Review

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The SFRA Review

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Beam Me Over, Scotty

Oooof! We’ve just moved. I’d give just about anything right now for a good matter transmitter. The escrow on our new place closed just before the holidays and during finals week — not the best time to have to be moving. Sadly, we had little choice. My dear Granny died in September; we’d been living with her these past few years so that we could help her stay in her own home as long as possible. In October, the family listed her place and discovered that beach front property moves fast out here, even in a recession. We had to scramble to get new digs quick.

I mention Granny here to greater purpose. My grandmother led a good and full life, dying at the age of 93. It is the change she experienced over the course of her long life, something she remarked upon often, that I’d like to note. Granny was born into a horse and buggy world; she remembered adults being astonished at the Wright brothers’ first flight. She remembered clearly the wonder of the first radio she heard, and when she and my grandfather bought the only washing machine for blocks around, neighbors crowded in for days to watch it run through its cycles. The cultural changes Granny lived through were just as great as the technological—she was born in Victorian times, after all. When she was fourteen, a police matron chased her around Catalina beach for half a day before finally collaring her and citing her for having her leggings rolled up to mid-calf.

Granny accommodated great change with aplomb, but how do cultures accommodate such change? A great deal of pain in our century has resulted from the headlong rush of ideas and technology and the attempt (often violent) to impose partial and inadequate understandings of the Just Society on a rapidly shifting world. I suspect that cultures like ours which undergo ever more rapid change eventually develop institutions, cultural expressions and value systems that can accommodate that change with some ease while themselves remaining relatively stable. Indeed, unlike the society into which Granny was born, we live in a more Protean society with fewer interdictive and more remissive controls, a society that is increasingly coming to recognize and value the cultural diversity and pluralism made inevitable by rapid change. And, too, we have since mid-century the rise of science fiction to ever greater cultural importance. SF is a cultural expression that rapidly accommodates (and helps us to accommodate) change. And as the logic of our culture is such that the pace of change is only likely to pick up in the foreseeable future, I believe that like rock and roll (itself a cultural expression that helps us accommodate rapid change in our value systems), SF is here to stay.
The Executive Committee, ever frugal, will not meet as usual this January. The EC will attempt to stay on top of things by mail and phone and keep the Association’s money in the bank. We all need to put our own money in the SFRA’s accounts, too: Dave Mead has mailed out our dues notices and those of us (I include myself here) who haven’t mailed them back yet need to do so right away. Despite our recent dues increase, the SFRA is still the best deal in the field.

Remember our East European and Russian members. In the former Soviet Union, professionals (and particularly academics) have traditionally been paid less than workers. A Russian professor of physics or modern languages still makes less than a Moscow bus driver. Grab a big candy bar, an SF novel, or any other good thing that you think might be useful and pop it in a jiffy bag down at the post office. Quick, easy and certain to be appreciated. (Best to use registered mail, I suspect.)

Here’s where I can now be found: 5225 St. George Road, Westminster, California 92683. Phone: 714-897-9060.

Pete Lowentrout

1992 SFRA Conference Update

Call for Papers

The 23rd annual conference of the Science Fiction Research Association will convene at John Abbott College on the Island of Montreal, June 18-21, 1992.

Proposals for panels and presentations are welcome. The following topics are being developed at the present time: Canadian and Quebec SF, the state of SF publishing, teaching SF, women’s issues in SF, and SF in megacorporate America.

Inquiries, suggestions, and precis of papers should be sent by March 1 to: Steven Lehman, Department of English, Box 2000, John Abbott College, Ste. Anne de Bellevue, Quebec Canada (H9X 3L9).

Steven Lehman

Call for Papers

One of the sessions at the 1992 SFRA Annual Conference will be on “Canadian Science Fiction.” Please send proposed papers for this session to David Ketterer, Department of English, Concordia University, 1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd. W., Montreal, Quebec, Canada H3G 1M8.

David Ketterer
Review-Articles

German SF: Two Guides and a History

by Franz Rottensteiner

Körber, Joachim, ed.: Bibliographisches Lexikon der utopisch-phantastischen Literatur, 1985-. Corian-Verlag Heinrich Wimmer (Bernard-Monath-Str. 24, D-W 8901 Meitingen, Germany).

Rottensteiner, Franz and Michaël Koseler, eds.: Werkführer durch die utopisch-phantastische Literatur, 1989-. Corian-Verlag Heinrich Wimmer (Bernard-Monath-Str. 24, D-W 8901 Meitingen, Germany).


One major problem with research into science fiction and fantasy in the German language is the lack of sources and even proper bibliography and documentation. Unlike the Anglo-Saxon countries where enthusiasts have bibliographed even obscure magazines and their contents, let alone books, such completeness doesn't exist for Germany. Robert Bloch's Bibliographie der utopischen und phantastischen Literatur 1750-1950 (Giessen: Verlag Munnikisma 1984, with a supplement dated December 1990) is a valuable publication, but it isn't complete; the entries are not always exact, and it has the failing of many such bibliographies: it lists titles that do not really belong but which were listed because the title was suggestive of a fantasy content, but which the compiler himself obviously didn't read. And since science fiction was considered of little literary value, as "trash" or "Trivialliteratur"—many works were not collected and preserved in public libraries at all, and there may be many books that do not exist any more and perhaps have not even been bibliographed. For instance, of the historically important dime novel series Der Luftpirat und sein lenkbares Luftschiff (165 issues between 1908-1911), a forerunner of many later space operas, no complete set is known to exist, although this had a circulation in the tens of thousands, and was at one time ubiquitous in Germany. There appear to be a few collectors of old German SF and fantasy works, what each of them owns is unknown, and few are willing to allow access to their collections, and they often do not use them for research themselves. There are quite a few who just hoard their books but never read them. There definitely is a lack of enthusiasts who would put into German SF the tremendous amount of work and diligence that E. F. Bleiler put into his The Guide to Supernatural Fiction or Science Fiction: The Early Years. And since there exists little criticism of
German SF, and fewer histories, it often is not known what many books are about at all, especially where obscure writers and rarer works are concerned.

Some steps toward improving this situation are made in the first two works, two in a series of such works (others include encyclopedias of film, adventure fiction, comics, and erotic literature) published by the small publisher Corian-Verlag, which specializes in works on science fiction and related subjects. The loose-leaf format is very flexible, since no order of appearance is required, and addenda and corrections can be filed as required. These compilations are not principally concerned with works originating in the German language, but cover all works and writers published in German, whether original or in translation. Most valuable are those rather small contributions that deal with original German works, for on the others usually much is available in English language publications, and aside from the bibliographies they add very little to the sources in English; in fact, they sometimes give the impression of having been compiled from them.

_Werkführer durch die utopisch-literarische Literatur_ discusses individual books, both novels and story collections, and might be compared to the two Magill/Salem Press sets devoted to SF and fantasy and the two Bleiler books, but there is no pre-selection or pre-evaluation. Any book in the fantastic genres may be included, and the series is intended to be open-ended. The length of annotation varies, but for most works it is two pages. It consists primarily of a summary of the contents, followed by some critical commentary, depending upon importance. In the case of major works that can amount to full-length interpretations including a bibliography and a listing of film versions, but usually a summary followed by some short critical remarks is sufficient. Two volumes have appeared so far. The base work consisted of 500 pages, and since 1989 there have been eight supplements, each usually between 150 and 200 pages. Supplements sell at DM 0.28 per page, so that an average supplement sells at about DM 40.00-50.00.

The oldest of these “Loseblattsammlungen” of Corian-Verlag is Joachim Körber’s _Bibliographisches Lexikon der utopisch-phantastischen Literatur_. It was started in 1985 and runs currently to seven volumes, totaling nearly 6,000 pages in 27 supplements. It sells now for DM 775.94 (about $460.00), and every year there are about four new supplements. The entry for each author consists of a short biography plus evaluation, followed by a more or less complete bibliography of all of his writings that appeared in German: novels, collections, plays, short stories, essays and so on, not only genre work. In some cases (such as Isaac Asimov, Stanislaw Lem or A.C. Doyle), these listings run to hundreds of pages. The bulk of the authors in the Körber encyclopedia are of course those to be found in any standard SF reference
work, but among them are also some writers not known in anglophone countries. The modern German professionals of the dime novels "Hefte" series are ably and enthusiastically covered by Hermann Urbanek, while Robert N. Bloch contributes some well-researched profiles and bibliographies of German fantasists such as Karl Hans Strobl, H.W. Zahn, A.M. Frey, Leonard Stein, "Alexander Ular" and others.

In the Werkführer so far nearly 50% of all current entries are devoted to older German works, but with time this proportion will diminish, not only because the bulk of SF works published in Germany comes from abroad, but also because there is little interest among German readers in historical SF.

It is interesting to note that much valuable work on the history of German SF has been done by American researchers; after William B. Fischer's The Empire Strikes Out: Kurd Lasswitz, Hans Dominik and Development of German Science Fiction (1984) there is now Peter S. Fisher's well-researched and very readable study of German SF of the Weimar Republic, which lasted from the end of the First World War up to the seizure of power by the Nazis in 1933. It was politically and economically a turbulent time, the population sharply divided politically, and almost all groups dissatisfied with things as they were, longing either for a return of the Hohenzollerns and/or a restoration of a militarily strong Germany, while leftists wanted a real revolution. All these different opinions found their expression in literature. The rightists wrote a flood of revanchist works which foresaw another war from which Germany emerged triumphant. All the injustices done to Germany by the "hateful" peace treaty of Versailles were corrected at least on paper. The various groups, whether of the left or of the right, all longed for a strong individual, a dictator, who would unite a divided Germany, do away with all political and social differences, and address himself to the urgent national question.

Dictatorship loomed in the visionaries' minds as the ideal form of government. The sense of identity between the populace and the dictator, repeatedly described in the political fantasies, expressed both a longing for harmony and a desire to harness the raw power embodied in the frustrated masses. The uncontrolled mob, depicted in some fantasies in scenes of civil war, in others by apocalyptic images of panic, revealed the writers' underlying feelings of fear and mistrust of modern mass society. It was too volatile and unpredictable for them; yet they realized that their visions of dramatic change would remain unfulfilled without the support of the multitude. The answer to this problem lay in the figure of a dictator. He alone could mold millions of suppressed individuals into one united front. (p. 219)
A second Bismarck as in Otto Autenrieth’s *Bismarck II* (1921) was just one of many such figures. The right dominated a sub-genre already popular from before WWI: that of future war. With these works Fisher deals in the first long third of his book, “Revanchism and Racism: Fantasies of the Radical Right.” In them, literature is totally harnessed to the political purpose which is the restoration of Germany to a position of power in the world, including often the return of her former colonies. Varying from writer to writer, some see France as the main enemy, while Russia is often seen as a natural ally for Germany and another victim of WWI.

The bulk of the writings in the second large part, “Nationalist Dreams for the Masses: Weimar’s Technological Visions” were not so blatantly political. They often included political upheavals in their scenarios of the future, but these are arrived at as almost a side effect of mostly technological changes which are invariably presented on a very crude level. As has been said of the novels of Hans Dominik, the most popular German writer of futuristic novels ever, they are more about power than technology—sometimes in an uneasy combination with Eastern mysticism. Among the most influential books of the times were the two SF novels by Thea von Harbou, *Die Frau im Mond* (1929) and *Metropolis* (1924), both made into successful films by her husband, Fritz Lang. Easily the most important SF novel of the time was Alfred Döblin’s *Berge, Meere und Giganten* (1924), a powerful expression of political upheaval and biological transformation that turned human beings into mountains; anybody familiar with Döblin’s masterpiece of rare visionary power will recognize the indelible influence this novel had on the strange cosmos of Cordwainer Smith.

The third section of Fisher’s book deals with the least influential and smallest group of fictions: “Hope and Despair: Socialist and Pacifist Visions.” It is hardly surprising that these works had the smallest circulation and the least influence, that their authors were persecuted, that some of the books were banned and confiscated on publication, and the rest burnt and blacklisted after the victory of the Nazis.

Fisher gives a clear and detailed picture of the social and political forces at work in the Weimar Republic, and he provides balanced and incisive analyses of the many works covered, often with a psychoanalytical slant. In many respects Weimar science fiction was part of the future these authors helped to bring about. Few of the novels discussed in Fisher’s book are of any literary interest, but they are of high interest as indicators of the spirit of the times, giving a telling picture of the German political landscape. *Fantasy and Politics* provides a valuable segment of a general history of German science fiction yet to be written.

_Franz Rottensteiner_

[Rottensteiner is a Vienna lawyer with an expert knowledge of German fantastic literature. He edits the German language journal, Quarber Merkur.]
Word and Image: A Survey of Fantastic Film & TV Magazines

by Michael Klossner

This survey omits foreign language magazines and periodicals devoted to a single film or TV series, including one mass market title, *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, published by Starlog Communications. I failed to obtain sample issues of *Cinefan, Cinemacabre* and *TV Zone*. There is no scholarly journal specifically dedicated to fantastic media, but relevant articles appear in more general periodicals, such as *Science-Fiction Studies* and *The Journal of Popular Film and Television* (quarterly, 4000 Albermarle St. NW, Washington, DC 20016).

The fan-oriented magazines have made fantastic media one of the most thoroughly documented areas of popular culture. Anyone interested in the field should track down these sources. Some library somewhere should collect the fan magazines. And someone should index them.

Every issue of *Starlog* includes a directory of new fan clubs, usually a dozen or more, each devoted to an SF or fantasy film, TV series or star. Almost every club publishes a periodical. *Gorezone 18* (Summer 1991) lists thirty-three current American, European and Australian horror film fanazines. With so much fan activity, it is not surprising that several commercially published magazines on genre media have flourished. With a few exceptions, notably *Cinefantastique*, these magazines are useful not for their critical acumen but for assembling facts and for interviewing film and television workers. Most of the periodicals are dependent on studio handouts and on access to directors, producers, actors, screenwriters, special effects technicians and makeup artists. Such interviews are of course usually self-serving and anecdotal, but interviewees often speak frankly about past work and coworkers, even if they engage in boosterism about current projects.

*Cinefantastique* is the Rolls Royce of genre magazines and one of the few to review current films soon after their release. These reviews and *CFQ*'s willingness to reveal studio “secrets” have led to feuds with some of the major studios. Besides reviews, *CFQ* includes previews of films in production, lengthy, detailed articles on both major current films and older classics, and excellent illustrations. Most B films and TV programs receive only brief reviews, although *CFQ* has recently devoted major articles to both *Star Trek* series. *CFQ* is the first choice; all other magazines are optional.

While *CFQ* covers SF, horror and fantasy, Starlog Communications divides the work among three magazines. *Starlog* covers SF and fantasy; *Fangoria*, major horror films and selected B films; and *Gorezone*, low budget, off-beat, extreme, underground and European horror. *Starlog* and *Fangoria* both often run nostalgic pieces on older films. Both emphasize
interviews with film workers, especially actors, but both also interview fiction authors. Neither reviews current films, thereby ensuring friendly relations with studios that supply needed material. Both are heavily illustrated and feature long letters sections. Letters to Starlog are quite revealing about civil wars among obsessed fans. Advocates of TV's Beauty and the Beast seem to be the most fanatical these days; Trekkies are mellow by comparison. Letters in Fangoria often show young fans trying out their critical wings; one commented on a recent B movie, “The tortures were excellent, too.”

Starlog and Fangoria make no pretension to serious criticism, but since there are twenty-two issues of the two magazines each year and only six of Cinefantastique, they naturally provide a great deal of information not in CFQ. Fangoria is stronger than CFQ in coverage of B horror. Unlike Starlog, Fangoria reviews B films on videocassette, genre novels and occasionally nonfiction books about genre films. A typical recent issue had articles on something old (an AIP starlet), something new (The Addams Family) and something B (Basket Case 3). Fangoria recently ran an entertaining two-part survey of dozens of wild Chinese horror films. Where else can you find out about a movie in which the hero electrocutes himself and a clinging vampire by urinating into a pool of electrified water? Starlog surpasses CFQ in coverage of both current and nostalgic TV, providing not only interviews with TV stars, writers and producers, but also credits and synopses of individual episodes. Tom Weaver has compiled two volumes of his interviews with film personalities of the 1940s to the 1960s, originally published in Starlog, Fangoria and Filmfax: Interviews with B Science Fiction and Horror Movie Makers (1988) and Science Fiction Stars and Horror Heroes (1991; reviewed in Newsletter 191).

Starlog Communication's third magazine, Gorezone, covers hardcore horror. Besides interviews, the magazine features a regular column on makeup techniques, coverage of horror comics, and an extremely erudite video column by Tim Lucas, editor of Video Watchdog. Although aimed at gorehounds, Gorezone is somewhat more adult than Fangoria, and its emphasis on less well-publicized films may make it more valuable.

Filmfax concentrates on B films and nostalgic television of all kinds, not only SF and horror but also B Westerns, animation, action films and non-pornographic exploitation. Interviews and articles are generally long and detailed, as are Filmfax's reviews of relevant nonfiction books, “unusual” video (e.g., Wild Women of Wongo) and recordings of film soundtracks. Ads from small video dealers offer many obscure titles not available from major video outlets. A recent issue had a typical mix of subjects—articles on Rondo Hatton, Soupy Sales, Clarence Nash (the voice of Donald Duck) and the early B Westerns of John Wayne and an interview with AIP executive Sam Arkoff.
Cinefex is the magazine of record for special effects. Each issue consists of lengthy technical reports on all aspects of effects work in one to three current films. Miniatures, puppets, stop-motion animation, matte paintings and computer-generated images are only some of the techniques discussed. Cinefex is dependent on interviews with filmmakers and does not offer critical judgments on the effects or on any other aspects of the films, but the technical information presented is invaluable. American Cinematographer also often has articles on technical work in major genre films.

After a hiatus, Chas. Balun, a long-time contributor to Fangoria and Gorezone, recently defected from Starlog Communications to revive his personal, simon-pure gorehound zine, Deep Red. The new issue, number 7, is book-length (128 p.) and sells for $14.95 in paperback and $39.95 (!) in hardback. (Older issues are available for less.) Balun’s introduction is an angry manifesto against tepid, R-rated horror films turned out by the major studios, the MPAA rating system, “anal-retentive, chicken-shit distributors who had no idea how to market films that defied simple classification” and magazines full of “bullshit puff pieces that shamelessly hype a plethora of boneheaded genre entries” (such as Balun’s former employers). Deep Red champions Italian, German and independent American horror films, from the art gore of Dario Argento to the porn gore of Ruggero Deodato. Balun and his contributors demand gore but they also demand quality. Interviewees include Balun’s hero Argento and John McNaughton, director of Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer. A long article chronicles the surprising amount of explicit horror in films before 1968. Balun ponders how to respond to the two most extreme subgenres—cannibal films and snuff films. At his worst, Balun engages in irresponsible Japan-bashing. Nevertheless, Deep Red is the most articulate voice of the gorehound.

Nothing could be much further from Deep Red than Midnight Marquee, a thoughtful appreciation of old films, edited for twenty-eight years by Gary Svehla. Long, nostalgic articles discuss both classics and obscure films. Svehla briefly reviews current films and nonfiction books. The oldest magazine in the field, Midnight Marquee is well respected, but the issue I sampled (number 41) spends too much space on unnecessary synopses.

A new title, Scarlet Street calls itself “the magazine of mystery and horror.” The issue seen (number 3) is quite thin, with brief, fannish notes on current films, TV programs and books and four articles on old films.

Michael Weldon’s Psychotronic Video is the successor to his Psychotronic! In 1983 Weldon compiled thousands of one-paragraph entries from Psychotronic! into The Psychotronic Encyclopedia of Film (1983), one of the most useful guides to B movies. Weldon’s reviews are highly erudite but often descriptive rather than critical, since his publications are
aimed at people who love B films. *PV* has far more (but much briefer) video reviews than *Filmfax*, the other B movie magazine. Reviews in *PV* cover both old and new movies and include foreign (Italian, Brazilian, Australian) films. Each issue also includes two or three long articles or interviews on B movie personalities, reviews of nonfiction books, very learned letters from committed fans and advertisements for hard to-find videos. One recent issue has no fewer than fifty-three obituaries for people in the field.

Lucas's *Video Watchdog* is aimed at "perfectionist" collectors of fantastic films on videocassette and videodisc, those with sufficient commitment to care about issues such as differing versions of films, title changes and "letterboxed" vs. "cropped" formats. Both short reviews and long scholarly articles cover U.S. B films and foreign movies. Some articles discuss variant versions of major Hollywood films. Nonfiction books are reviewed. The first few issues of *Video Watchdog* seemed determined to present only information that would be new to even the most knowledgeable fan, but recent issues have lightened up sufficiently to cover well-known personalities Barbara Steele and Dario Argento, as well as such neglected figures as early Soviet fantacist Aleksandr Ptushko. (See also my review of *Video Watchdog* in *Newsletter* 191.)

Two British magazines try to emulate *Cinefantastique* by covering SF, horror and fantasy and by reviewing current films. *Fear* is superior to *Starburst*. Besides reviews of films, videos and novels, *Fear* offers short articles on new films, interviews with directors and novelists, a comics column and short stories. The quality is about as high as in *Cinefantastique*, but *Fear* lacks *CFQ*’s lengthy, in-depth articles and spreads itself too thin by covering fiction as well as film. *Fear*’s issue 34, October 1991, is apparently the last issue from the publisher shown in the bibliography. Editor Gilbert owns the magazine and is seeking a new publisher, possibly an American one. He’s working on another film magazine that is scheduled to start in the U.S. in February 1992, according to the November 1991 *Locus*.

*Starburst* has a little bit of everything—interviews with directors, actors, and novelists, reviews of current films, book reviews, comic news and brief notes on video releases. I found *Starburst*’s film reviewer, Alan Jones, to be cranky and fannish, but the magazine also has a witty regular column by John Brosnan, author of *Future Tense* (1978), one of the best histories of the SF film, and the newly published *The Primal Screen: A History of SF Film*. *Starburst*’s two TV columnists, Paul Mount and John Peel, are no better than Jones, but *Visual Imagination* covers TV in more detail in their other publication, *TV Zone* (not seen).

An ad reveals that *TV Zone* covers American as well as British TV. In contrast, *Time Screen* is dedicated solely to British television shows, many
of them totally unknown to Americans. Besides episode guides (credits and synopses of all individual episodes of a series), *Time Screen* features detailed articles and long interviews with figures such as Gerry Anderson and Richard Carpenter. (If you don't know who they are, you're not into British television.)

Each issue of *Epi-Log* covers from eight to twelve TV series. For each series, the magazine provides a brief description of the program's premise, followed by complete credits and a one-paragraph synopsis for each episode. *Epi-Log* does not identify the network on which each series ran or specify the length (30 or 60 minutes) of episodes, facts which are probably well-known to the magazine's fan readership but which should have been included anyway. The description of *Alien Nation* never gives the correct name of the alien Newcomers—the Tenctonese. Having already covered almost all American SF, horror and fantasy series, *Epi-Log* is beginning to branch out to include British fantasy shows and American series in other genres. *Epi-Log*'s episode synopses are often clumsily written but more detailed than those in *Time Screen* or in Roger Fulton's *Encyclopedia of TV Science Fiction* (1990; reviewed in *Newsletter* 192), the most complete book on the subject. Fulton, *Epi-Log* and *Time Screen* each has material not found in the other two. Anyone who needs episode-specific information on genre TV should first consult Fulton, then choose among back issues of *Epi-Log* and *Time Screen* for any additional information required.

It is tempting to dismiss the fantastic media fan magazines as endless collections of trivia. Browsing through them, it sometimes seems only a matter of time before the reader will confront a twenty-page interview with the makeup artist on *Friday the 13th Part Ten*. But if films and television are worthy of study, scholars should be grateful to the fans who have kept so many magazines alive. Too much documentation is better than too little.

**Bibliography**

Information is current as of summer 1991. Most or all back issues are available unless indicated otherwise. Subscription prices are subject to frequent change; query before subscribing.


Clarke, Frederick S., ed. *Cinefantastique*. 1970-. Bimonthly. Box 270, Oak Park, IL 60303. $27.00/6. ISSN 0145-6032. Circ.: 30,000. Indexed: *Film Literature Index*.

Shay, Don, ed. *Cinefex*. 1980-. Quarterly. Box 20027, Riverside, CA 92516. $20.00/4. ISSN 0198-1056. Circ.: 15,000. Indexed: *Film Literature Index*. 


Stein, Michael, ed. *Filmfax*. 1986-. Bimonthly. Box 1900, Evanston, IL 60204. $25.00/6. ISSN 0895-0393. Circ.: 15,000. Indexed: *Film Literature Index*.


Svehla, Gary J., ed. *Midnight Marquee*. 1963-. Semiannual. 4000 Glenarm Ave., Baltimore, MD 21206. $4.50/1. ISSN 0886-8719. Indexed: *Film Literature Index*.


Gellert, Sally Jane, ed. *Scarlet Street*. 1990-. Quarterly. R.H. Enterprises, Box 604, Glen Rock, NJ 07452. $15.00/4. ISSN 1058-8612.


McKay, Anthony, ed. *Time Screen*. Irregular. 574 Manchester Road, Stockbridge, Sheffield, S30 5DX, UK. £3.20/1.

*TV Zone*. Visual Imagination, Box 371, London SW14 8JL, UK. £20/$34.00/12. (Not seen).


Back issues of *Time Screen*, *Starburst* and *TV Zone* are available from Star Tech, Box 456, Dunlap, TN 37327.
Recent & Forthcoming Books

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

Reference

Beahm's Guide to Literature for Young Adults, v. 4, Science Fiction, Mystery, Adventure, and Mythology; v. 5, Fantasy and Gothic. Beacham Pub (P)


McMullen, Sean. Australian Science Fiction and Fantasy (Mid-85 to Mid-91). Author, GPO Box 23653x, Melbourne, VIC 3001, Australia (P)

Watson, Noelle & Paul Schellenger, eds. Twentieth-Century Science-Fiction Writers. 3d ed. St James Press, November

History & Criticism

The Arthurian Yearbook, v. 1. Garland (P)

Clark, John R. The Modern Satiric Grotesque and its Traditions. Univ. Press of Kentucky (P)


Heinlein, Robert. Tramp Royale. Ace, April 1992 (presumably nonfiction)


Lenz, Millicent. Nuclear Age Literature for Youth: The Quest for a Life-Affirming Ethic. American Library Assn, 1990 (P)


Penley, Constance & Andrew Ross, eds. Technoculture. Univ of Minnesota Pr (P)


Reiss, Edmund et al. Arthurian Legend & Literature: An Annotated Bibliography, Renaissance to Present, v. 2. Garland, date not set


Testa, Carlo. Desire and the Devil: Demonic Contracts in French and European Literature. Peter Lang (P)
Author Studies

[Shelley]. Botting, Fred. Making Monstrous: Frankenstein, Criticism, Theory. Manchester Univ. Press distr by St Martin's, December
[Stewart]. Friedman, Lenemaja. Mary Stewart. Twayne, 1990 (P)

Film & Television

Cumbow, Robert C. Order in the Universe: the Films of John Carpenter. Scarecrow Press (P)

Illustration


Recent & Forthcoming Books II

Reference


History & Criticism

Barker, Clive. Pandemonium. Eclipse Books, October
Filmer, Kath, ed. The Victorian Fantasists: Essays on Culture, Society and Belief in the Mythopoeic Literature of the Victorian Age. Macmillan, London; St Martin's (P)
Herdman, John. The Double in Nineteenth-Century Fiction: The Shadow Life. St Martin's (P)
Morse, Donald E. & Bertha Csila, eds. More Real Than Reality: The Fantastic in Irish Literature and the Arts. Greenwood, December
Wagar, W. Warren. The Next Three Futures: Paradigms of Things to Come. Greenwood (P)

Author Studies
[Heinlein]. Heinlein, Robert A. Requiem: New Collected Works and Tributes by the Grand Master, ed. by Yoji Kondo. Tor, Feb 1992
[Koontz]. Stephens, Christopher P. A Checklist of Dean R. Koontz. Ultramarine (P)
[Rice]. Stephens, Christopher P. A Checklist of Anne Rice. Ultramarine (P)

Film and Television
Senn, B. & J. Johnson. The Horror, Science Fiction and Fantasy Film Subject Guide. McFarland, February 1992
Van Hise, James. The Addams Family Revealed. Pioneer Books, October
Yule, Andrew. Losing the Light: Terry Gilliam and the Munchausen Saga. Applause Books, December (P)

Illustration

Neil Barron (II Dec 91)
News & Information

C.S Lewis Fans, Listen Up!

One of the better books of the many about C.S. Lewis is Jack: C.S. Lewis and His Times by George Sayer, HarperCollins, 1988. Sayer was a student and friend of Lewis. A ten cassette, 15 hour unabridged recording read by Frederick Davidson was released in 1991 by Classics on Tape, Box 969, Ashland, OR 97520, $43.95 if purchased, $16.95 if rented. If business or pleasure requires a lot of driving, you could do worse than listen to this. NB.

Majestic Lord

The centenary edition of The Lord of the Rings, mentioned in Newsletter 190, is a most handsome volume, although at about seven pounds uncomfortably heavy to hold unsupported. It’s bound in brown cloth over boards, with the front cloth cover embossed with Tolkien’s logo and with a red ribbon marker. The text incorporates all earlier revisions and is identical to the British HarperCollins edition. This includes a foreward, prologue, the three novels, six appendices, a four section index and seven maps, all totaling an even 1200 pages. Fifty color plates by the British artist, Alan Lee, supplement the text. It’s not as long as Norman Mailer’s new novel, Harlot’s Ghost, which is to be followed by a sequel, but it’s likely to be read for a lot longer. NB.

World Future Society

This nonprofit Washington, DC organization was founded in 1966 and describes itself as an association for the study of alternative futures. Membership brings you a bimonthly, The Futurist, a member’s newsletter, Newsline, a catalog of 300+ books available from the society’s bookstore, an annual outlook report, a primer called The Art of Forecasting and a 160 page book, The 1990s & Beyond, one of a number of books the society has published over the years. A year’s membership is $30, refundable if you’re not satisfied (you keep the book), sent to WFS, 4916 St Elmo Ave, Bethesda, MD 20897-1406. NB.

From the Darkness of the Crypt Comes . . .

new publications from Necronomicon Press, 101 Lockwood St, West Warwick, RI 02893. A good friend of Robert E. Howard, Tevis Clyde Smith, has had his recollections assembled in Report on a Writing Man and Other Reminiscences of Robert E. Howard, ed. by Rusty Burke, who provides a
detailed biographical profile of Smith ($6.95); the second issue of the quarterly Necrofile (reviewed earlier); Lovecraft Studies 25, ed. by S.T. Joshi ($5); Studies in Weird Fiction 10, ed. by Joshi ($4.50); Crypt Of Cthulhu 79, ed. by Robert M. Price ($4.50); Robert E. Howard's Fight Magazine 3, ed. by Price ($5); and new editions of Joshi's index to HPL's five volumes of letters, The H.P. Lovecraft Christmas Book, and Robert H. Barlow & HPL's The Night Ocean. The non-periodical publications will be reviewed. NB.

**Taliesin's Successors**

That's the name of a collection of interviews by Ray Thompson with contemporary authors who have written about the Arthurian legend. His purpose is to explore the process through which Arthurian tradition evolves by discovering why authors chose to deal with it as they did. He's completed 22 interviews to date and is now editing them for publication, hoping to have the manuscript ready by summer 1992. His subjects include: John Arden & Margareta D'Arcy, Christopher Fry (dramatists); Margaret Atwood, John Heath-Stubbs, Maria Jacobs (poets); David Gurr, David Lodge (realistic novelists); Joy Chant, Kathleen Herbert, Mary Stewart, Rosemary Sutcliff, Peter Vansittart, Jim Hunter (historical novelists); Michael Coney, Patricia Kennealy, Andre Norton (science fiction writers); Nancy Bond, William Mayne, Susan Cooper, Alan Garner, Guy Gavriel Kay, Susan Shwartz, Welwyun Wilton Katz, Peter Dickinson, Jane Yolen, Robert Holdstock, Sharan Newman, Diana Paxson, Meriol Trevor, Naomi Mitchison, Richard Monaco (fantasy writers).

**What is a Feminist**

"I myself have never been able to find out precisely what feminism is. I only know that people call me a feminist whenever I express sentiments that differentiate me from a doormat." Dame Rebecca West, writing in 1913.

**Utopianism and Communitarianism**

This is the name of a new series published by Syracuse University Press and edited by Gregory Claeys of Washington University and Lyman Tower Sargent of the Univ. of Missouri, St. Louis. Both monographs and general studies in the fields of utopian and communitarian studies will be issued. Topics to be covered include historical and contemporary interpretations of utopian literature, individual communities and groups of communities, utopian social theory, and themes such as the treatment of women in these traditions. Reprints will occasionally be published, and original works of utopian fiction may be issued. The first in the series was introductory, The
Concept of Utopia by Ruth Levitas. Announced for December were Lawrence Foster's Women, Family, and Utopia: Communal Experiments of the Shakers, the Oneida Community, and the Mormons, and a reprint of an 1893 novel, Unveiling a Parallel, by two Cedar Rapids matrons, Alice Ilgenfritz Jones and Ella Merchant, ed. by Carol A. Kolmerten. Proposals for this series may be sent to SFRA member, Lyman Tower Sargent, Dept. of Political Science, University of Missouri—St. Louis, St. Louis, MO 63121.

**SFRA Pioneer is Guest Curator**

An exhibit, Star Trek and the Sixties, will open 28 February 1992 at the National Air and Space Museum of the Smithsonian Institution and will continue through Labor Day. The Guest Curator for this presentation is the 1991 SFRA Pioneer, H. Bruce Franklin. According to Franklin, the Smithsonian show "historically contextualizes the original series in ways that may, we hope, prove provocative."

**Pulphouse Short Story Paperbacks Catalog**

Pulphouse has issued their Short Story Paperbacks special catalog, #1 to describe their new project. It's a series of $1.95 paperbacks each featuring one short story, with 10 books scheduled to be published every two months. The first 40 books are now available. Nos. 41-50 will be ready for shipping in December 1991; and Nos. 51-60 will be ready in February. Five mystery short story paperbacks will also be published every two months and are available individually or through subscription. Limited editions of signed hardbacks in both short story and mystery story are also available. Contact Pulphouse Publishing, Inc., Box 1227, Eugene, OR 97440.

**Collier Nucleus New Re-Issues**

Two new paperback re-issues have been published in December by Collier Nucleus, Macmillan's paperback division. They are The Face in the Frost by John Bellairs and A. Merritt's fantasy, Dwellers in the Mirage. Both are listed at $5.95 and will be reviewed later.

**SFRA Members Current Projects**

Edra Bogle, Treasurer, has begun receiving new and renewal memberships for 1992. Some members have continued projects while others have begun new ones.
New members:


FRANCIS, Diana Pharaoh, Iowa State University, Ames: My thesis is a fantasy/science fiction novel which I hope to publish following graduation.

HASSON, Moises A., in Chile: Index to SF magazines in Spanish.

JIANGZHONG, Guo, in China: "A Critical History of Foreign SF."

MALMGREN, Carl D., Dept. of English, U. of New Orleans, NO, LA 70148: Articles on Delany, Card, Benford.

OLSA, Jaroslav, in Czechoslovakia: "Fantastic Motifs in the Arabian Nights."

TERRA, Richard P., a "journalist-writer-freelance communications," P.O. Box 9211, Boise, ID. 83707: Various projects—"I regularly contribute to David Hartwell's NY Review of SF; occasionally to SF Studies."

Renewal Members:

ERLICH, Richard: Finally finishing up work on LeGuin for Starmont. "Dunnlich Literary Enterprises, Unlnc." finishing up Clockwork Something or Other (We're still arguing): a list of works useful, copiously annotated, for Greenwood Press (with Thom Dunn).


Ted Dikty Dies

(Thaddeus) E(ugene) [Ted] Dikty died from a heart attack in his Seattle area home Friday, 11 October 1991. He is survived by his wife, Judy (better known as the writer Julian May), his daughter, Barbara, who manages Starmont House, his son, Alan Samuel, who handles the Oregon bindery for Starmont, and his son, David, in Portland. Born 16 June 1920, he was an early fan and joined Pilgrim Ev Bleiler to co-compile the first of the year's best anthologies, Best Science Fiction Stories, 1949-1954, continuing to compile the anthology alone for three more years and edit other anthologies in later years. In the late 1940s he joined Erle Korshak and Mark Reinsberg to found Shasta publishers, one of the many specialty publishers of that period. In 1972 he founded FAX Collector's Editions, which reprinted material from the pulps, often in facsimile. FAX is a wholly owned subsidiary.
imprint of Starmont House, which began in 1976 as one of the earlier specialty presses to issue critical works dealing with SF and fantasy. Several dozen Starmont Reader’s Guides have been published over the past 15 years, with more scheduled. Starmont also publishes other SF/fantasy related books, including bibliographies and indexes. Starmont currently has over one hundred titles in print. NB.

**SFRA Member Dies**

Our sympathies go to the family of Stephen H. Goldman, associate professor of English at the University of Kansas, who died Monday, December 23, 1991, after a long illness. He is survived by his wife Hope, his three daughters, Melissa, Sarah, and Jessica.

[Jim Gunn’s letter of tribute to his colleague follows:]

Steve’s many friends in SFRA will want to know the sad news I enclose. . . . Steve served as vice-president of SFRA and contributed a number of articles and reviews to various SF journals. He served as the Associate Director of the Center for the Study of Science Fiction and Associate Editor of *The New Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*, wrote a half-dozen introductions to Easton Press’s Masterpieces of Science Fiction series and a dozen or so Collector’s Notes, was a major contributor and a Consultant to Salem Press’s *Survey of Science Fiction Literature* and contributed substantially to the *Dune Encyclopedia*, as well as to the first two editions of *Twentieth-Century Science-Fiction Writers*. He had nearly completed a book about Fred Pohl’s science fiction for Greenwood Press. He also was co-author of *Teacher’s Guide to the Road to Science Fiction*. Steve was my colleague whom I could always count on for counsel and support and help (I dedicated *The Dreamers* to him as “my best reader”), team-teaching all of the sessions of the Intensive English Institute on the Teaching of Science Fiction except the first, in 1975, when he was guest-teacher one afternoon. Tom Clareson team-taught the first two weeks of that session with me.

Steve died of colon cancer, which was first diagnosed half-a-dozen years ago. He had a couple of operations and some chemotherapy and even though the prognosis was not good when he had a second recurrence, he took on a position as Director of Freshman-Sophomore English, which he had to leave early in the fall semester. We’ll miss him, particularly the students whom he taught so well and the colleagues and friends to whom he contributed so much.

J**ames Gunn**
Letters to the Editor

December 30, 1991

Dear Editor:

My November Newsletter arrived just before Christmas, for which many thanks. Reading your item, "Editorial Matters", regarding our World SF meeting last May in Sichuan Province, I note with some sorrow that you have omitted one member of SFRA from your list of Western guests attending.

I should have been included on that list. Why was I omitted? I was one of the prime movers in securing the vote for the Chengdu conference in both San Marino and The Hague, and have worked over many years to establish links with China and the rather besieged SF community there. My first visit to China was in 1978, shortly after the death of Chairman Mao, when I took a thumping great package of SF books to Shanghai University.

It's a bit late now, of course, but if you could mention my presence in a line or two I'd be obliged.

Brian Aldiss

[Mea culpa. The omission of your name was completely unintentional; I certainly was aware that you had been among the China SFRA group; I recall now reading Betty Hull's comment about the missing luggage and trophies as well as stories-in the past-about your travels in China (from Locus?). I remember hearing about the suitcase of books you carried to China (I commiserated with you over the load of books, because my husband and I had carried a suitcase of books to France to a doctoral student from India that we had been host family for and who had married and was teaching English in a university there. We were never so glad to leave books as we were then.) Frankly, I can't say that I didn't know what I was thinking; it seems that I was not even thinking that day. You have my profound respect for your many ambassadorial efforts to open doors to China. Please accept my very sincere apology for this inadvertent error. BH,ed.]

December 17, 1991

Dear Editor:

In the Nov. SFRA Newsletter, in my review of Fulton's Encyclopedia of TV SF, the price was given as 7.95 pounds. It should have been 17.95 pounds. I don't know whether this was my fault or yours. I apologize if it was mine. After doing the review, I found the book listed by a U.S. distributor—Star Tech, P.O. Box 456, Dunlap, TN 37327, for $39.95. I will leave it up to you whether to print the correct price and the information on the U.S. distributor.

Michael Klossner

[At this point in time, we do not know what caused the price error. We apologize if we or the equipment caused the omission. BH,ed.]
December 7, 1991
Dear Editor:
I’m indeed grateful to you for reprinting the corrected version of my Pioneer Award acceptance speech. That was a very generous way of setting the record straight.

Bruce Franklin

October 21, 1991
Dear Editor:
I thank you for publishing my letter in SFRA Newsletter No. 189 and your call for historical information on SFRA, which I need in order to review it for our academic review Studia Universitatis Babes-Bolyai; I haven’t received yet any such information, but there is still time.

Without any intention of abusing your time and patience, I am sending you the English translation of two stories . . . “Modern Martial Arts” by Alexandru Ungureanu, and “Omohom” by Cristian Tudor Popescu, just to give you an idea of the Romanian SF written in the eighties. It is too early to speak about the nineties, no-one knows what is going to happen and how things will settle after the change in 1989, which marked the end of an era in Romanian SF.

Once again, please accept my warm thanks and my best wishes. My best to Mr. Ernie Harfst as well.

Cornel Robu

Editorial Matters
Welcome to the first edition of the SFRA Review, formerly the SFRA Newsletter. The January/February issue is enlarged to provide the opportunity for increased coverage of reviews by our national and international scholars. Although future months will return to a more regular number of reviews, this first edition points the way to our Twenty-Third Annual Conference to be held in Montreal, a cosmopolitan site where SFRA members from all over the world will gather to share their expertise and pleasure in subjects of common interest.

The name change is only one of the changes in this issue. Two longer review articles are featured in the first section, one by regular reviewer Michael Klossner and the other by Franz Rottensteiner, a German critic and editor. Watch for other changes as the year progresses.

In Dr. Cornel Robu’s letter (Letters to the Editor), note that he is still seeking historical information about SFRA’s early years. Also, he sent two Romanian stories in English translation so that we could have an idea of Romanian SF in the 80s. These stories will be reviewed in a future issue.
Dave Mead, SFRA secretary, mailed 1992 membership renewal notices in December. Don’t forget to renew; note, too, that the price of *Foundation*, the British science fiction journal, is still $14.00—until March—when the new price of $17.00 goes into effect.

Conference director, Steve Lehman has issued a “call for papers” on several different topics. He will be mailing out information on lodging facilities, conference registrations, and other program details. Be sure to send your proposed paper topic to him so that he can include it in the scheduled sessions.

During the past few months, several SFRA members have been communicating on GENie. For those of you who have yet to join, here is a repeat of the procedural description from Pete Lowentrou’s July/August 1991 column: he writes, “SFRA now has a private Category in the SF Roundtable (non-GENie folks read ‘private Online meeting place’.) Drop me a note online at P.Lowentrou, and I’ll get you in past the electronic bouncers. If you have a modem and are not on GENie, set your communication software for duplex (local echo), dial 1-800-638-8369, type HHH when you connect, and when the ‘U#’ appears type XTX99544, GENIE and press return. You’re in (have a credit card ready, of course). For $4.95 a month you’re in touch with thousands in the SF community from Germany to Japan.”

To both new and renewal members, welcome to our SF community.

* Betsy Harfst *
Non-Fiction

Four British Portfolios

Burns, Jim. *The Jim Burns Portfolio*. Introduction: Jim Burns


Each of these large-format (11"x 17") portfolios of work by four contemporary British artists specializing in fantasy and science fiction subjects contains 28 color reproductions, most of them examples of work produced during the 1980s. The plates are easily detachable for framing and, in fact, tend to separate from the binding whether you want them to or not.

While all of the artists have done book jacket and paperback cover illustrations, Rodney Matthews is especially known for his record album covers, and both Burns and Foss are recognized for their film work, Burns for *Blade Runner* and Foss for *Superman* and *Alien*.

Although the casual stroller through these galleries may initially have a general impression that the subjects are mostly spaceships and futuristic hardware, the artists' work is actually quite varied in nature. Bruce Pennington's paintings hark back to more conventional science fiction art with its monsters and dramatic alien landscapes. Matthews is appealing in the delicacy of his boats and air vehicles and in the characterization of fanciful creatures from fairy tales and legends. The textures of Burns's paintings glow with the tactile brilliance of ornate jewelry and rich fabrics, while Foss's gleaming space ships celebrate the dramatic thrust into the heavens. But this is largely post-pulp art and the photographic quality of much of the art is like that of a Chesley Bonestell whose eye is haunted by a surrealist vision.

What is striking is how sparsely the alien landscapes are populated with human figures. The major exception to this is the work of Jim Burns. However, the characters show little emotion and even in groups, each figure will be turned away from other members of the group. But the avoidance of contact is occasionally breached and Burns's "Songbirds of Pain"—in which a white bird is drooped over a red rose that appears to be bleeding down the canvas—has an emotional power that is rare in the work collected here.

Still, there is no question of the technical skill of these four artists and these portfolios may lead purchasers to investigate more varied selections by these and other artists in Dragon's World's extensive catalogue of modern fantasy artists.

*Walter Albert*
Women and Ghost Stories


The ghost story has had a long and honorable tradition within American literature dating back well into the early years of the nineteenth century. We have all read at least something by Hawthorne and Poe, pioneers in the genre, in our English classes in school and most of us read—or at least heard about—Peter Straub’s immensely popular *Ghost Story*. With these and other names before us far too many of us (myself included) just naturally assumed that the ghost story genre was a male genre and that female contributions were occasional but not the norm. However, this would seem to have been a serious error and one which has clearly colored our understanding and appreciation of the ghost story as a literary genre and as a medium of communication.

The introduction to *Haunting the House of Fiction* notes that perhaps as much as seventy per cent of the supernatural fiction of the mid-to-late nineteenth century appearing in the periodicals of the time was written by women. If this is indeed the case then a lot of scholarly work needs to be done in order to determine the nature of this work: how it developed, what it meant at the time, and what it has meant to the development of the genre and to our literature in general, and, of course, what it has meant to the development of feminine literature and consciousness.

The twelve original essays in this book cover stories and novels by feminine authors from the mid-nineteenth century into the twentieth and up to contemporary novelists such as the prize winning Toni Morrison, author of the challenging and enigmatic *Beloved*. Among the several writers covered, in addition to Morrison, are Mary Wilkins Freeman, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Edith Wharton (who gets two essays), Ellen Glasgow, Shirley Jackson, and Cynthia Ozick. Attention is paid not only to early and more traditional examples of the genre but also to more unique aspects of ethnic consciousness—Black (Morrison, Toni Bambara and others); Chinese-American (Maxine Hong Kingston); Chicano (Sandra Cisneros); Native American (Louise Erdrich); and African-Native American (Judy Grahn).

There are a number of themes which have developed within the feminine ghost story and which are exploited by the authors discussed—for example, family power and the victimization of the powerless wife/mother; the feminine confrontation with and use of feminine history; the woman’s relation not only to her household but also to her house itself; the woman’s distinct relation (through sympathy) to this past and, more so, to the dead.
These and lesser themes as well as related forms of literature (e.g. consolation literature and local color writing) are all analyzed throughout these essays and all together they provide a wealth of information and insight for the reader. Sexual politics within the home and within the broader society has always been with us and it is interesting to see how this has been treated within this particular form of feminist literature.

I am not well enough read in the authors to determine if what is said in each case is accurate. However, I am very familiar with certain authors and works and in each case found the relevant discussions provocative and informative. Thus, for example, the discussion of "The Yellow Wallpaper" by E. Suzanne Owens raises some interesting points and thus some interesting questions about the development of this classic and autobiographical study in repression. Also, the discussion of Jackson's classic, The Haunting of Hill House renews old questions and raises new ones. Finally, I must confess that I have never been able to get past the first few pages of Beloved. Now, thanks to Barbara Hill Rigney's very illuminating discussion of both Morrison and the Black ghost story tradition within which she worked I feel that I can master the book.

As noted already, there is much to be learned about the feminist writer in general and within the ghost story genre, and this set of essays goes a very long way toward meeting this need. The essays are generally quite scholarly, many times argumentative, sometimes critical even of their subjects, and always thought-provoking and illuminating. While they vary in style and readability as a whole they are an important contribution in understanding for either the general reader or the student interested in the ghost story. I can therefore recommend this unique book, a book which I expect I shall return to for renewed insight into a fascinating and important aspect of the development of American literature and society.

J.T. Moore

Lancelot in Translation


No one questions the importance of Chrétien de Troyes as the originator of the Arthurian romance. Few medieval authors attract as much attention or as many translations. The main point of disharmony among translators involves the decision whether to turn Chrétien's poetic narratives into English verse or prose.

I am convinced that poems should always be translated as poems; so I begin with sympathy for Ruth Cline's verse translations. As with her previ-
ous translations (of Yvain and Perceval), Cline has chosen to translate Chrétien's rhymed octosyllabic French couplets into rhymed English couplets. For me, the rhyming leads her into difficulties that too often force her into stilted, unpoetic language. In those instances the need to rhyme overwhelms her ability to recreate other aspects of Chrétien's genius, particularly his ability to move his narrative simultaneously as a story and as an exploration of the moral implications of the emerging chivalric code. Even so, Cline's verse gives far more a sense that Chrétien composed poetic narrative than, for example, does the recently published translation by David Staines. Lancelot is Chrétien's most problematic romance. He seems uncomfortable with its theme of adulterous love. In part he responds by adopting a subtly ironic tone, especially when describing Lancelot's considerable passion for Queen Guinevere. Cline's version captures that irony. Highly recommended.

Dennis M. Kratz

A Languorous Stroll Through Familiar Fields


Tzvetan Todorov's book on The Fantastic (1970; tr. 1973) has spawned almost as many sequels by other hands as Conan the Conqueror, although it is not entirely clear why. Was it really such a tremendous feat of intellect to observe that there are some stories which hesitate between natural and supernatural explanations of the experiences which they relate, resisting to the bitter end the temptation to spill over into one or the other? Does the observation really become any more interesting if one can claim convincingly that in addition to the meagre handful of actual examples which Todorov offered there are dozens more? Is the dense jargon which is so often used to dress up such adventures in accumulation anything more than a gullible emperor's latest birthday suit? Most importantly, does the Todorovian perspective actually add anything significant to an explication du texte? Although Neil Cornwell's book is far more readable than Christine Brooke-Rose's ultra-dens A Rhetoric of the Unreal (1981) and rather more plausible in its arguments than Rosemary Jackson's Fantasy: the Literature of Subversion (1981), I still cannot find any convincing reason within its pages to reject the hypothesis that the answers to the four questions listed above are: no, no, no, and no. The author's background in Russian studies allows him to extend the usual range of discussion to take in some neglected writers—notably Vladimir Odoevsky, on whose work Cornwell seems to be the world's foremost (and perhaps only) expert—and the timing of the book's
release has enabled him to add a quick “postscript” on the furor which followed publication of Salman Rushdie’s *The Satanic Verses*, but the book is otherwise a languorous stroll through familiar fields, whose commentary on the scenery does not seem to add much to the preceding commentaries which it cites so liberally.

Serious scholars of literary fantasy will need access to this book for its commentaries on Russian works—its essays on Puskin’s *The Queen of Spades* and Mikhail Bulgakov are solid and interesting—but they may find that the rest of its analyses tend to the over-familiar. Having said that, though, it must be added that the advantages of the present volume from the point of view of teachers who elect to place literary fantasy on the syllabus are considerable. It does provide a succinct account of previous work in the field; it takes in a wider—and perhaps better balanced—range of examples than most of its predecessors; and it is clearly written by the standards of its field. As an educational tool it will probably work better than any previous work of the same theoretical stripe, although some teachers will probably prefer to employ a textbook which is not quite so hung up on matters of genre-definition—Colin Manlove’s *Modern Fantasy* (1975) or Brian Attebery’s more tightly-focused *The Fantasy Tradition in American Literature* (1980).

*Brian Stableford*

**Useful Contribution to Feminist Discourse**


Anyone who undertakes a critical look at generic fiction—critical in the literary rather than the pejorative sense—is willing to take risks. Anne Cranny-Francis is no exception. From Australia, she deals mainly with American fiction, setting it in a broad socio-economic context, and bringing to bear upon it a range of critical approaches. In each of her chapters—one each on science fiction, fantasy, utopias, detective fiction, and romance—she outlines the history of the generic form, discusses the (patriarchal) socio-cultural agreements that underlie it and that it helps hold in place, and shows, by contrast, what a feminist writer must do (1) to bring these agreements up for discussion and (2) to expose them as agreements, rather than as “laws of nature.”

Cranny-Francis begins with a general discussion of generic fiction, especially its historic, economic and political bases, and introduces her critical position. Her discrimination between “subject position” and “reading position” proves exceptionally useful to her continuing discussion. Her approach seems generally direct, perceptive, and (aside from technical jar-
gon), clear. She uncovers the social, economic, and psychological attitudes underlying the various genres to demonstrate that a feminist “reworking of a popular genre must be accompanied by a thorough reworking of its constitutive conventions which can be achieved only with a detailed understanding of their historical development and ideological significance.”

What Cranny-Francis does well, she does very well indeed. While analyzing individual texts, she discloses the social and economic assumptions underlying them acutely and dispassionately. Her coverage of feminist generic writers is selective. She develops tactics, successfully demonstrating an approach which can easily be used by others.

I have more trouble with the way she distinguishes among genres, especially in her discussion of “fantasy.” It’s almost impossible to separate her “secondary world fantasy” category from her science fiction category, especially since she uses Anne McCaffrey’s “Pern” books to illustrate SF and Marion Zimmer Bradley’s “Darkover” books to illustrate fantasy. Clearly, she does not use standard critical definitions of “fantasy” and “science fiction.” She includes “horror” under “fantasy”; her discussion of “horror” seems virtually limited to vampire tales, and ignores such revisions of the “real” as Shirley Jackson’s.

She limits her discussion of detective fiction to feminist revisions of the “amateur detective,” arguing persuasively that the “hard-boiled” or “police procedural” tales, while interesting, create fewer dislocations and are more easily analyzed. She also covers the “Harlequin” romance, even while acknowledging that, as a genre, it encodes the patriarchal mythos most firmly; her discussion of the foundations of romance with both the Brontés seems very useful. She also notes the fairy-tale aspect of the “romance,” but does not include it as a sub-genre of fantasy.

Her most compelling analysis comes with her discussion of utopian fiction. Here she not only seems most at home, both with the genre and with the texts, but also provides a clear definition of utopian fiction. Unclear definition strikes me as one of the drawbacks of this book; it is refreshing to avoid it here.

There are also a few problems with the scholarly apparatus of this book, mainly in the bibliography and index. Cranny-Francis usefully divides the bibliography among her various chapters, but sometimes misses a reference, and gives only the current (re)publication date for older works. Thus, when she mentions that the narrative technique in Gilman’s Herland reflects the rising popularity of science fiction, an unwary reader, finding a 1979 date attached to Herland, might believe her argument. In 1915, however, the model most apt to have influenced Gilman was the scientific romance, which would more appropriately have been referred to here. The index covers authors and titles almost exclusively; using it to follow thematic discussions is not possible.
Feminist Fiction provides a valuable addition to the field of feminist criticism. While its language seems technical, it is limpidly clear next to that of many other feminist critics; while some of her distinctions need clarification, she has broken the ground. It does seem overly simplistic to claim, as Cranny-Francis does, that taking "a" feminist reading position invariably clarifies otherwise problematic texts, as though all feminists held the same attitudes, but it does seem useful to notice how texts (many long explicated through the "obvious" patriarchal model) look when discussed from alternate perspectives. An acute reader can follow Cranny-Francis' lead, and construct his/her own "reader position" through which to view them. Feminist Fiction should not be the only work of feminist criticism in one's academic library, but it certainly should be included.

Martha A. Bartter

War and Other Problems


This is one of a series published by the University of Manchester concerned with various aspects of cultural politics from Renaissance drama to television. As the title indicates, it covers a miscellaneous range of subjects from Vietnam to the atom bomb. Except for two pieces on Lem's Solaris and the Strugatskys in the context of pre-glasnost communism, the volume focuses primarily on American literature and American themes, sometimes giving them an interesting British slant. As with most collections of this sort, the quality is uneven but most of the essays are well worth reading.

Since the intended audience seems to be the political scientist rather than the SF specialist, many of the articles go over ground which will already be familiar to readers of this review. Jacqueline Pearson's article on sexual politics and women's science fiction, for example, does not break new ground but does provide a cogent summary of the role of women in SF from early writers like C.L. Moore to recent feminist writings. She uses the career of Marion Zimmer Bradley as a paradigm of the changing attitudes towards sex and genders and discusses the themes of woman as alien and transsexuality at length. Edward James's excellent article on race in SF, on the other hand, deals with material that has not received sufficient attention. His account of SF about "the yellow peril" reminds us that racism is not just a black issue. In other stories, aliens or robots act as stand-ins for non-white races. However, I believe James misses the self-conscious condescension of Heinlein's supposedly non-racist fiction (a parallel to his treatment of women in his later
books), and I wonder if his conclusion that things really have improved in the past thirty years is not overly optimistic. James is also the author of "Violent Revolution in American Science Fiction" a perceptive look at another neglected subject. There are other good pieces by Alasdair Spark on Vietnam and Carl Tighe on Lem's Solaris.

The volume ends with articles on atomic war by the three Americans who have written most extensively on nuclear war and American society—Paul Brians, H. Bruce Franklin, and Martha Bartter, with Brians' commentary and annotated bibliography on "Nuclear War Fiction for Young Readers" particularly valuable. No index, but each essay provides a bibliography or notes. The hardcover version of this slim volume is overpriced, but I recommend the more reasonable paperback to those interested in SF as a mirror of modern social issues.

Lynn F. Williams

**Botched Tolkien Encyclopedia**


This attractive coffee table book proclaims itself "The first encyclopedic illustrated guide to the world of Middle Earth and the Undying Lands." That's not exactly true, since earlier similar undertakings include Robert Foster's *Guide to Middle Earth* (1978), J.E.A. Tyler's *New Tolkien Companion* (1979), Karen Wynn Fonstad's *Atlas of Middle-earth* (1981; rev.ed., 1991), and Day's own *Tolkien Bestiary* (1979), but this new effort is the most visually spectacular, and the color and vitality of illustrations alone draw you to the book. However, an encyclopedia should prove to be accurate, reliable, and easy to use, and this one is riddled with problems.

First, the organization causes trouble. Instead of a single alphabetic format it is divided into five sections: History, Geography, Sociology, Natural History, and Biography. This division has little critical justification and numerous disadvantages. Tolkien's tree-like "Ents," for instance, are listed among the peoples of Middle-earth at the start of "Sociology," but they are not included in the charts, genealogies or main listings in that section, and there is no hint of where to find them. (They appear, in fact, under "Natural History."”) The four-page general index doesn't help much either, since it’s brief and error-ridden. (The primary listing for "Ents" is given as "220-2"; the entry is actually 200-2.)

Cross-references are necessary throughout, but are too few. Under "Beren," for example, there is no mention that Luthien is elven, an absolutely essential point in their love story. The "Luthien" entry identifies her as an elven princess in love with a mortal, and includes significant additional
details of the relationship, but it doesn’t say she’s also called “Tinuviel,” a name listed separately within “Natural History,” where two of three paragraphs are devoted to Luthien Tinuviel. “See also” notes would have covered many conspicuous holes.

Spelling, proofing, and typing errors abound, from the section title of “Georgaphy” on the contents page to the separate indexing of “Miriel” and “Muriel” as two different characters rather than one (“Miriel”) misspelled in places in Day’s text. Similarly, Tolkien’s “Indis” disappears entirely and becomes “Indris.”

The most alluring aspects of the book are its prolific, colorful illustrations, charts, and borders. However, many of these are reprinted from Day’s Tolkien Bestiary. Some genealogies are improved, but Bestiary, partly because it doesn’t claim to be encyclopedic, seems on the whole a better book. Much of the art is better presented there, in the layout for which it was originally designed (it is often oddly cropped in this new version), and some of the best artwork isn’t included, while the new plates added are often odd, or even simply wrong. Artist Tracy O’Dea, a newcomer to this edition, depicts fuzzy-looking elves with beards and another new artist, Graham Bence, provides a dull and inaccurate painting of Bag End with a rectangular door and windows, contradicting Tolkien’s famous description of the hobbit home with its “perfectly round door like a porthole, painted green” and “deep-set round windows looking over his garden.”

One interesting new addition is eight pages of maps by artist Sally Davies portraying the evolution of Tolkien’s world from creation to the beginning of historic time. Davies’ visualization of the series of gradual changes which move the flat disk of Tolkien’s mythology to the globed world of historic Earth is a fascinating sequence.

But on the whole Day’s encyclopedia contains too many errors and shortcomings to be reliable. The standard reference tools will for the present continue to be Tyler’s New Tolkien Companion, and the authoritative glossaries, notes, and maps Christopher Tolkien is providing in his carefully edited editions of his father’s unpublished writings. For a single volume, choose Tyler’s comprehensive alphabetic guide. It includes more thorough linguistic information and more helpful “see also” references than Day, and the book is far easier to use.

Richard Mathews

**Handy Lewis Handbook**


In a brief preface, Colin Duriez states his purpose in compiling this guide: “A [*sic*] C.S. Lewis Handbook has been written to encourage exploration and discovery (or rediscovery) of the ‘Christian world of C.S.
Lewis', "and that statement points to a major weakness in an otherwise very useful and usable book.

Duriez's Christian orientation and purpose are obvious in his explanation of some of the obvious Christian elements of Lewis's writing. For example, Duriez carefully explains that Aslan is not an allegorical figure standing for the Christ of this world but a fully-realized Christ as he would appear in Narnia. In addition, entries from Lewis's life (Joy Davidman), from his thought (theology of romance), and from his literary career are all discussed in a Christian light.

This Christian orientation, however, suggests that Duriez either ignores or is ignorant of other major influences on Lewis's life and work. His explanation of the Narnia series never mentions anything but Christian influences. The Scandinavian source for Fenris Ulf, the Greek source for Mr. Tumnus, the Celtic word "caer" as the source for Lewis's word "cair" (as in Cair Paravel), the fairy tale (if not folktale) source for the White Queen, and the pre-Christian origins of Father Christmas are not even mentioned. Moreover, the non-Christian aspects of Lewis's medievality are given very little attention.

Otherwise, *The C.S. Lewis Handbook* is a very handy volume. Duriez includes not only characters and items from Lewis's writings and people from his life, but also includes very informative entries, such as the one on Dr. Ransom (from the Space Trilogy), and very helpful entries, such as the one on Romanticism. Duriez includes other materials which increase this book's utility. As the end of each major entry, there are suggestions for additional reading, and items mentioned within one entry which are discussed elsewhere in the book are asterisked. At the back of the book, there is a reference guide which lists the various entries under general topics (the life of C.S. Lewis) or under the titles of the books in which they appear, and there are two bibliographies—one of Lewis's writings and one of writings about Lewis.

The C.S. Lewis expert may not need this book, but for others—scholars and fans—interested in Lewis, *The C.S. Lewis Handbook* will be a handy reference guide within the limitations imposed by its compiler.

C.W. Sullivan III

Fourteen Views of C. S. Lewis


There have been several recent collections and single author works of criticism on the literary achievements of C. S. Lewis. The majority of them have attempted to analyze his work—fiction, non-fiction, and religious es-
says alike—to determine the source of his inspiration and the meaning behind it all.

This book takes an entirely different perspective. It focuses less on the text that Lewis wrote, and more on the facets of his personality and beliefs which, combined, make his work what it is and give it the flavor that is unmistakably Lewis.

The tone is set immediately, with a preface by Owen Barfield; a longtime friend of Lewis, the executor of his literary estate, and a scholar in his own right. He points out that, to one coming fresh to Lewis works and having no knowledge of him, it might seem that there were at least three separate authors who all happened to share the same name and literary clarity.

This collection of fourteen essays illuminates that idea. Although each takes a slightly different approach and examines a different portion of Lewis', work, they all agree that Lewis had a remarkable style which is difficult to describe. Words such as clarity, consistency, unity, sincerity, and lucidity are used but Barfield, perhaps, comes closest when he sums up all the qualities into what he refers to as "presence of mind."

One idea which comes forth clearly is that Lewis himself loved to read for "sensation" (not to be confused with "sensational," which is quite a different matter). His idea of quality lay not in the writing style itself (although he could and did complain about poor writing, such as "cliches, jocosities, and frothy eloquence"), but in the atmosphere of the story; the feelings that the writing produced in the reader. He loved the essence of the writing, and it is that quality in his own works that has made his works so noteworthy.

This book is more scholarly than many SF readers will appreciate. However, it is an excellent addition to the study of a notable author.

W. D. Stevens

Questionable Arthurian Scholarship


Fascination with the Arthurian legend has encouraged numerous attempts to recover the history behind the legend. Since so little hard evidence has survived from the Dark Ages, some authors have sifted through the body of fiction for clues about historical sources, producing what may be called historical speculation. This ranges from the attractively plausible to the wildly improbable, as clear judgment is clouded by enthusiasm.

Having already dealt with Arthur and Merlin, Goodrich now makes Guinevere the subject of just such historical speculation. She is among those who argue that Arthur lived in the north of Britain, not the southwest as most
have assumed. Guinevere she identifies as a Pictish princess and holy Druidess whom Arthur married for her inheritance of Stirlingshire in central Scotland. Camelot is the fortress of Stirling. Indignantly rejecting charges of adultery, Goodrich insists that Lancelot was no more than Guinevere's devoted follower whom she initiated into the mysteries of the Grail Castle on the Isle of Man.

These and other claims, including Guinevere's abduction and the presence of a False Guinevere, rest primarily upon two pieces of evidence: the Guinevere Monument at Meigle in Perthshire, Scotland, and the thirteenth-century French Vulgate Lancelot. Behind the former Goodrich discerns a lost early source, The Northern Annals.

The problem with such evidence is that it is untrustworthy. The monument is but one among many with Arthurian associations, all of which cannot be right. The Vulgate Lancelot is a work of literature, not history, and there is no way of determining how much of it, if any, is based upon early material. Goodrich accepts some features as authentic and rejects others, but her judgments are debatable. Thus she identifies the "murders of brides so early in their marriage" and "the general absence of mothers" in Arthurian texts as evidence of matriarchy: "the bride was utterly expendable as soon as she bore a daughter." Bride murder is not common in Arthurian texts, however, and Goodrich offers no evidence to back her claim. The absence of mothers probably results from the focus on the chivalric deeds of the hero by authors of romance, who largely ignore children and the lower classes as well. If one were to seek an historical as opposed to literary explanation, why not a high mortality rate in childbirth?

The lack of footnotes prevents the reader from checking some claims, such as the identification of Bedivere as Guinevere's brother and the accusation that Arthur was the father of Gawain, neither of which appear anywhere in Arthurian tradition to my knowledge. Other claims rest upon the arguments of early scholars who lacked the evidence of more recent findings.

Deprived of convincing evidence, the reader must rely upon the author's judgment, as she imperiously hails as "brilliant those who support her argument, or dismisses as "wearisome" and "incorrect" those who do not. Goodrich becomes herself the high priestess, leading the confused reader through arcane mysteries much as she pictures Guinevere did Lancelot. What she requires is faith, and those who grant it will be rewarded with a vision of a strange and intriguing world. Those who approach this book with a skeptical and enquiring mind, however, will be deterred by its arbitrariness, its muddled arguments, and its self-congratulatory tone.

Ray Thompson
Canonizing a Movie


The title of this collection of twenty-one original essays on a single film seems just right. "Retrofitting," designer Syd Mead's term for the old-but-new appearance of the technology and architecture of the film, seems to be exactly what Kerman and her contributors have set out to do for the reputation of a film which was a critical and commercial disappointment upon its release nearly a decade ago. In a single swoop, the book tries to bring Blade Runner in league with 2001 as a motherlode of critical discourse.

It almost works. W. Russel Gray and Leonard Heldreth illustrate the film's debt to hardboiled detective fiction, Aaron Barlow provides a fine perspective on Dick's androids (although he barely mentions the movie), Steve Carper analyzes well the role of the citiescape in the film, John Pierce relates it to the SF tradition of world-building, William Kolb provides almost obsessively detailed accounts of various script changes and a minute-by-minute analysis of the completed film, and Andrew Stiller even looks for significance in Vangelis's music-and-sound score. In what is probably the best essay in the book, Brooks Landon offers acute insights into the process of filmic adaptation of SF works.

On the other hand, there may be too much here for one gulp. Although Kerman has made some effort to avoid excessive overlap, and although the essayists seem aware of each other's contributions, there is still an extraordinary amount of repetition. Too often, it is repetition of the obvious: the sets are strikingly detailed, the android is a version of the doppelganger, Deckard is a tough guy who learns compassion. With only so much movie there to interpret, it's not surprising that some essays spin off in unexpected directions. Marilyn Gwaltney's essay on androids and personhood doesn't need the film at all to make its points, while David Desser's efforts to connect the movie to Paradise Lost almost seems to prove that Milton had seen the movie, rather than vice versa. This sort of thing can lead to tunnel vision, as when C. Carter Colwell finds all sorts of parallels in Richard Slotkin's Regeneration Through Violence and then attacks the film's reviewers for "ignoring" the insights provided by that book.

Although all the contributors understandably admire the film (so much so that it comes as a relief when William Kolb acknowledges several weaknesses), the variety of critical voices is stimulating. Essentially, though, they fall into two basic approaches which at times threaten to cancel each other
out. While the researchers (Landon, Rickman, Kolb, Carper) demonstrate convincingly that the final film is a patchwork of compromises, collaborations, and revisions, the theorists (Desser, Gray, Boozer, and Kerman herself) persist in treating it authorially. Kerman insists on its "fundamental integrity" even though other essayists relate how even director Ridley Scott was dissatisfied with some aspects of the finished film.

My only other complaint about this book, which ought to tell us almost everything we want to know about Blade Runner, is that it doesn't. William Kolb's 43-page bibliography of criticism is excellent, but there is no complete list of credits for the film and little attempt to relate it to the careers of Scott, screenwriter Hampton Fancher, or designer Syd Mead. Nearly all the essays mention the striking visuals of the film, but cinematographer Jordan Cronenweth never gets mentioned. The result can be a bit frustrating, especially to those interested in the collaborative aspects of filmmaking. Still, Kerman apparently wasn't trying to be definitive. As a collection of pieces about the issues raised by the film (which is all the book's title claims), the book is invaluable to any student of SF film, and a great resource for anyone who teaches it.

Gary K. Wolfe

The Careless Sage


After a brief summary of Merlin's appearance in earlier literature, this study focuses upon his role in three cyclical French romances of the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries: Robert de Boron's Joseph and Merlin, together with the Didot Perceval, for which Macdonald believes Robert was the "mastermind or architect"; the Vulgate Cycle; and the Post Vulgate Cycle. She argues that all three cycles are "various stages" of a single project directed by a team of Cistercian monks: in Robert's cycle Merlin is used "to link the Biblical and Arthurian material"; in the Vulgate he "unites the love interest with the dynastic and religious"; in the Post Vulgate his role is enlarged so that he takes his place at the center of the Arthurian drama as "not only the prophet of Arthur's doom but also one of its chief causes, for his weakness for the fair sex makes him lose all his other great powers."

This material has been studied too little, partly because of the complexity of the French prose tradition, and those interested in the figure of Merlin will learn about a crucial stage in his evolution before he appears in Malory.
Unfortunately, the bibliography ignores more recent publications, and some claims are inadequately documented, like the spurious identification of Morgan le Fay as both the Grail Damsel and hideous damsel in the Perceval of Chrétien de Troyes. Most disturbing, however, are the errors. Some of the blame for the many spelling and punctuation mistakes lies with the publisher, but Garland is surely not responsible for repeatedly misspelling “led” as “lead” and for ambiguous sentences.

Then there are the factual errors, especially in the earlier chapters. Mordred is not “the son born to Arthur through incest with his sister” in Geoffrey of Monmouth; incest is not introduced until the Vulgate Mort Artu nearly a century later. Nor is Bedivere’s name associated with Guinevere in “earlier Celtic romance”; that association had to wait until the twentieth century. Sometimes Macdonald even contradicts herself: in the Vulgate Cycle Mordred’s mother is variously Morgan and her oldest sister, while Yvonet’s father is Yder and Urien.

The proliferation of such basic errors undermines confidence in Macdonald’s work. This is unfortunate since her assessment of Merlin’s shifting role, though it exaggerates his importance, deserves attention. As it stands, however, it is too unreliable to recommend to anyone lacking sufficient knowledge of the material to guard against the mistakes. In a scholarly study one expects more care, especially at so high a price.

Ray Thompson

Poor Polidori


Macdonald’s full and fascinating profile of Doctor John William Polidori (1795-1821) is a first full-length life of Byron’s traveling companion and physician. The adjective “poor” was Byron’s epithet for this marginal member of the Byron-Shelley circle which had convened at Diodati on Lake Geneva in the summer of 1816. Everything that Polidori did during his short life of failures, repressions, angry fits, and bursts of literary activity is implied in Byron’s terse characterization. He handled all human relationships poorly, but none more poorly than his relationship to himself. Macdonald’s psycho-biographic approach makes this flaw of the romantic ego clear. Polidori was unstable, self-centered, and unable or unwilling to transform his egotism into artistic success. His single literary accomplishment, the vampire tale which will forever be associated with his name, was itself written as an act of literary revenge against Byron. His irascible relationship with Byron and the Shellesys and his break with them
reflects Polidori's entire life in one tense episode. Abused by father, family, and the world, Polidori was psychologically incapable of forming true and lasting emotional ties. Conversely, he also sought role models in the very people he despised. According to Macdonald, Polidori's detestation for his father found expression in his resentment and fear of Byron. Placed in a Freudian context, Macdonald's claim that "Polidori was beginning to play the role of rebellious son with Byron" goes far toward explaining his life as a series of petty paternal antagonisms, rebellions, and maladjustments. Puerile envy was also evident in Polidori's unmotivated dislike for Shelley since it stemmed from anger over the fact that he "drew Byron's attention away from Polidori without even trying." During the Diodati sojourn, he even managed to alienate Mary Shelley by behavior that alternated between sullen self-righteousness and obnoxious conceit. Like all others in Polidori's life, the three greater Romantics would tolerate him without ever liking or admiring him. By the time he had quarreled with Byron for the final time and moved on toward suicide, poor Polidori had become "Pollydolly," a no-longer-amusing nuisance.

Macdonald's portrait renders Polidori a Byronic hero on a minute and mediocre scale. His emotional explosions, posturings, wanderings, social cruelty, exhibitionistic melancholia, and self-detestation make him seem like a Childe Harold figure or tormented Manfred in petty rather than grand terms. His effort to fulfill the Byronic image turned him into a pathetic caricature of the Byronic personality, a man of "one virtue, and a thousand crimes" [Byron's Corsair who was also "mad, bad, and dangerous to know" but only in annoying and never in heroically evil terms. To paint this portrait, biographer Macdonald lets Polidori speak for himself by citing extensive stretches of Polidori's letters to his father and sisters and his Diary of the literary year, 1816. The four large chapters of the biography are sub-divided into twenty panels or psychoanalytic vignettes, each one depicting an unpleasant incident or anecdote which brings Polidori's failure to gain the attention that he most needed and craved into high relief. The materials are organized as a kind of internalized travelogue or last journey of a tortured young man, a journey toward inevitable suicide which begins when he is engaged by Byron, then dismissed by Byron, then wanders to Italy, and finally returns to England to administer poison to himself on August 24, 1821. Each chapter seems to contain a relevant peevish moment when Polidori rebels on his own terms against a father-figure who was both wanted and hated. The anecdotal skill of the biographer in recreating the personality of Polidori is demonstrated on the last page of the book where we are given a posthumous glimpse of this minuscule Byron manqué. When Polidori's nephew, the Pre-Raphaelite poet and painter, W.M. Rossetti, attempted to communicate with him during a séance, he inquired of Polidori's spirit "Are you happy?—two raps, meaning not exactly."

If Polidori failed at living, did he also fail at literature? The biography makes certain that aside from his regeneration of the vampire tale, Polidori's other writings, even his medical and scientific essays, have an intrinsic in-
terest for scholars seeking to understand the relationship between science and the romantic imagination. The *Vampire* itself is not just one more platitudinous Gothic fillip but a psychologically sophisticated and artistically improved horror story. It became an immediate model for a new type of vampirism and it has survived as a work of positive influence on the growth of the vampire tale. As Macdonald writes, "The tale occupies a pivotal position in the history of a major romantic symbol; vampires were never the same again, and it seems worth asking why not." The first vampire tale of the English Gothic tradition may have originated in Polidori's personal animosities, but its concentration on the theme of psychic rape gave an entirely new direction to a stock creature of horror folklore. Polidori's other publications have never been adequately studied prior to this biography. His tragic tale of self-victimization and incest, *Ernestus Berchtold; or, The Modern Oedipus*, his nature poetry collected in *Ximenes, the Wreath, and Other Poems*, his Burkean treatise, *An Essay Upon the Source of Positive Pleasure*, and his Beccarian polemic on the injustice of the death penalty, "On the Punishment of Death", are all carefully assessed by the biographer to reveal an intellectual side of Polidori which even Byron in his sadistic teasing of Polidori, had missed completely.

If Polidori is nothing more than a footnote in the career of Lord Byron, the biography nevertheless makes it clear that marginal figures like poor Polidori are worthy of study not simply because they illuminate the Byrons of literary history but also because such study can answer the need for a larger context against which to understand canonical authors since the minor figures "provide clearer examples of certain kinds of intertextual phenomena." Solid research, admirable documentation of evidence, and vigorous narrative movement make Polidori's own story now visible as an independent life struggling after an identity of its own beneath the overwhelming Byronic shadow. Scholars of the Romantic period will not like or admire Polidori after reading this biography; they will, however, understand him. Recommended for specialists and general readers; for graduate and undergraduate libraries.

*Frederick S. Frank*

**Postmodern Cyberpunk**


In this ambitious volume, McCaffery argues for the existence of a close thematic connection between cyberpunk SF and postmodernism, a connection based largely on a shared interest in the complex ways in which modern technology has caused "ruptures and dislocations" within our society. He presents a short history of both the cyberpunk and postmodernist movements, touching
on numerous figures connected with one or the other, and suggesting similarities in their work. Gibson and Sterling receive mention, as do Burroughs and Pynchon. Dick and Ballard pop up briefly. Short discussions of the work of such prominent postmodernist theorists as Jean Baudrillard and Fredric Jameson bracket a quick look at MTV, Talking Heads, and Blade Runner. As an introduction, the piece works well, aptly demonstrating the kind of high-speed information transfer so frequently associated with cyberpunk. It stakes out an enormous territory, substantiates few of its claims, but brilliantly sets the stage for what is to come.

Following his introduction, McCaffery, with the aid of Richard Kadrey, provides a series of thumbnail sketches of the major figures and works associated with cyberpunk, considerable space being reserved for authors who can be seen as influences. Some of the latter are obvious—Bester, Pynchon, Hammett, Burroughs, Burgess. Others are less obvious, but intriguing—Robert Stone, Patti Smith, Bernard Wolfe. A few—Mary Shelley, Olaf Stapledon—seem farfetched.

The rest of the volume is divided into fiction and non-fiction. The former section includes a number of short stories which were originally published in the 1988 cyberpunk issue of the Mississippi Review, most notably Shirley's "Wolves of the Plateau" and Sterling's "20 evocations," and it's nice to have them more readily available. Other stories are by Cadigan, Delaney, and Shiner. Also included are excerpts from novels by SF writers (Gibson, Kadrey, Laidlaw, Rucker, Shepard, and Sterling) and by postmodernists (Kathy Acker, Ballard, Burroughs, Don DeLillo, Mark Leyner, Joseph McElroy, Ted Mooney, Pynchon, and William Vollmann). Completing this section are several poems by Rob Hardin, essentially undefinable fictions by Harold Jaffe, Thom Jurek, and Misha, and illustrations by Ferret and Jim O'Barr.

The non-fiction section includes excerpts from the work of such postmodern theorists as Baudrillard, Derrida, Jameson, Arthur Kroker and David Cook, and Jean-Francois Lyotard. In general these pieces are too short to be any more than suggestive. More valuable are the critical essays. Joan Gordon argues persuasively that much cyberpunk fiction has a feminist undertext; Veronica Hollinger, in what may be the best essay in the volume, explores the use of postmodernist themes by Gibson, Sterling, and K.W. Jeter; in separate essays Istvan Csicsery-Ronay and George Slusser offer intelligent but surprisingly ambivalent analyses of cyberpunk; Brooks Landon discusses the link between cyberpunk and rock video; Tom Maddox does a solid explication of Bruce Sterling's Mechanist/Shaper narratives; McCaffery explores the interaction between cyberpunk and punk rock music; and Brian McHale examines the gradual convergence between science fiction and the mainstream. McHale's essay is particularly interesting for his discussion of both Pynchon's influence on the cyberpunks and Gibson's influence on the postmodernist Kathy Acker. The one academic essay that I found less than useful was by Darko Suvin, who begins by admitting that his knowl-
edge of cyberpunk is limited and then, rather high-handedly, goes on to criticise Gibson and Sterling largely on the basis of their political correctness.

The casebook also includes an interview with Gibson by McCaffery; Steve Brown’s account of some twenty years on the periphery of the cyberpunk movement; Sterling’s preface from *Mirrorshades: The Cyberpunk Anthology*; Takayuki Tatsumi’s explanation of the sub-genre’s enormous popularity in Japan; and David Porush’s short, but beautiful meditation on reality, the brain, and the inevitability of cyberpunk. Of less value is a typically incoherent piece by Timothy Leary. The book concludes with a bibliography of books, films, and music that the editor considers relevant to the study of cyberpunk and postmodernism.

*Storming the Reality Studio* is a valuable book, but not without flaws. Although most of the major novels of the cyberpunk movement are represented, McCaffery has intentionally chosen to anthologize little-known and often rather minor works of short fiction. The book would have been stronger if it had included major short stories by Sterling and Gibson. Also, short works or novel excerpts from Swanwick, Spinrad, Jeter, Bear, Effinger, or Williams undoubtedly have been of more value to the serious scholar or student than some of the fiction included. Finally, it would have been more useful to organize the book by theme or genre rather than alphabetically by author. Jumping randomly from cyberpunk to postmodernist, from theorist to critic to anecdotalist, was just plain confusing. I know that random cut and paste is a major postmodernist technique, but logical organization would have furthered McCaffery’s aims more effectively.

Despite these shortcomings, *Storming the Reality Studio* qualifies as a very important book, the academics’ equivalent of Sterling’s *Mirrorshades* anthology, and should be required reading for anyone interested in either cyberpunk or postmodernism.

*Vonnegut To Date*


This collection of twenty-four reviews and critical essays is intended to provide an overview of Vonnegut criticism through the publication of *Galapagos* in 1985 (although one review of the 1987 *Bluebeard* is also included). As such, it is both more comprehensive and far more current than such earlier collections as Jerome Klinkowitz’s *Vonnegut Statement* (1973) or Klinkowitz and Donald Lawler’s *Vonnegut in America* and is probably the most useful single collection of Vonnegut criticism to date. As Merrill notes in his introduction, the Vonnegut industry has begun to taper off a bit lately, and thus it is now possible to gain some kind of overall perspective on the arc of his reputation.
Essentially, that reputation falls into four stages—the early reviewers who saw in Vonnegut's science fiction his ambition to become a serious satirist, the academic critics who enthusiastically brought him into the fold of the literary establishment in the 1970s, later revisionists who began to view his work as self-indulgent and sentimental, and the reclamation workers of the 1980s who argue that Vonnegut's work as a whole constitutes a kind of mythos, which deepens and enriches our understanding of individual novels. The best representative of the latter position is Kathryn Hume, whose two essays in this volume constitute the most useful and insightful overviews of Vonnegut's fiction.

Merrill's long introduction is one of the most fascinating pieces in the book. It's an excellent history of Vonnegut's critical reputation, but it also reads at times like an inadvertent satire of critical fads and fashions since the 1960s, with each new essay or insight solemnly detailed as though it were part of some big-endian military campaign. The essays that follow well illustrate the ebb and flow of Vonnegut studies that Merrill describes: one small review from 1952, four pieces from the sixties, nine from the seventies, six from the eighties, and four written especially for this volume. Of the new essays, the most useful is Charles Berryman's "Vonnegut's Comic Persona in Breakfast of Champions," which is the most telling account to date of how Vonnegut manipulated his own reputation to escape from the science fiction ghetto and establish himself as a cultural figure. Of the reprinted essays, many will already be familiar to readers of Vonnegut—chapters from Scholes's The Fabulators, Tanner's City of Words, Klinkowitz's Vonnegut Statement, and Harris's Contemporary American Novel of the Absurd, plus selections from various journals.

Needless to say, there are lacunae. There is virtually no discussion of Vonnegut's short fiction or essays, and The Sirens of Titan gets only a passing mention in a few essays. Vonnegut's awareness of and relationship to science fiction is treated peremptorily if at all; none of the essayists even seem aware of the existence of Theodore Sturgeon as a possible source for Kilgore Trout, or of parallels between the Trout of the later novels and the career of Philip K. Dick, or of the suspicious similarities in name between John W. Campbell, Jr., and Vonnegut's Howard W. Campbell, Jr. Except for occasional citings of other postmodernist novelists, Vonnegut is treated as sui generis—it's as though Vonnegut has a secret source of material which he knows his academic followers will be unable or unwilling to track down. If so, it apparently works.

Nevertheless, this book is essential for any student of Vonnegut. The ten reviews comprise a valuable historical record, the reprinted essays bring together in book form some of the most insightful writing on Vonnegut, and the new essays give a useful picture of his current critical standing. The book is not nearly as definitive as it wants to be, but it is as good a collection on Vonnegut as we are likely to see for some time.

Gary K. Wolfe
How Does a Holodeck Keep People from Running into Walls?


Have you ever thought how a warp engine propels the Galaxy class Enterprise beyond the speed of light? Or how the crew manages wastewater or hazardous wastes? In a detailed set of technological specifications, authors Rick Sternbach and Michael Okuda have crafted a masterpiece technical manual for the Enterprise NC-1701 D. This volume is more than adequate to fulfill a trekkie's appetite for Star Trek techno-trivia and a promising Star Trek writer's need for a reliable source of *The Next Generation* facts.

Sternbach and Okuda's manual is the second attempt to consolidate *Star Trek* technical information. The first effort was compiled by Franz Joseph in 1975 in the *Star Trek Star Fleet Technical Manual.* This remarkable attempt to describe political and technical functions of Star Fleet and the Enterprise NC-1701, in particular, presented copies of the Articles of Federation, various peace treaties, and line drawings of everything from flags and insignias to uniforms and tricorders adorn the pages of this volume. Many of the ideas presented in this manual represent the level of technology common during the late 20th century.

Sternbach and Okuda provide an evolved level of technical sophistication similar to those advances we have experienced in our own lives since the original *Star Trek* series. Using the rich technocratic language that is a trademark of *The Next Generation* (quadritronic optical subprocessors or Bussard ramscoop), this manual takes us beyond the limits of our ethnocentricistic understanding of the universe and into the world of limitless imagination. It does tend to become tedious because it is similar to Chilton's repair manual for Chevrolets made between 1964 and 1973 in attention paid to technical descriptions and diagrams. But this same tedious attention to detail gives the manual a rich feeling of authenticity.

This manual is not intended to shape *The Next Generation* into a techno-babble display combined with outstanding visual effects. As Gene Rodenberry states in the introduction, the "Enterprise is also a symbol of the vast promise of technology in the service of humankind." However, it does lack some useful information that the original *Star Trek Manual* provided us, such as maps of the federation territory, diagrams of various ship classes in the fleet, copies of the Articles of Federation, and organization of Star Fleet. Certainly, these aspects have altered during the interceding 100 years, especially for the good of humankind.

*The Next Generation Manual* is an important bit of received wisdom for fans and writers, but for few others.

*Tim Latas*
Useful Survey of the Strugatskys


This book is a survey and critical interpretation of the work of premier Soviet sf and fantasy writers Arkady and Boris Strugatsky. Potts seems not to know Russian and, with one trivial exception, he makes no reference to the substantial body of studies of the Strugatskys in French and German. Although Potts never quite says so, he thus usually seems to be pursuing the goal of assessing the Strugatsky brothers as seen from the vantage point of the English-language sf community, looking at the Soviet writers as might the typical serious English-speaking reader—hence the basis for the “Marxian invasion” pun of the monograph’s title. This is a reasonable and useful undertaking. Most of the Strugatsky corpus is available in English and, however much the Strugatskys may have suffered in sales and readership from the Anglo-American prejudice against translated science fiction, “objectively” their work is competitive with that of the top rank of Anglophone sf writers.

Apprehensions raised by Potts’s academic English-department background prove mostly unjustified. He discusses questions—such as the interrelationship of works, or the evolution of themes—that will interest any inquiring reader, not merely the university specialist, and he does so in accessible language. Potts’s academic training may even prove genuinely helpful in navigating the absurdist-fantasy component of the Strugatskys’ output.

Any English-speaker with a developed interest in the Strugatsky brothers, or even someone wondering whether their books are worth trying, will find this study useful. For that matter, students of sf or of the Strugatsky brothers from outside the Anglophone world will find it instructive to see how the brothers are interpreted by a perceptive member of the planet’s largest and most fertile sf language-community.

Potts occasionally gets himself into trouble when, implicitly, he strays from his basic vantage point and tries to deal with the Strugatskys’ place within the USSR or the world of Russian literature. Such issues really require a knowledge of Russian and some degree of familiarity with the Soviet system. For example, Potts correctly reports that the Strugatskys were never “dissidents” in the Soviet meaning of the word (a point earlier made by others including myself), but he seems not to fully realize that there are degrees of resistance and punishment short of those characteristic of a full dissident (pp.16-17). Potts might have further modified his discussion if he had been able to read, for instance, the semi-autobiographical Khromaia sud’ba ([Lame
Fate], serialized in 1985), or the various Strugatsky interviews and fragments published more recently in the newly permitted Soviet sf fanzines and prozines. However, these flaws, even alongside minor errors and questionable opinions seemingly arising from disparate other causes, are not weighty enough to impair the study’s overall worth.

**Declaration of interest:** Potts makes more extensive use of my translations and critical studies than does any other sf scholar I have encountered. I cannot help but be positively biased toward a writer so sound in his choice of source material. On the other hand, I am annoyed at Potts’s occasional errors in dealing with my work. For instance, as my translation makes perfectly clear, his interpretation of “The Meeting” (p.29) is insupportable: Pol has his back turned and is walking away when Kostylin traces sapiens on the plaque—Pol never learns for sure that he shot an intelligent being. Again, my study of the Strugatsky future history does not “assert” (p. 17) that the Strugatskys are or ever were Marxist-Leninists—it says only that this is “entirely possible.” Perhaps these positive and negative biases cancel each other out, leaving me as a reasonably objective reviewer.

**Patrick McGuire**

[McGuire’s 1977 doctoral thesis at Princeton was slightly revised and published as Red Stars: Political Aspects of Soviet Science Fiction, 1985. He wrote the chapter on Russian-language SF for my Anatomy of Wonder and has written occasional articles about SF, especially Soviet SF.—NB.]

**Women Who Kick Butt**


By emphasizing the Amazons of classical mythology and by exploring the early stories of Asian, African and American Indian peoples, Salmonson has created a dictionary of more than one thousand names of women warriors, real and fictional, for each of whom she gives a brief history. Moving forward in time, she includes Amazons created in _The Faerie Queen_ and other epics, the dramas of English and French playwrights of the Restoration era, and by a few more recent authors: Charlotte Ford Gilman of the nineteenth century, C.S. Moore and Robert C. Howard of the early twentieth century and the mid-twentieth century creators of the comic-book characters, Sheena, Queen of the Jungle, and Wonder Woman. Other twentieth-century women warriors, such as General Jinjur of _The Land of Oz_, the Free Amazons of Marion Zimmer Bradley’s Darkover, and others are omitted.
Real women who took Amazonian roles are included; many from ancient and medieval history of the Old World; even a few from Indian history of the New World. Deeds of selected women soldiers of the American, French, and Russian Revolutions, the American Civil War, and the more recent conflicts of World War II and Vietnam are included. Salmonson believes many more such women than she lists existed and that her work "touches only the peak of a buried mountain."

Her entries for general nouns (Amazons, Gorgons, hag, matriarchy, viragos, virginity, etc.) are one to two paragraph entries given for individuals; even the longest is just a page—too little space to present the thesis about women as warriors that Salmonson has evidently developed and parts of which surface in these entries. Only by reading almost every entry for mythological individuals as well as the general entries is one sure that Salmonson believes a matriarchal society was supplanted by a patriarchal and that a true Amazonian state existed for several centuries—remembered dimly by several widely different cultures—Greek, African, some Asian. I should have liked to have seen a clearer statement of her thesis than the hints of the topical entries.

The entries for individual Amazons almost always cite a source in the bibliography of about 270 books from a number of different countries, though the majority are English language books of this century. Only a couple of journal references are given. Chuan, cited as the source for the Mme. Fan entry, is not included in the bibliography. In other instances, such as St. Genevieve and Phoolan Devi, no source for the history is cited. These are minor errors in editing.

Searchers for thesis subjects will find in these pages suggestive topics: the roaring girls of the Restoration, the woman samurai; Civil War guerrilla fighters who turned outlaw; Latin American women of the 15th to 18th centuries who took up the sword; and so on.

The Encyclopedia of Amazons has faults but it is a good beginning for scholarly studies of the Amazon in history and literature. As a better dictionary than encyclopedia, its chief users may well be other authors.

Paula Strain

[Seen by chance after sending this book for review was Antonia Fraser's The Warrior Queens (Knopf, 1989, $22.95), which provides detailed profiles of Queen Boadicea (first century), Cleopatra, Zenobia, Tamara, Queen Elizabeth I, Jinga Mbandi (17th century Angola), Catherine the Great, Indira Gandhi, Golda Meir, Margaret Thatcher, and others. Well-illustrated and documented. NB]
Valuable Guide to Role Playing


*Heroic Worlds* is the sort of work that enthusiasts often produce about their hobby, seldom do others write so well and provide so much information that is difficult to find elsewhere.

The book contains an eight-page definition of "role-playing game", an eighteen-page history of the hobby, twelve pages of addresses of game publishers, a list of award winning games since 1977, a brief glossary of terms and a four-page chronology; and all these are appendices to the Game Index, almost four hundred pages attempting to list every edition of every English-language game that falls within their definition.

Schick, himself a game designer, defines a roll-playing game as "quantified interactive storytelling," a defensible description that allows him to limit his coverage to manageable limits. A further requirement for inclusion is that the game has to include rules for the creation and development of individual characters in the story: this restriction allows Schick to exclude war games of the type popularized by H. G. Wells (usually called "miniatures" within the hobby because of their use of model soldiers). Board games are excluded unless they allow the creation of individualized characters.

Some forms are excluded pretty much by fiat. Schick does not cover: (1) play-by-mail games because they cannot be played solo (although) solo play is not a requirement for any other form; (2) mystery party games (not enough quantification); (3) live-action role-playing games ("This genre of games is still in its infancy and has not yet developed a significant publication history"); and (4) various kinds of books with plots that vary randomly or at the reader’s decision. A fifth area not covered is computer role-playing games, excluded by Schick only because of the size of the field; he himself calls for someone to study this field.

The material that remains is vast: literally thousands of entries detail the publication history of rule sets and supplements; of "scenarios," which are subplots, settings, and characters provided to help the game master create or enrich his game; sourcebooks (what kinds of weapons were used in medieval Japan and how much damage would they do within the particular game system? what were the cult religions of Imperial Rome and what did one have to do to become a priest? how fast did an armored knight move on horseback?); and a host of players' aid from preprinted forms to rules for solo play. After a combined twenty-five years in the hobby as players and faculty advisor for a student gaming club, the reviewers were astonished to find over 250 separate game systems enumerated.
So the book’s coverage of the hobby is impressive, and its authenticity is aided by fourteen of the best-known game designers who provide brief anecdotes and historical comment on the creation of the games. To check the accuracy of the work, we compared the book’s entries to over thirty games in our own collection: for a first edition, the reliability of *Heroic Worlds* is also impressive.

For seventeen of those games, the book’s entry was correct in every detail: date and place of publications, author or authors, illustrators (if any), number and pagination of books and pamphlets provided with the game, maps and other associated materials were all listed. The only information lacking that a collector might want is the original or current price. For eleven other games, the errors are those no sensible person would quibble about. For example, a game named *Chivalry & Sorcery* is listed as a 144-page book; our copy has 128 pages. Another, inelegantly named *GURPS*, has its third revised edition dated as 1988, but the third printing of the third edition has a copyright date of 1989. These are hardly the kind of errors that affect the usefulness of a reference work—they will certainly be accounted for in a later edition.

Of everything we examined, only four items were not listed; in every case, these were editions of games, not the games themselves. Two were published in 1990 and may simply have appeared too late to be included: a collection of scenarios for a spy game and the third edition of Boot hill, a role-playing game with a western setting. Schick appears to have missed a softcover edition of *Dragonquest* from 1982 and one of *Superhero* from 1978. We would feel very good about so few problems had we compiled a listing of several thousand entries, many of which present truly difficult bibliographical problems.

Role-playing games are a fascinating handmaiden to literature—it has been argued that they are in fact a communal, oral form of literature appearing, confoundingly, in an urban literate society. Their study can tell us a lot about how readers of fantasy and science fiction become co-creators of an art, and *Heroic Worlds* will be a significant aid to that study.

Walter E. Meyers and Michael R. Meyers

King Arthur in the Nineteenth Century


Until I read *Camelot Regained* I had been under the impression that the nineteenth century revival of interest in King Arthur had not begun until mid-century and was centered around *The Idylls of the King* and the pre-Raphaelites, with only minor manifestations like Keats’ “La Belle Dame Sans Merci” appearing during the Romantic Age. Roger Simpson, however, has opened up an entire
library's worth of chronicles, poems, plays, novels, and paintings which use the Arthurian myth well before Tennyson. These range from casual references to substantial works like Thomas Love Peacock's *The Misfortunes of Elphin* and Edward Bulwer Lytton's *King Arthur*. The remarkable obscurity of many of his sources attests to the thoroughness of his research. Many have not been noted by earlier bibliographers.

Simpson organizes his material unconventionally according to the type of writing rather than chronologically or by author: first comes the treatment of Arthur as a historical figure—an approach which tends to reduce the supernatural elements to a minimum—then the topographical, including local legends, travel writings, place names, and landscapes seen in terms of the literary Arthurian world. Comic versions range from John Moultrie's imitation of Byron to political cartoons and popular entertainments like the pantomime. Fairyland allegory, influenced by contemporary editions of medieval romances, emphasizes dreams, the imagination, and the marvelous.

In the light of this mass of contemporary material, Tennyson's role in the Arthurian revival undergoes a substantial reassessment. The final chapter is devoted to his early Arthurian poems such as "The Lady of Shalott." Simpson deals not only with the published work but with earlier drafts and journals. Rather than the pioneering influence he had seemed, the young Tennyson appears as an individualistic and even idiosyncratic poet whose work was actually quite different from that of his contemporaries. However, his use of Malory rather than Geoffrey of Monmouth, Spenser, and Drayton as his primary source helped change the popular attitude toward him, making Malorian material like the Lancelot-Guinevere episode more central than it had been.

The book concludes with a series of valuable appendices covering both literature and art. Although this book would seem to be too specialized for the casual reader, the depth of its research and broadness of its coverage make it a valuable source for anyone interested in either the Arthurian legend or in nineteenth century literature. Highly recommended.

*Lynn F. Williams*

### Reading Doris Lessing(s)


Most of us are willing to admit by now that readers are as responsible for the construction of texts as are writers. What this collection of nine essays demonstrates is that readers also construct writers, especially writers whose careers, like Doris Lessing's, span decades, move across and among literary genres, explore many varying styles and voices, and have gained wide readerships in many different countries. Take the rather obvious cat-
egories of style and genre: how do we reconcile the desperation of *The Golden Notebook* (1962) with the colorlessness of *The Good Terrorist* (1985); or the rather stodgy realism of *The Summer Before the Dark* (1973) with the surreal visions of *Briefing for a Descent into Hell* (1971) and *Memoirs of a Survivor* (1975); or the massive space-opera which is the Canopus in Argos series (1979-1983) with the almost minimalist treatment of family life in *The Fifth Child* (1988)?

The nine essays collected here, which focus on the various ways in which historical event and national identity have affected various receptions and constructions of "Doris Lessing" and her writings, make it abundantly clear that such reconciliations are neither possible nor particularly desirable. The South African "Lessing" is not the French "Lessing"; the American "Lessing" is not the "Lessing" read in Spain; even the two Germanys have produced different versions of "Doris Lessing." As Sprague states in her introduction, such a collection "validates and extends current critical theory about the relativity of the text and the nature of reader-response." *In Pursuit of Doris Lessing* is thus not only informative reading for anyone interested in the international career of one of our most important contemporary writers in English; it is also a fascinating example of theory-in-practice.

I found the essays on French, British, and Canadian reception particularly good, although all of them are well worth reading, at least as much for what they tell us about particular national identities as for what they tell us about Lessing. In "Doris through the French Looking-Glass," Nicole Jouve Ward demonstrates the irony inherent in the French lionization of Lessing as a major literary figure; following the incredible popularity of *The Golden Notebook*, the country responsible for the "death-of-the-author" theory "construct[ed] Lessing the novelist as almost more important or of more concern than [whatever] novel ... was currently coming out." Clare Hanson's analysis of the British "misreading" which confines Lessing within the boundaries of humanist realism includes a strong argument for the construction of Lessing-the-postmodern-fantasist. And in "Cultures of Occupation and the Canadian [Con]Script[ion]: 'Lessing Changed My Life,'” Virginia Tiger undertakes an analysis which certainly reveals as much about Canada as it does about Lessing, arguing that "the Canadian reception of Doris Lessing ... is intimately tied to the country's cultural schizophrenia as simultaneously a British and American colony."

It's a shame that its high price will probably deter all but hard-core Lessing scholars from buying this volume. It certainly deserves a wider readership than it will probably attract.

Veronica Hollinger
A Fast Tour of the Labyrinth


Borges probably is second only to Kafka in making fantasy palatable to the literary establishment. His tales of shifting or merging characterization, uncertain quests, and problematic realities are few in number and bulk but massive in reputation.

The first version of Stabb’s book appeared in 1970. This revision was necessitated by a late burst of productivity from Borges, beginning in 1969. Although Stabb finds these twilight writings generally less impressive than the “commercial” works from decades earlier, he conscientiously tries to fit them into Borges’ world.

The main thing he doesn’t do, not too surprisingly, is fit Borges into the tradition of fantastic literature. The chilly elegance of Borges is distinctive, but the mood and ideas aren’t especially original. It’s barely possible, for example, that Theodore Sturgeon’s “The Ultimate Egotist” could have been inspired by reading Borges’ “The Circular Ruins,” but it’s most unlikely. Distrust of appearances, awareness that identity is conditional, a jaundiced attitude toward claims of certainty—all were discovered and explored by Borges along with other fantasy writers simply because they lived in these times, our times. But because he wasn’t tainted with the pulp-fantasy tradition, Borges has managed to make these concerns noticeable for a wide audience.

Stabb can’t deal with larger issues like this, of course. Indeed, like any Twayne writer, he is intensely aware of “the [space] limits of this study.” What he does provide is an outline of Borges’ life, a listing (with some summary and brief critical remarks) of important works, and a discussion of Borges reputation with mentions of some major critical works. He does all this very well, giving the impression of someone who has not only studied but inhabited Borges’ writing. I trust what he says and wish he’d been given a chance to say more. As an introductory study, though, *Borges Revisited* is recommended.

Joe Sanders

Entertaining Survey of the Decadents


In anthologies, the editor’s introduction rarely occupies more than one or two per cent of the book. That Stableford’s occupies about thirty per cent is not only a source of wonder but, as it turns out, a necessity, because this subject—the writings of the Decadent movement—is so little known. Briefly, the movement began in France with the publication of Charles Baudelaire’s
Les Fleurs du Mal in 1857. Its better known French adherents were another poet, Arthur Rimbaud, and the prose writer Théophile Gautier. Always rather less than a strong literary force, its subject matter tended to be the decay of civilization (especially of moral values) and the expression of extreme sexual license, all approached with an attitude of extreme cynicism. The Decadent is the victim of various ills, whose labels become the key terms of Decadent rhetoric: ennui (worldweariness); spleen (an angry subspecies of melancholy), impuissance (powerlessness). There was a small amount of public outcry against this material, but the Decadents in France were not supported; never numerous, they tended to kill themselves off while young through their tortured lifestyles, expiring from the effects of syphilis, tuberculosis and drugs. The movement was at its height in France in the 1880s, merging with Symbolism in the 1890s.

In England Decadence was much less of a movement yet was much more firmly suppressed through the courts, with Oscar Wilde and Aubrey Beardsley being censored; it existed, never quite flourishing, during the 1890s, though it was represented by good early novels from Arthur Machen, M. P. Shiel and even H. G. Wells (whose The Time Machine shows the Eloi as a wholly decadent race). Outside France and England there was certainly no Decadent movement as such, though Stableford identifies an odd Russian, Italian and German writer or two with affinities. In the US, literary Decadence was entirely alien to the frontier spirit, though Edgar Allan Poe was a precursor, who had inspired Baudelaire, while, from the 1920s, Clark Ashton Smith wrote in the Decadent tradition.

Of the 36 stories and poems anthologized, most come across today as horror or fantasy. Only French and English authors are represented, and Stableford has mostly chosen the work of the obscure and forgotten (hence nothing is included by Gautier or Machen). Obviously Stableford needed to be representative and true to the spirit of Decadence in his selection as well as providing entertainment for the reader. This he has done with some most impressive (though often very brief) stories from, in particular, Jean Lorrain, Rachilde, Remy de Gourmont, R. Murray Gilchrist and James Elroy Flecker.

As a brief treatment of a little-known area of literature bordering on horror-fantasy this is an excellent work. Stableford's introduction is aimed more at the layman than the academic, especially by its style (though it is nonetheless thorough and well-informed) and it makes entertaining reading.

Chris Morgan

[Stableford has edited a number of volumes for Dedalus, including a sequel to this anthology published in September, The Second Dedalus Book of Decadence (The Black Feast), which includes an introductory essay, “The
Philosophy of Decadence," that explores the historical and esthetic context of the poems and stories included (also £7.99 trade paperback). The decadent nature of Stableford's own life is explored in his autobiographical account in Foundation 50, Autumn 1990. Any UK bookseller can supply Dedalus books, whose distributor is Central Books, 99 Wallis Rd., London E9 5LN—NB]

**Video Guide**


About 70% of U.S. households have VCRs, and video rental dealers are about as common as pizza outlets. Libraries offer a wider selection than retailers, including a lot of non-theatrical film materials—how-to, documentaries, sports, etc. Partly to service such households are a number of guides to films, some of them limited to those available on videotape, others more inclusive. The one I've found most useful is the thick Signet paperback compiled by Leonard Maltin and crew, revised each fall with about 500 new entries and selective revision to older entries. The latest edition provides descriptive and evaluative information for about 19,000 theatrical and made-for-TV films, of which about 40% have a symbol indicating their availability on videotape. The arrangement is by film title, but there are no supplementary indexes by director, actors, genre, etc.

Visible Ink Press is a new division of Gale Research, which is well known to libraries, and will publish trade books for the bookstore market, such as this new video guide, which is derived from an electronic database marketed to video retailers and from Gale's two volume annual, *The Video Source Book*. The cover says about 20,000 videos are annotated, roughly three times the videos in Maltin. Many of these you wouldn't find in most retail outlets, such as many listings for Sesame Street or Star Trek episodes, operas, ballets, cartoons, documentaries, etc. The usual elements make up each entry: title, year, running time, color or b&w, MPAA rating, country of production, key cast members, director and a rating indicated by one to four bones (carrying out the theme of the book title). Elements not often found in other guides include awards from various sources, not only Academy awards; format (VHS, Beta, laserdisc) and suggested retail price. The annotations are usually shorter than those in Maltin and often lack much critical dimension.

What makes this guide potentially more useful to many users are the supplementary indexes, which occupy 528 pages. These include films that are captioned for the deaf (4 pages), awards (16), foreign films (including
British, 8), category/theme index (145), and cast & director index (364 pages).

Video stores divide their films into a handful of broad categories, but this
guide uses more than 300 categories, listed in the beginning and most with
sophomoric definitions (Amnesia Who Am I?, Cats Meow, Femme Fatale
She done him and him and him wrong). The latter could be dispensed with
altogether and straightforward headings used, e.g., Alcoholism instead of On
the Rocks. Some cross-references are included, e.g. Exploitation; see also
Sexploitation and Trash, and many categories are a trifle esoteric, e.h.
Restored Footage or Vegas Dreck.

The lengthiest index includes only principal cast and directors, although
some other specialists like cinematographers are mentioned in the annotations.
Some names have only one film following them, others have several
columns, such as Leonard Nimoy, who appeared in a twelve-part 1952
serial called Zombies Of The Stratosphere, as well as equally distinguished
work in Star Trek. Some of this sort of information is available in a number
of other sources, such as Ephraim Katz’ s The Film Encyclopedia, another
oversized trade paperback and a most useful one with a much wider scope.

The major value of this guide are the indexes and the coverage of non-
theatrical material, which most similar guides lack. Maltin, in the mass
market version (this book is also available in a slightly more readable trade
paperback edition) is half the price of this guide and is more critically reli-
able but has different emphases. Libraries as well as video fans should find
this a worthwhile and inexpensive starting point.

Neil Barron

Reading Poe’s Mind

Wuletich-Brinberg, Sybil. Poe: The Rationale of the Uncanny. New York:
Peter Lang, 1988. 223 p. $34.90. 0-8204-0669-4.

Professor Wuletich-Brinberg sets herself a formidable challenge in her
survey of Poe’s works: “to understand the soul of Poe’s work and not merely
its surface, one must study it from the inside and try, like the existential psy-
chologist, to understand Poe’s understanding of his own mind and goals.”
She goes on to note that, since Poe made few overt comments about this
understanding, beyond such formal and deceptive propositions as his “Phi-
losophy of Composition,” the critic must make his/her own connections and
conjectures by “reading between the lines” for those things Poe was too reti-
cent to talk about openly. She admits this “mind reading” (her term) has its
risks, but “the benefits of this approach may outweigh its defects, if there is
even one tenth of a kernel of truth that another, more sober, literary critic
might be able to extract from my comments.”
Thus, one's reactions to this book probably depend on the individual reader's reactions to Dr. Wuletich-Brinberg's conjectures. I found most of them rather abstract, general, forced, with an occasional insight worth noting in passing. When she does discuss particular works in detail her readings depend on interpretive assumptions that other critics may not share. For example, her conjectures about "The Fall of the House of Usher" follow the notion that Usher's "problem" stems from the "voices" of his heritage urging him to commit incest with his sister, a fate that he is willing to murder her to avoid. This is an interesting and possibly valid reading, but only one of several—and with any alternative interpretation, Wuletich-Brinberg's conclusions become dubious.

Poe: The Rationale of the Uncanny is perhaps best left for those "more sober" Poe experts who can best "extract" the "kernels of truth." And, on the practical level, I hesitate to recommend library purchase of the book since the review copy disintegrated in my hands mid-way through the first reading.

Keith Neilson
Fiction

Overly Subtle, Textured Stories


Aickman, who died in 1981, is recognized as a distinctive and highly original writer of ghost and horror stories. Both his originality and his shortcomings lie in over-subtlety; his stories do not explain themselves. They are social metaphors, full of significant and unsettling small details of contemporary English middle-class society. They suggest all kinds of deep supernatural conspiracies, yet they deliver no solutions, no easy conclusions, no smooth twists. In general these are stories to be read for reasons of texture rather than plot. This collection contains eight stories from Aickman’s previous collections, three from *The Wine-Dark Sea* and five from *Sub Rosa*. They are typical Aickman stories, sometimes powerful, never fully satisfying. “The Stains,” the best and longest, manages to be threatening and even terrifying in its descriptions of how a middle-aged civil servant (who has withdrawn into himself and into the countryside after the death of his wife) finds a peculiar sort of love with a simple country girl as he prepares himself for death.

*Chris Morgan*

Index to Strengths & Weaknesses


One of Piers Anthony’s strengths has always been his ability to link ideas from vastly different universes of discourse and thereby extrapolate fictions that entertain and instruct. In *Mer-Cycle*, that strength almost undermines the narrative itself. If anything, the novel attempts too many riches—undersea exploration by bicycle (an intriguing possibility Anthony thoroughly explores); machinery and technology from alternate worlds; alien spies and alien intervention in human affairs; a resolution to the mystery of Atlantis; the possibility of technological societies predating archaeological evidence for such on this world; the death of dinosaurs as a consequence of comet impact; the threat to present-day earth from our ecological short-sightedness; another threat to the earth from a calcium meteor that will reduce the planet to a lifeless desert; an extrapolated threat to a number of alternate earths, many already destroyed; a secret Chinese scientific project to prepare humans to survive on Jupiter; mermaids and tritons; American-Cuban military distrust; human-squid interactions; semi-hallucinatory dialogues with an ancient Minoan historian; a strictly human love story; and much, much more.
Anthony adroitly links these multifaceted directions, but one consequence is that *Mer-cycle* is forced into frequent static dialogues as characters explain causes and effects, explore sexual and personal relationships, and define puzzles and struggle to resolve them—even as they interpret millennia-old clay tablets to discover the truth behind ancient catastrophes. Crises are frequently averted when one or more characters reveals an unknown resource ... much like the cartoon Felix reaching into his bag of tricks. So, while there is action aplenty, there is an odd lack of legitimate threat to the characters. Part of this feeling stems from the fact that *Mer-Cycle* is appropriate for (and perhaps intended for) a young adult/juvenile audience. Part of it, of course, is based on the fact that the hero will survive and therefore must figure out solutions to problems. But the narrative levels are so complexly interlaced that individual resolutions come off as simplistic. Even the (presumably) final resolution is less an ending than a prelude to larger actions extending beyond the limits of this story.

Written in 1971 and subsequently expanded for publication two decades later, *Mer-Cycle* is mid-level Anthony. It explores familiar themes; it uses familiar images and situations (particularly in its treatment of sexuality); it demonstrates a familiar sense of unlimited imagination locked within the requirements of a narrative frame. At times exciting and intriguing, at times frustratingly static, *Mer-Cycle* remains a faithful index to Anthony’s strengths and weaknesses.

*Michael R. Collings*

**Dual Plot War Novel**


Iain Banks is one of those rare authors who seems to be able to produce something excellent and something different in every book he writes, even when touching on previous themes.

The Culture believes in peace, that people do not need wars or leaders. It also believes that all other civilizations should embrace their philosophy. So it persuades, subtly, nudging societies in the direction it feels they ought to go, often by assisting them in their internecine wars, primarily by supplying one side or both with weapons and/or experts. Cheradenine Zakalwe is one of its agents. Forty years previously he had worked with Tsoldrin Beychae to produce peace in the Voerenhutz cluster. With Beychae’s retirement from politics the peace is breaking down. Diziet Sma, a Culture agent, is pulled from an important conference to persuade Zakalwe that he must fetch Beychae from retirement to help smooth the situation. This series of events, going forward in time, and the outcome, are related in alternate chapters.
Between this narrative is another story. It begins with Zakalwe in the heart of a battle. In each subsequent section it moves backwards in time exposing, little by little, how Zakalwe arrived at the point in time where the first tale begins. It shows how he has been used, and abused, by the Culture, to obtain its ends. A mystery is slowly unravelled, of Zakalwe’s origins and his motives for continuing to fall in with the Culture’s plans. Yet even though we are travelling towards the beginning from a position of knowledge, Banks is still able to spring surprises.

The theme throughout the novel is one of war. Weapons of destruction ooze from the pages but the weapons the Culture uses are not always material. They are the motives of men like Zakalwe, human failings such as pride, revenge, greed. Zakalwe himself is a weapon, but although they know what he does, they are not aware of what shaped him—a weapon’s origins are sometimes as important as the destruction it can cause.

Like Banks’s previous books, this is excellent and thought provoking.

Pauline Morgan

Mostly Undistinguished Anthology


An original anthology of SF, fantasy and horror stories about computers is not exactly a new idea, though one hasn’t been assembled in Britain before. By limiting himself to British authors and buying a lot of material from new writers, David Barrett (not to be confused with David Garnett, who has edited two volumes of the British original anthology series *Zenith* and will be editing a new incarnation of *New Worlds* as an anthology series) has ended up with a book of considerably mixed quality. Two stories, “The World of the Silver Writer” by Anne Gay and “The Machine It Was That Cried” by John Grant, are very good indeed. Certain other contributors, including Terry Pratchett (who doesn’t normally write short stories and here demonstrates why), Keith Roberts, Ian McDonald and Garry Kilworth, are not at their best. Too many of the pieces are too brief and unpolished.

Chris Morgan

This Imitation Doesn’t Flatter


Kaitlyn’s beloved grandfather, an 80-year-old astrophysicist working in a lab at his farmhouse, produces “pure condensed light” (PCL), which reacts with one’s “heartlight” (or soul), allowing one to travel faster than the speed of light. Disturbed to discover that the sun is losing its PCL, he travels to the star Trethoniel, which has an overabundance of it, on a PCL-based butterfly named Orpheus; Kate follows on its brother Morpheus.
Attacked by a creature of pure Darkness, she lands on the snowy side of a non-rotating planet, meeting crystalline creatures named Ariella and Spike. She and her grandfather are reunited in confrontation with Trethoniel, who requests their heartlight in order to continue its existence. But Trethoniel, seeking immortality, is stealing the PCL from other stars, threatening to disturb the divine Pattern of life and death. Only Kate’s discernment and love saves Grandfather and thwarts Trethoniel; he chooses the Pattern, even though it includes, perforce, his own death.

Like Trethoniel itself, this book seems high-minded but is often flawed and false. While Barron has some talent, his writing here is sloppy and amateurish: clumsy shifts in point-of-view, unnecessary authorial intrusions, overwriting, and even bad grammar and misused words (nauseous, enormity).

Barron’s tastes and sentiments are cloying (“heartlight”, faster-than-light butterflies). He tries too hard, and very self-consciously, to be moving, tender, or profound. His work is embarrassingly derivative of Madeleine L’Engle’s in a clubby and self-congratulatory way.

His science is hopeless. Just what might “pure condensed light” be? It’s the unintentionally funniest SF concept since the “helmets of compressed electricity” in Earth vs. the Flying Saucers. How does Grandfather show Kaitlyn close-ups of a star and its planets on Earth, something impossible for contemporary astronomy? Negative energy is treated as if it were actually negative; negativity and evil are both reified, a serious error in both science and theology.

The nonsense is not only in the science. Why are names light-years away derived from Latin and Greek? The aliens Kate meets are not alien; they could live down the block. Does Grandfather have a Scottish accent, or not? How can we tell? The overall shoddiness is an insult to the reader.

It’s a pity, because Barron’s characterization of the “fallen” Trethoniel, become a kind of cancer through its desire for eternal selfhood, is perceptive, telling, even profound, and the last fifty pages of the book almost save it. Had Barron been more careful, less ambitious, and less imitative, he might have produced a short, fine novel. But this book, disguising itself as earnest and pious, is too often sloppy, pretentious, tacky, and unoriginal.

William Mingin

Bear’s Best


This complex, stimulating, and highly recommended novel set at the turn of the binary (base-two) millenium, 2047-2048 AD, uses four major point-of-view characters and several carefully imagined locations to portray, examine, and question issues and mysteries of sentience, self-consciousness, subjectivity, responsible agency, artistic creativity, and criminality as they are brought to combined or parallel millennial culminations. Bear’s allusive and
challenging narrative inventively combines some of the fictional devices, thematics, and stylistics associated with detection or police procedurals and with novels about utopian and dystopian societies, interstellar explorations, simulated or virtual realities, and artificial intelligence.

The precipitating event in the narrative, black poet Emmanuel Goldsmith’s unexplained murder and mutilation of eight followers, brings three investigators to the task of unraveling his past and his crimes, understanding his mental condition, and confronting the paradox of a formidably creative and destructive intelligence.

Assigned to this “grisly meat puzzle” is Lieutenant Mary Choy, a Los Angeles “pd,” black-skinned by cosmetic choice, who savors investigation, mystery and capture in a future where ninety-five percent of crimes are solved and murder is rare, where convictions bring forced therapeutic refitting for social misfits. Choy’s case leads her from Southern California’s city of light to the island of Hispaniola, whose black people are ruled by a ruthless white dictator, and where Emmanuel Goldsmith is reported to have fled. She both does and does not find Goldsmith’s dark secrets confessed by his tortured brother in the appropriately named town of Terrier Noir in a church built by John D’Arqueville. Another route to Goldsmith’s heart of darkness is taken by Dr. Martin Burke, a Faustian researcher who has invented a technique for probing and entering—via nanotechnology and computer interface—the landscape of virtual reality, the “Country of the Mind,” in any person’s brain. The father of one of Goldsmith’s victims hires Gardner to conduct an illicit investigation into the murderer’s tortured mentality. Burke’s dangerous journey inside the mental country of sins and signs has its analogues in both Choy’s investigations and in the speculations of the third seeker, Richard Fettle, poet and sometime disciple of Goldsmith, who seeks in the springs of his memories of the master and in his own personal and creative despair the motives that might drive an artist to become a murderer.

Light-years away from these parallel searches, the AXIS space probe, an artificial-intelligence artifact, searches for life in the planets of other star systems; meanwhile, on earth, AXIS’s twin, JILL, the fourth major point-of-view character, replicates her “brother’s” thought. In episodes juxtaposed with the other three main lines of development, both engines meditate (and mediate) the novel’s issues of subjectivity, error, and guilt. JILL’s newly self-aware monologue on the millennial morning of January 1, 2048 (or 1-1-100000000000) provides a speculative coda to the entire novel.

Queen of Angels displays family resemblances to some of Bear’s other novels (the nanotechnology of Blood Music, for example, plays a key role) as well as rich resonances with themes in texts by other writers such as H. G. Wells, George Orwell, William Gibson, and Damon Knight. Altogether,
Queen of Angels emerges as Bear’s best novel so far, a provocative and reflective fiction that will compel re-reading and will sustain close analysis and interpretation as well as comparison to the best writing inside and outside the genre.

Philip E. Smith II

Women In Folklore


Each of the previous volumes in Pantheon’s excellent Fairy Tale and Folklore Library gathered tales from a single nation or culture. Carter collects fifty-eight stories from all over the world, including the classic 19th-century European collections, such as Afanas’ev (Russia), Asbjorsen and Moe (Norway) and the Grimms (Germany); several American groups including Ozark mountaineers, blacks and recent immigrants; and many non-Western cultures, from Arabs to Eskimos. All the tales feature women protagonists, as heroines, victims, “clever women”, “sillies”, “good girls” (a very brief section), witches, faithless wives, wicked stepmothers—and a few wicked mothers. Carter includes a few classic tales in their familiar forms, such as “The Juniper Tree” and “Little Red Riding Hood”, and several highly-variant versions of well-known stories, such as Arab and Gypsy versions of “Cinderella”, an Armenian “Snow White” (without dwarves), a Norwegian “Beauty and the Beast” and an Egyptian “Donkey Skin”. Most of the tales will be new to general readers, although none are published here for the first time.

Carter believes that folklore is “genderless” and that each telling of a tale has a different meaning depending on the intention of the storyteller. She notes that women often enjoy telling highly misogynist stories. One of her witty footnotes tries to turn a misogynist tradition upside down: “Swahili storytellers believe that women are incorrigibly wicked, diabolically cunning and sexually insatiable; I hope this is true, for the sake of the women.” Several women in these traditional tales refuse arranged marriages or save stupid men. Except when a story ends with a marriage “and they lived happily ever after”, most marriages are unhappy or even murderous. An Armenian story describes a king who wanted his daughter “to know nothing of the world, nothing of life, and never to love anyone but himself”. A Syrian tale of a woman who saves herself and her children from a (female) demon while her feckless husband is destroyed concludes “so it is with lazy men: using their own hands they dig the hole into which they fall”. A Jamaican storyteller remarks that “women know more of life than men, especially when it comes to children”. Several Eskimo tales feature powerful huntresses, some
of them lesbians. Surprisingly, this collection seems to have more stories favorable to women from non-Western sources than from Europe, although fifty-eight stories is probably too small a sample to justify any conclusion.

Like the classic fairy tales, the best of these stories are unsubtle but haunting. Some display the formulaic repetition typical of folk narratives; others are stunningly terse, cramming into a single paragraph events on which any novelist would spend a whole chapter. Much of Carter's fiction, notably The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories (1979) and her screenplay Company of Wolves (1985), show the influence of her interest in folklore. Her introduction to this enjoyable collection is an eloquent defense of the value of folk tales.

Michael Klossner

Stunning Folklore Novel


The Bordeaux Narrative is an extraordinary novel that I recommend with enthusiasm and admiration. The story recounts the quest of Dosu Bordeaux, a nineteenth-century Haitian peasant, to rescue his brother and a friend, who have been kidnapped and transformed into zombies, from the distant plantation where they are imprisoned. Ulysses-like, Dosu relates his journey across Haiti: the villages he visits, his encounters with magicians and supernatural beings, his rescue of his brother, even his return home and marriage to a woman whom he meets during his adventures.

The story is but part of the pleasure afforded by this absorbing novel. It satisfies also as a journey for the reader into a strange new world. Courlander immerses the reader in the mind of Dosu, that is, into the world as experienced by him. Courlander depicts a frightening and seductive world, rich in supernatural inhabitants, and his narrative offers fascinating insights into the interplay of the divine and human in such a world. With Dosu we encounter vodouns (gods and spirits who are worshipped and can, if they wish, aid humans), malevolent spirits known as bakas, houngans (magicians who serve vodouns), and bucors (sorcerers who specialize in destructive magic). Central to the tale, as to Dosu's life, are the cult practices employed to placate vodouns or enlist their aid in order to avoid danger or harm enemies.

The "other" can be a powerful figure in fantastic fiction. In The Bordeaux Narrative that figure is the zombie. Courlander provides the most horrific depiction of zombies, reduced to absurdity in so much popular fic-
tion, that I have ever read, using them to give his narrative a provocative moral dimension. These are the "living dead" from a different, more disturbing perspective: not the dead brought back to a form of life but living men and women whose souls have been captured and who have been reduced to dehumanized obedience by the magic of an evil houngan. They are spiritually and emotionally dead, lacking the power of will and any interest in the pleasures of life. In perhaps the most compelling moment of his narrative, Dosu sees a troop of zombies forced by their overseer to repeat "we are only earth" as they move listlessly along.

As eminent scholar, Courlander has written numerous academic studies of Haitian and African folklore as well as two other novels. Many of the themes and ideas central to The Bordeaux Narrative are discussed in his absorbing non-fiction study The Drum and the Hoe (1960), but in the story of Dosu Bordeaux these ideas come to compelling life. The Bordeaux Narrative is a stunning fusion of scholarship and imagination.

Dennis M. Kratz

The Worldweary Wordsmith


Though The Pixilated Peeress is ostensibly by both de Camps, it reads like many of the other humorous novels Sprague has produced during a very long career. As such, it won't add much luster to his reputation, but it's nothing to be ashamed of either. None of the ingredients is very surprising: Hunky young soldier meets dishy noblewoman on the run from unwanted suitor. Enchantments, betrayals, flights through wilderness and secret passages, swordplay and battles, etc., all follow. Nothing too unusual for an heroic fantasy novel. However, de Camp knows how tired his material has become, and the book plays with readers' expectations by tossing elements together into incongruous heaps. I smiled a lot and chuckled a few times. The novel also comments wryly on some current concerns—the evil cult that first takes its followers' money and then their souls feels a lot like Scientology. Overall, TPP pokes fun at the silliness of most heroic fantasy, with mild cynicism, a healthy respect for the power of money, and a hero who is a warrior only because he's lost his job as a college professor. And the whole thing is very briskly done.

It may not win—or deserve—any awards, but the novel is recommended for people who can appreciate professionalism and good sense.

Joe Sanders
Military SF


In this military science fiction novel from David Drake, mankind has consumed the Earth in a nuclear holocaust, and now survives solely in underwater cities on Venus, an ocean world terraformed over several centuries. Wars between the "domes" are fought on the surface, by mercenary battle fleets, which must fight as well the savage plants and animals of the low land masses, used as naval bases.

The capitol ships of Venus are easily recognized as descendants of World War II dreadnoughts, especially the Japanese *Yamato* and its never-completed American response, the *Montana* class. These vessels also have advanced, highly plausible electronics and automation, making them far more efficient and deadly than comparably armed twentieth-century ships.

Drake gives a great deal of attention to this technology, but there are enormous gaps. First, in response to Earth's catastrophe, nuclear power is proscribed on Venus, and the planet has not had life long enough to produce fossil fuels. So, what powers these behemoths? For that matter, what is the energy source supporting life in the domes? Given Drake's past painstaking explanations of precisely such matters in his *Hammers Slammers* series, this omission is a major surprise.

The plot concerns the nineteen-year-old son of a politician, recruited into a mercenary fleet by his uncle. Since he has been training in the arts of combat on computer simulators, he goes to the surface as a military prodigy, with skills far beyond his years or experience.

For much of its length, *Surface Action* has an ambience similar to that of an old, youth-oriented Heinlein novel. Then toward the end, the much harder grittiness expected from this author starts to kick in. Stylistically, this makes the novel something of a two-headed beast. In addition, much of the imagery seems incongruous, such as metaphors involving lions and wildebeests. These do not really fit on a planet where most of the people live in domes without wildlife, and what lives on the surface tends to be giant squids and land crabs.

Not surprisingly, the ending has a very interesting military situation, a sort of mutant Jutland. But when the climactic conflict between characters occurs, Drake trivializes the big issues into petty, personal ones.

This is by no means the best of David Drake's military science fiction; his Romans-and-aliens epic, *Ranks of Bronze*, qualifies for that, in my mind at least. Though *Surface Action* benefits from a fascinating, pulp view of Venus, and an inventive naval-oriented conflict, it is in sum a rather disappointing novel.

*James P. Werbaneth*
Series Ending Extremely Satisfying


For two years, David Eddings’s long-suffering readers have awaited the fifth and final volume of his Mallorean series, *The Seeress of Kell*, while two novels in his new *Elenium* trilogy have appeared. However, at long last he has fulfilled his promises with the end of what has proven to be a ten novel series, which began in 1982 with the first novel of the *Belgariad*, *The Magician’s Gambit*. Both the five-part *Belgariad* and the five-part *Mallorean* have become best sellers, and with good reason as I have enumerated in reviews of the earlier books. When a series has been so enjoyable, therefore, one approaches the final novel with a mixture of eagerness and trepidation. Will the author end the story as well as he has continued it over the years? What will happen to my favorite character? Will the ending be really pleasing, vaguely unsettling, or downright wrong? Now David Eddings fans can sit back and relax. The climax of the ten-part adventure is all any fan could hope for.

Like the earlier books in the series, this novel begins mid-adventure, so a new reader would initially be and probably remain utterly lost for most of it. That problem, so readily solved by a short recap of both who the heroes are and what their adventures have been at the beginning of each novel, was never rectified in either series, which is a shame. However, for those many who have followed the characters from book to book as the High King Garion, Ce’Nedra his Queen, Belgarath and Polgara, great grandfather and great Aunt hundreds of generations removed, and a growing group of friends search the world for Garion’s kidnapped son, this novel is the perfect ending. For the rift in the universe which has caused all these unwanted events is healed at the end in such a fulfilling way that the reader is likely to feel only true satisfaction.

There is one other aspect of this series that has not been mentioned in earlier reviews and bears some discussion now that the series has ended. Few writers in the science fiction and fantasy genres are as skilled in world-creation as Eddings. There are those whose worlds enthrall us, and call us again and again. Tolkien’s *Middle Earth* obviously heads the list. For some, C.S. Lewis’s *Narnia* is still a favorite, long after childhood has been left behind. Anne McCaffrey’s *Pern* has kept readers enthralled for almost three decades, with new novels set on that intriguing world still appearing. And there are many others that have held and entranced readers over the years. However, world-creation still remains one of the most demanding and difficult tasks of the fantasy writer, and one of the most essential ones if a series, especially a long series, is to succeed. With his world, David Eddings has created a perfect venue for a high fantasy. The world is full of interest-
ing religions and gods, strange cultures, and medieval fortresses. However, Eddings has set himself no easy task, as each of the cultures and their gods is fascinatingly and distinctly different from every other one. Thus the sensible and earthy Sendars are set up in contrast to the highly chivalrous but totally impractical Mimbrates, and the devious and merchantile Tolnedrians are juxtaposed with the equally devious but murderous Nyissans, who in turn contrast nicely with the devious but brilliant Drasnians. The complexity of these different cultures is fascinating rather than overwhelming or irritating, and by including representatives from all these people in the *Mallorean* quest, Eddings keeps these differences always before the reader. Yet even then Eddings has still managed to make each character an individual, not just a stereotypical representative of a distinctive race. Given that Eddings is dealing almost exclusively with the human species, unlike some other fantasy writers, this achievement is even more laudable. There are few fantasy series that place such a fascinating array of diverse and convincing social types together and achieve the coherence that Eddings does. In this aspect of his work, he proves himself a consummate artist.

However, there are some problems with this last novel which make the book a little less than perfect. The humour, a trademark throughout the series, is wearing a little thin, and, for the first time in ten books, all the characters are beginning to sound the same when they make jokes. Even the most unlikely characters have witty repartees that sound very much like those of Garion's company, with whom we associate such humour. This overuse weakens the effect of the humour generally, making it seem a little forced and weary by the end of the novel. The writing generally is not as good, the characters not as clearly defined, and the motives of various characters are frequently left unexplained, a technique that worked well in the earlier volumes when the reader felt these motives would be explained in subsequent books, but which does not work well here, leading to vaguery and confusion in places.

The final problem with the book revolves around the extremely tidy ending. While the climax of the book is all that readers could wish for, the chapters that follow, in which Garion drops off or visits all his old friends, becomes too neat altogether. There is not even one character left single at the end of the novel, excepting the new god. While pairing characters off with each other is often a very cosy way to end a novel, pairing all the characters off, even the most staunchly and comfortably single characters, makes the ending feel strained. All that tidiness in a series that has celebrated some characters' persistent untidiness in so many ways also gets tiresome.

However, these are small complaints when compared to the overall success and, indeed, magnificence of this ten-part series, which has, despite
the complexity, the myriads of characters, and the overwhelming length of novels and time between novels kept so many readers of fantasy entranced. The pace of the adventure, the exciting voyages and chases, the mighty battles between powers of phenomenal evil and those of over-powering good, the consistency of the major characters in their quest to save the world, their almost unfailing good humour in the direst of circumstances, and the utterly unexpected surprise of the final climax makes this novel, and the whole Mallorean series (to say nothing of the Belgariad) essential reading for any real fantasy lover.

J. R. Wytenbroek

Back to the Budayeen


The first two novels concerning the life and times of Marid Audran, *When Gravity Fails* (1987) and *A Fire in the Sun* (1989), were both deservedly nominated for major awards. *The Exile Kiss*, volume three in what now appears to be an open-ended series, fails to achieve the same high level of excellence, but is, nonetheless, not without its pleasures. It should reinforce Effinger's reputation as one of our genre's better stylists and storytellers.

In the earlier books in the series, Effinger chronicled the rise of Marid Audran from street punk to second-in-command to Friedlander Bey, the most powerful man in the city, a nameless, twenty-first century metropolis located somewhere in the Middle East. Marid's boss is, in part, a gangster. He has his hands in every variety of illegal activity, both throughout the city and especially in the red-light district known as the Budayeen, but he's much more than that. Friedlander Bey is also a powerbroker on an international scale, able to set up or topple regimes around the world. Only his great rival, Shaykh Reda Abu Adil, is a match for him. Marid, who discovered in *A Fire in the Sun* that he is Friedlander Bey's great grandson, seems to be on track to become one of the most powerful men in the Middle East. If, that is, he can survive the complex world of intrigue that swirls constantly around Friedlander Bey.

In *The Exile Kiss* Marid and his boss are framed by Shaykh Reda for the murder of a police officer and then sent into exile before they can prove their innocence. Abandoned in the midst of the Arabian desert, they appear to face certain death, but are rescued by a passing Bedouin tribe. Having learned much from Hassanein, the wise Bedouin leader, Marid eventually returns to the city with Friedlander Bey. There he must prove their innocence of both the police officer's murder and the killing of a much beloved imam who was apparently assassinated immediately after Marid had an audience with him. Marid puts the lessons he learned in the desert to use in order both to clear himself and solve the crimes.
The Exile Kiss is a much less ambitious book than were Effinger’s two earlier excursions into the exotic world of the Budayeen. Many of the secondary characters from the earlier novels take brief turns here, but none of them is given anything really interesting to do. The plot is linear and contains few of the mystifying complexities that marked When Gravity Fails and A Fire in the Sun. Like the earlier novels in the series, The Exile Kiss is a mystery, but we pretty much know who the guilty parties are from the beginning. Rather than having to unravel a complex tangle of clues, Marid merely needs to survive and then find evidence connecting Shaykh Reda and his underling, the corrupt police officer Lieutenant Hajjar, to the crime. Effinger actually cops out a bit at the end. The evidence Marid turns up confirms that Hajjar is the actual murderer, but it is not acceptable in a court of law so Marid simply gives a speech before a large crowd that his enemy Shaykh Reda has conveniently agreed to let him address, and convinces them to kill the corrupt police officer. Finally, The Exile Kiss has relatively little science fiction content. Marid still has a selection of mind-altering hardware that he can chip into his brain at need, but he makes only the most routine use of it. Despite a few mentions of futuristic drugs, weapons and communications devices, most of this novel could just as easily be set in contemporary Cairo.

The above paragraph should not be taken as a condemnation of Effinger’s novel, however. In fact, I recommend the book, particularly to those who have read When Gravity Fails and A Fire in the Sun. The Exile Kiss is well written and enjoyable. It provides a logical and believable continuation of Marid Audran’s story. It is simply, as I said before, not as ambitious as the earlier volumes in the series. Although unlikely to receive any award nominations, it is a better book than most of what passes for science fiction at your typical Walden Books.

Michael M. Levy

Alien Contact Tale


An alien first-contact story, Khan narrates the gradual learning process that links a psionic race whose visible culture seems primitive with non-psionic, but technologically-advanced humans from off-planet. As is standard in first-contact stories, the humans have come to investigate this sparsely settled planet in order to evaluate its potential as a source of natural resources, in this case, forests of highly-prized wood. The culture of seeming-humans they confront has also obviously been extracted from a Middle-Eastern desert-tribe model, complete with an onerous climate, although this one is caused by years-long summers and winters rather than desert conditions. The alien leader, Rukmani Khan, is interested primarily in a young woman in the expedition, Sindon Liang. She encour-
ages this interest out of curiosity as well as passion, but the result is predictable, especially when we add the factor of this race's persuasive powers, telepathy and telekinesis. Rukmani apparently promises, and delivers, a heightened sexual experience that enslaves Sindon to the point where she abandons the humans and goes with him to bear a daughter, Tara, and see her to young womanhood.

Of course, there is a serpent in the midst of their pleasures, in the form of Khan's loving wife. It is the custom for the Khan to spend the long summers in a beautiful Summer Palace away from his wife, sporting with his nobles, reveling in the beauties around him and using his powers to create art rather than the food-gardens of the Winter Palace. The humans have landed on the planet during this summer period and are located at the site of the Summer Palace. Therefore, their knowledge of the culture is based on only a small part of its practices. As Sindon learns more, especially about the dependence placed on nobles' abilities to persuade material objects, including natural resources, to do their bidding through telekinesis, she is able to gain a truer picture of the aliens.

However, when she finds out that the Queen is a threat to both her and her daughter, she leaves him and he submits to an exile of many years in the Winter Palace with the Queen. The story resumes at the end of his sixteen-year exile, when he intends to reclaim Sindon and their daughter. But the retreat from the humans has given them time to get a toehold on the planet and for Sindon to rearrange priorities. The Khan has no lure for her, although she cannot persuade him of this without the inevitable violence. The Khan's powers of persuasion maintained his illusion of power for too long. Only after their personal misunderstandings have been cleared away are the two races they represent able to get on with the business of intergalactic diplomacy. As with other Felice novels, alien and human are explored on both the personal and the social levels and there are no true villains or heroes, just a fascinating story.

Janice M. Bogstad

"Hard Science" vs. Humanity


Rather than plugging Forward's more recent books, the cover refers to him as "Author of Dragon's Egg," his fascinating 1980 first novel about the development of intelligent life on the surface of a neutron star. If the human characters of that novel are sketchy, who cares? The concept and its loving, detailed development are enough to hold our interest. Now, though, Forward is tired of working in Hal Clement territory, and wants to do a Heinlein-esque story of political intrigue in a multi-planet setting, especially concentrating on human survival on terraforming of Mars.

Unfortunately, Forward's skill isn't up to his ambition. The descriptions of life on Mars are interesting, but to get to them, a reader must endure cartoon-
like characters stumbling through the most graceless melodrama and heavy-handed satire imaginable. I can believe Forward’s gadgets could work, but I can’t believe people would behave the way they do in this novel, individually or collectively. Fiction that concentrates first on people may succeed or fail, depending on how much humanity the writer can encompass.

When you begin with an interest in scientific speculation, though, you may find it hard to get people into the story; you may view them merely as elements in the technical extrapolation. Such data-driven fiction can wind up flattening and twisting characters for the sake of concepts. I think that’s what Forward is doing. And I think that’s why, despite the concentrated thought Forward has spent on the background and hardware of Martian Rainbow, the novel is almost unreadable.

Not recommended.

Joe Sanders

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

**Literary Injustice**


Although I still remember such early Harness stories as *The Rose* (1966) and *The Ring of Ritornel* (1968) with fondness, I must admit that I haven't read any of the author's more recent fiction. Harness' last two novels, *Krono* (1988) and *Lurid Dreams* (1990), both received mixed reviews, however, and, knowing this, I came to the author's latest work, *Lunar Justice*, with relatively limited expectations. I hoped to discover both strengths and weaknesses even a variety of problems, perhaps, but leavened by some of the magic I remember from his earlier novels. Unfortunately, I found magic to be sadly lacking.

*Lunar Justice* is a decidedly old-fashioned story and the first novel-length addition to Harness's long-running "Patent Attorney" series. It describes the adventures of patent lawyer Quentin Thomas, who is sent to the Moon ostensibly to oversee the set up of his client's newest invention, a motorized guillotine. Unbeknownst to the lawyer, however, he is actually being sent to serve as counsel to Michael Dore, a philanthropist who has been accused of treason. Dore is the head of the Lamplighter project, which for several years has been sending nuclear waste to Jupiter. Dore claims that the waste, when properly ignited by a powerful psychic, will cause Jupiter to switch on and become a small sun, thus turning the planet's moons into useful habitats for humanity's excess population. He got the idea, he admits, from an old Arthur C. Clarke novel.
Unfortunately, another group which has a more nefarious use for Earth's excess millions has sabotaged Dore's efforts and framed him for treason. Worse still, the trial judge, the prosecutor, the jury, and some of the witnesses are implicated in the frame-up. Thomas, an inexperienced trial lawyer, but a powerful psychic, must get to the bottom of the conspiracy, ignite Jupiter, and save both Dore's life and his own.

*Lunar Justice* has numerous weaknesses. Harness' style and character development are something less than adequate. I just can't believe in a lawyer who, when startled, exclaims "holy moon rocks!" Because Thomas is so matter-of-fact about everything, even an attempt on his life, the novel lacks any real dramatic tension. Although Harness tries to be "with it," filling his characters' heads with microchips and including a couple of surgically-altered assassins, his science is basically of the "gosh wow! " A.E. Van Vogt school. Some of it, particularly his comments about our evolutionary relationship to Neanderthal man, is noticeably dated. Finally, the book's climax, in which Dore is exonerated, Jupiter is ignited, and four major villains die more or less simultaneously (each from a different cause), is too corny and unbelievable for words.

Has Harness slipped over the years or were my standards simply lower back in the 1960s? Would *The Rose* stand up to another reading? After plowing through *Lunar Justice*, I guess I'm afraid to go back and find out.

*Michael M. Levy*

**Formulaic Horror**

Hinkemeyer, Michael T. *The Order of the Arrow*. NY: Tor, 1990. 313 p. $17.95. 0-312-85022-0.

Poor Anne Davis, plunged into a nasty combination of horror themes. To be pursued by a slasher/serial killer is bad enough, but her problems are compounded when she enters a Gothic marriage. Her handsome husband owns an island off the coast of New York where he lives in a replicated fourteenth-century castle. Surrounded by a strange retinue of "gentry" and feared by the villagers, he has an uncanny knowledge of things medieval.

The heroine of *The Order of the Arrow* is a doctoral student in Medieval History. A year after her parents and fiance were killed by a knife-wielding madman, she seems to have found the secret to renewed happiness by marrying Chandler Kane. Meanwhile the killer, dismayed by his failure, is stalking her. Unfortunately her husband (whom she regards at first as her bulwark against future attacks) is soon revealed as a greater threat. Through sorcery he and the others of the "order of the arrow" have managed to live for more than five centuries. Their evil souls require new bodies, and Anne's is next.
She manages to escape, thanks to her knowledge of medieval history, an unexplained "gift" that enables her to see others' souls and (in a very telegraphed transformation) the help of her would-be killer.

The Order of the Arrow is formulaic entertainment that exploits themes as diverse as the transmigration of souls and serial murder to move the plot forward rather than evoke any thought. Hinkemeyer writes well enough and manages to blend the two story-lines, although the final scene rushes rather hurriedly toward the Defeat of Evil. His treatment of graduate school life, particularly the dilemma of having an unsympathetic dissertation director, rings true. But in many respects the novel reads like an unconscious parody of horror fiction from twenty years ago: the serial killer's problems can be traced to his mother; sexual appetite is a sign of evil tendencies; and as for the souls that the heroine can see (on occasions where it helps the plot), "good" souls are white and "bad" souls are black. I could have done without the novel's one trendy-modern touch, an epilogue that throws the entire narrative into doubt. (Were these just the fervid imaginings of an overwrought graduate student?) A very slight entertainment.

Dennis M. Kratz

Machiavelli and Darwin meet John W. Campbell, Jr., in Space


This is Hinz’s fourth science-fiction novel. It is also the third novel in a series called “The Paratwa Saga,” the other two being Liege-Killer (1987) and Ash Ock (1989). His non-series novel is Anachronisms (1988), a disappointing retread of Alien.

The Paratwa takes up precisely where Ash Ock left off. In 2363, two and a half centuries after a nuclear/biological holocaust has obliterated life from Earth, humanity has grown to a billion inhabitants of 200-plus artificial colonies that orbit the devastated planet. Naturally, there is a fly in this ointment: a superior alien race, the galaxy-roving Os/Ka/Loq, wants to seed the earth with its own flora, and it has been manipulating humanity toward this end, even since before the holocaust.

The primary Os/Ka/Loq agents are the Paratwa, genetically engineered binary assassins: “binary” because they are single consciousnesses controlling two bodies, “assassins” because they are superb hit-and-run warrior-terrorists. Directing the assassins are the five members, also binary, of the Paratwa royal caste, the Ash Ock. Opposing the aliens are the Council of the United Colonies and a “computer hawk” named Nick, nemesis of the
Ash Ock since the days leading up to the holocaust (in Liege-Killer he and his partner, Gillian, were awakened from stasis-sleep to deal with Reemul, a Paratwa assassin, and Reemul’s master, Codrus, one of the Ash Ock).

Like its predecessors, The Paratwa mixes three types of formula fiction: space opera (updated with computerese, sex, and lots of “up close and personal” violence), the detective story, and the political thriller. So you will enjoy the book—indeed, you will enjoy the whole trilogy—if you enjoy reading about the power center of a society under tremendous stress; if you enjoy trying to figure things out before the author makes everything clear; and if you enjoy the tropes, stereotypes, and themes of American pulp SF: action, high-tech weaponry, “psionic” powers, superscientific gadgets, implacable (and seemingly invincible) foes, fearless heroes, a sexy heroine, an even sexier villainess, universal Machiavellianism (almost everyone in the novel either tries to control others or is controlled by someone else), cosmic Darwinism (human natural selection duking it out with Os/Ka/Loq “cooperation of the fittest”), and adherence to John W. Campbell, Jr.’s dictum that humanity must eventually triumph. But if you find this kind of thing tiresome, Hinz is probably not for you.

Although Hinz’s best novel to date is Liege-Killer, you do not need to read it before reading The Paratwa. You should probably read Ash Ock, however, before reading The Paratwa: Ash Ock is the weakest novel of the three, but it is also useful as a scene-setter.

Todd H. Sammons

Open-Ended Book Closes on Character Development


I must begin by stating that I liked this book though I generally have serious problems with the concept of an open-ended series, most of which, I believe, tend to drag on for the sole purpose of separating the marks from their money. However, as a youth, I did enjoy the grandfather of sf series’ authors, E.E. “Doc” Smith, and, as a young man, I passed many pleasurable hours reading about the travels, trials, and endless quest of E.C. Tubb’s Dumerest. Yet, I always knew that, in these and other sf adventure series, the largest missing element was character development. The main characters remained cardboard figures used by the authors simply as decoration. They would perform feats of derring-do and/or discover scientific principles solely to continue acting heroic. You think I’m about to say that this series overcomes the problem. It doesn’t. But it comes as close as I’ve seen lately.
Jack Storm, the last true Dominion Knight, has been captured by Emperor Pepys. The Emperor offers Storm a way out of this dilemma, but only at a high cost to Storm’s sworn beliefs. Can Storm pull the chestnuts of personal honor and his lady love from the fires of war with Ash-farel? With rebellion with the Empire imminent, is it possible for Storm to recover his stolen memories and rescue St. Colin?

Does Charles Ingrid allow us to view the motivations, emotions, plans, or personal histories of the people about whom he writes? Much more so than any other series author I’ve read. So pick up the book and meet the evil Emperor Pepys (Is he really?), the loving and good Amber (Does she? Is she?), and the strong, wise, heroic Jack Storm (Can he really be all that?). Have fun.

Daniel F. Mullen II

Let the Stars Wait


Keith Laumer usually does a creditable job providing a few hours entertaining escape, but surely *The Stars Must Wait* must have come from his reject file. The plot is so hackneyed, the characters lack reason for their actions, and Laumer does so much foreshadowing, there’s not a surprise left. And this goes on for close to 300 pages.

Try this plot for excitement. A back-up NASA crew member of the star ship *Prometheus* bound for Callisto enters his sleep coffin just in case he’d be needed for the nine-year trip. He fully expects he’ll be home with his wife and kid by dinner time. He awakens ninety years later, still on Earth, but a non-technological Earth where filthy humans fear the “Noocler,” eat only from their stash of cans (no mention of how they opened them), and raise kids to sell. Will our hero save the community from the wicked Baron who lives in luxury with the only clean, pure young woman around? All he thinks about is completing the mission to Callisto. I really wish he had.

I did somehow finish because I wanted to make sure Laumer wouldn’t trick me about the identity of the mysterious old old man. A quick peek at the end didn’t give this information. Yet, I cannot be sure I didn’t occasionally doze off for characters would somehow reappear or disappear. Nor have I yet figured out why all 40 chapters had to begin on a right hand page so that more than half the chapters were preceded by blank pages. Well, in essence, there wasn’t much difference between the left and the right pages anyway.

Muriel Becker
Scales of Justice


S.N. Lewitt's fourth novel is at times an engaging read, but for the most part it is just frustrating. There are many things that make me want to like the novel—especially the nicely developed textures of the colonial Francophile culture, the quaint notion that the Academie Francais could be the unifying institution for a space-faring society greatly effected by time dilations, and the idea that all kinds of drugs ranging from caffeine and chocolate to alien narcotics could be the major products in interstellar commerce. But in the end the novel fails because of the author's inability to create believable characters and have them interact in believable ways in a plot of any realism or consequence. The plot, despite its interesting moments, lacks coherence, and in fact the elements of bad space opera and clever social satire interspersed in the story almost seem to come from separate novels by two writers of greatly varying talent.

The plot consists of the adventures of an able bodied spacehand, Emile Saint-Just, who runs afoul of an increasingly overbearing interstellar trade commission, the Justica, with institutional aspirations to authoritarian rule. Unjustly imprisoned, Saint-Just becomes the pawn of a resistance group which, oddly and inexplicably, can operate very effectively with the Justica prison system. Eventually paroled for good behaviour, Saint-Just returns to his home planet carrying a genetically engineered weapon in his blood intended to be used by the local resistance against the Justica. On his home planet, Saint-Just begins to understand the true nature of increasing Justica power. The Justica is a threat to his culture and Justica policies have already weakened the fabric of his planet's society by suppressing the narcotic that was the planet's major export and provided the economic basis for the planet's social structure. Saint-Just's only real concern, however, is regaining job security by forcing the spacers' and merchants' guild—which mysteriously refuses to recognize his membership—to accept him. Along the way he is swept into the street riots of a bohemian and student inspired insurrection against the Justica and the collaborationist planetary government. Always the pawn, Saint-Just is finally exploited as a popular hero of the riots when his simple presence provides images useful to the resistance.

*Peter C. Hall*
Real and Imagined House


A strange castle suddenly appears in rural Scotland on the lower slopes of Ben Lawers, drawing to it a motley crew of international scientists and spies. Included in the group is doomed genius Spencer Gill, who senses the castle’s mechanical nature just as its walls “expand,” trapping them within.

Once inside, Gill and the others discover that the castle is now larger than it was when they were outside, its many doors leading to other “worlds” where the group’s worth as sentient beings will be rigorously tested. Each of them must now confront their worst nightmares, unaware that Sith of the Thone, the barbaric alien intelligence controlling the House, has secret plans for his political future which necessitates failure and “death” for each of them.

Although the characters are painstakingly constructed in the first few chapters, their sustained development suffers due to the rich texturing of the “synthesized” worlds within the House itself. The complexity of Lumley’s vision is therefore revealed in his exploration of heterotopic space, in that passage from one “world” to another hinges on epistemological and physical thresholds becoming one and the same.

This accomplished by the House’s “programing,” each member of the group is then tested according to the threshold they’ve crossed: trapped in an endless desert where werewolves prowl the night, American “ghostbuster” Miles Clayborne finds a door numbered 666, and upon opening it is consumed by hellfire; conversely, Minister of Defense David Anderson finds himself in a perfectly synthesized London, but one where no one knows who he is. It thus remains for Gill, himself trapped on a world of rusting and useless machines, to finally find the door which will lead them back to the outside world.

An impressive work by genre standards alone, Lumley’s novel is, in addition, an excellent example of postmodern discourse in art. This is demonstrated by the author’s careful examination of real and imagined space, as well as the equal consideration given to displacements and transformations which occur when epistemological thresholds are crossed.

*Joseph M. Dudley*
New Jekyll/Hyde Perspective


Martin retells *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886) from a new perspective. Mary Reilly, a maid in the household of Dr. Edwin Jekyll, has kept a diary about her master (whom she admires) and his strange "assistant" Edward Hyde (whom she does not). The novel offers two intertwined stories, for Mary gives a detailed account not only of Jekyll's erratic behavior and Hyde's consistent viciousness but also of her own life in the underclass of nineteenth-century British society. Abused as a child, Mary was educated (and further mistreated) in a school that we later discover was founded as a charitable act by Jekyll. She is a good employee and a moral individual. She rouses Jekyll's paternal interest when he notices the scars that remain from the alcohol-induced punishments that her father inflicted on her as a child. Mary becomes more than an observer when Jekyll makes her his assistant and partial confidant in his efforts to control, or at least minimize the damage, caused by Hyde. It is she, not Jekyll, who witnesses first-hand the tragic failure of his noble experiment.

Martin does more than imitate Stevenson's great novella: she manages to extend its moral implications from Jekyll the individual to the society in which he exists. Both novels explore the links between physical and spiritual disfigurement. As Hyde represents the dark side of human nature, so the story of Mary's life envelops the reader in the dark side of Victorian culture. Hyde is ugly, but Martin suggests that an analogous ugliness disfigures the culture in which Mary Reilly lives.

Mary Reilly inevitably suffers from comparison with its model. Mary herself is, though strong and noble, not a character who grips the imagination. Nonetheless, I highly recommend this book. Perhaps it will lead new readers to *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, a landmark of horror fiction. I would like to see Mary Reilly issued in tandem with *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. The combination would provide a valuable opportunity for readers to see how one creative imagination nurtures another.

*Dennis M. Kratz*
Reprint Anthology


A reprint-theme collection of thirteen short stories, Western Ghosts provides fair-to-decent return for its reasonable cover price. Good ghost stories, one might argue, are based in the concrete detail of the everyday world. In this particular situation, the American West proves to be that world.

Harlan Ellison's "Pretty Maggie Moneyeyes" is a high-energy Las Vegas yarn about a haunted slot machine. Irresistible to men while alive, a dead Maggie Moneyeyes retains old powers in her mechanical reconfiguration. A well-told tale that takes a hard look at casinos, ruined dreams, sexual need, and sudden death, it should be required reading for "lonely guys" headed for Vegas.

Western Ghosts has one other superior tale. Set in a decaying Pacific Northwest mill town, Jack Cady's "Resurrection" focuses on an old peddler who refuses to let his dead dog stay dead. Vivid sense of place and well-realized characterization make the supernatural plot line both believable and moving.

Other modern stories of distinction include Oliver LaFarge's "The Resting Place" and Billy Wolfenbarger's "The Attic." Both feature aging men coming to terms with their past. LaFarge's outdoorsy tale depicts the last days of a famed archaeologist who returns to his favorite Southwestern ruin to die. On the darker side, Wolfenbarger's mood piece explores the troubled psyche of a West Coast poet who's done too much dope and bedded too many women.

Originally published in Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine (1983), "Custer's Ghost," by Clark Howard, is a great story idea marred by an unforgivably trite ending. Set in 1926, the fiftieth anniversary of Custer's Last Stand, it features yet another aging central character, this time a crippled Sioux warrior, in search of life's meaning and redemption.

Several contemporary stories have focused on instances of power and feeling. A dead Colorado woman tells her life story to the mortuary beautician in Michael Bishop's sad-funny "In the Memory Room." A Denver private detective/witch heads north to Wyoming in Edward Bryant's "In the Shade," to investigate strange goings-on. In the unfolding scenario, the ghost or haunt proves to be the physical environment, that is, a once-ranched valley destroyed and flooded for an electrical generating project.

Looking to the 19th century, Ambrose Bierce's "The Stranger" and Joaquin Miller's "The Mountain-Mirage" are short, spooky tales that, to this day, still read well and retain an uncommon eeriness.

While Western Ghosts is probably not an essential purchase, it did have its moments and pleasures for this reader.
Part of the American Ghosts Series, Western Ghosts has four sister anthologies — Ghosts of the Heartland, Dixie Ghosts, Eastern Ghosts, and New England Ghosts.

James B. Hemesath

Futuristic SF


For more than 15 years, Niven and Pournelle have collaborated to produce some of the best ‘hard’ science fiction available (The Mote in God’s Eye, Oath of Fealty, Lucifer’s Hammer, and Footfall). For Fallen Angels, they have added Michael Flynn, the author of In the Country of the Blind, to the team.

Fallen Angels takes place a few decades into the future. The ‘Downers,’ who live on Earth, are no longer interested in space. The Europeans are preoccupied with the wars that arose after the Soviet Union disintegrated. The United States is ruled by Luddites and zanies. With such a supporting cast, there is obviously a lot of satire in this book; some of it is worthy of P.J. O’Rourke, the author of a very irreverent book on the American government entitled Parliament of Whores. However, the cumulative effect is to present a picture of a future America that is repugnant because it is all too possible.

Two Angels become ‘Fallen Angels’ when their ship is shot down despite an east-west orbit designed to increase its ground speed. It crash-lands on the new North Dakota Glacier, and who is there to help them? In technophobic America, scientists, engineers and computer programmers are the rag-and-bone men of society. Science fiction fans are so beyond the pale that they can be reeducated or even given psychiatric help. When the ‘Angels’ fall, the fans come out of the woodwork to save them from the ice and the government.

The fans also get them back into space aboard the prototype of the Phoenix. This ship has been kept in a museum and lovingly maintained by its designer, Gary Hudson. The Phoenix is a real design by a real Gary Hudson for what is called a single-stage-to-orbit vehicle (SSTO). An SSTO lands on its tail and is then refueled and flown again. McDonnell Douglas Space Systems Co. has recently won a DOD contract to build an experimental SSTO called the Delta Clipper or DC-X. It will demonstrate the technology in suborbital flight in the Spring of 1993.

The ‘Angels’ are Russians and Americans living in space in Peace (Mir), the old Soviet space station, and Freedom. The American station has been cobbled together out of two shuttle tanks and the small space station NASA
plans to launch in the next few years. The ‘Angels’ also have a Moonbase, a small solar power satellite (SUNSAT) that beams power down to Earth, and three experimental NASPs (National Aerospace Planes). The ‘Angels’ have converted the NASPs into scoop ships to collect air from the Earth’s atmosphere. The ‘Angels’ have all the oxygen they need from the lunar rock, but the need to replenish their nitrogen supplies from time to time by dipping it out of the atmosphere.

As in Heinlein’s *Stranger in a Strange Land*, Niven, Pournelle, and Flynn have contrasted the off-planet and ‘downer’ cultures effectively. For example, Alex and Gordon, the two ‘Fallen Angels’, are heroes to the fans, but they see themselves as expendable and from the bottom of their society. Alex, who left the United States on the last shuttle launch when he was six years old, can only pilot a scoop ship and care for the children in the day care center. Gordon, the Russian-American who was born in orbit, thinks of himself as just a 19-year-old wannabee poet.

The cultural differences work to the benefit of Sherrrine, a computer programmer instrumental in saving the ‘Angels.’ She is one of two remarkable women in this story. She is also tall and gangly and thinks of herself as unattractive, but she epitomizes the ‘Angels’ concept of beauty.

In this book, the onset of new Ice Age has had ruinous consequences in North America. Today there is a media fracas about global warming complete with what Dr. Joanne Simpson, the 1990 President of the American Meteorological Society, called excessive claims and nasty insults. So this book is a timely reminder that the Earth is a planet with a harsh climate in an interglacial period. There have been 20 major glaciations and several lesser glaciations in the last two million years. Another Ice Age is inevitable; the question is when?

Niven, Pournelle and Flynn’s new Ice Age is plausible enough to qualify as ‘hard’ science fiction. It resembles the quickly developing, ‘snow blitz’ type of ice age that the public television presentation of *the Weather Machine* popularized back in 1975. Their surging North American ice sheet seems to be patterned after the Laurentide ice sheet in the 10th millennium B.C. This leads to fascinating discussions of advancing glaciers, a dramatic rescue on the ice sheet and an escape from the authorities over the ice.

*Fallen Angels* gets off to a fast start, but drags a bit when the authors explain how the world of science fiction fandom works. Fortunately, the last half of the book is really gripping. Those who are not sf-fans will have to work to remember all the new jargon. Think of this fan-stuff as overhead. It is a necessary part of a story which is, as one of the authors explained, their gift to fandom. Perhaps the authors will include a glossary in the second edition. Until then, the readers can deduce the meaning of most of the unexplained words from their context.
Many of the 'Downers' are very interesting characters. A reader will come to care about them by the end of the book. How could they not be interesting? Many characters are based on real people or composites of real people, and the authors know some very interesting people. At least one of the, is an old friend to the millions who have read Niven and Pournelle books. The biker in this story, Harry Czescu, is also Mark Czescu in Lucifer's Hammer and Harry Reddington in Footfall. Figuring out who is whom will delight some readers.

Fallen Angels is too good a yarn to miss.

Joseph P. Hennessey, Jr. and John Cameron

A Fabulous Natural History


Natural History is the wonder-filled tale of how Antoni de Montpalau, an aristocratic young naturalist in nineteenth-century Catalonia, sets out to hunt down and destroy the elusive vampire Onofre de Dip, Lord of Pratdip, also known as the Owl. After a series of strange and captivating adventures, Antoni succeeds in conferring the peace of death on the Owl, and he returns to claim the hand of the daughter of the Baroness d'Urpi, the fair Agnés, whose "delicate presence," we are told in the delightfully eccentric Index of Proper Names with which the text closes, "stirred the souls of plants."

This truly strange and beautiful novel has little to do with the American tradition of vampire stories to which many of us are accustomed; while it might be more accurate to compare it to the magic-realist novels of writers like Borges and Marquez, it is also quite different from the South American tradition of fantastic literature. I really cannot say what it might be compared to. On the one hand, it is a fairy tale for adults, a kind of myth, a dream filled with eccentric characters and unnatural natural wonders; the physical world, so carefully studied by Antoni de Montpalau and his friends, who are united by "a great love of science and progress," includes not only vampires, but also creatures like the aurea picuda, a "winged creature of undetermined species [whose] song was a pure and inaudible melody," and the otorrinus fantasticus, "an indescribable beast." On the other hand, it is a tale told against the background of actual historical events, specifically the First Carlist War of 1830s Spain, and many of its characters are actual historical figures; events—even those involving fearless vampires hunters—are strongly influenced by the political and military upheavals of a country in the grip of civil war. Reading Natural History is a marvelously disorienting experience.
In his Foreward, David Rosenthal informs us that Joan Perucho is “one of Catalonia’s most engaging and original novelists” (a list of other 20th-century Catalan artists would include painters Salvador Dali and Joan Miró, and architect Antoni Gaudi). Born in 1920, Perucho suffered under the repressive measures of Franco’s regime, which attempted to destroy Catalonia as an independent state with its own language. His first book, (Beneath Blood (1947)) had to be published in secret. According to Rosenthal, Natural History, originally published in Catalan in 1960, is Perucho’s most popular work.

This is a wonderful tale, told by a great writer. It seems rather unfortunate that critical superlatives have become so debased in our consumer society that everything I’d like to say in praise of Joan Perucho and his vampire tale has probably already been said about Stephen King and Salem’s Lot. So I’ll simply say that this is a work of great intelligence, lyrical, playful, and very, very sophisticated. It is also a splendid introduction to a writer who deserves to be more widely known to English-speaking readers. I recommend it highly.

Veronica Hollinger

SATIsfying


Mike Winters is an average guy living an average life beset with the average problems. Then he picks up Sati, the strange and beautiful hitchhiker sitting along a desert highway. Within minutes of meeting her, Mike decides not only to take her home to L.A., but to allow her to stay in his apartment. Once there, Sati reveals herself as God and announces her arrival with flyers attached to the morning newspaper. Mike and the other apartment tenants are understandably skeptical and only believe her to be crazy, but she quickly wins the trust of the small group and gains a modest following through nightly “meetings.” Just as her popularity seems ready to explode beyond L.A.’s borders, Sati is killed, leaving those who knew her to ponder her possible divinity.

Sati is a very easy God to follow. You can believe in her if you want, you can worship her if you want, you can pray to her if you want, but you don’t need to. You don’t need to give her money, and you don’t need to suffer or punish yourself in any way. You only need to make yourself happy, which, if done properly, will make others happy. Sati’s philosophy is simple: the World is not a testing-ground, it is a playground, made only for the happiness of God and Man. If any one is miserable, it is his own choice to be so. As with most things mystical, this message can become deep and meaningful if it is contemplated long enough.
Sati parallels Christ in many ways—with a modern twist. She has an inner circle of friends, or apostles, but this time women and children are included, as well as a black drug-pusher, his pregnant Nicaraguan girlfriend, and a homosexual with AIDS. She is surrounded by the poor and the humble, and does mundane tasks for them, such as folding and delivering newspapers, cooking pancakes for breakfast, and baking cookies (instead of washing their feet). Three mysterious “wise men” visit her, represented by an Italian, an African, and an East Indian. She speaks mostly in analogies and pseudo-parables, telling those who will listen what to do (be happy), but not specifically how to do it. She never argues or presses her point; she is always calm and serene. She also telegraphs her own death by claiming she can almost drink poison. As a combination Doubting Thomas/Judas, one of the inner circle poisons her to see if she really is God. Her remaining friends don’t exactly spread her “word,” but they do create a very successful business based on the cookie recipe she gave to Mike.

Pike wisely leaves the question of Sati’s divinity unanswered. There are several opportunities for Sati to perform a miracle, the most significant of which is to cure Timmy, one of the inner circle, of AIDS (the modern leprosy) as he lies on his deathbed. Sati said she did not come to make miracles, and she managed never to make one. In fact, she did nothing spectacular, but Mike and the others decide to believe in her anyway.

Pike does not ridicule other religions, nor is he dogmatic in this thought-provoking study of faith. Sati is as quietly convincing as its title character. Recommended.

Jeanette Lawson

Turtle Utopia?


Life on Earth under the Turtles was good. Okay, so education was pretty much nonexistent; hard tasks could be performed by humans with memo disks inserted into their skulls; surgeons didn’t have to be taught the hard way. Wasn’t it all worth it for the peace and prosperity the Turtles brought? Humans profited in their trade with Turtles. There was no more hunger since the Turtles supplied redfruit and Taus; and the Taus were also good as slave labor—never mind that they are probably sentient. And that old field, quantum physics? To the Turtles this was a blasphemous topic. None of it is true, anyway.

Or so the Turtles thought. Calamity strikes when the Mother, the lone female Turtle, mysteriously disappears. The Turtles’ very existence as a race is at stake. Suddenly quantum physics might have a use: it could help the
Turtles find their Mother. A human space pilot, Krake, is the only human who knows how to operate the Turtles' FTL technology, a wave-ship. Krake, the Quintero twins (one of whom has secretly been studying quantum physics), a runaway farm girl named Moon and her Taur, and surgeon Sue-ling are commandeered by two Turtles to find out what happened to the Mother. They set out on Krake's wave-ship, only to discover that the Turtles' home planet is completely gone. Following the advice of the half-sentient Taur, they follow the planet through a wormhole into another universe, and their adventures really begin.

The narrative of *The Singers of Time* is broken up by the singers of time, the aiodoi, a race that exists outside of time and space, listening to the songs sung by people from Earth. The songs are of physics as told to a child ("[T]hink of the universe as an extremely long, extremely skinny anaconda ... that ... has just swallowed a pig" [17]). The weaving together of the songs and the story make this novel; they finally connect about halfway through the book and start making sense in relation to each other.

The pace is swift, the characters well-drawn, and the situations well-created (no idyllic ship-life here; instead, the crew are always arguing). However, when I was halfway through the book, I examined the jacket and front matter thoroughly; I thought maybe it was a young adult novel, since the vocabulary was simplistic and one of the heroes, Moon, is a young adult. Nope. It's geared to adults. The effect of simplicity here is interesting; it makes the humans, so long Turtle-dominated, seem childlike; and it makes the alien Turtles seem more human. Compare the telling of this book to the songs heard by the aiodoi: complex ideas are expressed clearly because the vocabulary is simple and the situations easy to follow. Pohl and Williamson are acting as singers in *The Singers of Time*; it is remarkably appropriate to the book.

Karen Hellekson

**Humorous Twists**


Rincewind is back. So is the Luggage, that chest of sapient pearwood that faithfully follows the incompetent wizard around. Stuck in the Dungeon Dimensions, Rincewind is summoned by mistake by Eric Thursley, a fourteen year old demonologist who thinks he has summoned a demon. Eric thus demands his three wishes—the usual three. He wants to be ruler of the world, meet the most beautiful woman who ever lived and to live for ever. Despite Rincewind's protests that he is not a demon, Eric is determined, especially as Rincewind appears to be able to deliver. Unfortunately noth-
ing is ever straightforward on the Discworld, particularly when there are
demons involved. Eric finds that as ruler of the world he is the next sacri-
fice of a jungle tribe, the most beautiful woman in the world is now fat, forty
and with numerous children and to live forever you have to start before the
world has begun.

This is a short book, of novella length, but it lives up to Pratchett's repu-
tation, every page is filled with his twisted humour. It is also marvellously
illustrated by Josh Kirby. Instead of being confined to the cover as is the case
with most Pratchett books, Kirby has been able to scatter more than a dozen
of his detailed paintings, the style of which exactly match the tone Pratchett
produces in the text. They make a superb team.

Pauline Morgan

Movie Parody

Pratchett, Terry. Moving Pictures; A Discworld Novel. London: Gollancz,

There is little that can be said about the discworld novels of Terry
Pratchett that has not been said before. He has a unique talent for taking a
simple idea, twisting it through 720 degrees, standing it on its head and
convincing his audience that nothing like it has ever been created before.
This time he, literally, has a wild idea. It escapes. Mayhem ensues.

In the first discworld book, The Colour of Magic, he introduced the idea
that pictures could be taken, a bit like using a camera but inside the box was
a little demon which hastily painted the scene the box was pointed at. Now
perstinance of vision has been discovered by the Alchemists Guild of Ankh
Morpork. You need six demons in the box, two to paint the pictures, four to
blow-dry the paint. Because no magic is involved, the wizards at the Unseen
University are not too bothered. But as usual, things escalate. A city of card-
board grows overnight in an out of the way place called Holy Wood. All
kinds of people flock there—trolls, talking dogs, farm girls—all unsure what
the attraction is, all knowing that it is the most important thing in their lives.
If it sounds familiar, it is, but twisted in a highly enjoyable manner.

Meanwhile, back in the Unseen University, a thing with elephants hang-
ing from it has started spitting pellets at people. It seems that the urn contains
a device for measuring the thickness of reality and it is getting a bit thin,
 somewhere about where Holy Wood is. And if it's not stopped, monsters
from outside will get in. It is time for the wizards to get involved. Of course,
 the day will be saved by Gaspode, the rather-mangy-Wonder-Dog, though
no-one will recognize the fact.
This is a marvelous send up of the Moving Picture industry with some of the classic images from old movies, such as the highly intelligent Lassie (here a very thick Laddie, failing) saving the world, and King Kong, climbing the highest tower (here a giant woman clutching the ape-shaped librarian). Great stuff.

Pauline Morgan

Second View


Terry Pratchett’s books are always a laugh, and *Moving Pictures* is no exception. This latest novel in the Discworld series tells the story of Holy Wood. After the death of a guardian that kept the evil of Holy Wood at bay, dreams strike the alchemists, who create a new art medium—moving pictures, or clicks. Before you know it, everyone has moved to Holy Wood to make clicks; everyone wants to be a star. Vincent, ex-magician-in-training and expert at the smouldering look, is an exception. He feels that something is amiss, and he and Gaspode, the talking wonder dog, have to save the world from the evil of Holy Wood. As Vincent says, “Everywhere else, the most important things are gods or money or cattle. Here, the most important thing is to be important”.

*Moving Pictures*, like the rest of the Discworld books, is a stand-alone novel, and though I like this one less than some of the previous ones, it’s still wickedly funny, with puns and other plays on words, odd situations, and an unlikely hero. The best part about *Moving Pictures* is the movie allusions: look for situations from *The Wizard of Oz* and *Gone With the Wind* (called *Blown Away* by its creators); there’re even a few lines from “Diamonds Are a Girl’s Best Friend.” If you look hard enough, you might even find a moral.

Karen Hellekson

All the Myriad Earths


As I’ve said before in these pages, Robert Reed is clearly the best writer to have yet emerged from the L. Ron Hubbard Writers of the Future contest. A Hugo and John W. Campbell Award nominee, he is the author of three previous novels, *The Leeshore* (1987), *The Hormone Jungle* (1988), and *Black Milk* (1989), all of which I enjoyed. Reed is an enormously versatile writer and each of his books is radically different from the next. *Down the Bright Way*, his most rewarding novel to date, may very well deserve award consideration.
The Bright is an interdimensional highway that connects an uncounted number of alternate earths. Greg Bear made fascinating use of a similar idea in his *Eon* (1985) and *Eternity* (1988), but Reed’s development of the concept is equally impressive. Although they originate in similar, perhaps identical genetic stock, the inhabitants of the alternate earths joined by the Bright vary enormously in both physique and culture. The Founders, apparently the earliest race to achieve intelligence, are hairy, big-brained australopithecines. The inhabitants of the incredibly overpopulated earth known as Termite Mound can vary their metabolism at will, alternately living in a virtual state of suspended animation or at enormous speed, depending on the immediate availability of food. The monstrous races known as the Unfound, super strong, virtually immune to all forms of poison and radiation, live solely for killing and conquest. Although his different races all share a common humanity, Reed provides us with a variety of life forms every bit as fascinating as those found in David Brin’s *Startide Rising* (1983) or Rebecca Ore’s *Becoming Alien* trilogy (1988-90).

The Wanderers, a group created by Jy, a virtually immortal member of the Founder race, have travelled the Bright for hundreds of thousands of years, searching for the Makers, the long-lost creators of the interdimensional highway. Going from alternate earth to alternate earth, they meddle, benignly but not always successfully, with the cultures they discover, attempting to bring about peace and prosperity on each world. Incidentally, they propagate their quasi-religious faith in the Makers and recruit new Wanderers to carry on the cause.

Reed uses a number of viewpoint characters to tell his story. Kyle, a misfit from our own Earth, is obsessed with the Wanderers. He’s adopted their lifestyle and passes himself off as a Wanderer to his landlord, his neighbors, and his girlfriend, Billie. Quence, a highly-ranked Wanderer, has been travelling the Bright for centuries, but still possesses doubts about the value of their mission. He feels enormous personal loyalty, however, to Jy, the charismatic leader of the group. Then there are the mysterious Moliak, who might or might not be a renegade Wanderer, and his assistant Cotton, the oddly-talented soldier from Termite Mound. Each of Reed’s characters stands out as an individual with his or her own strengths and weaknesses. Although sense of wonder-inspiring technology is at the center of *Down the Bright Way*, we never lose track of the fact that it is being used by real and highly fallible human beings.

It’s surprising and disappointing to me that Lou Aronica, or whomever is currently in charge of SF publishing at Bantam Doubleday Dell, didn’t consider this book worthy of hardcover publication under either its Bantam Spectra or Doubleday Foundation imprints, since it’s a stronger novel than most of the hardcover volumes they’ve produced so far in 1991. Robert Reed’s *Down the Bright Way* is the best book yet by one of the fastest developing talents in our field. It deserves a wide readership.

Michael M. Levy
Echoes of Mary Shelley


The connection between SF and sexuality can be traced to none other than Hugo Gernsback, considered by many to be the father of the genre. He published two relevant magazines parallel to *Amazing Stories*; in fact, *Your Body* started in 1928 and *Sexology* started in 1933. The posthumously published *Ultimate World* is his synthesis in novel form of these two long-standing interests. Love is strange, after all, even alien or otherworldly. Quebec writer Esther Rochon came out with one of the strangest novels ever imagined in this vein in 1985, titled in French, *Coquillage*. It was translated into English and published last year as *The Shell*.

The focus of this novel is an extraterrestrial, cephalopodic monster who inhabits a giant shell located in the middle of a river resembling the St. Lawrence. The human protagonist, Thrassl, and his son both fall madly in love with the monster. The plot unfolds through a series of chronologically shuffled flashbacks and flash-forwards. The central events are the impregnation of Thrassl, the subsequent birth of tiny twin monsters, and the consequences of the jealously enraged reaction of his girlfriend. The tale ends happily, though, as the monster transforms itself into a kind of Noah’s Ark, or Yellow Submarine, to transport a saving remnant of humanity to a new home at the center of the sea.

Two weaknesses detract from the haunting allure of this extraordinary piece of work. First, the narrator remains too often outside the action. Many of the scenes pass like a succession of still photographs lacking dramatic tension and dialogue among the characters. Second, the full development of relationships between characters seems to be sacrificed for the sake of focusing on the monster. For example, the conflict which could be expected to arise from a love triangle involving Thrassl and Vincent is ignored. These two characters actually live together in the shell for some twenty years, yet the reader is left utterly in the dark as to their interaction.

A few warts notwithstanding, *The Shell* is a unique achievement which may hold lasting literary interest. It echoes Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* in its unorthodox concern with the process of procreation, as well as also having been originally conceived in dreams. It is laced with disturbing passages of erotic lyricism. In terms of depth psychology, Esther Rochon has depicted the possibility of making peace with the id in a way that is neither facile, nor silly, nor self-indulgent. Her striking utopian vision arises out of the muck of human pain and fear with grotesque brilliance. The final words of the monster affirm the murky roots of human existence:
I am a monster-nautilus who lives in the shadowy depths, in the dark recesses, in the forgotten pockets of the world. I poison all those who fear me and reward all those who have confidence in me. If I'm called loudly enough, I always respond.

I emerge like a bolt out of the blue, bringing consolation like the moonlight. The love that is offered me I return a hundredfold. I have come now because you need me.

Steve Lehman

Paradise Lost


This is a remarkable novel. Like Scarborough's Nebula-award-winning *The Healer's War*, it envelopes readers through its use of tangible, concrete, nearly naturalistic description so thoroughly that one is hard put to see it as SF or fantasy. Yet *Nothing Sacred*, from at least one level of perception, is clearly fantastic in a way that *Healer's War*, grounded in an experiencer's-eye view of the Vietnam War, is not. Here, events take place in the not-too-distant future (ca. 2069) Tibetan landscape, bringing some removal from the relentless-seeming present of much of the Vietnam novel and examining the idea of the existence of a mythological holy ground as an actual place.

And yet, the reality of this new novel is just as relentless as is that in *Healer's War*. Like *Healer's War*, *Nothing Sacred* defies categorization. It is a prison-camp narrative written by a female P.O.W. captured in Tibet during her first mission. It contains a strong vein of social criticism, including the suggestion that war is perpetual to the extent that it sustains economies or can be used to disguise social ills. The seeming pointlessness of an individual life when that life is set in a societal framework not unlike our own could as well comprise the text of a mainstream novel.

However, most of the action of *Nothing Sacred* takes place in Shambala—Shangri-La, the mythical sacred kingdom. Ironically, this Shangri-La is not the romanticised one of earlier film and fiction. The top of the holy mountain has been blown off in a random bombing symptomatic of the ongoing global conflict; the sources of the sacred lake have been plugged and the lake dried. The suffering of the few remaining inhabitants of this holy ground, compared in the narrator's earliest perceptions to the sufferings of prison camp occupants, is tangible and graphically detailed with a vividness at which Scarborough is a master.
In combining the landscapes of the mythic and the actual, Scarborough's novel becomes both apocalyptic and millenial: by the end of the narrative, nuclear fire has eradicated life on earth outside the boundaries of Shambala. The text thus opens the questions of last and first things typically raised in the face of an encroaching millenium. On this level, Nothing Sacred is a profoundly spiritual narrative, a novel of transformation and rebirth, or at least of a conditional rebirth which might come if trials by fire, suffering, and loss have proved fertile.

The tangibility of Nothing Sacred gives it veracity. Readers from across the full spectrum—mainstream, fantasy, and SF—are likely to become engaged as the text unfolds its many layers in a process not unlike the opening of a lotus blossom.

Mary Kay Bray

Something Didn’t Happen


Something happened! Robert Silverberg, SF master and multi-winner of both Hugos and Nebulas, can usually be counted on for at least a good read. The Face of the Waters isn’t, though the story moves quickly enough. A small human colony on the water planet Hydros is tossed off the small island they’ve been inhabiting by the alien race with whom they’ve been living side-by-side for generations. They take to the water in a caravan of ships, ostensibly traveling to another island that will give them refuge. However, it soon becomes clear that the man leading them has decided they should go on a quest to find the mythical Face of the Waters, worshipped by the locals as a kind of heaven. After terrible adventures on this hostile alien world, they finally arrive at the Face, which is indeed a strange and mystical place. The secret of Hydros is revealed, and the protagonist, doctor Valben Lawler, finds internal peace at last. Hydros is a well-drawn world, with alien fish, plants, and amphibious intelligent beings meshing together into a cohesive whole, but it’s nowhere near the level of interdependent complexity Joan Slonczewski achieves in her water-world novel, A Door Into Ocean (1986).

The problem with Face is partly character (instead of depth they have angst), partly setting (Hydros lacks complexity because Silverberg relies solely on its hostility to humans), and partly bad prose (Li’s “big globular breasts [bounced] like planets threatening to leave their orbits” [171]). Coupled with this is Silverberg’s general inability to see women as anything but sex objects, which is infuriating as well as limiting. The Face of the Waters suffers from a general malaise that even Silverberg’s overwrought prose can’t help. Don’t bother.

Karen Hellekson
Dependency Vampires


In addition to the obvious “Pied Piper” suggestions implicit in its title, *The Children of Hamelin* seems most accurately to be about vampires. Not the blood-dripping-from-the-fangs sort, however, but a more insidious, more threatening, and—because real—more devastating sort. The vampires Spinrad exorcises here include the Vampire God of Acid (p. 271); the vampires of dependency that flee before the promise of healthy male-female relationships (p. 304); and most critically, the emotional vampires (p. 145) that survive on the sufferings of addicts. For Spinrad, the latter range from drug addicts, to sex addicts, to “group” addicts. All of them are led away gently to their deaths, like the children in the old tale, dancing to the mesmerizing music the Pied Piper plays.

The narrative of *Children of Hamelin* seems purposefully thin. Ex-junkie Tom Hollander ekes out a marginal living as a fee-reader for a literary agency. Outside of work, he searches for meaning—in sex, in drugs. The novel rapidly develops three sub-narratives: Tom at work, Tom at home, and Tom exploring the dark undersurface of the Foundation for Total Consciousness. Spinrad adroitly interweaves the three strands, tying them into a final, inevitable knot that explicitly condemns the emptiness of the 60’s drug culture, the vapidity of sex as manipulative tool, and, perhaps most important, the danger of organizations that promise secular salvation at the expense of personal individuality. To this extent the novel, although apparently written some years ago, neatly approaches the contemporary issues of dependency, co-dependency, and the increasing importance support groups play in our lives, to the extent that some sociologists and psychologists now talk about literal addiction to such groups.

Hollander struggles against encroaching addiction on all levels. His story is graphic, exploitative, at times sensationalistic, always disturbing and grating. Its language is often dated; almost every statement uttered by one character begins either with “man” or “dig,” and the rest of the novel incorporates conventional 60’s jargon: “junk,” “bummer,” “groovey,” “cat,” and “O wow.” It nonetheless wrestles with layer after layer of paranoia, of distrust, of counter-culture mores. It critiques the “game” of literary publishing as devastatingly as it does the Foundation itself.

Taken as a slice-of-life novel about New York in the 60s, *The Children of Hamelin* does little more than reinforce my relief at having avoided most of that culture. But there seems more to the novel than that. Harlan Ellison’s
dust jacket comments imply that the book is a roman a clef; certainly the fundamental nature and premises of the Foundation and its leader, Harvey Brunstein, will ring familiar to many readers, and Kent Bash's illustration of Hollander rather looks like Norman Spinrad himself. Even without such hints, however, The Children of Hamelin admirably exposes the darkness, the emptiness, the meaninglessness, and the terror implicit in the communities it anatomizes.

Michael R. Collings

An Occasional Lapse


I'm going to take this opportunity (at the expense of Mr. Wolfe) to explain something I should have known a long time ago, but have just proven to myself. The lesson is, good authors are perfectly capable of, and oftentimes guilty of, writing bad stories. I have been exposed to this several times of late. Castleview is a good example. Gene Wolfe is known as one of America's leading science fiction and fantasy writers. Stories such as "The Fifth Head of Cerberus," published in The World Treasury of SF, edited by David Hartwell in 1972 (which I recently read, after my disappointment with Castleview) explains Wolfe's reputation as a writer's writer. The world we learn about through "Cerberus" is thoroughly realized, and the intriguing plot makes it hard to put down. It represents science fiction at its best.

Castleview, on the other hand, will receive no such recognition. In reality it is a mid-list book written by a top author. The blurbs appearing on Castleview's jacket cover praise Wolfe's talent and elegance as a writer, and applaud his novel Soldier of Arete. But not a word from anyone about Castleview, that is, except from Wolfe himself, who describes the book:

Horses, cars, pretty women and frightened men are involved in large numbers; so are a sly dog and part-time plastic surgeon, a tough tomcat (formerly of the FBI and CIA), an occasionally French girl in training as a vampire, and an actual vampire. There are a lot of chases and fights, and a good deal of shooting.

Even the author knows this is not an important book. Entertaining and suspenseful, yes, at times, but disappointing in the end. Castleview starts with a sudden jolt (an unexplained death by the fourth paragraph) and continues in a similar manner throughout (continuously bringing the reader to a climactic point only to jerk the rug out from beneath him, without explanation, to pick up the storyline elsewhere). By the time the reader returns to the scene, the action is over, the trail has grown cold, and the questions remain unanswered. It is kind of fun at first, but quickly becomes annoying.
The characters are a curious lot but lack substance. Many are introduced but none are fully developed. They are so caught up in the mysteries around them that they fail to react in believable ways. They accept too easily unexplained shootings, deaths, and disappearances of family members. They are simply stand-ins needed to react to the weird situations the writer throws at them.

So, why would a quality writer bother? I think we all know and I don’t think we can blame Wolfe. Established authors are obligated to fulfill contracts. Most of the ideas they needed to get down on paper have been used up, and their styles are so polished as to go down with all the kick of distilled water. We simply have to be selective in choosing what to read by an author. “Best of...” anthologies offer one solution, critical reviews offer another. Chances are you’ll get more satisfaction trying to discover the new voice on the block or digging up an old favorite when he was that new voice. This reviewer’s advice: Skip Castleview. But don’t skip Wolfe.

Drake Asbury III

[An alternative, comedic way to read Castleview is to view it as an ironic parody of contemporary mainstream, SF, or fantasy fiction as well as film and TV subjects, plots, characters, themes, and techniques. Consider the proliferation of vampire novels (both mainstream and SF), the spy tales, the chases and fights—staples of film, TV, and book plots which lend themselves to satire or parody. BH.]

Wollheim’s Last Annual World’s Best


The 1990 Annual, the 25th Donald Wollheim compiled for DAW Books, was his last and one of his strongest; he chose these 12 stories from 1989 before he died at the age of 76. Wollheim’s editorial predilections had never been for the more experimental, daring, or interesting kinds of fiction often found in annual collections edited by Terry Carr and, later, Gardner Dozois; instead, Wollheim tended to select safer and saner SF and fantasy, often with a positive or progressive message. For this collection he wrote only a three-paragraph introduction because of his poor health but he still sounded the familiar and hopeful note that SF writers have a “visionary eye” for “the themes and concerns of our world” and that their stories “speak eloquently, offering important messages about genetic engineering and human/alien communication, as well as warnings about future wars, nuclear waste, and even computer obsessions, for anyone who is willing to listen.”
Wollheim’s themes partially classify the stories: genetic engineering could include Brian Stableford’s ironic tale of a genetic cure for aging in “The Magic Bullet” as well as Lucius Shepard’s Guatemalan military-political adventure among degenerate nocturnal mutants, “Surrender.” Human/alien communication would account partly for Gregory Benford’s “Alphas” and is a major theme of both Lisa Tuttle’s “In Translation,” a sadly ironic look at an obsessed man’s fixation with aliens, and Judith Moffett’s “Not Without Honor,” a charming and nostalgic tale of the alien Scribbles’ pilgrimage to Earth to seek the aid of Jimmie Dodd and the Mouseketeers. The study of war is the major theme of J. G. Ballard’s “War Fever,” set in a future Beirut torn by senseless strife and ominously observed by the United Nations; incitement to war occurs in Robert Silverberg’s “A Sleep and a Forgetting,” in which a staid and proper Sinologist from our time line communicates with a Christian Genghis Khan living in Byzantium in an alternate universe and convinces him that he was born to lead, fight, and conquer. War is also a subtheme of Shepard’s “minor adagio in a symphony of pain,” “Surrender.” Nuclear waste isn’t a major feature of any story but computer obsessions figure in Robert Silverberg’s second story, “Chiprunner,” about a fifteen-year-old male anorexic who hopes to disappear inside the microscopic infinity of a computer chip, and in Orson Scott card’s amusing, tour de force cyberpunk monologue, “Dogwalker,” in which a cyborg “kid” and a low-life pimp take on Organized Crime in a big computer caper.

Three stories are unaccounted for by Wollheim’s themes. Brian Aldiss’s “North of the Abyss” is a cautionary fantasy about the punishment awaiting an inauthentic, wife-beating, corporate sellout, American egotist who visits the temple island of Philae in the Upper Nile and encounters the judgment of Isis and Anubis. James Morrow’s “Abe Lincoln in McDonald’s” presents an alternate future in which slavery hasn’t been abolished and to which Abe Lincoln must be brought to learn why he should persevere to win the Civil War. Last and least, Barrington J. Bayley’s banal “Death Ship” recalls pulp stories of the 1940’s with its combination of a totalitarian future ruled by a Europa Leader and scientists experimenting with idempotency to change the future by sending humans forward in a Buck Rogers “death ship.”

There are no Hugo or Nebula winners here but Silverberg’s “Dogwalker” won the 1990 Locus Award for Best Novelette. Only two of these stories, Benford’s “Alphas” and Stableford’s “The Magic Bullet,” appear among the 25 collected in the competitive volume, Gardner Dozois’s The Year’s Best Science Fiction: Seventh Annual Collection (1990); Dozois’s collection, however, contains many of the winners and nominees for the Nebula and Hugo prizes. Even if Wollheim’s choices of the World’s Best SF missed most of the award winners, his anthology helps to broaden the selection of magazine fiction given a second life by being reprinted. With the exception of Bayley’s “Death Ship,” the collection provides strong, interesting reading and is recommended.

Philip E. Smith II
Young Adult

Ghost Stories for the Young


The best way to catch the imagination of a child and make her want to read is to present her with stories like this. They are short enough to be read without tiring listener or narrator, or to bore the youngster with a limited attention span. Yet they are just as accessible and enjoyable for the older, more sophisticated child.

Within this volume there are ten supernatural stories. Many of them take the haunted house as a theme, sometimes to the extent of insisting that the only desirable residence is one with a ghost. This is the case in the initial tale, "Number Four, Bowstring Lane." Almost every house in Crowbridge has one and to be without is to be outside the pale of local society. Thus, ex TV personality Marcus Fantail needs a ghost and arranges to have one installed, but not quite with the results he expects. This story, like several others, displays a macabre sense of humour. In contrast, the next story, "Earings," deals with the ghost of a murdered girl bent on revenge. "Earings" has plot weaknesses as well as unusual elements; for example, why would domineering Herbert Goss want to marry a church mouse like Aunt Dimsie—he has all the money and position, and she is she neither particularly young or attractive.

Some ghosts are traditionally nasty, like the one in "The Legacy" which is accidentally invited in, but others, such as the ghost-mouse in "Watkyn, Comma," are charming. Sometimes the outcomes are totally unexpected, as in "An L-Shaped Grave," concerning the events at an art exhibition in an out of the way London suburb attended by jaundiced critic Maurice Hart. Some, such as in "Cousin Alice," end up with only good results.

What all these stories have in common is a minimum of description, which could get in the way of a child's enjoyment, easily recognizable character types—the unpleasant ones almost always get their comeuppance. Yet within the stories is sufficient subtlety to intrigue the adult reader as they brush issues pertinent in the real world. The book can perhaps be summed up as a collection of tales written for children but with adults in mind. Excellent bed-time reading.

Pauline Morgan.
Vesper Holly Close to Home


Vesper Holly, now 20, is back for her fifth adventure, this time at home—in and around Philadelphia. In May 1876 President Grant calls on her and her friends—her guardian (and the narrator), Professor Brinton Garrett (“Brinnie”), his wife Mary, and Vesper’s “aides-de-scamp,” Smiler and Slider—to aid him in a secret national crisis. On the eve of the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia, children travelling with the visiting Emperor and Empress of Brazil have been kidnapped. The scandal of lax security could be devastating for Grant’s administration—already rocked by scandal—and could help unseat the Emperor as well.

Vesper and Co., including her “boyfriend,” Toby Passavant (“The Weed,” a sort of gangling, polymath Indiana Jones, Jr.), set out to recover the children and in doing so uncover the real plot, hatched by the nefarious Dr. Helviticus, Vesper’s nemesis from previous books, who, with the connivance of a rogue ex-general, plans nothing less than mass assassination, the usurpation of two governments, and control of a hemisphere.

Like blue cheese, one either cares for Vesper Holly’s adventures, or doesn’t. But even fans must wonder if the series is to be saddled with Helviticus until he dies of old age. Toby Passavant’s omniscience strains belief, and the befuddled naivete of Brinnie, the narrator, is wearing thin. Grant’s motive for secrecy—preserving the stability of his administration—is unconvincing, and seems self-servingly cold in the face of a kidnapping. And some of the cliffhangers are cheats, although the book also generates some legitimate suspense.

To be fair, impossible characters and repetitive formulas are nearly de rigeur for this sort of series (which promises to continue), and Alexander does have fun with them. A more grown-up Vesper is a welcome change and Toby, though impossible, is enjoyable. While still lightweight Alexander, this is first-rate Vesper Holly, one of the best of the series so far.

William Mingin

The Gods of Egypt were an Unpredictable Lot


Gillian Bradshaw draws from the ancient world of polytheistic Egypt for her first novel for young people, one in which the rhythm skillfully follows the tension in the story line. The beginning pace is slow and calm, but it intensifies as problems arise, actions multiply, and concerns of whether Good or Evil would prosper become prominent.
The story in this highly recommended historical adventure fantasy is about seventeen-year-old Prahotep, whose dying father tells his unlucky son to pursue a career in the far-away city of Thebes. In Prahotep's search to find what the gods wish him to do, the youth continues to experience constant misfortunes. Bad luck follows him in each occupation he tries. Then he meets a man who shares a secret that convinces Prahotep to attempt another career: being a grave robber. He fails at this one as well. But he DID find a treasure—the Dragon, Hathor.

Through listening respectfully to the lonely three-thousand-year-old Hathor, the last dragon in Egypt, Prahotep learns the history of the Dragons and of his own people. Eventually, the two plan a journey to the land of Nubia where they believe there may be other dragons. However, the cruel, ruthless priest, Nefersenet, suspects Prahotep of having unearthed immense wealth. Thus, it is to escape discovery by the priest that Hathor and the young Prahotep, accompanied by the strong, helpful soldier Baki, embark on a journey toward freedom, survival, and, in Prahotep's case, a sense of self worth; the latter is the major link between youthful readers today and Prahotep.

In this time and place filled with magic and fantasy and three dimensional characters, every upper elementary and middle school reader's imagination and creativity will be enhanced.

_Jenny Minkin_

**Base Motives Satisfied and Thirst Assuaged**

Cooney, Caroline B. _The Cheerleader_. NY: Scholastic, June 1991, 179 p. $2.95. 0-590-44316-X.

This slim novel is a modern young adult rehashing of the standard horror tales in which protagonists sell their souls to the devil for something they truly want and then have to deal with the nightmarish consequences. The supplicant here is Althea, a "nobody" in high school who desperately wants to be a popular girl. For author Cooney, this translates to being one of the varsity cheerleaders, all of whom are "slim blondes and sparkly brunettes." Althea wants to cheer, date a football player, and have her telephone ringing off the hook all day and night.

After writing more than 35 books, most recently thrillers of young adults boarding with abusive people, it is disturbing that Cooney can simplify every girl's desires into a quest for popularity when so many girls today weigh their conflicting options carefully and want to have an honest, strong rela-
tionship while pursuing a satisfying career. I'm not suggesting that most teenagers don't want popularity. They do, but they consider many other more significant issues. Neither do they have the resource available to Althea.

Althea possesses the means to the rather simple end she desires: a vampire lives in the tower room of her old house. The shutters and door are tightly locked, and she has been instructed to leave them that way. But the vampire's teasing voice, offering Althea popularity, tempts her to free him. All he wants in exchange is a certain girl in school, Celeste. Celeste will merely feel "tuckerered out," he claims, and Althea hardly considers whether she can become popular on her own strengths. She is so easily persuaded to give the vampire her friends in order to gain the coveted varsity cheerleader position.

What is so difficult to believe about Cooney's novel is its simplistic premise that a young person could be so shallow. Yet, something similar was recently in the news when a mother tried to kill the mother of her daughter's cheerleading opponent. Perhaps for some, the desperate desire for the "good things" in life is overwhelming.

Cooney's prose, however, cannot be excused: it is tedious and stilted. The vampire's voice is "like antique silk, faded and slightly torn"; his jagged gray nails are "like aluminum foil"; he has "hands the color of mushrooms"; and a voice that is "rich and contented, like cream soup." These vague similes are all the reader is offered about the vampire, and they are reiterated often. Althea's home is surrounded by stereotypically spooky hemlock trees; Celeste "shimmers like a mirage" (can a person REALLY shimmer?); and her "pretty golden hair quivers." Althea's parents are either never home or do not exist, as they are never mentioned in the book. In addition, the prose is trite and lacking in descriptive language.

Nothing in any review will prevent this book being a runner-up in popularity to the thrillers of R. L. Stine or Christopher Pike among those non-thinking adolescents so I have little fear that revealing the end will make a difference: the corny resolution is completely ridiculous. It seems that if a person is happy and refuses to give the vampire strength, vampiric power is minimalized. Also, loud rock music helps. And how completely out of character it is that Althea decides being popular isn't worth it and simply moves away, fortuitously, leaving the vampire patiently waiting for another victim. You'd think Cooney would have her at least burn down the tower room, but, of course, there may be plans for The Cheerleader II.

Janine Hummel
For Less Discriminating Readers


Superficially, this can be classed as a good read. It is fast paced, action packed and easy on the brain. It is only in retrospect that the faults become apparent; some stylistic, others showing the author’s influences. Haven is an unpleasant city, cramped, hot, dusty and rife for trouble. It reminded me of Terry Pratchett’s Ank Morpork without the intense emphasis on stench, corruption and sewage. The first chapter, almost a short story in itself, introduces us to the husband and wife team of Captains Hawk and Fisher. Both of the city Guard, she is tall and blond, he is lean and one eyed and reminiscent of Barbara Hambly’s mercenaries, Sun Wolf and Starhawk.

Haven is a place crawling with odd creatures, mostly malevolent, such as vampires and werewolves. It is also, surprisingly, governed by democracy. Hawk and Fisher are detailed to protect a politician whose Bills presented to the governing body have made him many powerful enemies while improving the lot of the common citizen. They fail. Blackstone is murdered in what at first seems to be a locked room mystery. The house is sealed magically with all the suspects inside (shades of Agatha Christie) and the body count mounts. It is surprising that anyone survives. The plot is not original and the denouement telegraphed.

Other than plot problems—it does get a little silly at times—Simon Green must look to his style. It is very off-putting to have a change of viewpoint in the middle of an action scene. Overall, it is the kind of book that the younger, or less discriminating, reader will enjoy for the duration.

Pauline Morgan

A Cousin from Brazil


The idea of walking out of one universe and into another is handled in an exciting way by Peni Griffin. Her first novel for children between nine and twelve opens as ten year old Ahto, son of a priest of the World Bird, is chasing a ewe through mist and fog on a pastoral hillside while thinking primarily of his forthcoming initiation into the elite priesthood when he would be permitted to use his bird-like singing ability to heal. Soon lost, he crosses a rift between his world and ours and finds himself in a residential section of San Antonio, Texas, where he is befriended by ten-year-old Paula and her younger brother Peter.
Communication is difficult, but the compassionate, curious Paula, intrigued by Ahto's unique appearance and manner of speech, and reluctant to leave this strange person stranded, decides to take him to school with her, claiming Otto to be her cousin from Brazil.

Accepting a parallel world I find less troublesome than that Paula's mother and grandmother allow Otto to live with them so easily. If, however, a reader can suspend disbelief on this subject, the novel becomes a unified whole with points of view alternating between Otto and Paula. In this way, the family turmoil resulting from an impending divorce, which naturally causes conflicting loyalties in the human children, is doubly seen. To my delight, along with the family pathos, the unfortunately to-be-expected cruelty of the school children toward Ahto, the adult prejudice against him for his presumed birth defects [He does have a completely flat nose], and even the music teacher's possible motives for wanting Ahto in the choir are doses of humor as events on Earth are seen from Ahto's perspective.

As the story unfolds, both Ahto and Paula are tested. In contrast to Ahto, who is always gentle, although dogged in his desire to return home, Paula is occasionally officious, not always a model of tolerance and integrity—indeed, a normal fifth grader. Both, however, must make difficult choices which will affect the rest of their lives.

Upper elementary and middle school students will find this science fiction novel considers several of their pre-adolescent fears and frustrations. Without being obvious, it also portrays the workings of prejudice, the need to adapt to change, and the ideal of universal brotherhood. *Otto from Otherwhere* is strongly recommended.

*Catherine Greenfeder*

**Tender Native American Time Travel Romance**


*Sing for a Gentle Rain* begins with a prologue in which an Anasazi girl, Spring Rain, stands on a mesa singing for a gentle rain to moisten the parched land and for a son capable of leading her people to a fertile land. Her songs mystically traverse the centuries to enter the dreams of a half-Indian high school boy, James Winter. As we learn in every other chapter through almost half the novel, James has more than school problems. Though he knows his archaeologist grandfather loves him, he hurts from being rejected by his rock star mother and from having been deserted by his Indian father. He doesn’t even know to what tribe his father, James Wintersun belonged. His overwhelming concerns, though, are to learn why he is having recurrent dreams and to discover what had compelled him to touch a Pueblo III pot that was in a protected glass case in a nearby Anasazi museum.
In the alternate short chapters, we find Spring Rain, too, has her frustrations. Though her Shaman grandfather, Anasan, would have been willing to teach her the meanings of the words of the sacred songs, the tribe reserves such religious information to males. Like James, she regrets having no mother, and she wonders what kind of man the mysterious wanderer who fathered her was. But, most of all, dedicated as she is to the well-being of her tribe, she worries that the drought, which has already lasted nine years, will decimate the tribe before she has a son, a child of the Shaman's line, a male whom Anasan would be permitted to teach or who would intuitively know the meanings of the words of power. Then, she physically becomes a woman and worries even more. In her tribe, the only suitable mate for her is still a boy. The legend of a man to lead the tribe to a place of "fertile land and fast water" will never come to pass.

Predictably, James, camping out in a light rain on a mesa on what is currently Navajo land, dreams again of a naked girl singing. He awakens to find Spring Rain physically present, both of them in the light rain Spring Rain believes James has magically brought with him to the mesa above the thirteenth century Anasazi Indian village. At first James is embarrassed by Spring Rain's nakedness and repelled by her poor teeth, conditions he soon hardly notices. Remarkably inept at first and facing a high degree of prejudice, James does learn the language and customs of the tribe, and he proves himself a worthy mate for Spring Rain. All the details of that struggle in the second half of the novel are totally believable and not without humor.

In spite of their differences in language and culture, James and Spring Rain do grow to love each other. The intriguing ending of this tender coming-of-age novel leaves it to the reader to decide whether James's experience was dream or reality. I tend to believe the latter. Just as James Winter had created a detailed model of an Anasazi village for his school project, Alison James has sculpted a reality in which each scene can be brought forth in the mind like a word of power, drawing us easily into the mysticism of the tale—into a fine novel that reveals two young people achieving their shared and individual quests, each with heightened understanding and respect for each other's roles and responsibilities.

Muriel Rogow Becker

A Thrilling Journey From Start to Finish


Fourteen-year-old Juniper is an extraordinary young girl. Her beauty is as captivating as her power to cross the boundaries of space and time which she does not view as the rest of the world does. Juniper believes in the eternal Now, where all time occurs simultaneously. She also feels a strong connection with the medieval age, evident in her vast collection of medieval books, tapestries, and herbs.
Juniper’s beliefs about time and her love of the medieval age come together to form the basis of her relationship with shy, artistic Dylan. They embark on a journey which involves a unique entry into the middle ages. First, Juniper uses her telepathic abilities to transmit images of medieval castles and objects to Dylan, who then duplicates these images onto paper. Their game progresses to the point where Juniper actually experiences time travel. While in the medieval age, she observes the people though she is careful not to do anything to disrupt the course of history. Meanwhile, Dylan sees everything Juniper does. This includes a young woman named Johanna, whom both Dylan and Juniper believe to be somehow strongly linked to Juniper. As Juniper and Dylan continue playing their dangerous game of life and death with Johanna, Juniper particularly becomes obsessed with Johanna. Thus, she feels compelled to play out their game until the end.

Sherryl Jordan has successfully created a young adult fantasy, providing much more thought-provoking material than that related to the measurement of time. Readers are immediately thrust into the lives of these extraordinary and adventurous characters who are able to conquer time/space limitations. Jordan also successfully blends fantasy and reality by describing the time travel experiences while portraying Dylan’s home life and his love for Juniper. She also tackles issues dealing with family relationships, a subject with which all young adults can relate. Thus she far exceeds a simple examination of the relationship between these two teenagers.

Jordan’s ideas about the eternal “Now” are quite difficult to comprehend for those who view time only in terms of the past, present, and future. However, this different, but fascinating view of time and the power to cross its boundaries would be an excellent choice for class study: The Juniper Game has complex themes, and many worthwhile discussions could be generated about the medieval age, telepathic abilities, and the characters’ motivations. The Juniper Game is a highly recommended fantasy.

Nicole Vara

Moss Grows Above Sub-City One


The plight of an ordinary human being striving for personal freedom is a recurrent theme in literature. In this young adult science fiction novel, it is the main character, Andra, whose fight against custom and irrational rules in the year 3987 ultimately inspires a reader to consider his or her own existence in today’s modern world.
Fifteen-year-old Andra is both blessed and victimized by the advanced society in which she lives. On the one hand, her life is saved through an extremely advanced brain transplant operation, which gives her back her sight, without which she would have been "expired"; on the other, her subterranean, totalitarian world dictates not only a person's occupation but even the color of clothing. Though earlier her intelligence had been considered only average, after her operation, she performs superlatively as an assistant to Professor Kiroyo, whose research is to recapture and relearn information about how to exist on the surface of a planet.

The always non-conforming Andra now seems to know things she never knew before, and a careful reader realizes early in the novel that the graft from the brain of 17 year-old Richard Carson, who died in 1987, has enhanced Andra's mind and is influencing her thoughts. She has memories of events and images from 1987 and knowledge of the prior 2000 years. That brain also has increased her desire for political and esthetic freedom. Andra yearns to see the plants and the sun, to grow long hair, to paint non-regulation pictures, and to read Jane Eyre. Her verbal descriptions, the colorful paintings of what she visualizes, her refusal to obey the regulations of Sub-City One's government, and her acerbic tongue eventually attract the attention of Shenlyn, the director, and Cromer, the security chief. Meanwhile, Daemon, the leader of the young people, and the young musician, Syrd, an escapee from an even more regimented enemy city, support Andra in inspiring the young people of the city to rebel.

Andra intends to depose the director. Director Shenlyn's plans are far more ambitious: to colonize planet 801. And, when Shenlyn orders Andra's rehabilitation, Professor Kiroyo points out that only Andra has the knowledge first to recognize a liveable planet and then to teach underground dwellers to survive physically and emotionally in the open.

These antithetical goals exemplify the simultaneously somber and hopeful tones in the novel. Nor is the subject mindless rebellion or a projected generational space voyage. In spite of its several flaws [for example, there seem to be so many young people and so few adults], Andra's value should not be underestimated. Andra elevates the simple pleasures of music and an appreciation of nature beyond any satisfaction in technological advancement. Also, though Andra's world holds only a few museum artifacts from the past, there are striking parallels between that future and our own, frightening images that demand reflection. Indeed, this fine science fiction novel provides a significant reading experience for all young adult readers.

Wade Nacinovich
Worthy Addition to Dragonflight Imprint


Where Piers Anthony blends the mechanical and the magical in the Xanth series, the protagonist’s essence of magic in this fantasy for young adults by Tanith Lee is purely mechanical. Like its predecessors with the Dragonflight imprint, *Black Unicorn* is beautifully written and extremely interesting. Its only disconcerting element is that events are told primarily through narrative rather than dialog. And the dialog is choppy, appearing in unexpected places. Nonetheless, the story is fascinating.

In a solitary fortress in the desert, 16-year-old Tanaquil leads a life of utter boredom, a life she feels has been totally wasted. Her cold, aloof sorceress mother, Jaive, whose own magic experiments go wrong more often than right, has paid little attention to her daughter ever since Tanaquil proved incapable of performing magic. Thus, Tanaquil is forced to entertain herself; she mends broken items for the servants and guards and goes for walks every other day, a short way into the desert of this world her mother claims is a badly-made version of a more perfect world in the multiverse. Tanaquil fantasizes that one day she will be permitted to leave, perhaps to find the father Jaive refuses to talk about. Her only break in the monotony is provided by a little scavenger creature, a peevee with limited speech it attained from a spill-over of Jaive’s sorcery. When the peevee starts bringing Tanaquil bones found under the dunes, she uses chains and gears and levers to reconstruct the skeleton. It comes to life as a black unicorn and runs off into the desert. She and the peevee follow. Lost, she is protected by the fearsome creature, and, after almost expiring, arrives at the wondrous city from which she believes her unknown father may have come.

Here, Tanaquil is befriended by the king’s daughter and learns of two legends: one, that a unicorn founded the city and will return to bring prosperity to it; two, that the city had offended the unicorn, and it may return to destroy the city altogether. Indeed, the images of the walled city—both in words and in the line drawings that precede each of the three parts as well as both prose and drawings of Tanaquil sitting in the market-place mending a mechanical snake, Tanaquil riding behind Princess Lizra, and Tanaquil rescued by her mother’s demon—enhance the mystical, medieval flavor of the entire novel. Even more fantastic, the full-color painting on the jacket of the red-haired Tanaquil with the black unicorn behind her reveals his fearsome power and Tanaquil’s cold strength. Certainly, the colorful, clear descriptive passages compare to those in all Tanith Lee’s adult and young adult works. I shall never forget the description of the insane Chair servants and of the Flying Chair that served as an elevator in the 15-story castle.
Yet the evidence that this was the city of which her mother spoke is purely circumstantial, as is the idea that the king and the princess are Tanaquil's father and half sister. "You remind me of myself," Tanaquil blurts out. Undeniably, Tanaquil needed to be part of the royal family, the family that destroyed the unicorn in the first place, so that she may be empowered to release the unicorn from his bondage in the imperfect world.

The question of whether or not we belong in a perfect world, of whether fixing things so they don't break again is magic, and whether a glimpse of perfection demands ever striving for it places Black Unicorn high on any list of worthwhile reading for ages 12 and up through adults.

Joanellen Blakeley

**Familiar Themes Well-Handled**


This is a young adult coming-of-age quest book. As such, it is composed of familiar elements: the discontented adolescent misunderstood and unappreciated by his society; a mysterious threat to that society from outside; the successful meeting of the threat by the adolescent, accompanied by a growth in both self-knowledge and group acceptance. An adult reading this book will know the ending from about page 5, and will see most of the intermediate plot turns coming a mile away.

However, as C.S. Lewis pointed out, the gift in fantasy writing is the ability to take traditional mythic elements and imbue them with new life in a story with terms that appeal to its readers. Luenn brings some intriguing details to the familiar framework. The description of goldsmithing techniques: the depiction of the first stirrings of social change in a previously male-dominated society; the examination of the sensations involved in rock climbing, and above all the exploration of the inner life of Arocco, the hero—all these keep the story moving over the rather threadbare plot.

The writing is clear, the standard quest accoutrements such as the tutelary animal (in this case a snow leopard), well-chosen and vividly realized. The ending avoids banality by stopping just short of foreseen triumph over the external threat, while having fully accomplished Arocco's inner maturity. (It also sets up a sequel possibility.)

Recommended for pre-teens and young adolescents.

*M. H. P. Rosenbaum*
The Golden Swan Lays an Egg


One of Bantam’s “Timeless Tales”, new versions of the world’s classic stories, *The Golden Swan* is based on East Indian legends and myths, primarily from the *Mahabharata.* A great king, Nala, captures a golden swan who brings him to his fated mate, the beautiful princess Damayanti. Avoiding four gods disguised as Nala, she chooses him as her husband, and they swear eternal love. But the jealous god Kali involves Nala in a game of dice in which he loses everything but Damayanti; impoverished, they wander off to a forest. Shamed and tormented, Nala is driven by Kali to leave Damayanti. He is transformed into a dwarfish hunchback and loses his memory. Damayanti searches for him in vain. Now keeping horses for King Ritupama, he manifests miraculous abilities, such as making chariots fly. With the help of the gods, Kali is punished, Nala regains his true form and his memory, and he and Damayanti are reunited. Risking her on a last throw of the dice, he wins back all he had lost.

The story of *The Golden Swan* and its telling, while suitable for children, are essentially “for all ages,” as are several of Mayer’s other picture books, such as *The Unicorn and the Lake.* Unfortunately, her writing is unwieldy—often leaden and marred by graceless notes and imprecisions (she doesn’t seem to know, for instance, that a silverfish is an insect, not a fish). The illustrations by Robert Sauber, presumably imitating Indian style, also have a clumsy oddness, somewhere between the style of 1950’s schoolbook illustrations and bad Indian movie posters.

The story, even with its many common mythic elements, is intriguing in its foreignness and strangeness, but also offputting. The interventions of the gods are incoherent and puzzling, and the miraculous powers of Nala, because their provenance is not made sufficiently clear, are jarring. The whole is without the poignance or suspense it seems to seek after. Overall, an earnest, well-meaning, but unsuccessful effort.

*William Mingin*

Campfire Tales


There’s much that’s strange in this collection. A young girl, Janet, discovers firsthand the mysterious dark powers growing in her mother’s garden. Fourth grade David stumbles into the occult when he learns the truth behind a friend’s knowledge of an ancient Egyptian king’s curse. Another boy, Tom,
builds a radio that inexplicably broadcasts events that have not yet taken place; he can now warn of impending accidents, all but one of which he can’t prevent. A ghostly legend, involving a construction worker’s demise, makes a class trip to a dam extra exciting—until Becky begins showing off, and tragedy strikes. And, more’s in store. When pupils of a German piano teacher disappear mysteriously, Elsa, helped in working some magic of her own, investigates the rumor that Frau Gruber has sold her soul to the devil. When John wears his “Maya blue” shirt from Mexico, he will learn whether the lecturer at the science museum was correct in saying “the way we act often depends on color.” A camping trip ends with a ghostly reminder of a deranged murderer. And, when a greedy businessman has designs on Rick’s grandpa’s used book store, a dusty book on magic solves the problem with unforeseen results.

These eight tales’ familiar Twilight Zone quality, stock characters, and simple text and diction make this collection ideal for the upper elementary and/or middle school reader. Most of the outcomes are macabre, but the gore is of low dosage. Indeed, these are the kinds of stories that seem spun out of a child’s fancy, best told around a campfire.

Laura Huhn

Teen Horror not for Squeamish


“True horror,” writes T. Pines in the Introduction, is “everyday occurrences gone awry.” The interesting twists in these 13 thrillers by some of today’s top writers of this increasingly popular young adult genre indeed find their basis in every day life. For example, in the ghoulish first story in this anthology, “Collect Call: The Black Walker,” Christopher Pike, a notable author of teenage thrillers, writes of a dark and mysterious new boy in town over whom two teenage girls fight. Was Bobby Walker, the new boy, the “Black Walker”? How could a phone call be received from someone unable to make a call? Readers must draw their own conclusions.

Obviously, the stories are not for the squeamish: they give explicit details of various forms of death, dying, and revenge; they deal with adolescent fears and insecurities taken to horrifying extremes. Two stand out for their originality and depth. Against the background of an unsolved mystery of a beautiful drowned girl, “Lucinda,” by Lael Littke, effectively captures the eeriness of a ghost town submerged beneath a drying reservoir. Caroline B. Cooney’s “Where the Deer Are” addresses a concern for the environment within the context of a child’s fear of the woods where two children had disappeared twenty years earlier.
The language used by this macabre crew of writers is standard for the majority of teens and any brief references to sex or alcohol are not explicit. Teens in grades six through nine, whose own emotions fluctuate from one moment to the next, will thoroughly enjoy the suspenseful feelings offered to them in such a thriller as R. L. Stine's "The Spell", where readers learn some spells just aren't meant to be broken. The other short stories in this engrossing, fast-moving anthology are also sure to please... and frighten. The stories will be easy to read. They WILL be hard to forget.

Amanda Steng

Even Smaller Lilliputians


Life changed when they left the Store created by Arnold Bros. (est. 1905) and took a ride in a truck to their new home, an old quarry. It took a while to settle, but the nomes did begin to adjust to life Outside, almost. One day, though, a lone human posts a sign, declaring the reopening of the quarry. And more and more humans keep appearing, paying no attention to the nomes' many warnings. Incidents build quickly, nome-time, to a necessary decision of whether to run or fight. They bicker, as they often do, until a choice is made for them. Dorcas, a nome who seems to understand machines and electricity intuitively, unleashes the C...A...T. The confrontation of nomes and humans turns into a slow speed, but nonetheless exciting bulldozer chase with an unexpected climax that sets the stage for the last book of the trilogy, Wings, already published in Great Britain.

Interestingly, Diggers does not suffer if it is read before having read Truckers [See #183] to which it is a sequel: a reader is immediately caught by the well-characterized people only four inches high coping with life in a world dominated by giant humans. [This is not Honey, I Shrunk the Kids.] Without question, anyone who hasn't read the first novel will be assiduous in searching for it. All who read Diggers will eagerly await the American publication of Wings. The book jacket is entrancing. The chapter epigraphs from The Book of the Nome are seductive. The tale itself has a complexity beyond its function as an entertaining science fiction adventure: Diggers incorporates such issues as class division and the changing of traditional roles for both men and women. And underlying the light situational humor is an epic of the Bromeliad people who, generally as spikey as pineapple leaves, when the time comes, work together to adapt to a world not made for them, a world that, for the most part, does not even know they are there.
The Bromeliad is highly recommended for ages 10 and up to any and all who feel nostalgic about Jonathan Swift's *A Voyage to Lilliput* or T. H. White’s *Mistress Masham's Repose.*

*Cathy Martin*

**Trilogy Concludes**


This, the third volume of the adventures of the nomes, runs parallel to *Diggers.* Masklin, one of the Outside nomes (four-inch-high people), who instigated the move from the doomed Store (in *Truckers*) has in his possession a nome heirloom, a black box which has always been called the Thing. Inert until it arrived in the store, the Thing was activated by the nearness of electricity. It told the nomes that they came from another world and that their spaceship was still up in space waiting for them. Prompted by a stray newspaper cutting which said that Grandson Richard, 39, (descendent of the original Store builder and therefore God) is flying to Florida for a rocket launch. Masklin, Angalo (who wants to drive an aeroplane), and Gurder (who wants to meet what he believes in, i.e. Grandson Richard, 39) set off to stowaway in Concorde in an attempt to get the Thing close enough to the spaceship to summon it. Once in Florida they discover that they are not the only nomes in the world; there are other tribes which habitually migrate on the backs of geese.

Like both *Truckers* and *Diggers* this book was written for children, but it has the same appeal to readers of all ages that the Discworld novels have. The main difference is that *Wings* is shorter and consequently doesn't have as many narrative strands. In some ways it works better because of its compactness and the linear plot.

*Pauline Morgan*

**Evil Finds Its Conscience**


about nasties who try to kill other families of nasties and so on and so on...? Because the hero says “No, it doesn't have to be this way!”

In the first book, *Homeland*, R. A. Salvatore chronicles the life of Drizzt Do ‘Urden from the final hours of Mother Malice’s labor to roughly... Well, read on. You’ll find the education of a young noble born to Drow parallels that of any medieval scion except for the techniques utilized to pervert a young mind to become like the vile traitorous scum who rule the city of Menzoberranzan. Instead, Drizzt turns into a rebellious youth but, by no means, a human one. Few youths are pursued by golems of their father that are magically operated by their mother.

As any coming-of-age story would be incomplete without friends, in the second book, *Exile*, Drizzt meets members of other underworld races and begins to discover how thoroughly his own race prejudices itself. Finally reaching the surface, our hero undergoes yet another learning experience, one that both surprises him and upsets him most profoundly. In the third book, *Sojourn*, Drizzt feels the hatred of dwarves, humans, and other surface dwelling races. Only one man looks beyond the fact that Drizzt is Drow. Only then does Drizzt begin to learn to live with his world and with himself.

Many complex social and ethical issues in this fine trilogy are worth discussing; however, because of the nature of the subgenre and the particular characters, the Dark Elf trilogy is awash in violence. Younger and/or impressionable readers, be warned.

Daniel F. Mullen II

Brighter the Enemy You Know . . .


A kidnapping, mob violence, a car crash, a stealthy rescue attempt, an electrocution, BEMS, death rays, and a wild ride in an enemy space ship offer enough action to keep a reader glued to this unfortunately predictable novel.

Humanoid Tsorians have been using Earth as a military outpost for about ten years when a California group of resisters kidnap Commander Rogav Jy. Not wanting to know how close the more militaristic, non-humanoid Hykzois are to Earth, they demand the Tsorian conquerors leave. One of the resisters, Marilyn, the mother of the protagonist Jason, who, despite her developing liking for Rogav, had been the Judas Goat to assure his kidnapping, does warn that the Tsorians might not be willing to ransom Rogav. And it’s true. The Tsorian occupation leader, sure she is as capable as Rogav in commanding the fleet and repelling the Hykzois, makes no rescue attempt. Thus, Rogav’s daughter, Aryl, decides she will locate her father and rescue him. She reasons that Marilyn’s son, Jason,
undoubtedly knows where the resisters are holding her father. She finds Jason just as the vile Hykzois destroy San Francisco. Naturally, Jason joins Aryl, and the two set aside their prejudices and begin their adventurous journey to achieve their common goal.

Like all of Service's recent young adult novels, *Under Alien Stars* is easy to read and will be exciting for young people between 12 and 14, but only those who have not read too much science fiction.

*Muriel Rogow Becker*

**A Worthy First Song**


Flutirr is a Nelvin, one of several races on Trillilani. Born at the top of a rigid caste system, he risks ruin and ostracism through demerits at school and un-"Noblish" behavior. He is attracted to the completely classless by their storytelling, their emotional warmth, and their freewheeling music. Through flute-playing he forms an uneasy bond with a deformed beggar, Don, and when Don is afflicted with a terminal case of "sporadism", he sets off to track down the tenuous hope of a cure. The demands of his quest force him to learn the selflessness and suffering true friendship can require. But when his mission is finally successful, he still faces the daunting task of trying to change his world.

*Flute Song Magic* has a number of problems. The Nelvin caste system is hard to understand. If caste is economic, how can some Nobles have relatively menial jobs? If not, what is its basis? The system of demerits at school is also confusing. Does Flutirr have two, or seven?

Flutirr is so out of touch with his own motivations that he seems a willless schmoo driven by whatever happens next. His "friendship" with Don is not developed enough to make his quest convincing. A small but serious flaw is the unicorn he encounters along the way, as much out of place in his world as it would be in ours. His return from the quest is interrupted midway, and the author brings him home in one sentence, an amateurish disruption of the story that rushes the ending.

With all these flaws, however, *Flute Song Magic* is a good portrayal of a sensitive person's awakening to the inequity and inhumanity of his society, and of the painful sacrifice of the callow self to the demands of our love for others. Winner, with this book, of the Avon Flare Young Adult Novel Competition in 1989, Ms. Shettle displays the swing and drive of a natural storyteller and the gift of rendering people that we care about. In *Flute Song Magic*, she gives us something to enjoy and a promise of good things to come.

*William Mingin*
Angus Isn't Nessie


Angus is a young sea monster who finds himself trapped in a Scottish loch after a severe storm separates him from his group. Lonely and frightened at first, he soon makes friends with a bird; two otters; Fiona, a young girl; and James, an old Scottish terrier whose brogue not only adds authenticity to the setting, but is particularly intriguing. However, knowing he must get back to his group before winter migration, Angus searches for a route back to the sea. But the water which brought him into the loch has now receded, and Angus finds himself landlocked. He also discovers he has a dilemma: he is torn between his previous life with his own kind and his present life with his new companions.

Through Angus's interaction with the other characters and his own personal triumphs, Smith unfolds a wholesome and entertaining fantasy. Well-written and developed, *Come Away Home* presents a time of innocence and demonstrates the true meaning of friendship. This poignant, brief novel is a wonderful choice for upper elementary or reluctant middle school readers.

*Elaine McCarroll*

Summoned By Mistake


Young Ryan DeWitt finds vacationing with his parents on North Carolina's offshore Magic Island boring. He thirsts for adventure. He daydreams. He whines. He shouts at his father, "You hate me." Then, as early as page six, when he had just bought a box of Crayolas, he disappears.

Ryan reappears on an alternate world with only the red crayon from the box, accidentally summoned by an absent-minded wizard in search of color magic. Befriended by the wizard, Aloysius Persyvaunce, in this world of kings, of talking dragons and eagles, and of a college of wizards, Ryan finds he has a strange attraction/repulsion to a young warlock named Rudd—that all his own feelings are manifested in Rudd. Indeed, each character Ryan meets in this somewhat medieval world has a parallel at home. Thus, while his father, seeking help from psychics in America and England to find Ryan, begins to understand the degree that he had badgered his son and created stress for them both, Ryan, through his confrontations with Rudd, learns valuable lessons about himself.

Happily, the novel's didactic nature is not too obvious. Nine- to twelve-year-old readers will easily recognize the troubled young hero. Many will identify with Ryan's thirst for adventure, strained relationship with his father, lack of interest in sports, and/or inability to do well in school. Artistic youngsters
will revel in Persyvaunce’s search for the Deep Magic of all the colors of the world. Others will delight in the flowery language so common to high fantasy. Yet, Red Wizard lacks energy. Once the plot has been established, it moves inexorably and slowly, culminating too obviously in Ryan’s return home.

Nancy Springer has been a short story Hugo finalist. Her mythic fantasies for general readers have been well-received. Her magical fantasy for the 12-and-up reader, The Hex Witch of Seldom (Baen 1988), was highly praised. To my regret, Red Wizard is a static pale copy of that earlier YA novel. In plot, the difference is minor: instead of a twelve-year-old boy helped by a wizard, a sixteen-year-old girl enters an alternate world and is helped by a sorceress. Like Ryan, she must decide whether or not to return home. The plot adaptation to a children’s novel just does not have the power of the earlier YA fantasy; nonetheless, Red Wizard should pleasantly occupy a rainy day.

Joseph Jeremias

Stay Away From Jerry


Who is it who whispers warnings on the phone, who leaves threatening messages, who fills Karen’s bed with slimy jelly fish? This is the situation in which R.L. Stine, one of the most prolific and popular writers of young adult thrillers, places Karen in this brief, thought-provoking, fast-moving, intriguing novel. Karen’s former best friend, Ann-Marie, arrives from New York to visit. Karen plans to spend their first week together in her father’s beach apartment. But even Ann-Marie acts strangely. Perhaps, she’s jealous of Karen’s success with the boys.

So reminiscent of the beach movie series of the sixties, Beach Party is Annette Funicello and Frankie Avalon’s Bikini Beach with a little Psycho mixed in, set at Venice Beach, California, a place teenagers would “kill” to frequent. Certainly, the six young people Stine presents are simplistically representative of the adolescent species. Mike, Karen’s old boyfriend, has apparently followed her to the beach; Vince, who also appears to be interested in Karen, wears leather and rides a big black-and-chrome motorcycle; and Jerry, to Karen, is Galahad and Lancelot combined. As Cindy Lauper would agree, “Girls just want to have fun”: Karen, headstrong and impulsive; Ann-Marie, the cool, sophisticated New Yorker; and Renee, Karen’s competition for Jerry.

Unfortunately, adolescent readers will probably be unaware that Stine’s representation of these young women caters to the male fantasy that women are stupid and will adore almost any young man. Yet, what is also eminently clear is the message of intentions of having good clean fun going tragically wrong, a typical and realistic portrayal of what is happening at teen parties and dormitories throughout the country. Within its fast-paced, action-oriented pages, Beach Party deals with gangs, crime, divorce, compulsions, and MURDER. So mothers
can forget Emily Post's *Etiquette* and give their teenage daughters this exciting, danger and rescue novel that has just enough tension and conflict among the major characters to fill any lulls in the action—certainly, before sending them to the beach.

Aurora H. Stauber

"Hi, Babes, I'm Back"


Nightmares of that dreadful evening kept haunting sixteen-year-old Jenny. Even though the horrible ordeal was over, Jenny could not forget what happened. Her last babysitting job had been a real nightmare—she was almost killed. However, Jenny's been receiving psychiatric help and decides to take another babysitting job to finally put her past to rest. As she plays with her new charge, Eli, a brilliant yet emotionally sensitive ten-year-old, the telephone rings. She answers the phone to hear a frighteningly familiar voice say, "Hi, Babes, I'm back." Strange and terrifying things then begin to happen. Is she reliving her nightmare, or is this just a product of her overactive imagination? Does Dr. Schindler believe her, or does he think she's crazy? Who's trying to frighten and harm her? Is it Chuck, Eli, Cal, Dr. Schindler, or is it Mr. Hagen back from the dead?

As the reader progresses through the novel, Stine fills in the gaps from the previous chapters, each of which had ended with a cliff-hanger, a technique which, frustrating to the reader at first, makes it almost impossible for anyone to put down this well-written, fast-paced novel.

In addition, this psychological thriller deals with a frightened teenager who tries to come to terms with her own fears. She must convince the adults in her life that she is not crazy, and she must be brave enough not to succumb to her fears. The emotional traumas of adolescence will generate much discussion in class or in conferencing. The only problem is that any teenager who reads either *The Baby-Sitter* or *The Baby-Sitter II* will think twice about babysitting.

Valerie Maloney

Be a Star


Using a mix of comedy, fantasy, science fiction, and a touch of the supernatural, Ann Turner addresses adolescent issues in an unusual way. It's certainly not every day that people move into the childhood home of a 150-year-old witch as nine-year-old Rosemary Morgenthau's family did when they moved into the Woodhaven farmhouse.
Everyone in the Morgenthau family identifies with an interest or talent: Mom is a dancer, Dad is a college history professor, and 11-year-old Brother Nicky is a rock collector. They all have labels. Everyone, that is, except Rosemary, who struggles with who she is, searching for her identity. Even her family nickname of Rosie doesn’t suit her any longer.

When she finds images in the roses of her bedroom wallpaper, she decides to prove she’s a serious person by doing research on the past. The information she accesses from the local library about the farmhouse’s past tenant exceeds anything she ever dreamed of. By the book’s end, every reader, young or old, will empathize with Rosemary and feel as she does when she first realizes the consequences of love are so different from those resulting from its lack.

Rosemary’s Witch is easy reading. Its action holds a reader’s attention while still highlighting some of the concerns of young adults in early adolescence. Also, though the ending is predictable, its fairy tale style makes it a most likable story.

Mary Beth Golden

Dark Wishes


Two months after Eastfield’s coal mines shut down, the town began to die. Buildings were demolished. Kids hung out on street corners. Everything was in disrepair; yet, nobody even seemed to care except for Jules Dwyer, a young high school student who feels trapped by the slow death of the town and hopes for change. Then a stranger comes to town, and the town begins to show signs of life. The townspeople’s deepest wishes begin to come true. But, though the townspeople welcome the stranger, Jules notices that strange happenings have followed the stranger’s arrival. Jules first sees that his sister’s toys are steadily springing to life. Then his friend’s beat-up old car turns into a new Mercedes. But, when his sister disappears, Jules realizes that what you wish for may not always be for the best. Jules must now find out what the stranger has to do with these odd events.

The events that comprise the story make for a minimal plot and any horror is watered down for the 12-and-up targeted readers; however, the characters’ reactions to these events are enough to keep the story moving. Also, in the tradition of Stephen King, Westwood has created a town in the grip of an unknown terror. Its gritty setting provides a realistic backdrop for a frank and accurate portrayal of a town transformed by the loss of its sole means of support.

Westwood has also succeeded in bridging age and interest barriers. Younger, less sophisticated readers will marvel at the story and identify with
the youthful protagonist. Older, more experienced readers will appreciate the detail of the story behind the story, the wonderful descriptions of the stark gray streets that animate Eastfield in its slow decline. As the characters move through this setting, every reader will become sensitive to the misfortunes experienced in this English mining town. *He Came from the Shadows* is a novel rich in atmosphere, a moving story of power and energy.

*Joseph Jeremias*

**Princess Shimmer Struggles On**


The saga begun with *Dragon of the Lost Sea* in 1982 revealed that the ancestral home of the dragon princess Shimmer used to stand at the bottom of the Inland Sea. However, several hundred years earlier, the witch Civet had stolen the waters of that shallow sea, rendering Shimmer and her entire clan homeless; as her mission in life, Shimmer seeks to return those waters to their proper site and then to restore her ancestral home. Incidentally, to get anywhere with her project, she must learn to get along with others, especially the companions she acquires in her quest: Civet—now reformed; a human teenage boy and a girl, Thorn and Indigo; and an animal wizard and trickster figure, Monkey. In the second book, *Dragon Steel*, Shimmer and her companions “borrow” the magical dragon cauldron from the treasure vault of the High King of the Dragons, hoping to use it to transport the Inland Sea to its proper place. Unfortunately, they crack the cauldron in the process.

Now, in *Dragon Cauldron*, Monkey serves as the viewpoint character and narrator. Thus, readers encounter Monkey himself, the other companions, and everyone else that appears in the novel through the words of a vain, self-centered, self-laudatory prankster and practical joker. As the companions strive to get the cauldron repaired, they have many adventures and, naturally, misadventures. Eventually, by magic and sacrifice, they succeed in mending the cauldron, but, inadvertently, they release the Nameless One from his ancient, enchanted imprisonment. That dread being proceeds to regain his magical powers, take command of an army, and, by the end of this third novel in the series, capture the companions—along with the cauldron. With so much magical power in his hands, the Nameless One is perhaps utterly invincible, free to carry out his threats to despoil the whole earth. The captured companions can only promise themselves and each other that they will find a way to prevail. Whether or not they do will undoubtedly be the subject of the next sequel.
Sub-themes in the novel include implicit messages about the value of cooperation and friendship, as well as vivid descriptions of deforested and polluted areas that do reflect current concerns about ecology. Further, Laurence Yep's story line is inventive, and his characters well-differentiated, the latter a quality for which Yep has been praised as early as his 1975 award-winning historical novel of Chinese Americans, *Dragonwings*. In fact, the whole series maintained my interest enough so I did finish the text, but so far it has failed to grip me: Yep has a way of *telling* rather than *showing* what happens—or, sometimes, of first telling and then showing—in a manner that diminishes the dramatic impact of his inventiveness and the unexpected turns of plot. Perhaps 12- to 14-year-old *aficionados* of fantasy, admirers of Laurence Yep, and/or those attracted to any title with the word "dragon" in it might find it more satisfying than I did.

*Andy Hilgartner*
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______Repeat last year's entry.

________________________________________________________________

(This subscription form may be copied.)

2/92 (This is NOT a renewal notice)
(The information below will NOT appear in the Directory, and is for SFRA’s records only.)

Occupation:

______________________________________________________________

Institutional Affiliation: _______________________________________

(Discipline:) __________________________________________________

Projects SFRA should undertake:

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

Current work in progress: (Okay to mention in Review? Yes___ No___)

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

Please send membership forms to the following persons: (complete addresses, please). You may use my name as a referral.

______________________________________________________________

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