasy and horror. And yet, and yet...the mixture of cruelty, violence and outre plots made believable by his masterly storytelling abilities, mixed with an unexpected cheerfulness amidst the savagery, somehow moves Dahl into a twilight zone all his own.
Dahl’s stories are well enough known and admired today not to require my urgent recommendations. Two of his hobbies, wine and antiques, are evident in “Taste,” “The Butler,” and “Parson’s Pleasure.” (I suspect an antiques friend who I had read the last story has never forgiven me.) And then there’s the tale of “The Landlady,” whose guests stay somewhat longer than planned. And...time must have a stop. I recommend that libraries acquire both books in prebound form to give them longer circulating lives and to satisfy more users. Individuals will be happy with either choice; only Dahl fanatics need both.

Neil Barron

A Mystery Illuminated, Not Explained

What if there had been a major writer of feminist fantasy writing as early as the 1930s. What if, further, this writer had a poet’s ear, a critic’s wit (I’m thinking of criticism of the George Bernard Shaw school), and the mythmaking imagination of the Celtic renaissance. What version of the goddess might she have come up with?

There was and is such a fantasist: her name is P.L. Travers, and her creation is Mary Poppins. Mary Poppins, for those who do not know Travers’s books, bears very little resemblance to the character played by Julie Andrews in the Disney film of that name (a much earlier proposal to film Mary Poppins with Beatrice Lillie in the lead might have come closer). The character Travers created is prim, self-satisfied, acid-tongued, occasionally soft-hearted, and above all mysterious. She can chat with sparrows and sunbeams; she hobnobs with serpent gods and constellations; she comes and goes through a multitude of worlds and yet when she comes to this world it is as a nanny—an absolute monarch, it is true, but only of the nursery. She is full of contradictions that make perfect sense. Travers herself calls her the Great Exception, and Demers comments that “It is not simply that she never explains, but that she herself cannot be dissected or resolved.”

The statement might be applied to creator as well as creation. Pamela Travers guards her privacy to such an extent that it seems almost an invasion to refer to her by first name rather than by initials. In this fine study of the author and her work, Patricia Demers manages to respect the privacy while shedding light on the public utterances. In the process P.L. Travers comes to seem more than a little like Mary Poppins.
Demers limits the biographical section of her book to the standard details. Travers grew up, not in a typical English nursery but in the exotic Queensland countryside. Her early professional experiences include acting, dancing, and reporting in or around Sydney before coming to London at the age of 18. Of primarily Irish extraction, she attached herself to the Irish renaissance movement, meeting with Yeats, becoming a protegee of AE, and contributing poetry to the Irish Statesman. This body of poetry, along with her theatrical and literary criticism for the New English Weekly, is the main source of information about Travers’s imaginative growth, and Demers makes extensive and effective use of both. Even though we know nothing about Travers’ nonliterary friendships or romantic attachments, about her personal frustrations or triumphs, we do have a record of the development of a distinctive voice and a boldly original outlook. Demers points out that the poetry (which is generously quoted) anticipates both the irreverence and the visionary glow of the Poppins books. Some of the poems, while traditional in form and diction, are surprisingly candid in their exploration of women’s sexuality and a kind of female-oriented and sensually apprehended cosmos.

Travers’ reviews and essays reveal her more down-to-earth and satirical side. Demers does not try to portray her as a consistently insightful critic; for instance, “Travers’ comments on non-Shakespearean women impress me as a mixture of clear sighted career-woman’s judgements and pure mush.” Yet even her more indefensible opinions are confidently expressed and worth considering in the light of her own artistic practice, according to Demers, for they are based on Travers’ belief in “the need to join ideas and people, to engage an audience or readership with fully realized and fallible humanity, to overact and exult in gallimaufry, to provide entertainment which is faithful to reality and to avoid cleverness and mawkishness at all costs.”

When it comes to readings of individual works, both the Poppins books and lesser-known texts like Friend Monkey, Demers continues to illuminate without explaining, to guide and suggest meanings and relationships in such a way as to make me want to go back and reread them all. I did go out and find the two most recent Mary Poppins books, Mary Poppins in Cherry Tree Lane (1982) and Mary Poppins and the House Next Door (1988), both fairly brief books depicting single extended episodes rather than the varied sets of adventures of the earlier books. I found that I tended to agree with most reviewers, who thought that these latter tales, while worth reading, were less sure and less absorbing than the major stories, rather than with Demers, who claims that they represent “major additions to the Poppins canon.” Yet Demers makes a strong case at least for their importance in understanding Travers’ themes.
Interestingly enough, there are only two chapters (out of eight) explicitly devoted to Mary Poppins, and yet Demers' whole study provides the best context I have seen for contemplation of that quirky and splendid incarnation of the goddess.

Brian Attebery

Dick Reprint in an Altered State


The second volume of the paperback reprint of Underwood-Miller’s five-volume collection of Dick’s short stories reprints 26 of the 27 short works written (or published) between mid-1952 and early 1953. The missing story, “Second Variety,” was the title work of the hardback edition (and is referred to both in Norman Spinrad’s reprinted introduction to the collection and in the bibliographic endnotes); it has been replaced, in what I can only interpret as a cynical attempt to capitalize on the release of the film *Total Recall*, by the 1966 short story which provides the movie with its premise, “We Can Remember It For You Wholesale.”

This situation makes for somewhat of an aesthetic disaster. Dick’s prolific output in the early 1950s, prior to becoming primarily known as a novelist, though enjoyable in itself and interesting in its tracing of lines of development both in thematic content and increasing mastery of literary technique, does not, after all, exhibit Dick at his most powerfully mature. The inclusion of the 1966 short story, one of his best, reminds us of how far he came from the beginnings otherwise reprinted here. Presumably Citadel-Twilight could have reprinted the volume with “Wholesale” in it out of order if it felt the film tie-in would sell more copies; monkeying with the chronological approach sets up a domino effect in future volumes of the reprint series. Will “Second Variety” lead off the next volume, thus bumping the last couple of stories to volume four? Will it replace “Wholesale” among the mid-1960s entries, thus magnifying the 1953 story’s relative lack of complexity? Whatever happens, it will have disfigured the collection.

“Wholesale” aside, the stories collected here reveal Dick to have restricted his concerns during this early phase of his career to a greater degree than in the first years, as reprinted (faithfully) in volume one, *The Short Happy Life of the Brown Oxford*. There are fewer whimsical fantasies, in fact
fewer fantasies altogether, and among those, "The Cookie Lady" and "Beyond the Door," the mood is darker. This is also true of the sf works, a number of which end with either the real or threatened destruction of humanity, usually due to its capacity for stupidity, venality, and/or xenophobia. Only in two, "James P. Crow," and "Jon's World," does humankind overcome external obstacles to commence a future of hope. Elsewhere, as in "Adjustment Team" and "A Present for Pat," the victory is a small, personal one (no wonder Dick could never get a story past John Campbell!)

There's not a really bad story in the lot, but none is at the level of the maverick "Wholesale." Despite, as a by-product, rewarding the publisher for its bad judgment, I recommend the book, as well as its predecessor and upcoming volumes, not only to Dick's fans but also as an example of the level to which the 1950s pulps could occasionally rise.

Dick's Short Fiction: A Variety of Titles

With the publication of the third volume of the paperback reprint of Underwood-Miller's 1987 cloth edition of Dick's complete short SF, Citadel Twilight continues its guerrilla warfare against Dick bibliographers. The plot so far: U-M titled its first volume Beyond Lies the Wub, after Dick's first published story; CT retitled it: The Short Happy Life of the Brown Oxford (did they really think that was catchier ??). Volume Two was titled by U-M Second Variety; CT, looking for a movie tie-in with Total Recall, ripped "We Can Remember It For You Wholesale" from its place with the other mid-1960s fiction, retitled the second volume, and in the process, jettisoned—you guessed it, the original title story: "Second Variety" moves to volume three, where it displaces The Father-Thing as title story: otherwise the text hasn't been tampered with.

Aside from the problems that librarians and bibliographers may have, there's a question of textual integrity. In my review of volume two [see above], I pointed out that the sophistication of "We Can Remember..." reflects badly on the otherwise enjoyable—for its own sake—contents of the 1952-53 stories. The displacement of "Second Variety" is not crucial in this way, but the story suffers from being removed from a bunch of companion stories, many in volume two (the others in the initial volume) in which Dick explored the aftermath of a U.S.—USSR nuclear war, a theme he left behind by 1953.

Those cavils aside, the third volume shows Dick, despite a fantastic output (23 stories in 14 months), gradually shaping his craft, and reacting both to the national paranoia of the McCarthy years and a general sense of misanthropy. The few stories that do have relatively upbeat endings, such
as "War Veteran" and "Pay for the Printer" seem somehow false, though it is doubtful that the editors of Satellite SF or If asked for the hopefulness, as John Campbell would have.

As Dick notes in extracts from various comments, he also set out on an anti-Campbellian treatment of mutants, depicting them not as invariably superior morally to homo sapiens, rather subject to different, though equally disfiguring natural traits, as in "The Golden Man." He continues to view the possibility of alien vs. human contact as a 50-50 proposition. Sometimes they are the bad guys (but usually win), sometimes we are (and seldom win).

The series so far must be recommended as an affordable way to witness the maturing of one of the two or three most significant authors who developed through the pulp SF tradition. I don't imagine there will be much monkeying with the final two volumes (aside from the absence of "We Can Remember...") beyond speculation as to what volume four, subtitled by U-M "The Days of Perky Pat" will end up as with CT. Second Variety (CT version) has a slightly better cover than the preceding volumes, but the artwork continues to be inexplicably amateurish. A move to better cover art would surely sell more copies than the strange title changes.

Bill Collins

Hammer's Master Director


Terence Fisher's place in the history of horror films is similar to that of Tod Browning, director of Bela Lugosi's Dracula (1931). The influence of both men's work on dozens of subsequent films is undisputed, but neither is greatly respected by most serious critics. Before Fisher directed The Curse of Frankenstein (1957) and Dracula (1958) for Hammer Films, horror films had been in decline since the mid-1940s. Fisher's success inspired Roger Corman in America and Mario Bava in Italy and, according to Stephen Rebello's Alfred Hitchcock and the Making of Psycho (1990), even encouraged Hitchcock's sole venture into horror. Before Fisher, almost all horror films were black-and-white, and many critics assumed that horror was best served by monochrome films. After Fisher, few filmmakers (except Hitchcock and George Romero) could contemplate making horror without color. Before Fisher, respectable horror films were expected to be subtle and suggestive. After Fisher, horror was gaudy, violent and highly sexual. Although Fisher made 51 films from 1947 to 1973, he became famous between 1957 and 1962, when he directed five films that breathed new life into very familiar material—Curse of Frankenstein, Dracula, The Curse of the Werewolf
(1961), The Phantom of the Opera (1962) and perhaps the best film ever made of The Hound of the Baskervilles (1959). After this peak, his best work was probably The Devil Rides Out (1967), based on a novel by Dennis Wheatley.

Dixon spends only a page or two on movies he considers unworthy of Fisher but lavishes up to twenty pages of detailed, often shot-by-shot analysis of films which he believes show Fisher at his best, as a “director of emotions” and a master of camera movement and editing. Dixon dislikes the most notorious scene in Fisher, the rape-like staking of a woman vampire in Dracula, Prince of Darkness (1965). While he defends Fisher’s artistry, Dixon joins political-minded critics who condemn Fisher as a sexist reactionary. Nevertheless, he feels that Fisher’s nostalgic fondness for the Victorian period was a major asset in his films. If Fisher was the first reputable director of explicit horror, he was also the last important maker of Gothic horror. Dixon believes Fisher succeeded in making Gothic cliches frightening not primarily by showing more horror but by careful, detailed naturalism, by making the Gothic setting as believable as possible.

At the peak of his enthusiasm, Dixon declares that “What John Ford is to the Western, Fisher is to the Gothic”. His claim that Fisher was a major talent is unpersuasive, but Dixon does show that the work of Hammer’s top director was more sophisticated than is generally recognized. Dixon is a real expert on film techniques and conducted valuable interviews with Fisher’s widow and many of his colleagues. The Charm of Evil belongs in collections that want to go beyond the basic titles on the Gothic cinema, David Pirie’s Heritage of Horror (1974) and Gregory Waller’s The Living and the Undead (1986).

Michael Klossner

Writing for Fun and Profit


Thirteen people contributed to this collection of essays on storytelling, “Ideas and Foundations” (world-building) and the business of writing.

The kickoff essay is a reprint of Robert Heinlein’s excellent “On the Writing of Speculative Fiction.” In the introduction, the editors warn the reader that this is not a “How To” manual; they encourage writers to read all the essays, note that some seem to/contradict others, and then use what seems best in order to get their manuscripts finished, polished and out the door toward a sale. In Heinlein’s essay, after some crisp defining of “story,” the new writer is told simply to Write, Finish It, Send It, Keep Sending It Until Sold.
The first section contains essays on the process of writing. Of these, Jane Yolen’s “Turtles All the Way Down” seems the most useful. She describes the three “voices” of good fantasy writing, and talks about the importance of internal consistency in fantasy-world construction, ending with three “rules” of writing for children. A case can be made for these applying to adult literature.

The most useful section of this book is the one on world-building. Poul Anderson gives a graph-illustrated rundown on types of suns, and the planets that might be found round the different suns, and John Barth follows this up with a model for constructing a believable society on an imaginary planet/future Earth. Other essays in this section cover imaginary beings and starship drives.

The last section talks about markets, manuscript preparation, do’s and don’t’s of cover letters. At the very end are some guidelines for submitting to Asimov’s and Analog which will be very useful for the new reader.

**A Book in the Hand**

Two other handbooks for writers have come out this year: Orson Scott Card’s *How to Write Science Fiction and Fantasy* (Newsletter 185), and Rusch & Smith’s *Science Fiction Writers of America Handbook: The Professional Guide to Writing Professionally* (Newsletter 188).

All three books contain worthwhile information for writers seeking to break into the marketplace. Compilations from Dozois and Rusch/Smith and numerous writers and editors, give the widest variety of points-of-view, but they do not overshadow Card who conveys the best picture of the actual process of writing, from inception of idea through rewrite. He manages to be encouraging without masking the hard work involved in development and self-editing, or the difficulties encountered in seeing one’s story reach print.

The Dozois anthology is weakest in this area; most of the short essays give some rules without delving into the reasons or the process. But this book’s strength is in the section on world construction; though Card also gives good advice on this subject, the thoroughness with which several authors cover the subject in the Dozois anthology conveys a more complete picture.

The SFWA handbook contains very little on either of these subjects. Where it will come in very handy for anyone, new or old hand, is in the first-rate information on the business end of writing. The sections on contracts, copyright, royalty statements and other areas of the market are a must-have for anyone who wishes to earn money by writing fiction.

*Sherwood Smith*
Maps of the Vast Wasteland


Fulton's subject is all science fiction programming shown on British television from 1951 to 1989—159 series and miniseries, 64 TV films and 41 animated series. Besides British programs, he covers foreign shows broadcast in Britain, including most of the important American series and a few Australian and New Zealand programs. The U.S. series include the quality programs *Twilight Zone* (both the 1959-64 and the 1985-86 series), *The Outer Limits* (1963-65), *One Step Beyond* (1959-61), *Rod Serling's Night Gallery* (1970-73), *Kolchak, the Night Stalker* (1974-75), *V* (1983-84), and of course *Star Trek* (1966-69) but not *Star Trek: the Next Generation*, 1987 which has not yet been shown in Britain; old favorites such as *Superman* (1953-57) and *The Invaders* (1967-68); comedies such as *ALF*, (1986-90), *Batman* (1966-68), and *Mork and Mindy* (1978-82); and bad series such as *Battlestar Galactica* (1978-79) and *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea* (1964-68). Many of the British programs have been seen in America—*Doctor Who* (the longest entry, with 44 pages covering the series from 1963 to 1989), *The Avengers* (1966-69), *The Prisoner* (1968), *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* (1981), *Blake's Seven* (1978-81), *Max Headroom* (1985), and several “Supermarionation” puppet series by Gerry Anderson. Fulton recommends several British series which have never been shown in the U.S.—*A for Andromeda* (1961), *Adam Adamant Lives!* (1966-67), *Out of the Unknown* (1965-71), *Red Dwarf* (1988-89), *Sapphire & Steel* (1979-82) and *Undermind* (1965), as well as the three legendary *Quatermass* series (1953-59) written by Nigel Kneale. Kneale also wrote three TV films highly praised by Fulton—1984 (1954, with Peter Cushing as Winston Smith, by all accounts a better version than either the 1956 or the 1984 films), *The Stone Tape* (1972) and *The Year of the Sex Olympics* (1968). British SF on TV exhibits a strong tendency to pessimism, seldom seen on U.S. screens, especially in the early ecological series, *Doomwatch* (1970-72) and two programs on nuclear war, the series *Survivors* (1975-77) and the TV film *Threads* (1984). It wouldn't be British television without literary adaptations, such as *Day of the Triffids* (1981), written by John Wyndham from his novel and *The Invisible Man* (1984) from H.G. Wells. The British have also made many children’s SF series, of which Fulton particularly endorses *Catweazle* (1971).
For each program, Fulton furnishes dates (unfortunately only dates of British broadcast of U.S. programs), producer, the regular cast and the names of their characters, and a brief descriptive commentary; for each episode, he gives the title, writer, director, guest actors and their character names, and a synopsis of one to three sentences. Episode-specific information is omitted for a few series, such as ALF. Fulton identifies particularly good or poor programs but does not bother to criticize the many middling shows.

Harris Lentz's *Science Fiction, Horror and Fantasy Film and Television Credits* (1983, supplement 1989) includes many U.S. programs not in Fulton, just as Fulton has several British shows not in Lentz; Lentz provides only credits and no synopses, description or criticism. *Fantastic Television* by Gary Gerani and Paul Schulman (1977) has criticism, credits and episode synopses for fifteen series, all but one of them American. Fulton's *Encyclopedia* is the most complete source of TV episode synopses and is essential for the study of genre media.

Goldberg's *Unsold TV Pilots* uncritically describes 303 television specials, each from 30 minutes to two hours long, broadcast to introduce series which were never made. 107 of the 303 are fantastic, mostly thrillers or situation comedies featuring ghosts, aliens, robots and people with special physical or mental powers. The pilots range from *The Orson Welles Show* (1958), about an elixir of youth, to *Poochinski* (1990), in which a detective is reincarnated as a dog. This chronicle of failure offers the dubious consolation that the series we were spared were probably even worse than those that were made.

Michael Klossner

**A Literary Prism**


William Beckford's *Vathek: An Oriental Tale* has beguiled and baffled readers and critics for more than two centuries, so it should come as no surprise that this collection of critical essays does not reach a final conclusion concerning a work that has been alternatively dismissed as a minor literary curiosity and hailed as a multifaceted forerunner of the modern novel. Indeed, the differing critical views concerning *Vathek*'s generic characteristics makes for the most illuminating reading in this uneven collection of studies of Beckford's fantastic narrative.

Frederick S. Frank’s “The Gothic *Vathek*: The Problem of Genre Resolved” makes a persuasive case for keeping Beckford’s novel within the context of the Gothic tradition. He finds structural, thematic, and symbolic devices in *Vathek* that harmonize with similar devices in the emerging
Gothic mode of Beckford’s era. Frank argues that the work can be considered Gothic because of its “perverse pilgrimage,” its tormented protagonist, its preference for isolated enclosures, and its nihilistic view of cosmic disorder. (Frank also contributes one of the most valuable features in the book: an extensive “Checklist of Vathek Criticism.”)

In contrast, Peter Hyland contends that Beckford’s novel lacks most of the traditional Gothic ingredients, particularly in view of the ironic treatment of Vathek himself and his unvirtuous female companion, Nouronihar, who joins him eagerly in his damnation, rather than fleeing his wickedness, as the archetypal “maiden in flight.” Like Frank, Hyland sees moral confusion at the heart of the novel, but in his view the ambiguities and deceptions of Beckford’s hostile universe make it impossible to categorize Vathek with any degree of certainty.

In the essay which gives Graham’s volume its title, “The Movement Underground and the Escape from Time in Beckford’s Fiction,” Temple J. Maynard insists that Vathek must be viewed in relation to Beckford’s Episodes and Vision in order to reveal the interconnected themes of time and mortality, which cannot be readily discerned if the novel is examined in isolation from these other works. Thus, the subterranean tendencies of Beckford’s narrative, combined with the emphasis on a forbidden passion, suggest a transcendental desire to escape from the mundane world into a sensual world of permanence; this feature is typical of the oriental tales which came to England by way of France. Maynard interprets Vathek’s retreats into enclosed spaces (either above ground in a lofty tower or below ground in an infernal cavern) as an attempt to transcend time and social constraints. Seeing Vathek as an example of the “oriental genre,” Maynard affirms the “terrible penalty” that the Caliph must pay at the end of the novel as the price for the “rejection of the real world.”

Viewing Vathek as an “inversion of romance,” Randall Craig considers the protagonist’s journey as a movement from promise to punishment, from wish-fulfillment to despair, a passage which inverts the typical pattern of the romance: the journey from conflict to discovery. According to Craig, by inverting the action of the traditional romance, Beckford negates any sharply-defined view of good and evil and calls human freedom into question. Beckford, therefore, offers a metaphysical moral of profound disillusionment, rather than an ethical moral to crown an Oriental fable.

The rest of the essays in the volume may be sketched out more briefly. Brian Fothergill focuses on the symbolic associations of the tower, dome, and subterranean hall, but his analysis ends with an anticlimactic digression on the construction of Fonthill Abbey, an insight which would have been far more helpful at an earlier point in his commentary. J. V. Svilpis situates Beckford’s novel in an Eastern context, going so far as to consider the narrative as an attack on the occidental view of orientalism, as evident in Johnson’s Rasselas, for example. Svilpis contends that the macabre irony of
Vathek undermines Western ideology and realism. Michael Baridon chooses to see Vathek as an example of eighteenth-century avant-garde pointing the way to modern literature. Devendra P. Varma finds parallels between Vathek and Persian Sufism, yet this commentary seems to call for a more extensive study of the subject. Stressing Beckford’s “exterior style” of narration, R. B. Gill considers Vathek “a public work whose surface meanings are the intended meanings.” Jurgen Klein’s “Vathek and Decadence” offers little beyond an enhanced plot summary.

Graham’s own essay deals with Beckford’s influence on Poe, yet it is surprising that he does not develop the parallel between the Caliph Vathek and Prince Prospero, the doomed protagonist in “The Masque of the Red Death.” Maria L. B. Pires presents a discursive commentary on Beckford’s interest in Portugal and Vathek’s affinities with Portuguese literature, but she does not draw any substantive conclusions, except to acknowledge Beckford’s kinship with the oriental culture established in the Iberian Peninsula. Taking the volume as a whole, and given the complexity and/or eccentricity of Beckford’s novel, we should not expect any single reading of Vathek, which serves as a kind of prism reflecting the contours of each critic’s sensibility. Graham’s volume shows that Beckford’s literary prism continues to cast its brilliant yet eerie light well into the twentieth century.

Ted Billy

Lewis on a Couch


This analysis of the Narnia series of C. S. Lewis attempts to show that they are not simply Christianity-oriented fairy tales for children, even though they have been widely accepted as such by both lay and religious authorities. Holbrook’s thesis is that they have a much darker and more sinister meaning, based on Lewis’ boyhood experiences and their collective effect on his unconscious.

In this belief, Holbrook is in opposition to most other authorities, and to popular opinion, although he has found support from others. One of the more disturbing aspects of this is that he seems unwilling to accept arguments against his thesis; in one paragraph he states that he takes clues from many writers, but then adds that, in one critical work, the critic states (with specific reference to the Narnia books) that the point in question is of no significance. Holbrook’s comment with reference to that statement is that “This will not do” and he then proceeds with his own arguments.

Holbrook’s ideas come primarily from psychological sources dealing with symbolism, from the influence of George McDonald on Lewis, and from letters written by Lewis to Arthur Greeves in which material had apparently
been deleted which is purported to show a homosexual relationship. (Parenthetically, the material was restored by scientific techniques, and Holbrook acknowledges that it may not be ethical to uncover words in such a manner when the participants wanted them concealed. However, he decided to use them anyway since someone else did the actual work which revealed them.)

To summarize Holbrook's objections to the material in the Narnia series, while trying not to oversimplify them, is a difficult task. First, of course, is the idea that Lewis, unconsciously or otherwise, used the framework of the tales to fantasize on his own subconscious fear of women and his need to control forces that threaten him. The sexual imagery that Holbrook finds in the books is a further expression of that fear and hatred. However, it is the idea of the need to control that receives the most attention, since it is this need—according to Holbrook—that caused Lewis to use the books to fantasize and justified (Holbrook's emphasis) cruelty and murder as a punishment for those who do not follow one's own precepts. Holbrook feels that the use of cruelty in children's stories, and especially those which purport to carry a religious message, is especially heinous. While it may be deplorable, it was certainly not new with Lewis. The original unbowedlerized fairy tales of the Brothers Grimm, for instance, certainly lived up to the name of their authors. Even the Bible shows streaks of cruelty and vindictiveness, as when Elisha sends bears to devour the children who mocked him. If one argues that Christianity changed all that, one can point to Christ scourging the money-changers (Lewis is accused of a whipping fixation) as well as to other instances.

One problem may lie in a difference in attitude. As Holbrook points out, Lewis's belief in Christianity was a literal belief. He felt that real demons existed to try to conquer man and the world, and that only by continual vigilance could they be overcome. Consequently, one was justified in whatever actions were necessary to achieve this end. If this is "self-righteousness" as Holbrook terms it, then many other religious people must also be termed self-righteous.

There can be no doubt that there is a lot of violence in the stories. Whether it exists for the reasons Holbrook states, or for other reasons, will probably require considerable additional study. Holbrook raises some interesting arguments but, at this point, they are unlikely to sway the adherents of Lewis's work who believe they are excellent introductions to the basic tenets of Christianity.

W. D. Stevens
Valuable Correspondence


Robert E. Howard made his first sale to the pulps at age 18 and killed himself at age 30. An earlier volume of his letters covers the first half of his writing career, from 1923-30; his correspondents then were mainly local friends. The bulk of the letters in this second volume went to professional writers he never met: August Derleth, Clark Ashton Smith, H. P. Lovecraft. Howard is especially eloquent in writing to Lovecraft; unfortunately not all of his Lovecraft correspondence is here. Chatty letters to Howard’s high school pal, Clyde Smith, are well represented, but there are no letters at all to other close friends of this period, such as Novalyne Price. The editors never describe the guidelines by which these letters were selected.

In a brief introduction, Robert M. Price argues that the letters do not reveal “the real Robert E. Howard,” and wonders whether “there was no real REH to meet .... Reading his letters I have received the impression that Howard made himself into an embodiment, and little more, of the codes, loyalties, hatreds, and prejudices he had inherited from Celtic and Texan forebears.” Howard does seem curiously unaware of certain strong undercurrents in his personality, such as his inability to separate himself psychologically from his mother; and he often uses the “codes, loyalties, hatreds, and prejudices” of his forebears to mythologize his own anger and frustration. But he engages in a good deal more self-analysis, in his long letters to Lovecraft, than most of his fellow Texans would have done or would have been able to do; and the personality that emerges from this self-analysis is much more than an inherited shell of cultural identifications. Howard also turns out to be a surprisingly knowledgeable and sophisticated debater, and sometimes a sly one as well, as when he apologetically tells HPL “I’m sure I have misunderstood you frequently. I find it difficult to believe that some of your views are as arbitrary and intolerant as they look on paper.” Lovecraft surely had their correspondence as well as REH’s fiction in mind when he wrote in an obituary, “The character and attainments of Mr. Howard were wholly unique .... he had an internal force and sincerity which broke through the surface and put the imprint of his personality on everything he wrote” (reprinted in Glenn Lord, ed., *The Last Celt*, 1976, p. 69).

This thick stapled pamphlet, with its uncomfortably wide lines and tiny print, gives the appearance of a fannish publication. But its annotations are scholarly in quality and quantity, and its content is essential to an accurate understanding of Robert E. Howard.

*Alan C. Elms*
Lovecraft in the Limelight


Thanks to S. T. Joshi and Marc Michaud, with the assistance of Brown University’s John Hay Library and the Rhode Island Committee for the Humanities, the Lovecraft centenary in August, 1990, was celebrated by a two-day gathering of the writer’s aficionados, including a number of participants paying their own way from various European countries. From a reading of the proceedings, which includes both presentations originally written as papers (some subsequently revised for this volume) and transcriptions of off-the-cuff speeches, one cannot help but get a sense of how much fun it must have been to be there. Whether it may, as Joshi suggests in his introduction, “inaugurate a new and more profound stage of Lovecraft scholarship,” is less evident.

Though in the concluding address, Joshi states that “we have heard autobiographical, formalist, historicist, philosophical, structuralist, and poststructuralist analyses of Lovecraft,” the printed proceedings don’t verify that claim. That may not be a bad thing for some of the participants, as the argument, which concluded the final session, questions how desirable it might be if Lovecraft were “discovered” by the academic establishment. It seems obvious from the heated exchange that, though Lovecraftians have no doubt that HPL is a significant American author, they’re not so sure that contemporary critical viewpoints will have anything good to say about him.

Certainly the research reported in the centenary conference is not going to galvanize anyone to lobby for a session on HPL at the next MLA. This is not to say the material is devoid of interest, far from it. Much is still to be discovered about HPL’s life, and Will Murray’s analysis of the geography of his mythic Massachusetts, the indefatigable Kenneth Faig’s continuing research into the writer’s family history, reminiscences by colleagues such as Frank Belknap Long and Harry Brobst continue to add facets to both the man and his work. Also, the contribution of the European visitors as to the publishing history of HPL in France, Germany, and Italy provides a factual basis on which other critics may build conclusions concerning reader response to his translated works.

Some of what Joshi would like to think of as academic criticism, though, just doesn’t make it. The entire panel on “Lovecraft and Modern Horror” rambles about anecdotally without ever saying anything germane to the subject. A potentially good subject, “Lovecraft’s Narrators,” can be summed up in one of its sentences: “Though I haven’t worked all the way through this, I think it is something worth discussing.” So do I. I wish someone had discussed it. There are some attempts at rigorous critical method. Unfortunately, one of them, which tries to interpret “The Colour out of Space” as a disguised family history, reads
like the kind of tenure-retaining article foes of the MLA warned us about. Maurice Levy’s discussion of the influence of surrealism on HPL’s popularity in France is altogether valuable, though too brief, and Barton St. Amand’s surprising findings in “Lovecraft and Borges” will perhaps contribute more to further investigation of Borges criticism than they will to HPL studies.

I have saved Donald R. Burleson for last. He contributes two entries, one on HPL’s use of Providence in his fiction, too brief but an excellent example of “traditional” Lovecraft studies at their best, and a gentle taste of painless deconstruction in a paper on dreams and reality. The recent publication of Burleson’s deconstructive analysis of Lovecraft from a university press (reviewed in SFRAN 188) marks, I think, the first time a pulp sf or fantasy writer has been the subject of a book length study based on a single critical approach, and which quietly assumes the author to have major status. Burleson may have enlisted on a gradually sinking ship (deconstruction), but the appearance of his monograph signals the end of the era of nostalgic critical innocence that Joshi and many of the attendees at the centennial conference seem to prefer. Take heart, ladies and gentlemen. Lovecraft’s soulmate, Edgar Allen Poe, has been ritually castigated by junior faculty members anxious to retain the approval of their tenure committees for half a century. But no anthology of significant nineteenth-century literature can avoid reprinting him and generations of students find a wondrous fascination in his prose, despite the party-line of their teachers. Lovecraft deserves, and may yet achieve, that ambiguous fate.

Bill Collins

A Private Myth


A study in exquisite (not to say excruciating) detail of the Arthurian poems of Charles Williams, this close reading will require copies of Taliessin Through Logres and The Region of the Summer Stars (as well, if you can get it, of Heroes and Kings), close at hand, since the author presupposes an intimate line-by-line familiarity with these intense and profoundly esoteric works.

King has made excellent use of the occult materials upon which Williams drew so heavily. Much has been written about how Williams lived in a dual world of the natural and the supernatural, specifically the occult. This is probably true, at least in psychological terms. Although Williams finally parted company with his own occult society, he never abandoned use of these materials as Williams himself understands them.
What Williams did with the Arthuriad was turn it into an intensely private myth. However well you know your Arthurian literature you cannot interpret Williams without reference to his complex and highly personal theology. Here King again serves as an excellent guide. With the poems at your side and King at your ear, and a lot of time and self-discipline, you will find these materials illuminating. But Williams is not T.S. Eliot. His mythology is so personal and so complex that only a close coterie of devotees is likely to sustain appreciation of even his finest work. Certainly Williams' last volumes of poetry are his best. They can be read deliciously without any guide at all. But Roma King's contribution will help you over the bumps, assisted by Williams' broadest and perhaps best commentator, Glen Cavaliero, in Charles Williams, Poet of Theology.

Williams' Arthuriad is a dizzy, gorgeous, overwhelming read. Who cares what it means? Indeed, why must it mean? A better poet than Williams says a poem must not mean but be. The Williams Arthuriad is not The Waste Land and The Four Quartets, but it is smashing poetry. That ought to be enough.

Nancy-Lou Patterson

[This review is abridged from the original, which presumably appeared in Mythlore, the journal of the Mythopoeic Society.]

Ecce Machina!


In this erudite, intelligent, somewhat digressive study, Knapp surveys the many different ways in which mechanization enters contemporary literature giving (surprise) no attention to science fiction, but rather studying such varied works as James Joyce's "A Painful Case," Antoine de Saint Exupery's Wind, Sand, and Stars, and Sam Shepherd's Operation Sidewinder. Knapp's concluding thesis is conclusively inconclusive. Having cast a broad net over dramatists, novelists, and short story writers both from east and west, Knapp has discovered that virtually all writers only raise questions about the interactions between "the mechanical, technological, and programmed world of which they were and are a part." It seems, therefore, that in mainstream literature as in life the presence of human-machine interface is a breaking story of the greatest magnitude. Extrapolating Knapp's work leaves us face-to-face with nothing less than the merger of C.P. Snow's "two cultures" as books, film, art, TV commercials, graphic novels (comic books, once) and even yesterday's rock groups (remember Devo?)—all work with cybernetics. Time was you couldn't fit a terminator into a telephone booth—now a terminator.
may be a telephone booth or anyone else. It is not surprising anymore to learn that so-and-so is "wired, "wired in", "disconnected," "out of phase," "out of focus," or "logged off." In a world where you can subsist on vegamite sandwiches, mega-byte burgers and Gatorade (for the electrolytes) the very is-ness of it all is theme enough. Where once heroes descended into the Land of Adventure they now spend most of their time trying to Escape from Silicon Valley.

Knapp’s last book, then, may be viewed as academic PROPWASH, a cultural backdraft from the non-stop, hi-tech techno-rap of integrated circuitry and heavy metal.

Science fiction poet Dick Allen saw the task of modern SF as a search “for a definition of humanity which would stand in the light of twentieth century knowledge,” and veteran SF writer Jack Williamson saw SF as a “searchlight” on the engine of modern technology. It is well, then, for scholars to look hard and long, forward and backward through the history of all literary kinds, charting the wholesale transformation of such once familiar concepts as Eros and Logos, the Feminine Principle, the Ephiphanic Experience, the Sacred and the Profane. Reading Knapp will show students of writers such as Philip K. Dick, William Alec Effinger, and William Gibson that the dangerous visions of SF writers distill essences flowing through all contemporary art, through Stanislaw I. Witkiewics’s The Crazy Locomotive, through Juan Jose Arreola’s “The Switchman,” and through R. K. Narayan’s The Man-Eater of Malgudi. Students of cultural history will need sharp eyes and rapid pens to chart a wave of such magnitude—the times, they are a changeling.

Thom Dunn

An Auspicious Beginning

Knight, Damon, ed. Monad; essays on science fiction. Irregular. Issue 1, September 1990. $5. 4 issues/$18 ($22 foreign). Pulphouse Publishing, Box 1227, Eugene, OR 97440.

Noting admiringly Le Guin’s Pilgrim Award acceptance speech, Knight says Monad will be devoted to “essays by science fiction writers who do not reach for their guns when they hear the word ‘literature’; who do not consider themselves laborers in the baloney factory or missionaries for Star Wars; who are not fans, academics or anecdotalists...” That last exclusionary clause may raise a few eyebrows. Knight reprinted a letter from Tom Whitmore, Locus reviewer and bookstore co-owner, who objected to such exclusions. Knight admits he’ll “read any contribution I receive and publish anything I like,” adding “Criticism of science fiction by fans and academics is written from the outside. Only s.f. writers can criticize it from the inside. The fans and academics have their own journals, in which they sometimes publish very foolish things.”
This initial issue contains five pieces, two reprinted and three originals, in its 91 pages. Admirers of Le Guin will be interested in the talk she gave to a Swedish book fair in September 1989, in which she explores in detail her growing Feminist awareness and how it influenced the writing of Tehanu, the fourth book of the Earthsea series, which Bob Collins perceptively reviewed in Newsletter 174, a review usefully read in conjunction with Le Guin's essay.

"I Dream Therefore I Become" is a short excerpt from Brian Aldiss's 1990 autobiographical work, *Bury My Heart at W.H. Smith's,* and shows again how much can be said in such a brief compass. "An All-Day Poem" is reprinted from Thomas Disch's *The Right Way to Figure Plumbing,* 1972. The piece is aptly named, but I cannot see why Disch felt it had to look like a poem. I read parts of it aloud to myself and found it scans as well or better as normal prose.

Easily my favorite essay is Bruce Sterling's "Processing the Simulacra for Fun and Profit," an account as witty as it's funny, of Sterling's "two-year explorations in the recherche hinterlands of contemporary literary theory." If some of your minor gods include Ferdinand de Saussure, Roland Barthes, Fredric Jameson and deconstructionism, you won't find any worshipful words here. But Jean Baudrillard's ideas are discussed with great wit and perception, for Sterling feels Baudrillard "is a true voice of the 1980s" (the essay's odd title is taken from his writings).

Knight's piece concludes the volume. "Beauty, Stupidity, Injustice, and Science Fiction" is less an essay, more a group of related, mostly autobiographical apercus, which by chance I saw reprinted in a Tor Double issued last May, *Rule Golden & Double Meaning.*

This collection is well worth its modest cost and is a good beginning. But you may want to wait to subscribe, since no later issues have appeared through September 1991, and it may be more prudent to buy issues as published.

*Neil Barron*

**Very Useful Utopian Study**


The bulk of this syncretic study of the utopian impulse presents an overview of the major commentaries on utopian thought written in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the opening section Ruth Levitas provides useful prec'cis of a number of liberal-humanist criticisms of utopia. The author suggests that for the most part these criticisms make distinctions, create definitions, and include and exclude texts based on matters of form. This treatment of utopia essentially as a literary genre rather than as a political program is contrasted with the Marxist and neo-Marxist attempts to define utopia through function covered in the second section, which comprises the bulk
of the study. The third part of the book examines contemporary utopian studies, suggesting that if there is not a developing rapprochement between the liberal-humanist and Marxist traditions, there is at least a renewed pluralism in utopian thought. The study concludes with an attempt to retheorize utopia not in terms of form, content, or function, but rather as an expression of a desire for a different, better way of being.

It is in her historicizing of the writings of Marx, Engels, Morris, Mannheim, Sorel, Bloch, and Marcuse in the second section that Levitas’s study becomes most interesting and useful. Her thorough analyses of these major figures are highly readable and very informative. Pleasantly, they are also free of the dogmatism and overwhelming sense of trendiness that plagues so much current criticism. While the book covers material with which many researchers in utopian studies are already familiar, it would be good reading for scholars seeking to acquaint themselves with the field and should be a fine supplementary text for a course in utopian thought on both the undergraduate and graduate level.

Peter C. Hall

The Shining Scrutinized


Most of my friends who read Stephen King consider The Shining his scariest novel; but to some readers, including editor Tony Magistrale, King’s third novel is “literature of the highest order.” In defense of this position, Magistrale and 14 other critics here examine the novel and Stanley Kubrick’s controversial 1980 film adaptation through a variety of lenses.

Several critics use the many allusions embedded in the novel to situate it within various literary neighborhoods. Leonard Mastuzza shows that references to works by Poe and Shirley Jackson contextualize The Shining within the genre of Gothic supernaturalism, haunted-house division; Jeanne Ressman and Brian Kent view parallels to novels by Hawthorne, Norris, and other classic American novelists as links to the tradition of naturalism; and Magistrale illustrates how the novel’s structure, characterization, and treatment of free will establish the dimensions of its tragedy as truly Shakespearean.

Other critics, elaborating insights introduced by Douglas E. Winter in The Art of Darkness (1984) and by Magistrale in The Landscape of Fear (1988) and The Moral Voyages of Stephen King (1989), regard The Shining as social commentary: a portrait in microcosm of mid-70s post-Watergate America, with the Torrances enacting the then novel but now passe collapse
of the patriarchal nuclear family. Patriarch Jack's alienation from Wendy and Danny and his failure as a writer presage his loss of self and subsequent death—key developments that, Alan Cohen shows, are paralleled in Jack's degenerating inner language. But, as Cohen, Greg Weller, and Burton Hatlen note, the optimistic end of The Shining offers a fragile replacement for the decrepit nuclear family in small non-traditional communities (Wendy, Danny, and Hallorann) built upon alternative "languages" (the shine). Hatlen's singularly insightful essay further probes the philosophical implications of King's treatment of Good and Evil as inter-subjective social constructs that emerge from within relationships; Hatlen thus positions the novel within the tradition of phenomenological existentialism.

Three critics focus on Kubrick's 1980 film—an adaptation, James Hale reminds us, whose radical changes in plot and thematic emphasis, eccentric performances by Jack Nicholson and Shelley Duvall, and directorial undermining of traditional "scare scenes" enraged many audiences and most critics. Hale's brilliantly observed essay offers an unconventional but wholly persuasive reading of this most problematic horror film.

While not all of the essays in The Shining Reader are as well-written, and well-reasoned as those by Hatlen and Hale, all are provocative. That The Shining can actually sustain a 220-page book of essays distinguishes it from most of modern horror fiction and much of the rest of King's oeuvre. Best of all, these essays will probably send you scurrying to the bookshelf and thence back into the claustrophobic ordeal of the Torrances at the Overlook Hotel.

Theological Views of Lewis


The first thing to note is that this volume has a large price tag for relatively slim contents-five essays centering primarily on theological implications in Lewis's life and works. Walter Hooper's iconoclastic, at times colloquial introduction to "C.S. Lewis: The Man and His Thought" is the most readable of the offerings, and occasionally contradicts conclusions reported in subsequent, more academically oriented essays. Ann Loades' essay, "Some Reflections on C.S. Lewis's A Grief Observed," for example, analyzes that text in precisely the way that Hooper says it should not be read—as strict autobiography, as if Lewis were not capable of imagining the implicit narrative. Even so, there is no sense of a true dialogue between the two essays, each essentially asserts a reading with little discussion of alternatives.
The remaining essays are as tightly focused as the first two: "The Epistemology of C.S. Lewis's Till We Have Faces," by Robert Holyer; "From Time to Eternity: MacDonald's Doorway Between," by Frank P. Riga; and "From Fairy Tales to Fairy Tale: The Spiritual Pilgrimage of C.S. Lewis," by W.E. Knickerbocker, Jr. The MacDonald essay almost seems intrusive, given the overwhelming presence of Lewis in the volume, and there seems in fact to be little cohesion among the other essays, beyond the fundamental fact that each deals with the "spiritual" Lewis as opposed to Lewis-the-maker-of-fictions, or Lewis-the-scholar, or any number of other approaches. The readings offered are interesting enough in their own right but ultimately do not alter or intensify substantively the representations of Lewis that have emerged over the past several decades. Given the cost of the volume, the reader may be left with a wish for more-either breadth or depth.

The volume includes "Works Cited" pages for each essay, but neither a bibliography nor an index. Only for the largest libraries.

Michael R. Collings

Fairy Tales and Sex


The sexual implications of fairytale have been widely discussed in such works as Bettelheim's groundbreaking The Uses of Enchantment (1976), Tartar's The Hard Facts of the Grimms' Fairy Tales (1987), Bottigheimer's Grimms' Bad Girls and Bold Boys (1987), and numerous books and articles. The tales have received any number of psychoanalytic readings, a variety of feminist interpretations, and even the odd Marxist analysis. Many of these readings have been highly useful and have served to broaden our understanding of an often undervalued form of literature. Most, however, share the assumption that the erotic material discovered in the tale is part of a hidden sub-text, something of which neither the storyteller nor the intended audience was aware.

James McGlathery, a professor of German at the University of Illinois, specifically contrasts his own approach to fairytale with those of Bettelheim and other interpreters of the genre. Where most critics, particularly those with a psychoanalytic bent, have tended to assume that the original storytellers were relatively naive and essentially unconscious of the sexual symbolism of their tales, McGlathery argues that they understood exactly what they were saying or implying, and expected that their audience, or at least some segment of it, would also understand. The supposed naivete of the
fairy tale, he thus insists, is often a pretense, hiding a narrative irony and conscious use of symbolism generally unrecognized by critics.

McGlathery divides his topic into six parts: tales involving relationships between brothers and sisters; variations on the beauty and the beast theme; stories of interactions between fathers and daughters; tales containing a supernaturally-endowed female helper or antagonist (a fairy godmother, for example); and, finally, stories involving bridegrooms and bachelors. In each chapter, he begins with tales that have little or no erotic material. Then, analyzing numerous folktales taken from the Grimms, Perrault, and the less familiar Pentamerone (1634-6) of Giambattista Basile, he considers stories with increasingly obvious sexual content. For example, in the chapter on brothers and sisters, the shared love of the prepubescent Hansel and Gretel is seen as entirely innocent, as is the more intense love of the half-brother and sister in “The Juniper Tree.” The relationship between sister and older brothers in “The Seven Ravens,” however, involves “hints of unconscious girlish sexual fantasy,” and the adventures of the postpubescent female protagonist of “The Glass Coffin” symbolize the young woman’s “unconsciously incestuous attachment” to her brother. In each case, McGlathery suggests, the teller of the tale clearly understood what was going on.

The men who first collected folktales are often praised for their willingness to give serious attention to a form of literature previously dismissed as beneath consideration, but they, in fact, as has been known for some time, frequently brought their own middle and upper-class prejudices to the activity. The Grimms in particular tended to look down upon the folk whose tales they were collecting. Indeed, rather than going out into the countryside to hear the stories they later published, they frequently learned them second-hand, filtered through the retelling of middle and upper-class people who had themselves heard the stories from their nurses or servants. When the moral of a fairy tale was not sufficiently middle-class, the Grimms occasionally went so far as to rewrite it themselves. One of the greatest strengths of Fairy Tale Romance is that it, in effect, returns to the original storytellers the right to be intelligent, thinking human beings, capable of a full range of emotional and artistic recourse, rather than the naive rustics that the Grimms and later scholars too often took them to be.

The book suffers from a certain repetitiveness, perhaps unavoidable considering the large number of similar tales that McGlathery must examine to make his point, and a few of the author’s examples failed to convince me. In general, however, his argument makes considerable sense and should serve as a healthy, down-to-earth corrective to some of the excesses that have been perpetrated upon the folk tale by less talented exponents of the psychoanalytic school of literary criticism. Fairy Tale Romance is a valuable book and should be of interest to any scholar doing work in the genre.

Michael M. Levy
Orwell’s Reputation


Considering the trends in contemporary scholarship that have led to widespread canon-bashing and the questioning of literary value and reputation, John Rodden’s book on George Orwell is both timely and potentially instructive. Critics are now forced to confront the point that the reputation of an artist and individual works are not simply matters of individual achievement and intrinsic value. Value and repute are relational phenomena, shaped by the dynamics of interpersonal and institutional forces. Rodden uses George Orwell as the case in point, trying to make sense of the literary reputation of a single controversial and significant figure, and along the way reveals much about the processes by which reputations are formed generally.

Rodden establishes early in his study that George Orwell has become the Dr. Frankenstein of the twentieth century; the man is forgotten and his reputation subsumed completely by his compelling and horrible creation. Today, the writer and the work are completely confounded. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* spawned the adjective “Orwellian” and those on the Left and the Right who find the term useful also claim the man, or rather the reputation of the writer, as part of their intellectual heritage. In response to this, Rodden has taken a step beyond the traditional “life and times” literary biography. The study becomes a wide-ranging cultural history of the complex relationship between Orwell, his writings, and intellectual and political movements since the 1930s.

Readers interested in literary reputation as a conceptual issue will find the chapter “Terms of Repute” particularly engaging. There Rodden explores the institutional network of production, distribution, and reception which circulates and values a writer’s work. The study presents a systematic look at how Orwell and his books emerged through this web of relationships into public reputation.

In Part Two of the book, Rodden abandons straightforward chronology in tracing Orwell’s history of repute, presenting instead a “portrait gallery” of the various images of Orwell that have gained currency. Examining Orwell in succession as “The Rebel,” “The Common Man,” “The Prophet,” and “The Saint,” Rodden presents a panoramic survey of the many faces of George Orwell from a variety of critical locations including the political, professional/cultural, religious, gender, and generational. Each chapter in its turn becomes a case study of the uses and abuses of Orwell’s literary reputation.
and his symbolic role in the political and cultural debates of the mid-Twentieth Century.

Rodden's study is both engaging, well-written, and deserving of the attention of a broad audience. Readers less interested in reputation as a conceptual issue and more in the formation of Orwell's reputation specifically should be able to skip Rodden's theoretical chapter and still gain from his insightful analysis of the making and claiming of the reputation of George Orwell.

Peter C. Hall

A Second View

One of the more important developments in literary criticism during the past decade has been the rediscovery of the provisional nature of all critical judgments. This attitude has led to increasing interest in the politics of literary reputation. How do contemporary writers acquire their reputations? Why do some make the so-called "canon" of major works? How do the prejudices and preferences, political as well as esthetic, of scholars influence the criticisms that they make? Rodden addresses these questions in his thoughtful study of the history of George Orwell's reputation as a writer, thinker and person.

In Orwell's case, responses grew around both the writings and the man. Fitting in a book that addresses the interplay of arbitrary and informed judgments in literary criticism, Rodden divides his analysis into four arbitrary categories that represent four distinct "faces" of Orwell's reputation: Rebel, Common Man, Prophet and Saint. He then examines the processes by which readers of widely different perspectives have found in Orwell's writing support for their opinions. "Orwellian" has become an adjective with a wide range of meanings.

In western culture, a work acquires the status of "literature" (as opposed to more entertainment) in part by gaining a place in academic curricula. Rodden provides a fascinating study of the different ways in which Orwell's writings have been taught in American and British schools. This portion of the book emphasizes Orwell's two best known (because they are widely taught!) works: Animal Farm and 1984. Rodden draws an interesting distinction between minor and major canons that roughly parallels an author's inclusion in secondary school or university curricula. It is difficult, he suggests, to move from the lesser to the more prestigious category. He also offers important observations on the ways in which examinations assume "correct" interpretations.

Scholarly books, especially those addressing subjects of some sensitivity, generate their own politics of reception. Rodden's book, for example,
received positive reviews in the *New York Times* and *Christian Science Monitor* and was damned by Joseph Sobran in the *National Review*. I found his book thoughtful and provocative. My one disappointment stems from Rodden's inadequate treatment of Orwell's relation to science fiction. Nonetheless, this study deserves the attention of anyone interested in science fiction and fantasy—two forms of literary expression whose recognition and appreciation have long been hindered by prevailing trends of academic politics.

*Dennis M. Kratz*

**Language and Narrative in Lewis**


The literary works of C. S. Lewis might be termed prodigious: more than two dozen books, stories and essays of varied types. His work included adult fiction and fairy tales, religious writings and literary criticism, poetry and works on language. Given such a person, and such work, it's only natural to expect scholarly studies of his work. This is such a volume: sixteen essays devoted to an analysis of Lewis's life work.

If it isn't surprising that such a book should appear, what might be surprising is its focus and the way the focus is addressed. The essays do not concentrate on the content of his work, except as needed for illustration, nor on the varied types of material. Instead, the essays are focussed in Lewis' use of language and narrative (or, in the context of the title, word and story). The surprising element is the unifying theme for the material. The book is divided into two parts; each part focuses on one paragraph each from two separate books by Lewis, one dealing with language, the other with story. This is not to say that the essays are about those two paragraphs, or even those two books; the paragraphs simply address the heart of Lewis' thoughts on the two subjects. The essays then look at individual works as they are reflected in the ideas expressed by Lewis in the cited paragraphs. The result is a scholarly book that is quite readable. The editors say that the book is intended for all serious readers of Lewis. The word "serious" needs further definition; people who read Lewis for pleasure, or even for religious illumination will probably not be drawn to this book, no matter how avidly they may be Lewis fans. On the other hand, anyone who goes beyond the surface content of Lewis's works will find this a valuable illumination.
Most of the essays deal with Lewis’s fiction, specifically the Ransom novels and the Narnia series. However, there is still ample attention given to his poetry, his religious works, his works on language, and his other fiction.

Only one author (Lobdell) deals with the disputed work, The Black Tower. This is one of the more interesting aspects of Lobdell’s essay. He not only affirms his belief that the story is indeed by Lewis, but makes a very convincing argument that it was originally intended to be the second work in the Ransom trilogy, given up when Lewis “wrote himself into a corner” and failed to find a way out. His arguments lead one to wish that the book had been completed, although that would probably have resulted in Perelandra not having been written, which would have been a great loss.

A review of this type and length can’t do justice to sixteen separate essays, but can only give a flavor of the overall work. In this case, the book is an excellent addition to studies of Lewis as an author, and will be valuable to scholars. Unlike many books of this type, it will also prove interesting to non-scholars who nevertheless take a serious interest in the background of the material they read.

W.D. Stevens

Two More Studies of a Grand Master


The appearance of these two new books is most welcome in light of Asimov’s recent publications. Even the best of the early studies (Patrouch, 1974, Gunn, 1982) are woefully outdated by the five novels that tie together the Foundation and Robot series—Foundation’s Edge (1982), The Robots of Dawn (1983), Robots and Empire (1985), Foundation and Earth (1986), and Prelude to Foundation (1988). Through their very different approaches these studies add to our understanding not only of Asimov but of science fiction in general.

Toupence considers Asimov’s science fiction, not by publication dates, as has usually been the case, but according to the chronological order of the books in terms of future history . . . . Establishing The End of Eternity (1955) as the book in which Asimov creates his future time line, he begins with the robot novels and short stories, proceeds through the novels set in the early centuries of the Galactic Empire, and finally examines the Foundation novels. Prior to publication of the Robot and Foundation novels of the 80s, such an approach was possible but not nearly so effective, and our knowledge of Asimov’s intentions as well as our appreciation of his skill is much enhanced as a result.

Because he is chiefly interested in the impact of Asimov’s scientific training on his fiction, Toupence admits heavy reliance on Thomas Kuhn, Gerard
Genette, and Karl Popper. His thesis that Asimov demonstrates continuing use of the scientific method throughout his writings, even—and perhaps especially—in the invented sciences of robotics and psychohistory, is based on careful consideration of the plots. Equally important is our better understanding of the way in which Asimov has continued to clarify the relationships of people, places, and times in his future universe. A very useful appendix, "Main Characters in the Asimovian Universe," adds to this understanding.

Hassler, who organizes his chapters around "a form or text, such as short story, series, novel, juvenile," is interested in examining Asimov's anti-literary stance and self-styled rationality and their effect on the fiction. He finds their sources in the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, especially "the paradox of Godwinian philosophical anarchy and the invisible hand of control," as much as in Asimov's scientific training, and he relies heavily on the autobiographical works to support his contention. Further, because Hassler seems to care less about the novels as future history than as individual, though often linked, products of a masterful storyteller, he generally treats them in terms of traditional literary achievement, with frequent reference to sources, parallels, "high art" devices, and earlier criticism.

The differing intentions—and results—of the two studies can easily be seen. For both, *The End of Eternity* is well-constructed and interesting, but for Touponce the importance of this early work requires that it be the first to be considered, and all fifteen pages of his second chapter are devoted to its relationship with the other future history novels. Hassler gives it only four pages as part of his fifth chapter, "Robot Novels and Two Non-Series Novels," but makes more frequent references to this earlier discussion of the novel than does Touponce. Paradoxically, Touponce devotes only a paragraph to (later publication of) the six juvenile novels as evidence of Asimov's prefatory updating of scientific knowledge; Hassler finds an "intrinsic unity" in their setting in the universe of the Galactic Empire.

There are advantages and disadvantages in each book. Touponce profits from having completed his book some two years later than Hassler who had to read *Foundation and Earth* page proofs and had no access to *Prelude to Foundation* and *Nemesis*. Occasionally, Hassler's subjective reactions to Asimov and his work and his use of somewhat chatty exposition detract from the general excellence of his criticism. Touponce's long plot summaries are both a refresher and an expansion of our appreciation for those of us who have already read these works, but for those who have yet to read them, such disclosures may well reduce the entertainment value by giving away too much of the story. Both writers are plagued by typos and exasperating documentation omissions: Touponce's Chapter 3 has 14 footnote references, but only three are documented; similarly, Hassler does not document footnotes 9-21 referred to in Chapter 1. Both studies conclude with adequate bibliographies and index.

Buy Touponce for up-to-date exposition of the future history and Hassler for critical connections with mainstream literature.

Arthur O. Lewis
Fiction

Visionary Blend


Piers Anthony and Roberto Fuentes have previously collaborated on five Jason Striker martial arts novels, all unfortunately long out of print. The collaborations were ingenious, exciting, well-executed; and the books clearly benefited from the skills of both authors. In *Dead Morn* Anthony and Fuentes team again. Anthony's writing skills merge with Fuentes' experiences during the Cuban Revolution to tell the story of a character who at first supports Castro's program of change, then later, disenchanted with Castro, joins the CIA in opposing him. *Dead Morn*'s protagonist, Yellow Six 048197, has ignored the caste system of 25th century Fidelia and married a green. Arrested, he is forced to time-travel to 20th century Cuba to effect a small but critical change in history. On his return, he discovers that the change was more critical than anticipated; Fidelia is Gueveria, the caste system is infinitely fluid, and his beloved 233 was never born. Angered, 197 returns to Cuba, intending to counter his own interference, restore the reality frame of Text A, and rejoin 233. Much of the action deals with his struggles to survive in Cuba from 1958 to 1962.

The time-travel framework of *Dead Morn*, however, is little more than a structure within which Anthony and Fuentes explore the Cuban Revolution, alternate actions that might have affected world history, and the futility/insanity of warfare. 197's time "phaser," for example, is never defined, and his movements from Text A to Text B are as much mystical as scientific. The alternate futures are logical enough, but Anthony and Fuentes are less interested in extrapolation than in the results of arrogance, greed, betrayal, murder, and warfare in our world.

As a result, the experiences of 197 (alias Juan Bringas) in Cuba are more engaging than his lives in either alternate. Fuentes' own experiences are meticulously re-created, outlining Castro's systematic destruction of Cuba's economy, society, stability, and heritage. Yet *Dead Morn* is more than a historical novel wedded to an SF frame. As have Anthony's strongest works (for example, *Macroscope, Chthon, Phthor, Battle Circle*), the novel allegorizes humanity and inhumanity, nobility and infamy, power and destruction. He returns to the persistent theme of Ragnarok, the total destruction at the end of time, as Bringas's intrusions create neither Text A nor Text B but the blinding light of Text C—nuclear holocaust. In addition, he explores anew structures and themes long familiar to his fans: enemies revealed as friends, the futility of revolution, the deadly immaturity of humanity as a species.
Pessimistic, dark, at times narratively elliptical, at other times superficial in its representation of broad historical movements, narrated in Anthony's occasionally ponderous style—*Dead Morn* recreates a specific failure in our political history and extrapolates into human motivations, aspirations, passions, triumphs, and defeats. It is more consistent and coherent than *Total Recall*, more unified than *Pornucopia* or *Hard Sell*, and more serious than the Xanth novels. It recalls Anthony's visionary blend of history and fiction in the *Bio of a Space Tyrant* series, of alternate realities in the Apprentice Adept and Omnivore series, of the futility of warfare as a stimulus to change in *Battle Circle*. It is perhaps not a major novel, but it shows Anthony joining with Fuentes to again exercise their considerable powers.

Michael R. Collings

The Rest of the Rest of the Robots


This is mainly a retrospective collection of Asimov's classic robot short stories and essays about robotics which he has augmented with one new story, "Robot Vision," and an introduction subtitled "The Robot Chronicles" in which he comments on his robotic fiction and non-fiction. The 17 short stories, reprinted here, are more than half the robot tales Asimov has written; they range from his 1940 first published robot story about the beloved playmate, "Robbie," to 1989’s “Too Bad!” about a miniaturizing cancer surgeon robot a la *Fantastic Voyage*, most featuring mobile humanoid robots but a few dealing with huge stable computers. His 16 essays elaborate on his three laws of robotics and on the larger theme of artificial intelligence. Asimov explores many nooks and crannies of the three laws. In "Evidence," "Feminine Intuition," and "Bicentennial Man," the robots are heroes; in "Someday," "Liar!" and "Little Lost Robot," they are pseudo-villains. My favorite story is his second robot story, "Reason," in which a robot on a small space station steadfastly insists on misinterpreting his own observations and rejecting the arguments of the two human operators of his subservient state. Another story of peculiar behavior which the human characters must interpret correctly is "Runaround." Others involve Dr. Susan Calvin, who ages from a young scientist to the elder statesman of robo-psychologists, but, like her creator, Isaac Asimov, always solves the case. The 1990 story, "Robot Visions," sends a robot 200 years into the future to test the newly developed time machine. He reports back that the Earth has become an Eden after a vague "sad time" and that further time travel would be unwise. Only one
physicist questions the robot further to discover that there are no babies in the future world. This is a disquieting view of humanity's future if, indeed, it is his view rather than a fiction, for in many instances Asimov has predicted the technology of today.

In a 1976 essay, "The New Teachers," he foresaw the proliferation of personal computers and the networking of their resources. In "Future Fantastic," he points out that a computer or robot may serve to isolate some people but is much more likely to provide the leisure time for a flowering of "intense creative ferment," hobbies, and far-flung friendships. Hundreds of such computer bulletin boards have sprung up in the past few years. The essays on the three laws point out that almost any tool or machine can be used to bad ends by unscrupulous people and also that tools can be dangerous and unsafe for an unwary user. For this reason we build safety factors into our machines, e.g. carts have seat belts, knives have handles, and robots have three laws of robotics that provide safety, usefulness, and endurance.

In several stories and essays, Asimov considers the issue of true artificial intelligence as well as the theme of slavery of robots. He asks what characteristic defines a human being? If the answer is a brain, self-awareness, curiosity, humanoid shape, mortality, then, if robots achieve these, should they be given political rights? These issues may become real questions in the next century and may not be solved as easily as in such films as Short Circuit or Terminator. Asimov's robo-psychologist, Susan Calvin, was "born" in 1982. With the steady progress in AI, there may indeed be a child among us who will be able to follow in her fictional footsteps.

Robot Visions is recommended as a good one-volume source to Asimov.

Mary Lou West

First Fantasy


A first fantasy by a writer of historical fiction (she is Catherine Lyndell) uses familiar themes—a book illustration which opens a gateway to an elven world; in that world, elven magic is fading mysteriously and magic-hating monks oppose efforts to rejuvenate the magic while they encourage the depredations of the Wild Hunt among humans. Three people from the uncombed fringes of Austin, Texas, come through the gateway somewhat unwillingly; their entrance and exit make the story.

Bell uses familiar themes and, wisely, limits her story to the events just preceding and following the use of the gateway. Her story is tight and plausible because both humans and elves meet with preconceived but conflicting ideas.
(Did you ever expect a heroine of a fantasy to tell an elf-lord he is a "sexist racist bigot and not terribly bright"? Judith says just that in these pages).

The book has its faults. The motivations for the monks' hatred is implied, but never explained. Interesting characters, such as Kerwain, the elf-child, are introduced and then forgotten for the remainder of the plot. The major heroine, Lisa, is never really drawn for us or explained to us.

Faults or no, the story reads well and is complete within its 346 pages. Only a few loose ends remain from which a second story might be developed, but it is a story that the reader will not regret if it is never written. The Shadow Gate is not a second The Labyrinth Gate, but it is a good way to spend an evening.

Paula M. Strain

Apprenticeship Concluded


Take a narrative reminiscent of Orson Scott Card's Speaker for the Dead. Combine it with a Heinleinian Young Man as hero. Blend in equal parts of A.E. Van Vogt's action-every-eight-hundred-words structure and of aliens that echo H. Beam Piper's Little Fuzzies . . . and you have an approximation of M. Shayne Bell's Nicoji. This is not to say that the novel is merely derivative; it is a first novel, and as such it owes much to writers and novels that influenced Bell's development. It does, however, lack a distinctive touch that brands it as uniquely Bell—something not to be wondered at this early in a promising career. Bell has published widely as both short story writer and as poet; tackling a novel is an ambitious undertaking at which he acquits himself well.

The eponymous "nicoji" are a lifeform unique to one world, a luxury food for which Earth dwellers willingly pay enormous prices. Bell's hero, Jake, is one of the unfortunate workers lured to the planet with promises of high wages and an easy life. The reality, of course, is quite the opposite. The ubiquitous (and stereotypically evil) company, American Nicoji, goes to every length to avoid losing trained nicoji harvesters. When Jake and his friend Sam, accompanied by their crew of native "help," decide to escape the company's clutches, they begin an odyssey that takes them across the face of an alien world. In the process, they discover how to break the hold of the company and allow the help to recover their planet. More importantly, Jake learns much about himself and his own dreams. As Card has frequently done, Bell allows his backgrounds as a Mormon living in the Idaho/Utah area to become fundamental to his novel although again like Card) he avoids
overt preaching. But his interests surface as the novel reaches its conclusion, building on a symbolic structure that focuses the climax on Christmas Eve and the promise of restoration, rebirth, and life. Bell handles this subtext deftly, never allowing it to interfere with the story he tells; but at the same time, he manages to make the final pages more resonant than they might otherwise have been.

Nicoji is a 'classic' SF tale in the sense that it is almost pure story, stripped of most overt social, political, or moral pretentiousness. Bell sets his characters in an impossible situation, then complicates that situation almost beyond endurance while moving them across a landscape inhabited by dangers and threats at once alien and enigmatic. As in Card's *Speaker for the Dead*, discovering the nature of the alien life leads to a resolution that requires sacrifice and selflessness. Although not as powerfully imagined or as fully realized as *Speaker for the Dead*, *Nicoji* nevertheless demonstrates that Bell has completed his apprenticeship and with this novel produced what must be considered (to revive an old definition) his "master-piece."

*Michael R. Collings*

**More Harlequin than Horror**


The tender prey in this lightweight novel are a Boston-based TV investigative reporter, Amanda Price, and her daughter, Ashley. The novel reads smoothly as Bradford portrays the daily trials and tribulations that a one parent family experiences. In a most realistic manner, Bradford also addresses the inter-relationships of the divorced parents and their child. Yet, there are lulls in action even after Amanda and her daughter must run for their lives.

It is understandable that Amanda wants to advance her career; however, she gives little or no thought to the possibility that any of her actions might have repercussions she would be unable to handle. Thus, when she uncovers the unethical activities of a ring of corrupt businessmen, she immediately exposes them on television. Then she is on someone's "hit list."

At the beginning there is some suspense, but the thrill wears off quickly, and, like the Harlequin romances, each of which is similar to the others, this chase novel offers only a mindless few hours. No literary award will be forthcoming.

*Nancy Boyle*
Straight-Forward Adventure


This is the second volume of a trilogy and as such has certain characteristics that middle volumes tend to be infected with. First, it is assumed that at least some of the background is remembered. In this case it is an Earth ravaged by the results of genetic manipulation that has got out of hand. Settlements are slowly being encroached by dangerous plant life and attacked by mutated animals. The huge airships, the skylords, were originally designed for disaster relief but have become the dominant culture, each being a floating city, terrorizing and demanding tribute from land based towns.

In volume one, *The Sky Lords*, Jan Dorvin manages to obtain a brand new airship. She is altruistic and wishes to help the land-based. She finds she is opposed, not only by the controllers of the other airships she has captured but also by the people she is trying to help. The other strand to the plot involves Ryn. He is a throwback of the Eloi, scientists who changed themselves so that they live in their own private utopias. He is brought without contact with normal humans other than the holograms the computers create for him. Frustrated, he seeks to escape and finds his chance when a group of airships arrives looking for the base where the Eloi live. They want some technology that will enable them to attack and defeat Jan’s fleet which they see as a threat. Naturally, nothing goes according to plan for any of them.

The first volume presented the complexities of the societies—land-based and within the airships—through Jan’s eyes and in an exciting and action packed way. This volume is in parts far more sedate, consolidating the situation while setting in motion some of the features which will undoubtably be explored and enhanced in the final volume. This is not a bad book by any means but is much more of a straight-forward adventure, building on what has gone before with less complexity and fewer new ideas.

Pauline Morgan.

Well-Done Space Opera


Although never very prolific, Edward Bryant was one of the most highly-regarded young science fiction writers of the 1970’s, his literate and decidedly off-beat short stories earning him two Nebula Awards. In the early 1980’s, however, Bryant pretty much left the field to write horror fiction and film and television scripts. His best science fiction can be found in the mosaic novel *Cinnabar* (1976) and the collection *Particle Theory* (1980).
The current volume, *Neon Twilight*, contains three of the author's stories, which he describes as "the collected space opera of Ed Bryant." All are well-done, but none of them is typical of Bryant at his best. "Waiting in Crouched Halls," first published in *Worlds of Tomorrow* in 1970, is an exciting, if somewhat over-written tale of space pilots fighting off an enormous death machine which is out to destroy their planet. The story is very similar to one of Fred Saberhagen's Berserker tales. "Pilots of the Twilight," on the other hand, is an actual Berserker story, written for Saberhagen's shared-world anthology, *Berserker Base* (1985). The novella is essentially an unusually well-written piece of adventure fiction, reminiscent of both Bryant's earlier "Waiting in Crouched Halls" and the attack on the Death Star scenes in *Star Wars*. "Neon," the short story that ends the collection, is set in the same universe as "Pilots" but several decades later and its title character is the granddaughter of one of the space warriors of that earlier story. Someone is trying to kill Neon for reasons unknown. She meets Bob, the artificial intelligence who used to run her grandfather's spaceship and is told to flee the planet. The story is little more than a fragment, breaking off abruptly with no resolution and, in fact, reads like the first chapter of a novel in progress.

This is an enjoyable collection of light-weight adventure stories by a writer who is capable of much better. One can only hope that Bryant will continue with "Neon" and that, freed from the constraints of the shared-world anthology that limited "Pilots of the Twilight," he will produce a science-fiction novel comparable in excellence to his earlier short fiction.

*Michael M. Levy*

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**Especially for Hackers**


William Irving Zumwalt, "Wiz" to his friends, and "Sparrow" to most, is a hacker with a penchant for magic. Wiz hadn't known, when he accidentally transported to an alternate universe where computers can create magic, that, somewhat akin to the frog-turned-prince or the handmaiden-turned-princess, he would change from a computer nerd to an adventuresome hero—and that, in the short space of two years, he would win the love of the beautiful sorceress, Moira, and become one of the most important wizards in the land. [The earlier adventure was depicted in the 1989 *Wizard's Bane*.]

In most fairy tales, a godmother or other magical being is the vehicle through which transformation occurs. In *Wizardry Compiled*, a combined sword and sorcery and science fiction adventure, it's a computer that originally carried Wiz into the place where his imaginary characters appear real. In addition, the transformation is more psychological than physical.
As the novel opens, Wiz is in the Capitol of the North, attending a boring executive board meeting of the reigning wizards. This is the new reality. Wiz may be a token, a human leader valued only for his technological expertise. However, skillful as he is, or perhaps because he is moving beyond the bounds of technology, he's caught in one of his own spells. He is then lost in Wild Wood, the domain of the Dark League, enemies of the civilized Council of the North. Now, with the aid of only a faction of his adopted people, Wiz fights the forces of Darkness.

Fast-moving and believable, the plot captures us, the readers, much as Wiz is himself caught in his own spell. If we draw upon our own ability to suspend disbelief for the moment, we can observe Wiz create his own reality from his basic, unconscious human desires. As we follow his quest, we can accept this fantastic reality filled with witches, dragons, and knights. Along the way, there's plenty of action, plain English is spoken, and the humorous programmer's axioms, laws, and sayings that head each chapter add delight to the reading experience. For example, the chapter titled "Playing in the Bullpen" offers three worth reading:

*Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.*
Clarke's law

*Any sufficiently advanced magic is indistinguishable from technology.*
Murphy's reformulation of Clarke's law

*Any sufficiently advanced magic is indistinguishable from a rigged demonstration.*
programmers' restatement of Murphy's reformulation of Clarke's law

This is an easy story to follow, filled with technology, chivalry, romance, and humor. It will appeal to a wide audience from advanced middle school readers to sophisticated adults, who, as I am, are fascinated by both computer technology and witchcraft.

*Beth Ann Courtney*

**Fast Action, Shallow Characters**


In a world where men battle in high-tech suits of armor and Valkyrie-like Searchers roam the battlefields for fallen heroes, one man struggles to restore peace to a war-torn land. The man is Nils Hansen, Commissioner of Security Forces. The setting is Northworld, where nine separate planes of existence are linked together by the all-encompassing chaos-like matrix.

Disappointingly, although Drake's knowledge of military matters remains strong in this most recent addition to his military SF, his characterizations still tend to be shallow. None of the humans possess potential for
growth. Even Sparrow, a master smith, imprisoned by a vain and brutal king and forced to create machines of war evokes little emotion or sympathy.

Second in the “Northworld” series, Vengeance entertains by its ruthless energy and near endless action. As Hansen struggles to establish peace in the war ravaged Open Lands, Sparrow plots his revenge. Borrowing from Norse myth to form the core episodes, Drake deals with honor and glory as well as with pain and suffering as he cleverly blends elements of fantasy into the quickly paced action, action in which the horrors of the battlefield sequences possess a gritty realism.

Readers will find the cardboard characters the only blemish on this otherwise satisfying military science fiction novel, one with boundless possibilities for Book Three.

Joseph Jeremias

Cross-World Trilogy Begins


Book One of the “Night-Threads Trilogy” is a welcome addition to the subgenre that can be termed “cross-world.” Generally, in these fantasies, normal, rational people from our own scientifically-oriented era find themselves in worlds where magic works. Will that person accept the new world and survive or possibly become a wielder of magic is the question that generates immediate tension.

The beginning situation is a familiar one. In the Empire of Rhadaz, “kind” Uncle Jadek, has been perfectly willing, for the last three years, to rule the Duchy of Zelharri until the heir, the crippled Duke Aletto would be twenty-five. Aletto’s birthday passes without any change in his status. But Jadek, who has no heir of his own-legal or otherwise-now plans to force Aletto’s sister, Princess Lialla, to marry a weakling of Jadek’s choice. Then, should Lialla have a child, Jadek could continue his rule through the child—if necessary murdering anyone closer to the throne. Our sympathy is immediately aroused, not so much for Lialla, who is always angry that she is not the best thread wielder in Rhadaz, but for Aletto, crippled by marsh fever, constantly demeaned by Jadek, and now a heavy drinker.

Now Emerson leaves the familiar. Lialla attempts to bring some of her dead father’s old warrior companions to Rhadaz to help. She fails. The truth is she’s but a mediocre wielder of Night Threads. In a delightfully humorous touch, what arrives is an entire car from our world. In it are three people: two sisters, Jennifer and Robyn, and Robyn’s seventeen year old son Christopher. Jennifer is a self-reliant lawyer with a soft spot for her sister, who has dedi-
cated herself to economic security. Robyn is a hippy who drinks a little too much, an embodiment of the tie/dye era. And the occasionally smart-mouthed Chris, the first to accept the rules of this second world, is more parent to Robyn than son.

Now there are two cultural groups to seek help in combating Jadek and in countering the evil that appears to threaten, an evil originating from our world. Deeming the Night Threads too dangerous to use, the five decide to travel to Sikkre physically. On the way, there are many personality clashes, the major ones between Lialla and Jen for Jen has a natural aptitude for Night Thread magic, picking it up quickly and easily. Indeed, a highlight of the novel is the way Jen can see the threads in daylight, sense the threads by sound, the sounds that are the key to wielding thread. The pupil is better than the teacher. To Lialla's disgust, even Robyn has a special magic.

On the way, they sort themselves out, add companions, and recognize the necessity of working together, and though, occasionally, the dialog is slow, Emerson has left room for further character development, for romances, and for resolving some of the subplots. This is the start of a great adventure.

Richard Zagorski

A Rather Delicate Mistress


In his first novel, the most recent of the Damon Knight-edited Ace Science Fiction Specials, Gregory Feeley has taken a time-honored, one might be tempted to say over-used scenario, that of the spunky young space colony in revolt against a powerful, but increasingly decadent Mother Earth, and shown that even the most tired sf cliche can be given new life. The locus classicus for all such stories, of course, is Heinlein's The Moon is a Harsh Mistress, but The Oxygen Barons contains more than enough originality to stand on its own. Feeley's book received a 1990 Philip K. Dick Award nomination, as did Allen Steele's Clarke County, Space, another novel about a space colony in revolt against Earth that stood much closer in spirit to the Heinlein original. The two make for interesting comparisons.

Feeley's characters, although not complex, hold our attention more than adequately. Galvanix, the male protagonist, is an idealistic, somewhat impractical young Japanese scientist. His name, which he chose himself, clearly reflects his rather simplistic, space-opera idea of the kind of heroism that will be needed to free the Lunar Republic from Earth's clutches. On the other hand, Taggart, the secret agent who is something very close to the superhero Galvanix would like to be, feels nothing but disdain for her nominal ally's
fantasies. Their love-hate relationship, which evolves slowly throughout the book's violent, action-filled length is, again, something we've seen before, but I still find it believable.

What makes *The Oxygen Barons* work, however, is the very strange world Feeley has created. The moon, we discover, has been successfully terra-formed, but the balance of nature is fragile and easily disrupted. War with Earth could literally destroy the blooming lunar ecology. As Feeley's characters lope through dense vegetation and climb impossibly slender towers under the low lunar gravity, the book takes on a surreal quality that I've come across before only in the work of S.P. Somtow, or, perhaps, Jack Vance. Then there's Galvanix's bizarre invention, the steam telegraph, which might also be at home in a Jack Vance novel.

*The Oxygen Barons* is an unlikely combination of adventure and art and a number of reviewers have reacted to it in a rather negative fashion, but it is a good book. I look forward to Mr. Feeley's next work of fiction.

Michael M. Levy

**Short Story Delight**


In 1986 Bantam Books did something nearly unheard of in science fiction circles; they brought out a short-story collection by a brand-new writer, a writer who had not yet published a novel, one whose name was virtually unknown to anyone but regular readers of *Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*. *Artificial Things* by Karen Joy Fowler received rave reviews, however, sold well, and started off the career of one of the genre's best short-story writers with a bang.

In her second collection, Fowler shows that she has continued to grow as a writer. All of the stories in *Peripheral Vision* are excellent, and a couple of them are even better than that. "Liserl," published here for the first time and nominated for a Nebula Award, takes as its starting point the recent discovery that a very young Albert Einstein had an illegitimate daughter. Liserl's birth, evidently, is mentioned in one of Einstein's letters, but there is no other evidence of her existence. Fowler brilliantly combines historical fact with her own meditation on Liserl's possible fate, describing her as in some strange way a victim of the time-dilation effect. Although much more somber in mood, "Liserl" makes for an interesting comparison with Connie Willis' recent, award-winning story "At the Rialto," which played games with Heisenberg's uncertainty principle.
The other outstanding piece in *Peripheral Vision* is “The Faithful Companion at Forty,” which first appeared in *Asimov’s* in 1987. This story asks the question “just what was the nature of Tonto’s relationship with the Lone Ranger?” and answers it in a most rewarding and unbelievable fashion. The talking buffalo on the front lawn at the end are a stitch. A third very good story, “Lily Red,” was first published in *Asimov’s* in 1988. In this new variation on the Prometheus myth, Lily, stuck in a bad marriage, flees her home and winds up in the small town of Two Trees where she’s taken in by the proprietor of the local bed and breakfast. Everyone seems extremely nice to Lily, but she can’t figure out why they all insist that she visit the local caves and the nearby rock with its oddly painted madonna. The remaining two stories in *Peripheral Vision*, “Contention” and “The View from Venus,” are also excellent. Both, however, appeared in *Artificial Things*. My feeling is that they should therefore have been excluded from this collection.

Despite the repetition of two stories, this is a fine selection of Fowler’s work. “Liserl,” “The Faithful Companion at Forty,” and “Lily Red” alone are worth the $4.95 asking price. This book is highly recommended.

*Michael M. Levy*

**On the God-Daemon’s Doorstep**


In the city at the heart of the world, magic and science co-exist uneasily. Religion combines with militarism and technology flowers at the center of medieval society. The Rat aristocracy, already ruling over humankind with an iron hand, now wishes to bring down those who rule over them: the thirty-six god-demons who dwell in the Fain, incarnate in living stone.

The White Crow, a scholar-soldier of the Invisible College, senses necromancy at work somewhere in the City and writes on the moon in her own blood to summon help. To her aid comes Prince Lucas, newly arrived in the City to study at the University of Crime, Zar-bettu-zekigal, an engaging (if somewhat promiscuous) dapple-tailed lesbian serving as King’s Memory to the Rat Priest Plessiez, and her old friend Casaubon, Lord-Architect of the Invisible College. Meanwhile, deep within the Fane itself, the Spagyrus, Deacon of Noon and Midnight, engages in an alchemic search for the ultimate philosopher’s stone, an object with the ability to imbue whatever it touches with complete perfection.
Gentle has created a richly textured world drawn in strokes both sensual and cruel. For example, in their rooms near Clock-mill in the City's Nineteenth District, Zari and Lucas pass the time respectively attempting to seduce the landlady and fantasizing about the White Crow. Meanwhile, the Rats-King (a single consciousness embodying several rats lounging on a circular throne-bed) orders the simultaneous construction of siege-engines to decrease the human populace and the placement of talismans to destroy the demon-Lords.

But it is the thirty-six Deacons and their gargoyle acolytes who ultimately hold power not only over life and death but also time and space: in the Fane, the severed and impaled head of Tree Priest Theodore is kept alive for questioning by the acolytes, while the Lady of the Eleventh Hour projects Casaubon and the White Crow thirty days into the future in order to save the city from the Spagyrus' magic.

A major new work, *Rats and Gargoyles* demonstrates Gentle's ability in the fantasy genre as equal to that of earlier science fiction novels, which include *Ancient Light* and *Golden Witchbreed*. An added touch is a short bibliography at the end of the novel, in which the author shares with her audience the sources of her research.

Highly recommended.

*Joseph M. Dudley*

**Antique Language Provides Magic Milieu**


Fine writing, in the grammarian's sense, provides much of the magic in this fantasy. Gilman uses words as bits of mirror to reflect meanings into her scenes which the words themselves do not have: "crow-blotched trees" (p.3); "He had cut himself a staff and was thwittling it, turning and rubbing" (p.119); "huffish and glary as a tumbled owl" (p.143-4); "The fire...burned, bright as autumn, in the stone-clear dusk" (p.235); "The cloak was heavy as a cloud...So swiftly then, to be overlooked, he happed himself into Mally's cloak, and went into the song that she had woven" (p.291).

Old dialect words are frequent—"sark", "leit", "starken", "flet" and others. With the exception of protagonists Ariane and Sylvie, all the characters speak a rough and elliptic dialect. "I see now what he's tholed for me, lang years. Telled him nowt, nor asked his will. And he is good, I chosen" (p.192). "Sith, lass, don't tha forfeit thysel, nor t'stone: not thine to lose. T'awd one would tak lass wick, nor stay her when she hawden her. Tha munnot give witch soul and all" (p.246).
The story, related so, is indirect and dream-hazy, with events melding and diverging without explanation, except as the protagonists grasp intuitively at what happens and why.

The story opens with Ariane coming to the rural home of Sylvie with whom, as college students, she had created imaginary worlds and their stories—the worlds of Cloud, Law, Unlethe. In reminiscence, they re-enact a Cloudish ritual—wassailing the moon at the winter solstice. During the ritual, Sylvie disappears, and Ariane grasps she vanished into Cloud. Her efforts to follow bring a creature from Cloud into this world for her to care for before the two cross into Cloud to meet some of its odd characters—a wanderer for whom it is always winter, the witch Malykorne.

Sylvie has parallel adventures in a different part of Cloud. Just as Ariane and Sylvie complement each other, the witch Malykorne and the witch Annis are two sides of a coin—light and life; darkness and death. It is the heroines' destiny to bind Annis' power sufficiently to assure the turning of the year and the rebirth of the sun. Exactly how they achieve this is unclear even to themselves, and continues so after they, and the wanderer, have returned to the world of today. Did their efforts achieve it? How much did the old custom of catching and killing a wren during the solstice affect the binding? What meanings and effect did the old ballads remembered and sung in snatches have? The reader, as the heroines, must learn by intuition.

The indirection and hints of Gilman's generally colorful and readable style occasionally exasperate because unfamiliar words are so often used in unanticipated ways. Nor is action violent or hurried; her pace is deliberate, though language describing it scintillates decoratively. Those who enjoy Patricia McKillip will certainly enjoy Gilman. Some will wish the story had been told with less color in its style and a bit more action and character clarification in its plot. Still—a first novel to recommend and an author to watch.

No artist is credited with the cover illustration, but it exhibits a strong influence from Arthur Rackham.

Paula M. Strain

Dream Wars in a First Novel


Elyse Guttenberg's first novel in a proposed trilogy opens in a medieval-like town. The heroine, Calyx, is dreaming, but it's not her own dream; it is her mother's memory-dream. A strange man, whom the reader soon will believe to have been the god Jokjoa, is in the bedchamber of the Lady of all Briana. He won't say his name aloud "lest [his] name be used against [her] and the child." The reader soon suspects the visitor was the god Jokjoa, and
the child seeded that night, Calyx. Now, fifteen, Calyx is much different from her sister and brother both in appearance and in her ability to read and experience dreams. She is a powerful jarak dreamer in a world in which people use their manifested dreams as the basis of decisions, and dream readers are important.

Calyx’s vivid dreams raise this heroic fantasy above the many that deal with fights between the gods which affect the lives of men. Other parallels to Greek mythology exist as well. Sunder, Eclipse, and Seed are three sister goddesses comparable to the three Fates; yet, different, for they argue. When Sunder (death) wins, lands become totally barren. There is also present the idea of a hero/savior of whom the Kareil clan sing: of Elan Sumedaro who “walked in dreaming/and in waking/Fought Edishu, dark Edishu/ he who was the god’s own nightmare.”

For many childish reasons, Calyx keeps her abilities secret. Yet, finally unmasked during a politically tense banquet, she is banished to the far north to live with the Sumedar priest. Here she thinks she will be able to develop her dream powers and to discover why the evil Edisyu harasses her in jarak dreams, but only one young Sumedar priest shares his learning with her. Thus she is still untrained when, to save her mother’s life, she must battle the evil Queen Lethia and the god Edishu, who demands from Calyx that she obtain Jokjoa’s seven tokens and give them to him so that he can escape his imprisonment in Kuoshana.

Sunder, Eclipse, & Seed is rich with poetry, magic, and myths. The heroine is at first a self-centered, unappealing child in youth’s awkward stage of self perception. As she matures, she becomes an interesting young woman, truly a princess, whose primary duty is to her world and whose dreams are effective ones. I eagerly await the next book of the trilogy.

Gloria Barker

Bizarre Love Triangle Disappoints


Ischia is a city whose boundaries sit precariously upon the edge of a volcano. The only force which keeps the lava from inundating the city is a talisman encased in a golden spire. The red stone of Ischia, molded by nine wizards of the Ninth, is a temptation thieves cannot resist. Thus, the unthinkable does occur. The stone vanishes. In face of impending danger, the stone must be quickly found or the city lost.

Ischia now has little hope for a future. It is Darvish, the king’s third son, who must undertake the quest for the missing stone. Unfortunately, he is known to be continually inebriated and sexually promiscuous with both males and females. Nor are his companions much better. Aaron is a petty
thief who had run away from his responsibility as a Clan Heir. Chandra is a young, precocious princess, Darvish’s destined bride, who aims to prove her abilities on this adventure as a wizard of the Ninth.

The three set off from Ischia, unaware that there has been a political schism and that certain members of the royal family have arranged for their quest to fail. And at first it appears they will fail. Chandra and Darvish expend their energies criticizing each other while Aaron is worn out rebuffing Darvish’s sexual advances. Finally, the three realize they must work together to survive and to achieve their quest.

This is such an ordinary plot that Tanya Huff must have decided to spice it up. Thus, she incorporates into the novel corrupt politics, alcoholism, women’s lib, heterosexual and homosexual love, and Freudian guilt but offers little or no resolution to any of the issues raised. For example, Chandra and Darvish do eventually wed; yet, Darvish still desires his best friend, Aaron. And Aaron, taught as a child by the priests of his country that homosexuality is a sin, suffers from his desire to accede to Darvish’s sexual advances. Whether Aaron is confusing a friend’s love for a lover’s love is never made quite clear. Meanwhile, so concerned with the personal problems of the three characters, Huff diminishes the main conflict, the recovery of the stone. The climax, as the stereotypical wizard battles our heroes, is so hastily presented it almost passes by without notice.

The Fire’s Stone was a great disappointment. In contrast to the highly praised duology, the Novels of Crystal (Child of the Grove and The Last Wizard), and the recent wondrous archetypal novel, Gate of Darkness. Circle of Light, The Fire’s Stone is only lighthearted entertainment, not to be taken as a serious examination of human relations nor as an exemplar of high fantasy.

Jennifer Wells

No Mindless Barbarian


In the Dragonlance Saga, the individual books are often by different authors; therefore a range in quality would not be surprising. The delight is that Flint the King, the second book of the Preludes II series, published shortly after the first volume, Riverwind the Plainsman, should so far surpass its predecessor which had poor characterization and an undeveloped plot. In contrast, Flint the King, gives its readers solid, moving, well-developed characters in a self-contained work which needs no support from the earlier volumes.
Writing as if it were for the first book of the saga, rather than a prequel, Kirchoff and Niles have not assumed readers are familiar with the setting or the circumstances in which the strong dwarven [sic] character, Flint, is involved. Without overburdening the reader, Kirchoff and Niles embed all pertinent background information.

The story begins just before the War of the Lance commenced. Flint Fireforge, returning to his homeland, discovers that his older brother has died mysteriously at his forge. Bewildering to him is that traders with some kind of evil intent have been active in Hillhome. Even more hurtful is that, as the town's fortunes increase, people are turning away from tradition.

Flint determines to solve the mystery of his brother's death and the source of the strange income. He sneaks into the ancient dwarven stronghold, Thorbardin. Strangers capture him and a female army captain of his people's enemy and fling them both into the Pit of Death. There, Flint discovers some answers to his questions. Ultimately, the two are rescued by the pitiful gully dwarves who live under the city. Subsequently those same gully dwarves tie Flint up until he promises to become their king. To save his homeland from the evil traders, Flint agrees. The adventures of this odd hero, who struggles to better the world as every hero should, continue until a satisfying conclusion.

Flint is no mindless barbarian. He is an empathetic character in a delightful tale that will please Dragonlance devotees as well as others.

Karen Valle

[See: Paul Thompson & Tonya Carter's Riverwind the Plainsman—this issue—which is the first volume of this Dragonlance saga. BH/ed.]

**Questioning Our Existence**


*The Quiet Pools* by Michael P. Kube-McDowell is an intense and startlingly real journey into the heart and mind of the human species when, in the not so distant future, we find a possible new home beyond our own solar system.

As the inevitable result of years of endless abuse and mistreatment wrought by human hands, the once beautiful earth is seemingly regurgitating all of its man-made poisons and growing increasingly inhospitable. The polluted and sickly planet has now become more or less dispensable, but not all agree with the abandoning of their home. So, as the Diaspora Project sends thousands of specially selected men and women into space on city-
sized starships, the Homeworld movement and their elusive leader Jeremiah do all in their power to stop this mass exodus.

This is an already interesting plot as is, but the novel’s true purpose only begins to manifest itself when questions on the Diaspora Project’s methods of candidate selection through a genetic process are raised. Why were the chosen to go? What are the specific gene traits that are or are not desired And ultimately: Are the lives of human beings genetically predetermined—no true act of free will?

Kube-McDowell deftly handles the question of man’s very existence, giving the reader an insight into how each of the novel’s several characters grapple with this incredibly humbling, frightening, and real question. The Quiet Pools is a thoughtfully written thinking man’s novel, not to be read lightly. It may very well be on its way to becoming a classic work of science fiction.

Jeff J. Maiore

Real Ghost Stories?


“The Canadian ghost story” may seem an oxymoronic phrase. Winnipeg, which writer Ethel Wilson describes as “new city of grain, utility, and railroads,” is no St. Petersburg; one does not expect to see on its streets the specters which haunt the tales of a Gogol or a Dostoevsky. Early writer Catharine Parr Traill observed that Canada is “too matter-of-fact a country for such supernaturals to visit.” Canadian storytellers have sounded much like Henry James when he complained that the literary artist is deprived of scenes of gloomy wrong and picturesque poverty in the New World. Present anthologist Alberto Manguel strikes the same note, before bravely embarking on his task.

Nevertheless, French Quebec and the desolate regions inhabited by Canada’s “native peoples” would seem to possess enough ancient sorrows and lamented injustices to satisfy even a Nathaniel Hawthorne or at least conjure a few ghosts. Far from Canada’s sunlit cities are the lonely prairies; where the characteristic corpse, at least in the melodramatic literature of the land, is found frozen in a blizzard. With only a little searching, ghosts can find a suitable region to haunt in the vast stretches of the earth’s second most territorially extended nation.

At first glance, some of the stories included in this anthology would seem to have only the most tenuous association with Canada. The setting is sometimes England, where ghosts have always been numerous, or India, another
favorite abode of spirits. A substantial number of the collection's contributors have found their way to Canada from Africa, Asia, Malta, England, or the United States. A further complaint might be that not all their tales are true ghost stories, certainly not in the classical sense that readers of M.R. James or Sheridan Le Fanu would appreciate. Yet, for the most part, these authors have lively tales for us, and one or two narrate with the poetic resonance and awesome tremor of the vintage ghost story.

Despite editor Manguel's warning of the spectral limitations of this "new antiseptic land," he has managed to locate a few true spooks, along with some curiosities. Tim Wynne-Jones's story "The Woman with the Lounge-Act Hair" begins with a great first line: "I stayed at the motel from Psycho last night." Robinton Mistry's tale of Zoroastrians and Goans in India, "The Ghost of Firozsha Baag," reveals a superb ear for the nuanced cadences of genuine folk speech and a general literary art of a high order. Two sketches, by famous Canadian writers Stephen Leacock and Robertson Davies, are satirical, though only mildly entertaining. That omnipresent Canlit celebrity Margaret Atwood is represented in "Death by Landscape," a skilled sketch with "Hanging Rock" atmospherics. Otherwise, the most successful genuine ghost stories in the collection are by John Charles Dent, whose ghost has all the essential attributes, by Timothy Findley, who neatly blends the supernatural with the psychopathic, and by Mazo de la Roche, who leaves Jalna long enough to concoct a Dorian Gray portrait in miniature.

While this Canadian volume cannot compete with the best of the British ghostbooks, it provides a few thrills and some aesthetic satisfactions. It does need to be in all collections of the genre. Just the idea of Canadian ghost stories appeals to the instincts of the true collector of curiosities!

Allene Phy-Olsen

The Most Frightening Monsters


Robert McCammon has emerged as a leading voice in contemporary horror. He has tackled monsters of every sort: cannibals, in Usher's Passing; vampires, in They Thirst; revenant Nazis, in The Night Boat; Amazons, in Bethany's Sin; voracious BEM's, in Stinger; werewolves, in the superb The Wolf's Hour; a King-esque, archetypally evil 'Dark Man' in Swan Song. Now he tackles the most enduring and frightening monster of all—humans. More specifically, humans whose values and perceptions were formed by the social revolutions of the Sixties, frustrated by the complacency of the Seventies, distorted further by the self-oriented Eighties, and brought to a breaking point by the "baby-boom" of the
early Nineties. McCammon’s opening scene not only introduces Mary Terra, his chief antagonist and hold-over from the Storm Front Brigade, one of the most radical of sixties terrorist groups—but it also suggests the hallucinatory world she inhabits, where reality and illusion are impossible to separate, not only for Mary but often for the readers who find themselves thrust into that world.

Mary’s carefully controlled madness finally breaks through, however, and she steals Laura Clayborne’s newborn child. Clayborne represents everything that Mary Terror despises: complacency, materialism, mindless knuckling under to the establishment, the “pigs” and the structuring they represent. But Mary is wrong. When Laura’s husband and family urge her to let others search for her child, she rejects them and sets out to track the woman who stole her child. This quest allows McCammon to bind together bifurcated strands of American consciousness, recreating the social, political, and personal battles of the Sixties in the context of a contemporary world.

As he does so well, McCammon balances psychology, sociology, and social comment with rapid-fire action. Laura Clayborne’s quest continually threatens death for her, for her child, for everyone who comes in contact with either Mary Terror or Clayborne. Beginning in a safe, secure, upper-class suburb of Atlanta, Clayborne’s search takes her through the heartland old America, finally concluding in an apocalyptic one-on-one struggle in an abandoned house in California—the birthplace of the Storm Front Brigade’s dream. As we follow Mary Terror, Laura Clayborne, and the circle of characters who aid each of them, McCammon forces us to redefine and finally abandon lost ideals and decaying dreams. His canvas includes no supernatural creatures; instead, the monsters he chronicles are ourselves, our distortions, our failures to accept reality. And his heroes are, similarly, plain people, willing to sacrifice everything for a new dream and a new vision of personal freedom, love, and integrity.

Michael R. Collings

Enticed to Continue


Set far from the land of the nomadic barbarians of the Empires Trilogy, the halflings of the Icewind Dale Trilogy, or the wyverns of the Finder’s Stone Trilogy is the continent of Maztica, an alternate world with parallels to Earth’s geography and to accounts of the Aztec conquest by Cortez.
In *Ironhelm*, book one of the trilogy, legionnaires from the Sword Coast seek gold and glory. They’ve been funded in the belief they would reach the riches of the east by sailing west. Well-equipped with horses and wizards, they unexpectedly find the continent of Maztica. The resultant story of greed and conquest in a clash of cultures is a familiar one; the warlike Mazticans are unable to stand before the organized cavalry and steel of the invaders. But the action leaves one unsatisfied, the characters, though interesting, appear one-dimensional, and there isn’t enough of the unfamiliar types of magic used by followers of a variety of gods. One wishes that exposure to these sorceries, and to the characters, was more fully developed (rather than stated) in this book. It is indeed unfortunate that such interesting historical parallels and major characters are presented so laboriously. Boredom is imminent.

Luckily, towards the end of *Ironhelm*, one is inspired to read on into the second book by a developing dark elf drow’s plot, a tentative love interest between a legionnaire and a Maztican (chosen by a god for some unknown destiny), and the start of a quest among unlikely companions. Book two, *Viperhand*, does develop these three subjects satisfactorily. One certainly becomes involved with the action as the gods awaken, and conflict expands from human to epic proportions. Magic itself—good versus evil—is in conflict as humans are changed to better further the purposes of the gods. Monsters abound; cities are destroyed; the overseas invaders are reduced to the same victim level as the population they invaded.

*Feathered Dragon*, the concluding volume of The Maztica Trilogy, brings the drow plot, love between legionnaire and Maztican, and all quests to fruition. The very power and right of the gods is questioned while horrific battles are being fought and the indomitable human spirit is glorified through the maturations of secondary characters. Indeed, it is somewhat discomforting that the primary characters never share this depth; without character growth, their questioning and subsequent denial of the gods does not ring true.

Despite character deficiencies and the ponderous quality of the first book, the Maztican Trilogy, as a whole, is enjoyable reading. However, since these books do not stand well alone, be prepared to wade through *Ironhelm* before finding pleasure in the magical realm of Maztica. With the action of *Viperhand* and the culmination of events in *Feathered Dragon*, the trilogy is redeemed.

*Gail Becker*
Step Right Up: Pick Your World Leaders


Achilles' choice was simple: did he want a long life, or glory? He chose glory. And most of the contenders for the Eleventh Olympiad in the twenty-first century choose glory too. There's an advanced medical technique, the Boost, that increases athletic performance. The cost is life. Unless the contestant wins gold in the Olympics and afterward is surgically altered to join the Link, which regulates body functions, he or she will deteriorate and die.

Jillian Shomer is just such a contestant. She Boosts at the last minute, after learning she probably couldn't win otherwise. But during training, she uncovers secret information. The Link is apparently dominated by one person, the Old Bastard, and it is he who single-handedly controls the world. And it is he who instigated the new Olympics, which choose the mental and physical cream of the crop to rule. It works to a point—the world is better than it was by far, but there is still crime and hunger. Jillian wants to Link so she can find out more, but when she loses at the Olympics it looks as though she doesn't have a chance. Then the Old Bastard takes an interest in her.

*Achilles' Choice* is based on an intriguing premise that mental and physical contests could be used to pick world leaders. Niven and Barnes' athletes display weaknesses and have character flaws—even supermen have faults. They also display a sense of humor: Jillian's three areas of specialty are fell-running, judo, and fractal mathematics. *Achilles' Choice* is an interesting treatment of the superman idea, with enough engaging characters and mystery to hold the reader.

Karen Hellekson

Conflict in the Stars


Co-author of several works with her husband, W. Michael Gear, such as the prehistory novels, *People of the Wolf* and *People of the Fire,* Kathleen O'Neal now turns to the stars for the Powers of Light trilogy. The setting is the far future as alien Magistrates and human Gamants are locked in a life and death struggle.
As the first book, *An Abyss of Light*, opens, readers are introduced to the Magistrates who insist that all worlds join their Union of Solar Systems. They offer peace and prosperity at the price of a world’s individuality. The Gamants, however, feel their heritage and religious freedom are more important than anything the Magistrates have to offer. Conflict of holocaust proportions ensues when Magisterial rule is imposed. Meanwhile, Jeremiel Baruch, commander of the Gamant underground fleet, attempts to quell the persecution of the Gamants. As the rebellion goes on, the forces of Good and Evil stir, and an ancient Gamant prophesy of Armageddon unfolds.

The second book, *Treasure of Light*, expands upon theGamant attempt to repel the Magistrates. Magistrate attacks engulf the planet Horeb in a fire storm. Magistrate death camps on Tikkun begin to systematically wipe out Gamant civilization. As the ancient prophesy seems to be being fulfilled, the lines between good and evil waver, and the question of whether both Gamants and Magistrates are merely pawns of a greater power arises.

The final conflict between the races takes shape twelve years later in the trilogy’s concluding book, *Redemption of Light*. The Magistrates are now determined to destroy all of Gamant civilization. Jeremiel Baruch launches his forces in a final desperate campaign against Palaia Station, the center of Magisterial power. What neither Gamants nor Magistrates know is that they are indeed part of a conflict that had begun before either race existed, one that has been raging since the beginning of time.

The ambiguity of good and evil, a race’s fight for freedom to live and worship as it chooses, and the mythic awareness of being pawns in conflicts among the gods are familiar themes that do enrich the trilogy. Indeed religion is a constant undercurrent adding a distinct flavor to the entire trilogy, nor is it forced upon the reader. One technique O’Neal uses is to rather subtly insert excerpts from ancient religious tomes throughout the action.

She also populates her trilogy with a multitude of highly believable characters that, along with the tightly knit plot, continually evolve from novel to novel. The transition between novels is dealt with very well as each successive volume broadens the plot and provides any necessary enlightenment from the former books. Thus, a reader is eased into each successive novel and given time to digest information while the pace slowly rises to its eventual climax. Although each novel is strong enough to stand alone, to feel the full effect of the conflict between Gamants and Magistrates the trilogy should be read in its entirety.

In the final novel, however, as we near the ultimate climax the action becomes somewhat predictable. Nonetheless, the characters’ reactions to the complex twists is a marvel.

The Powers of Light trilogy is recommended.

*Joseph Jeremias*
Gallant Galen


*Shifter* begins this new series, “The Chronicles of Galen Sword.” Naturally, Galen is the hero, the center of attention. He is indeed on an heroic quest. His character, however, doesn’t fit a normal pattern. Too often, he is rude, edgy, and downright nasty; yet, rotten disposition and all, quite soon, I found myself rooting him on as he is driven to search for the world of his memory, to look “in the shadows... Halfway between.” Nor, in search of his destiny, must this erstwhile millionaire playboy journey alone. Fictitious characters are attracted to him as well for more than the money he pays them.

At one point in the novel, Melody Ko, a brilliant tactician and a member of Galen’s staff, defines “the group of five... in the middle of a multimillion-dollar computer center: a brilliant scientist confined to a wheelchair by a First World curse; a half-human, half were-wolf creature who could scale sheer walls; a child who could move objects with her thoughts; a millionaire who thought he wasn’t human; and Ko herself, who was thankfully ordinary as far as she could tell.” She may be right about the half man/half robot, the ape-like halfling, the young powerful adept, and Galen, but she’s wrong about herself. She is phenomenal. There’s also a cat named ‘Bub, who is not visible to ordinary humans.

Plot and structure interweave in a most interesting manner. Galen had presumed himself to be an orphan, a very rich orphan whose parents had set up a trust fund for him before they died, or left, or disappeared. Now, at the age of twenty-eight, Galen remembers a time when he was in another world, living a separate existence. The flashbacks to when he regained his memory and to his early childhood, along with the mystery of his parents departure and the weird things that have happened to him, provide enough material for one or more prequels.

Enhancing the quest plot and the well placed flashbacks are several provocative concepts. The Reeves-Stevenses’ use of spontaneous human combustion, in which a being, for no apparent reason, bursts into flames, leaving behind only a few select appendages is particularly interesting. Other motifs provide an intellectual feast: the SF idea of other worlds; the supernatural issue of intelligent beings other than humans, in this case, werewolves; and the varied allusions to faery and Arthuriana.

*Shifter* is a real page turner in which the suspense is heart stopping, and the violent images of sight and smell are memorable and overpowering. I can hardly wait to read #2.

Anthony Pagliaroli
Fictionalized History


In his introduction, Resnick explains that he is deliberately mining the history of colonialism in Africa for his fictional purposes. This is not a new process for him; he has written a number of stories in this way. He says he believes *Paradise* is his best novel (I would have chosen *Ivory*). He carefully researches his material and uses the history well. But that creates at least a small problem, the danger that the history may overwhelm the science fiction. I feel that many readers of the genre may be turned off by these two novellas for exactly that reason.

*Bwana* is set on the planet Kirinyaga, where the remnant of the Kikuyu tribe have moved to attempt to establish Utopia. Koriba, the “witch doctor” (Earth educated, Cambridge and Yale) of the tribe is faced with a serious problem when hyenas begin attacking able-bodied tribesmen. Although he counsels patience, the paramount chief decides to import an off-world hunter to deal with the problem. The hunter, who is a Maasai, brings his own notion of Utopia as well as his rifle. The plot turns around the way Koriba deals with the problem and the intruder.

*Bully!* begins with the assumption that Teddy Roosevelt attempted to take over the Congo in 1910 in order to bring the benefits of democracy to the natives. The problems he encounters and the conclusions he reaches are the foci of the story.

Both of these are fun to read. Koriba is a witty, thoroughly delightful character. His interaction with the members of his own tribe and the Maasai hunter will certainly fascinate many readers. Teddy Roosevelt tends to be a rather stereotyped presentation of the president. Both stories, however, suffer from much the same problem—a sort of propagandistic presentation of the dangers of colonial exploitation and cultural change.

*Robert Reilly*

Excerpt Disguised as Prelude


*Riverwind the Plainsman* by Paul Thompson and Tonya Carter is the first book in the second trilogy of pre-Dragonlance Saga stories. If that sounds confusing, don’t be surprised. It is. Those unfamiliar with the original trilogy edited by Tracey Hickman and Margaret Weiss or the DragonLance Tales trilogy or the Dragonlance Preludes trilogy need only know that attempting
to find any meaning in any of these books would be foolish—even for those readers fully engaged in the world of Krynn.

Who is/was Riverwind? In the original saga, he was the husband of Goldmoon, priestess of the goddess of healing, Mishakal. Naturally, he had his heroic moments, but, overall, he was not the kind of outstanding character normally chosen for a spin-off story.

Thompson and Carter should have spent more time on character development. They also should not have assumed that everyone had already read and retained all the background and details presented in the earlier Dragonlance trilogies—possibly all nine. What Thompson and Carter appear to have done was to devise a plot, a potentially good one, and to select a minor Dragonlance character to affirm its relation to the Saga. Then, in what appears to be one ultra-long footnote in the form of a novel, they confirmed its Dragonlance authenticity by sloppy allusions that don’t always match the original material. Had they cut out the saga references and characters, developed an adventure in an underground elven city, and created a new fighter character, they might have written a work of merit. Unfortunately, that potential is buried in a mountain of trash.

Karen Valle

[See earlier review of Vol. II, Flint the King by Mary Kirchoff and Douglas Niles in this issue.]

A Humorous Sequel


Long ago powerful wizards known as the Sartan sundered the world into four realms of sky, fire, stone, and sea and imprisoned their ancient enemy the Patryns in a diabolical Labyrinth, but a few eventually escaped into the Nexus to plot their revenge. Having already found one Sartan in the Realm of Sky, the Patryn Haplo and his dog are now sent by the Lord of the Nexus to Pryan, Realm of Fire, to foment chaos among the indigenous elves, dwarves, and humans and to continue to search for Sartans in anticipation of the Lord’s planned conquest of the world.

But Pryan is already unstable due to enmity among its inhabitants. Haplo finds the three races unable to settle their differences even in the face of the new menace from the legendary tytans, giant, eyeless, seemingly mindless creatures who are sweeping the realm destroying all in their path with rudimentary but powerful Sartan magic.
Goaded by a strange and addled human named Ziñab, Haplo rescues a small band of survivors and they all set out for the nearest mysterious star in an attempt to escape the tytans. Subplots include an old man’s quest to be reunited with his late wife, two interspecies romances fraught with misunderstanding between elves and humans, and a dwarf’s attempt to avenge the destruction of his race.

Haplo fails to find more Sartan, but his explorations reveal more about his ancient enemy and the tytans they have apparently unleashed upon the populace. Neither does Haplo come to understand Ziñab, who plays the fool but nonetheless predicted Haplo’s appearance and understands the source of his magic. Ziñab maintains erratic control over a terrifying dragon and also displays a disconcerting habit of spouting anachronistic references to 20th century popular culture.

This volume is more loosely plotted than Dragon Wing, its predecessor in the projected series of seven novels, and its tone is more whimsical. Those who pick up this book first will have no trouble understanding Haplo’s situation; those familiar with Dragon Wing will welcome the additional background on both Haplo himself and the mystery of the Sartan. So far the universe created by Weis and Hickman maintains its energy. But the inhabitants of the Realm of Fire pale in comparison to characters such as the cynical assassin Hugh the Hand, the changeling Bane whom he is hired to kill, the clumsy servant Alfred, and Limbeck, the visionary dwarf, all of whom appeared in the first volume. Elven Star can easily stand independently as an entertaining fantasy, but anyone wanting to pick up the Death Gate Cycle ought to try the more absorbing Dragon Wing first.

Agatha Taormina

Sure and Deft Sense of Faerie


A good hike and a solid fantasy-romance have much in common. They both cover varied ground, allowing a fresh perspective on familiar areas and presenting unexplored territories. Neither are easy enough to be insipid and without substance, yet neither exhausts the traveler, but instead leave him or her pleasurably tired at the journey’s end. Before you plan your next hiking or climbing trip into the mountains, or your next armchair journey, read Paul Willis’ first fantasy-romance, No Clock in the Forest.

Willis begins his story with William, a young mountain climber who climbs not for the love of it, but for another notch in his belt; his admiration is not for the mountains themselves but for the shiny new equipment he uses. Losing his Fey companion on the summit of the South Queen, he heads back
down to the road to find that it has gone, and that he has been drawn into an ancient struggle. With a young hiker "lost" from her group, and armed with only an ancient key, a scarred ice-axe, and a quaintly written poem, William must somehow try to defeat for a time the forces which would destroy both the faery world and the wilderness that he has grown to love in his own world.

Paul Willis' first novel fits admirably into the venerable tradition stretching from George MacDonald's *Curdie* books and C. S. Lewis's *Narnia* to Walter Wangerin and Ursula Le Guin. Willis's sense for the geography of faerie is sure and deft, yet he combines this as well with a contemporary naturalist's eye and a fine study in mountain climbing. The two blend well, with only a few discordant notes: for example, although the young woman, Grace, has been part of faery all her life, she plays the disaffected, materialistic, bored teen-ager to such perfection that her transition to acceptance is a little too swift to be believable. However, Curdie and his father Peter would be very much at home in the new world into which Willis has come; Le Guin's Hugh would recognize Willis' geography well from his journeys in Tembreabrezi, and the Lady Lira and her marmots are every bit as dangerous as Lewis' Witch.

*No Clock in the Forest* deals with balance, and with consequences, and with responsibility as simply and thoughtfully as only a good 'fantasy romance' can. Moreover, it carefully links these themes with a care for the wilderness and for the environment in general. This care has always been present in such worlds, if one looks carefully, but it shines through in Willis' timely book, making his concerns accessible for hikers and armchair travelers alike. Like other works in this tradition, Willis provides the reader not only a thoroughly enjoyable read, but several morsels to chew slowly and gently over for quite some time as well.

*Andrea Winkler*

**Good Old-Fashioned SF**


The web, a vast construct in orbit around Earth, has been attacked by a space monster and has fallen. Only a few humans have survived, some (like Roxanne Kwan and her father) wandering the surface of the Earth, others (like Benn Dain and his family) living among aliens (the Eldern) in the "halo." Benn lives in the hope of learning "The Eldern Way" and winning acceptance as a civilized race for humanity. Because the Eldern races are so much more evolved, there seems little hope of this. Benn's only chance may be
through successful competition in the “Game of Blade and Stone” for which his mentor, Edward Gibbon Beta, is grooming him. Roxanne lives in the hope of achieving her father’s dream of returning to space and reconstructing the web around Earth. When three aliens arrive in the “halo” under suspicious circumstances involving the death of Gibbon’s clone brother, Benn follows them to Mazeway (where the game is played) in the hope of finding information and participating in the game. There he meets Roxanne...

Fast paced and loaded with suspense, this novel demonstrates once again that Williamson is a master of story telling. Once you start this one you won’t want to put it down. But don’t look for depth of characterization or profound meaning. This is a good old fashioned piece of science fiction, loaded with aliens and unexplained technology.

Robert Reilly

Young Adult

A Golden Age Revisited


Houghton Mifflin has finally issued Humphrey Carpenter’s Secret Gardens (first published in 1985) in paperback, and that is good news for anyone interested in children’s literature and/or fantasy. Carpenter, who has written respected biographies of J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis and who is the editor of The Oxford Companion to Children’s Literature, turns his attention in this book to the period from the publication of Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland to the publication of Winnie-the-Pooh, the period he, and others, refer to as the Golden Age of children’s literature.

Secret Gardens is both a biographical study of the authors and an analytical study of the works they produced and the time in which they produced them. Carpenter sees Charles Kingsley, Lewis Carroll, George MacDonald, and Louisa May Alcott as precursors to the main Golden Age figures: Richard Jeffries, Kenneth Grahame, E. Nesbit, Beatrix Potter, J.M. Barrie, and A.A. Milne. The secret gardens of the book’s title hint at Carpenter’s unifying theme, that so many children’s writers of that period (and perhaps others) were looking for “Arcadia, the Enchanted Place, the Never Never Land, the Secret Garden” (preface).
In addition to specific chapters on each of the authors listed, Carpenter presents a substantial introduction tracing the development of English attitudes toward children and toward literature appropriate for children. He also considers, briefly, literature since World War I, "the cut-off point between the classic children's books and the present day, with Milne regarded as a survivor of the Edwardians," in an epilogue at the end of the book wherein he discusses why and how a fantasy such as Tolkien's is very different from those of Barrie and Milne.

*Secret Gardens* is a useful book for the information and opinions it contains, but more than that, it is a readable book—the more so because Carpenter does not tread heavily on such over-emphasized ideas as "the children's writer as unhappy child" and does not depend on current buzzwords, such as "subversive," in an attempt to prove to the skeptic that children's literature is important. Carpenter knows that children's literature deserves serious consideration, and he provides it. Highly recommended.

*C.W. Sullivan III*  

**Darlings of the Dome**


In this brief novel for ages 8 to 12, two lovely kids search for a pet cat outside the experimental dome on Planet Pliocis where they live. Kate Olafson is about thirteen; her friend William Pitt, the brightest example of whiz-kiddery to date, is four. Kate considers him exceptionally sensible, tells him so whenever he is, and often defers to his judgment.

When, however, the two return from their successful quest, they find only one human in the dome, William's infant sister, Sadie. All the rest have apparently been abducted. That leaves Kate; William; Sadie; Timmy the cat; and Blanche and Thomas, two caged piebald mice, facing the immense problem of survival. Only the computer, whom the children call, from the initials of his title, "Grandpa," is still functioning; the various mechanisms such as the transmitter; Slave, the automatic washer of Sadie's garments; and the food synthesizing monitor have been vandalized. Between them, though, the children manage, William teaching and helping Kate to care for Sadie, and Kate preparing meals the hard way, by hand.

One other person had left the dome at the same time they had. Dr. Fahad Nasreem, one of the scientists, whom both Kate and William dislike for his stuffy rigidity and prejudice against pets. When he does come back inside, moribund from careless exposure to the purple gas pouring from a strange pyramid flanked by standing stones, he does tell Kate that he had
seen the alien kidnappers. Mostly, he fulminates about the earlier neglect in reporting or examining the pyramid. This information leads Kate and William to attempt to solve the mystery of the smoking pyramid with its lines of upright stones incised in a strange language and to try to overcome their enemies, the disgusting half-insect, half-humanoid aliens.

Contact with the title’s eponymous Ashar of Qarius comes about through a voice hacking into Grandpa during a secret game Grandpa is playing with William and Kate. Communication then proceeds from graphics to mathematics, from difficult scientific language to plain English. Finally, after asking appropriate questions, the youngsters learn that the aliens are Disgatts from the asteroid Sorrid. At this point, lest readers have not transliterated “Disgatts” and “Sorrid” to “Disgust” and “horrid,” the author writes: “William screwed up his face as though he were tasting something unpleasant.” This kind of minimal imagination hardly excites plaudits.

It is, moreover, not quite pleasurable, despite the charm of the major characters, to read a published text replete with typographical errors as is this book. Further, young people might be bewildered to find the Ashar of the title, presumed by them to be chief protagonist of the narrative, does not dominate it—Kate and William do. Still, the pair’s adventures and relationship should prove interesting to young readers, especially those with siblings.

While this is not a poor book, it is not highly recommended.

_Sybil B. Langer_

_In Between Worlds: Human to Dragon_


_Human Beware!,_ Thorarinn Gunnarsson’s sequel to _Make Way for Dragons_, is the story of the development of Jenny Barker from an ordinary human girl to a sorceress, to Veridan Warrior, to Mindijaran dragon. She is caught between being mortal and being a dragon; and she’s afraid to allow herself to be transformed to a Faerie Dragon.

She is burdened with an ancient prophecy: through her efforts, and the efforts of another, the Dark Emperor and the High Priest of the Dark in Alashera will be destroyed forever or they will lure Jenny to the Dark and reign in power forever.

Jenny lives in the dragon world with her Uncle Allan, who has become a faerie dragon, and his mate, Dalvenjah. Jenny is trained in magic and sorcery until she is old enough to go to college. At that point she returns to the world of humans and gets a degree in engineering. She is then sent to study with Lady Mira, one of the great sorceresses of the world.
All these years Jenny’s dragon lover, Kelvandor, waits for her to accept her real role in life: that of a dragon. She chooses to wait until the prophecy has been solved. Jenny loses her human body, and Kelvandor’s father’s spirit, to the Emperor of the Dark, “Now Kelvandor had two tasks, to win back both Jenny’s body and his father’s spirit. The Prophecy of the Faerie Dragons was far from complete; there were still too many pieces on the board to consider the game over. Jenny had been betrayed to the Dark, but she was still alive and on their side.”

Ann Hitt

Uncover the Mystery of Time, Space, and the Other


Borgel, claiming to be a distant relative from the Old Country mysteriously appears with his 32 lumpy black valises and takes up residence with Melvin and his family. Some time later, Melvin and Uncle Borgel take a road trip in Borgel’s 1937 Dorbzeldge. During this trip Melvin learns certain truths: Time is like a map of New Jersey (not any other state, just New Jersey); Space is like an elliptical bagel with poppy seeds; and, when dogs are taken out into Time and Space, they can talk—although you usually wish they wouldn’t.

Daniel Pinkwater has created an impossible science fiction novel with caricatured characters and implausible adventures. Not everybody likes this sort of thing. In fact, it can be downright bad if not properly executed. In this case, though, Borgel is imaginatively mind-boggling. Pinkwater is a master at making a reader believe in the improbable. Or, at least, do a doubletake.

The writing manages to convey humor through an aural cadence, with characters’ voices so rich in tone and accent, that you can almost hear them aloud—no mean feat. The plot is a tipsy-turvy adventure which careens through *deus ex machinas* like a Bloboform through a root beer stand, which is, as Uncle Borgel would be the first to say, really a sight every time-tourist should see.

*Borgel* may be marketed for children; yet, the absurdity of Pinkwater’s portrayal of, for example, a 450 pound ape waitress who believes she is “irresistably adorable” has its attraction for more mature folks as well. Join the quest for the Great Popsicle.

Margoleath Berman
Trips Through the Disappointingly Static


In this time travel novel, Max, an honor science student, embarks on a series of trips. Using an ultra-technologically advanced time-travel phaser, he must avoid the ever-present danger of bifurcation to chaos. His traveling companions are renowned scientist Sylvan and his attractive daughter, Eve, and the even more attractive but duplicitous duplicates of Sylvan and Eve, evil characters who threaten to send our hero to a molten Earth (evidently the time travelers’ Siberia).

The plot has intriguing possibilities, and, in the hands of William Sleator, author of such outstanding YA books as *Interstellar Pig* and *The Duplicate*, I expected exciting developments. For several reasons, though, the novel turned out to be peculiarly claustrophobic. Max never escapes his virtual imprisonment in space or time with one version or the other of the father and daughter; the outside world has no substance; and the possibilities of the original science fiction concept of a person’s actions splitting time lines are never fully realized.

Yet, credibility in a young hero remains a strength of Sleator’s writing. Despite his travels in the past and future, Max has many of the same fears, hopes, and anxieties as a typical, bright, risk-taking teenager in present-day suburbia. Emptying his proto-pack in search of a missing phaser, he takes out his calculator, wallet, Swiss Army knife, pens and pencils, and pocket flashlight. I know him and so will young readers, but they too may be disappointed in the static quality of Max’s adventures.

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SCIENCE FICTION RESEARCH ASSOCIATION, INC.

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