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The SFRA Newsletter
Published ten times a year for the Science Fiction Research Association by Alan Newcomer, Hypatia Press, Eugene, Oregon. Copyright © 1991 by the SFRA. Editorial correspondence: Betsy Harfst, Editor, SFRA Newsletter, 2357 E. Calypso, Mesa, AZ 85204. Send changes of address and/or inquiries concerning subscriptions to the Treasurer, listed below.

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Pilgrim Award Winners
J. O. Bailey (1970)
Marjorie Hope Nicolson (1971)
Julius Kagarlitski (1972)
Jack Williamson (1973)
I. F. Clarke (1974)
Damon Knight (1975)
James Gunn (1976)
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Darko Suvin (1979)
Peter Nicholls (1980)
Sam Moskowitz (1981)
Neil Barron (1982)
H. Bruce Franklin (1983)
Everett Bleiler (1984)
Samuel R. Delany (1985)
George Slusser (1986)
Gary K. Wolfe (1987)
Joanna Russ (1988)
Marshall Tymn (1990)
President’s Message

Lords of Light

I was fortunate to receive just a few days ago a copy of the TOR reprint of Damon Knight’s Rule Golden & Double Meaning, two novellas first published in 1954 and 1953, respectively. (May, 1991, ISBN #0-812-51294) Rule Golden is a vigorous working out of the social implications of an alien’s imposition of a radical Tolstoyesque pacificism upon the world. Double Meaning tells how detective Jawj Pembun, non-white colonial off-worlder and object of derision for his cultured, white Earthside superiors, comes finally to be taken very seriously, indeed. Between them, these thumping good tales elegantly lay low colonialism, racism, the national security state, bureaucratic stogginess, and the casual violence we visit upon each other and upon all the creatures of our world.

In his introduction, Knight notes that he had been offended as a boy by villains who were “Asians disguised as aliens by the change of two letters” and he writes that “my resentment of injustice and my dislike of stupidity would not allow me to invent alien menaces that looked like Japs with scales.” “Resentment of injustice....dislike of stupidity”—with the maturation of SF since mid-century, I believe that just this, variously expressed, has come to deeply characterize SF and the SF community. Saying this is not meant to minimize the very real differences among us, of course. Jerry Pournelle is not H. Bruce Franklin, after all, nor should we want him to be—SF thrives on nothing if not a diversity of opinion. These differences, however, are underlain by a shared quality of heart, Damon Knight’s gut-level progressivism that resents injustice and dislikes stupidity.

In California and across the United States, there is now much talk of what some call “diversity and multiculturalism” and others “political correctness.” This national discussion has missed an important and inevitable counterpoint to any consideration of cultural diversity: a serious consideration of the integrative vision and cultural self-concept of our society. Of course, those who speak of “political correctness” do sometimes fret over the dissolution of the old integrative vision of our society, decrying, for instance, a lack of proper attention to the “classics” or the death of Western Civilization. Often, I suspect, they mistake change for death; what is now happening in the West is as much a part of our culture’s own internal logic as was the Renaissance. In physics, when new facts show up the inadequacy of a theory, that theory changes. So, too, with culture. We are discovering a new diversity of cultural fact, and the old cultural self-concept, our old “theory,” is fading fast. Likely it will be a while yet before a new and per-
suasive integrative vision for our culture is in place, but have one we will, eventually.

Until then, SF most challengingly traces for us the possible outlines of that future integration, and perhaps the growth of SF in recent decades can be seen as resulting in part from this need for a more inclusive vision of a just and wise society. The intellectually diverse SF community, the many hearts of which all flame with a resentment of injustice and a dislike of stupidity, will most surefootedly find that Middle Path between cant and retrenchment that leads to a more adequate integrative vision of our society and it will help shape our culture's response to the diversity we now discover all about us.

DAW Books, Inc. has purchased an institutional membership in our Association in honor of Donald A. Wollheim. We in the SFRA are honored in turn to have our Association selected as a vehicle for honoring so great a colleague. Thank you DAW. And thank you Donald A. Wollheim—you will be missed.

In Newsletter #185, I noted the EC's creation of an adopt-a-scholar fund designed to purchase memberships for scholars who are prevented by hyperinflation, non-convertible currencies, and other economic hardships from joining the SFRA. That there is a need for such a fund is shown by George Slusser's and Daryl Mallett's appeal in that same issue for contributions to be put toward an SFRA membership for Romanian SF scholar Cornel Robu. I now throw my checkbook into the breach (and slap it challengingly across your faces!). As I mail this Presidential Blurb to Betsy, I will be sending a $50.00 check to Edra (earmarked for Dr. Robu). Open your checkbooks and, before you do anything else, send Edra $5.00—you'll be doing a good turn, helping to increase membership, and building a non-mundane world all with the strokes of your pens.

Peter Lowentrout

Miscellany

SF&FBRA Moves to Greenwood

After lengthy negotiations, Greenwood Press has purchased The Science Fiction & Fantasy Book Review Annual from Meckler Corporation; Greenwood will bring out the long delayed third edition (labeled 1990, but covering 1989 books) under their own logo. All major contributors are now being paid, and reviewers will receive their copies on the publication date, probably early this fall. Meanwhile contracts have been issued for the 1991 edition, covering 1990 books. The editors have several openings for criti-
cal "profiles" of leading authors in horror, science fiction, and fantasy. If you are working on an appropriate author, and would like to offer a profile, please query Bob Collins (1320 SW 5th St., Boca Raton, FL 33486). Articles are 3500 to 5,000 words, and include a biographical sketch, some interview material, and a critical survey of representative works. Honorariums are $150. Due date will be Sept. 1, 1991.

Bob Collins

A Matter of Engrams?

Last year's membership directory listed a dozen members in Illinois. I'll bet none of them celebrated March 13 as L. Ron Hubbard Day, in spite of a proclamation by Governor Jim Edgar. The proclamation was quickly rescinded, with the governor explaining that "this thing just slipped through the cracks." [My thanks to Michael Klossner for this essential bit of intelligence. —NB, 24 April 91]

History of Canadian SF/Fantasy Announced

SFRA member David Ketterer of Montreal says his Canadian Science Fiction and Fantasy will be published later this year by Indiana University Press. Originally announced as an Oxford title in the Canadian Culture series, it proved too lengthy and, not wanting to cut the manuscript by half, he placed it with IUP. Both English and French Canadian fantastic fiction is surveyed. Ketterer authored the entry on Canadian SF and fantasy for the Oxford Companion to Canadian Literature.

Eros Science Et Fiction Fantastique

That's the name of a 220 page collection of papers presented at the 21st conference of CERLI, an acronym not identified in the brochure sent me. The papers, all save one in French, include: "Eros méusé," "Les écrits de Laura," "La morte Amoureuse ou la mise à mort du fantastique," "Quelques substituts et simulacres d'Eros dans le récit fantastique moderne," "L'érotisme et la mort: images de la mère dans trois œuvres de Bram Stoker," "Les différents visages d'Eros dans la trilogie d'Anne Rice, The vampire chronicles," "Du fantastique érotique au gore pornographique," "Rapsodie ropsienne," "Working at loving: a postseparatist feminist utopia" (by Marlene Barr, the only English paper), and six other pieces. The delivered cost is FF91 with a postal money order payable to M. le Régisseur des Recettes de Publications, CCP 9404 28 U Marseille, and sent to Service des Publications, Université de Provence, 29 avenue Robert-Schuman, 13621 Aix-en-Provence, Cedex 1, France.
Nuclear Texts and Contexts

I’ve written before about this newsletter of the International Society for the Study of Nuclear Texts and Contexts. Edited by Paul Brians of Washington State, it’s a thoughtful, thoroughly professional newsletter, with solid book reviews (including descriptive annotations of nuclear war-related fiction), news, work in progress, etc. Issue 6, spring 1991, reached me in early May. Send a buck to William J. Scheick, Treasurer ISSNTC, English Dept., Parlin Hall 108, U of TX, Austin, TX 78712-1164, for this or an earlier issue, or send $5 ($6 if you’re outside the U.S.) to join.

NB

Necronomicon Press Celebrates 15 Years

I don’t know if the life cycle of fans has been charted with any accuracy, although conventional wisdom suggests the addiction begins in adolescence and fades as the fan enters the schools of hard and soft (but incessant) knocks, what is laughingly called “reality.” But for some, like Marc Michaud, an early enthusiasm and hobby becomes a business mixed with a bit of proselytizing. As you can tell from the press’s name, its focus is Lovecraft and his circle, but he casts his net a bit wider, as his latest catalog indicates. Publications due spring/summer 1991 include Robert E. Howard’s Selected Letters 1931-1936, ed. by Glenn Lord, Rusty Burke, S.T. Joshi and Steve Behrends ($9.95), the second collection of REH letters; The H.P. Lovecraft Memorial Plaque, a $5 booklet chronicling the efforts of HPL’s friends to raise money for a plaque dedicated last August on the lawn of the library of the John Hay library at Brown, repository of the largest collection of HPL manuscripts and books; Bruce Byfield’s study, Witches of the Mind: A Critical Study of Fritz Lieber (published, $9.95; to be reviewed); and The H.P. Lovecraft Centennial Conference: Proceedings, ed. by S.T. Joshi, transcripts of the six panels convened in Providence in August 1990. Plus the press’s serial publications, Crypt of Cthulhu 77, Lovecraft Studies 24, and Studies in Weird Fiction 9. If you have more than a casual interest in HPL, REH and fantastic fiction, send a buck to Necronomicon Press, 101 Lockwood St., West Warrick, RI 02893, for their latest catalog. Include some greetings for Michaud, who lives in a cellar of a shunned house with Richard Pickman, and an eldritch creature or two.

NB
Dedalus Literary Fantasy Series

Dedalus is a British publisher, many of whose works are distributed in the U.S. (and presumably Canada) by Hippocrene Books, 171 Madison Avenue, New York 10016. Brian Stableford has been a key editorial advisor and has selected the contents of several anthologies, such as The Dedalus Book of British Fantasy: the 19th Century, Tales of the Wandering Jew, The Dedalus Book of Decadence (The Black Feast), for which he wrote useful notes. Other fantasy titles issued by the firm include Meyrink's The Golem, Leroux’s The Phantom of the Opera, Potocki’s Tales of the Saragossa Manuscript, and Chambers’ The King in Yellow. All of these are trade paperbacks. Due this autumn is The Dedalus Book of Femmes Fatales, also edited by Stableford. If Hippocrene doesn’t distribute all these titles, you can order through any British mail order dealer or write the publisher directly: Dedalus Ltd, Langford Lodge, St Judith’s Lane, Sawtry, Cambs PE17 5XE, England.

Throwing Down the Gauntlet

In early April I received issue 2 of an annual trade paperback called Gauntlet, whose sub-title reads “Exploring the Limits of Free Expression,” and which says it’s “the only general interest-consumer-oriented magazine on censorship and limits to free expression.” This 402 page issue has discussions of various sorts of censorship (books, comics, music, art, film), a section devoted to Stephen King, including an original article by him on the film rating system, general news and commentary by a variety of contributors, some undistinguished, often violent fiction (suggesting that Gauntlet isn’t intimidated by censors, although I think the motive is more épater le bourgeois), and a few book reviews.

Last September a flyer was handed out at a Georgia fantasy convention, and it’s reprinted here. STAMP OUT SCIENCE FICTION NOW! is the headline, followed by an attack mostly on role-playing games, which are claimed to be satanic and demonic in nature. It’s signed by an Atlanta group, Christian Crusade to Stamp Out Science Fiction, probably a fundamentalist successor to the turn of the century crusaders against vice. Editor Barry Hoffman says the first issue was temporarily banned in Canada, told by an unnamed major book chain that it was too “daring” to carry, and “ignored by a great majority of ‘mainstream’ anti-censorship organizations.”

I haven’t followed the censorship scene closely in recent years, so I can’t tell you if there are notably better sources, although an annual appears long after the events and can do little but report them. There’s a little advertis-
ing, but most of the support must come from newsstand and independent bookstore buyers and subscribers. Send $8.95 to Gauntlet, Dept 91, 309 Powell Rd, Springfield, PA 19064. Add a donation and you’ll receive Gauntlet: A Newsletter, issued by Citizens Concerned About Censorship.

NB

Hard-To-Find Films on Video

Many desirable, once-hard-to-locate films are now available on video-cassette. I have dealt successfully with the three dealers listed below.


SINISTER CINEMA (P.O. Box 4369, Medford, OR. 07501-0168. 503-773-6860) offers Svengali (1931), Transatlantic Tunnel (1935), the British version of F.P.1 Doesn’t Answer (1932), J’Accuse (1938), Max Fleischer’s Superman cartoons (1941) and a large number of old B films.
LS VIDEO (P.O. Box 415, Carmel, IN 46032) lists Willis O'Brien Films 1915-1930, a tape including O'Brien's early caveman farces and test footage for the uncompleted creation The Cat and the Canary (1927); The Patchwork Girl of Oz (1914), directed by L. Frank Baum; the German version of F.P.1 Doesn't Answer (1932), different from the British film; The LS Video Floor Sweepings Tape, containing twelve trick films by Georges Méliès's (1902-1904) including A Trip to the Moon; and all 39 episodes of TV's Rocky Jones, Space Ranger (1954).

Happy viewing.

Michael Klossner

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor:

Although this letter may seem somewhat belated because of end-of-the-term activities, I do want to thank Bob Collins for his review of Understanding Contemporary American Science Fiction in the Jan-Feb issue of the Newsletter ("History Versus Literary Criticism," 26-27). He was much more tolerant of an historical overview written to the specifications of the South Carolina series—"introductory guides," as the current brochure describes it—than I anticipated. Nor did he wish that I had written the book that he might have written, as did another reviewer.

There are, however, several points which warrant attention. He acknowledges that he has "described only the first section of the book" (27)—the briefest chapter (5-39), which I did not originally plan to include. I finally did so only to establish the context for what happened subsequently. Moreover, instead of merely lauding the "Golden Age," I spent some time in that chapter trying to show how the genre magazines of the 1930s were an outgrowth of the popular fiction of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries which first measured the American infatuation with the machine, a theme I have dealt with in most of my earlier work, as in Some Kind of Paradise.

Granted the limitations of a review, my impression that he does not seem well acquainted with/or chooses to disregard my earlier work is strengthened by his remark that I am a "traditionalist" who "venerate[s] the 'Golden Age'" (26) and am "clearly nostalgic" for the "epic stages" and "heroic action" of the Campbell period (26-27). Quite frankly, I never read Astounding regularly; except for a few writers like Clifford D. Simak—whose City I much admire—and the short-lived Unknown, my interest in contemporary sf begins with Galaxy and F&SF. Nor have I ever praised the earlier writers...
merely because they were optimistic; rather, I suggest that the height of their optimism led to the depth of despair in the 1950s when even the good Doctor Asimov accepted nuclear holocaust as a given. This anguish engulfing the field resulted in a “Cul de Sac” in the 1960s (129-199), not in the 1950s, as Bob suggests (27). In the final chapter I suggest that because of (yes, a paradox) the New Wave, such an editor as Fred Pohl and such writers as Cordwainer Smith, Chip Delany, R.A. Lafferty, Robert Silverberg, Joanna Russ, and Ursula K. Le Guin revitalized American sf.

Since the first chapter of Brian Aldiss’ Billion Year Spree (a variant form) was published in *Extrapolation* (May 1973), as was one of Chip Delany’s earliest critical articles (May 1969), I would prefer to say that we agree on certain matters rather than that I “follow” them (26,27). As for my “neutrality” in a “contentious field,” I am among the first to acknowledge that all criticism, historical overviews, and reviewing are highly subjective; yet I think the task of the literary historian is to avoid a narrowly political, “contentious” stand whenever possible. As Robert E. Spiller repeatedly said—but he was not the first to do so—the task of literary scholars as a whole is to discover the societal context in which a text is written and produced, to examine the literary form, and to explore the societal context in which it is currently read. Opinions/interpretations change, as in the cases of Melville and Faulkner, for example, to stay outside the sf field. Need I say they will continue to change? In *Understanding* I tried only to indicate where we had been between 1926 and 1970 so that we might, perhaps, better see where we are and where we’re going. My thanks to Bob for saying that *Understanding* “isn’t a bad historical survey” and that it “is very efficient at what it aims to do” (27).

Bye the bye, the three or four obvious flaws were corrected when the book went into its second printing in mid-April. I can plead only haste and fatigue, but I shall never understand how *Gravy Planet* remained *Gravy Train* in both the text and the index.

Tom Clareson

[I’ll wager that your dog has learned to use the computer. BH,ed.]

Dear Editor:

I am sorry that Tom felt I was critical of his authorial performance. My main problems are with the design of the *Understanding...* series. I was not, for the record, “disregarding” his earlier work, but I did feel that describing the work at hand was primary. I still feel that “nostalgic” describes the tone of at least the early chapters, and that against the panoply of critical approaches rampant today, Tom is a “traditionalist.”
I, too, was influenced by space constraints—after describing the first section in very sparse detail, I found I could give no more than a cursory description of the rest within my word limits. Like most reviewers, I had my own agenda, of course. I don’t see the critical usefulness of another survey of the early history of SF—not while so much genuinely contemporary work waits for adequate critical examination. I think the usefulness of literary history is low in contributing to an “understanding” of the literature. Neither the agenda of the publisher (trite and unimaginative) nor mine (personal and prejudiced) is any fault of Tom’s, of course, and I regret having left any impression to that effect.

Bob Collins

*** REMINDER ***
Remember to renew your SFRA membership.

Science Fiction Research Association
Annual Conference XXII
June 28 - 30, 1991
Park Inn, 820 S. 135 E
and
Student Union, University of North Texas
Denton, Texas
Plan to Attend — Don’t Wait!
Send in your registration now.
NonFiction

Kafka, Inside and Out


These two volumes on Kafka’s life and work complement each other by analyzing the man and his literature from opposing perspectives. Citati presents a psychobiography, an attempt to recreate Kafka’s inner life, primarily by extrapolating from Kafka’s diary and letters. Anderson, on the other hand, has chosen a number of essays and book excerpts, most from European sources, which concentrate on recreating the external social, religious, and political milieu in which Kafka lived and worked.

Citati begins with an overview of Kafka’s daily life which at times approaches the form of an interior monologue, more a meditation on the writer’s personality than a traditional historical account of where and how he spent his time. He then focuses on Kafka’s relationship with Felice Bauer and follows with an illuminating description of the nature of Kafka’s creative process. Kafka’s reaction to the onset and course of his tuberculosis and his relationship with Milena Jesenska also receive extensive treatment.

Citati’s interpretation of Kafka’s interior life forms the foundation for his close critical readings of much of Kafka’s major work—“The Metamorphosis,” Amerika, The Trial, and The Castle—as well as two late stories, “The Burrow” and “Investigations of a Dog.”

Anderson’s collection also includes analyses of much of Kafka’s writing, but approaches the work with a presumption that Kafka drew equal inspiration from his external environment. The volume is divided into three sections, focusing attention first on Kafka’s physical environment, then on the intellectual forces that influenced his work, and finally on the literary importance of his letters and diaries.

The four essays in the first section describe the Prague that Kafka knew and his position as both a German and a Jew in the majority Czech culture. Kafka biographer Klaus Wagenbach argues that the writer’s life in the German Jewish ghetto of Prague is a source for his great theme of alienation; he also demonstrates how Kafka’s use of the more limited vocabulary of Prague German rather than High German influenced his writing style. German historian Christoph Stölzl explores Kafka’s ambivalence about his Jewishness as reflected in attitudes ranging from anti-Semitism to an interest in Zionism. Kafka’s knowledge of and interest in Yiddish theater and literature also receive attention here.
The second section, "Cultural Politics and the Fin De Siècle," contains essays tracing literary, political, and philosophical sources of Kafka's work. Here are discussions of libertarian influences on Amerika, Kafka's attitudes towards the writings of Nietzsche and Freud, and the influence of Otto Weininger's dissertation Sex and Character on Kafka's female characters. Margot Norris of the University of California at Irvine contributes a very useful comparison of "In the Penal Colony" and "A Hunger Artist" as symmetrically demonstrating sadism and masochism. Another essay traces the influence of Casanova's account of his escape from a Venetian prison on The Trial.

In the third section, "Texts, Letters, and Autobiography," are a discussion of the relationship between "The Judgment" and "Letter to His Father," an overview of the impact of such external concerns as Kafka's health and his choice of writing instrument and notebook on his writing, and essays on his correspondences with Felice and Milena.

Read together, these two volumes provide the reader with a balanced view of the sources of Kafka's themes and inspirations. As is to be expected, the biography Kafka is a more personal work; though Citati acknowledges quotations and includes an index, he provides no bibliographical references, just a list of authors whose influence he acknowledges. Despite the lack of an index, Anderson's volume is admirably edited. The essays, most of which are well-annotated, reinforce each other and the editor helpfully points out connections between them. Unlike many collections of articles from various sources, Reading Kafka creates a sum effect greater than its parts.

Both of these books are welcome additions to Kafka scholarship and suitable for most college libraries, but neither perceives Kafka as a writer of fantasy or horror; thus they never directly address the concerns of those interested primarily in literature of the fantastic.

Agatha Taormina

Serious Hubbard Critique


L. Ron Hubbard remains of interest to science fiction scholars for several reasons: 1.) his contributions to the genre as a writer during the "Golden Age"; 2.) the involvement of prominent SF writers and editors in the early development of his Dianetic psychotherapy; 3.) the imprint of various SF tropes on his Scientological religious teachings; and 4.) the continuing role in the SF community of several Hubbard-inspired enterprises: Author Services Inc., Bridge Publications, and the Writers of the Future contests.
Jon Atack says little in reference to reasons 1 and 2. (Russell Miller’s *Barefaced Messiah* remains the best available source for reason 2, as well as for Hubbard’s personal history.) Atack is better on reason 4. He provides several intriguing bits of information on Author Services, which currently appears to be no more than a literary agency. Atack says Author Services was founded in 1982 “ostensibly as a non-Church organization set up to manage Hubbard’s affairs as a writer,” but that it soon became “the controlling group” over the entire Scientology empire. When the IRS appeared ready to impound most of the Church’s resources after an adverse tax court decision, Atack says, “The Scientology Publications Organization U.S. was re-incorporated as a for-profit corporation, called Bridge Publications.” Atack makes no mention of Writers of the Future.

Atack is best in the area of reason 3. He describes clearly and systematically the sometimes subtle, sometimes radical permutations through which the tenets of Scientology have passed during four decades. He details not only publicly accessible Church doctrines, but also teachings heretofore restricted to the inner circles of Scientology. In addition he reports several entertaining instances of Hubbard apocrypha. In one of these, Hubbard led a nautical search for “an immense Mother-ship and a fleet of smaller spacecraft,” supposedly waiting in a huge cave in northern Corsica until Hubbard’s palm print “would cause a slab of rock to slide away, revealing these chariots of the gods” (p. 179). Unfortunately clashes with nearby port authorities necessitated the Scientology flagship’s departure from Mediterranean waters, and “Hubbard never returned to collect the Mother-ship.”

Atack was himself a Scientology insider for nine years, and other ex-Scientologists have provided him with large numbers of Church-related documents. He also draws upon massive archives made available as court records in various legal suits against the Church of Scientology. Scientology spokespersons have argued that the more incriminating documents, as well as some that contradict official Church biographies of Hubbard, were forged as part of a vast U.S. Government (or international) conspiracy against Hubbard and the Church. Readers must draw their own conclusions about who may have forged what and for what purposes. Atack does, however, tell a coherent and heavily footnoted story, in which Church of Scientology abuses of ordinary legal and ethical standards appear rife.

Atack’s lengthy accounts of Church infighting hold no inherent interest for SF scholars, though they should prove useful to students of contemporary religious movements. Missing from this part of Atack’s book is any substantial discussion of why people join the Church of Scientology, or why some of them remain despite apparent physical and psychological abuse. Atack occasionally refers to the relevant sociological literature, but offers no
original insights. He sites numerous examples of high-level members who have abruptly left the Church. These apostates, however, seem to have quit more often because of financial disputes between the Church as a franchiser of local "missions" and themselves as franchise holders than because of elevated doctrinal disputes.

As with several other books critical of Scientology, this one has reached print only after surviving repeated legal challenges. Certain passages seem to have been revised after the book was typeset, perhaps to forestall further legal action. (Note the slightly different typeface used on portions of pp. 71, 123, 203, 212, 288, and 349.) The Church of Scientology has been no more tolerant of its critics than any other religious cult, and often a good deal more brutal in its treatment of them than our pluralist society expects from an organized and purportedly "respectable" religious group. Atack cites the nasty treatment directed at authors of several previous anti-Scientology books, especially Paulette Cooper. Among the mildest aspects of the campaign against her, "Copies [of her by then out-of-print book] were stolen from libraries and bought up from used book shops, then destroyed" (p. 280). I hope Atack and his book fare better. According to both Cooper and Atack, "Scientology incessantly claims to have reformed itself, to have expelled the bad elements. She had heard such claims in 1968. We are still hearing them now. They have never been true." Perhaps now, five years after Hubbard's death, the leaders of the Church can begin to relax a bit and permit serious, well-informed critics to have their say without harassment.

Alan Elms

Sensitive, Intelligent Analysis


This study of Aldous Huxley's classic novel is probably the best volume in the Twayne Masterworks Studies series to date. Baker, a professor of English at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, is the author of an earlier book on Huxley, The Dark Historic Page: Social Satire and Historicism in the Novels of Aldous Huxley, 1921-1939. From the prefatory chapters—covering the "Historical Context," "The Importance of the Work," and its "Critical Reception"—Baker shows himself to be an almost ideal reader of Huxley's most famous novel. Brave New World, he says, "is a study of mass culture and industrial technology in a world where economic and social stability compensates for the vulgarization of intellectual life and the absence of political responsibility." A more succinct and penetrating assessment of the novel's thematic substrate could hardly be hoped for.
In Part 1, “The Boundaries of Utopia,” Baker lays out the general formal and philosophic context in which *Brave New World* should be understood. First, he analyzes it in relation to the “modern utopia,” contrasting it with the work of H.G. Wells. Then he considers it against the “modern dystopia” as represented by Eugene Zamiatin’s *We*. Rather than strictly a dystopia, Baker sees Huxley’s novel as an “anti-utopia” which attempts to transcend the terms of the Wells-Zamiatin debate. Baker’s discussion of the thematic relationships among these three major 20th century writers, showing how each built upon or revised his predecessors, offers one of the most compelling treatments of the status of science in modern utopian and dystopian literature that I have read.

Baker goes on to elaborate, with subtlety and skill, Huxley’s vision of the modern world as dominated by a falsely utopian “New Romanticism”—“a collectivist ideology, exclusively materialist and inherently antiliberal.” In a fascinating chapter called “Ideology and Power in Huxley’s Ultimate Revolution: The Case of the Marquis de Sade,” Baker displays Huxley’s conviction that the New Romanticism was linked to aberrant states of consciousness that bordered on the sadistic, generating a power-lust that expressed itself in all areas of human endeavor, from interpersonal relationships to institutional formations—including modern science and technology. Drawing on German sociologist Max Weber and British philosopher Bertrand Russell, Baker traces Huxley’s analysis of 20th century technocracy as an anti-human apparatus spawned by the essential nihilism of the New Romantic ideology.

Having masterfully sketched this general context, Baker proceeds, in Part 2, to a close reading of the text—one which, while offering a penetrating discussion of the novel’s themes, persistently evokes historical examples which deepen the analysis (e.g. Henry Ford’s mechanization of the workplace as a harbinger of the dominance of automata in modern social life which *Brave New World* takes to such powerful extremes). Baker’s close reading advances chapter by chapter, shedding light as it goes. I think it is clearly the most sensitive and intelligent analysis the book has yet received.

Many entries in the Twayne series have been uninspired rehashings of tired critical viewpoints of canonical texts which have already been done to death in the periodical literature. Robert Baker’s volume, on the contrary, is a challenging and original perspective on a novel that has never really been adequately treated. It deserves to be read not only by scholars of utopian and dystopian fiction but by students of literary and cultural modernism and social modernization as well.

Rob Latham
Frankenstein in the Classroom

Behrendt, Stephen C., ed. *Approaches to Teaching Shelley's Frankenstein.* Modern Language Association of America, 10 Astor Place, New York, NY 10003, December 1990. x + 190p. $34. 0-87352-539-6; $19. pb, -540-X.

Those of us who teach literature at the undergraduate level have for the past ten years found a great deal of assistance in the “Approaches to Teaching...” series published by the MLA. Each of these handy volumes contains a collection of articles on teaching the work of a major author or work, written by experienced teacher-scholars. Although the contents vary a great deal, the emphasis in general is on the practical—helping students understand Blake, for example, or ways of teaching *Lyrical Ballads.*

This latest entry in the series is one of the best. It contains an invaluable mix of background information with suggestions for teaching strategies. Among the more useful articles are Anne K. Mellor’s discussion of the advantages of the 1818 text over the 1831 edition, including a detailed list of the changes made by Percy Shelley, Stephen Behrendt’s on “Language and Style,” and Paula Feldman’s on psychology. There is a special section on *Frankenstein* on film. Several articles deal with feminist issues, in particular William Veeder's “Gender and Pedagogy.” Many articles suggest ways of presenting *Frankenstein* in such specific courses as Romantic Age or Science Fiction, or suggest strategies for helping classes understand its structure. There are recommended reading lists for both instructors and undergraduates and a filmography.

I have used *Frankenstein* for many years in both Romantic Literature and Science Fiction courses and thought I knew a fair amount about the book. After reading Behrendt’s anthology, however, I shall approach class discussions with new enthusiasm and new insights. Indispensable for anyone planning to use this book in class.

*Lynn F. Williams*

Tiresome Analyses


Burleson's deconstruction of Lovecraft has little to do with horror, and too much to do with tedium. His prose makes torturously slow reading for the average Lovecraft fan.

The main problem with Burleson is that every time he is in danger of becoming interesting, he veers off into the Twilight Zone of analyses. According to Burleson, everything Lovecraft penned is about the act of writing
itself, and not about scaring the dickens out of innocent readers. One of my professors once commented that all great literature is about sex. Deconstructionists apparently believe all great (or any degree, for that matter) literature is about text.

At the beginning of this thankfully short study, Burleson explains, ad nauseam, the manner in which he will “read” Lovecraft’s text. As other deconstructionists and even Marxist critics too often do, Burleson talks at length about his pet theory. To borrow deconstructionist terminology, Burleson’s manner of reading Lovecraft is always already boring, always already an adumbration of more boredom, and always already convoluted and redundant.

Burleson deconstructs thirteen of Lovecraft’s short stories, including “The Dunwich Horror” and “The Shadow Over Innsmouth.” Concerning himself always already too much with the etymology of certain words used either consciously or unconsciously by Lovecraft, Burleson’s analysis of Lovecraft becomes tiresome by chapter four. For example, when he discusses “The Statement of Randolph Carter,” he concerns himself almost wholly with the title of the work, specifically the etymology and meaning of the word “statement,” and the meaning of the word “of.” His excessive concern with whose statement the story is “of,” be it Randolph Carter or the text itself, produces a “so what?” feeling in the reader. In fact, the analysis of “The Music of Erich Zann” also centers on the word “of”: “What music, if any, ‘belongs’ to Erich Zann? What is the music ‘of’ Erich Zann?”

Burleson’s emphasis on the Indo-European roots of some of Lovecraft’s diction grates on the nerves after fifty pages or so, as does Burleson’s fondness for truly bad puns. Lovecraft: Disturbing the Universe is best left to those who have not yet moved beyond the quagmire that is deconstructionism, and is also best avoided by serious fans of Lovecraft’s literature (who, ironically, includes Burleson himself).

Désirée I. Guzzetta

Supplement to Alice


For the last 30 years Gardner’s original Annotated Alice has been the standard work by which other annotated volumes are measured. Only a few pages smaller than this new volume, the wealth of material contained in the previous work has delighted several generations, and it is still in print. Given such a success, why should there be a new version?
According to Gardner, the original book was a compilation of known material, with little original research involved. Since its publication, much new material has come to light, and many readers have written to Gardner pointing out various places for improvement. Finally, it was decided to publish a new volume. However, More Annotated Alice is NOT a replacement volume for the original. Instead, it is a supplement. The material in this volume is new; even when an annotation for a given word or phrase appears in both books, there is little repetition. For instance, one item which runs to eight long paragraphs in the original work is summarized in one short paragraph, plus two new paragraphs, in the new volume.

There is also new text: the "lost episode" about a wasp in a wig (first published 17 years after The Annotated Alice) is included here with extensive annotations. Where the original, and well-known, Tenniel illustrations were used exclusively in the first volume, this book uses illustrations by Peter Newell, which are also excellent, and Newell is the subject of an essay by Michael Patrick Hearn.

Since the book is intended as a sequel, it does not destroy the value of, nor replace, the original book, worth having in its own right. However, there is no doubt that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts, and every "Alice" enthusiast will want both books. Gardner's reasoning for the production of a sequel rather than a completely revised edition of the original may be valid—certainly, it would have been extremely difficult to squeeze the wealth of new material into the already overcrowded marginal spaces of the original book—but one can't help wishing for a one-volume combination.

Nevertheless, this is a refreshing and entertaining look at the world of "Alice," and the book is heartily recommended.

W.D. Stevens

Multi-National Collaboration


Following the path set by the NASA Art Program books, this book is another lavishly illustrated volume of space art. However, there are several important differences. First, whereas the NASA volumes were concerned solely with the work of NASA and the results of its Art Program, this volume begins with the history of space art itself, and includes many illustrations by artists of the past, some dating from the last century. Also included are several artists noted primarily for association with science fiction.
However, the most important difference lies in the fact that this is a multi-national collaboration with works by both Americans and Russians. Going further, a number of the paintings were produced by astronauts of both nations, who also have considerable artistic talent. This association has produced some breathtaking art, since the artists are not just passive bystanders recording their impressions, but are people who have actively participated in the events they picture. The enthusiasm is apparent.

The pictures range from realistic, through symbolic, to frank surrealism. Interestingly, the Americans seem to lean most heavily toward the school of realism, while the Russians almost monopolize the symbolic representations, and seem to have an exclusive lock on the surrealistic approach; at least so far as this collection indicates.

The text accompanying the pictures is, quite naturally, pro-space. It is also very well-written and, in itself, paints a picture of space exploration that is well worth reading. Just as the art represents both realism and symbolism, the text carries the same dual approach, with Ray Bradbury’s introduction representing the symbolic side.

The appendix with 73 artist biographies is interesting in itself but represents the one really weak point in the book. The only biographies given are for the contemporary artists. There is no material on Bonestell, Rudaux, or Leigh, for instance, even though their work is represented in the book and all are well known in their own right. In spite of this quibble, the book is an excellent value and is highly recommended.

W.D. Stevens

Still Trekking After All These Years


The 31 essays collected here originally appeared in the fanzine Trek between 1978 and 1987; thus they deal only with characters and episodes from the original television series and the first three films: Star Trek: The Motion Picture, The Wrath of Khan, and The Search for Spock. As is to be expected, most of the ink is devoted to meticulous analysis of the Kirk/Spock/McCoy relationship and all its permutations.

The quality of these articles is uneven. Some, such as the two-part “Love in Star Trek” by Walter Irwin, “In Search of Spock: An Analytical Inquiry,” by psychiatrist Harvey R. Greenberg, and “Brother, My Soul: Spock, McCoy, and the Man in the Mirror,” by Joyce Tullock give fans new ways to look at favorite moments from Star Trek and ample insightful evidence of the nature
of its appeal. Fans will also enjoy the lengthy film reviews and the compendium of inconsistencies in and additions to the theatrical versions of the films. The two parodies are wickedly funny satires that fondly acknowledge the series' worst excesses of bad acting and poor scripts. Other reprints, such as the results of the fan poll (taken in 1985) and the speculation about how Spock might be resurrected (written before the release of *The Search for Spock*) are sadly dated. The purely personal accounts of fans' emotional responsiveness to *Star Trek* also have limited appeal.

Trekkies will find much to debate in this volume. But it will also be enjoyed by those who fondly recall the original television series and would like to view the reruns with fresh eyes as well as others curious about why the phenomenon has endured for so long.

*Agatha Taormina*

**Occam’s Razor, Dulled Again**


While thinking about SF as a film genre, have you ever considered whether “the relationship between spectatorial pleasure and genre come[s] into play outside the sphere of narrativity?” Or, whilst pondering a special effects sequence, have you ever wondered “what sort of appeal to scopophilia is being made in such displays of cinema’s codes of visibility?” Perhaps you’re curious about the applicability of Alive Jardine’s notion of *gynesis* (“the ‘feminine’ signifies, not woman herself, but those spaces which could be said to conceptualize the master narrative’s own ‘non-knowledge,’”) or Julia Kristeva’s theory of abjection (“the mother of the semiotic chora:) to, say, Ridley Scott’s *Alien*. If so, then this is the book for you. But readers who are a little fuzzy on Greimasian rectangles, Stanley Fish’s theory of affective sylistics, or denaturalization as a project of structuralist criticism are likely to find most of *Alien Zone* tough sledding.

’Tis a great pity, because many of the essays in this intelligently organized collection challenge the conventional wisdom about SF as a genre, about particular SF films, and about the interplay of those films and contemporary culture. Kuhn has organized these 18 essays (all but three reprints mostly from *Science Fiction Studies*) into five sections in order to exemplify major schools contemporary cultural theory. On the path from empiricism to postmodernism, we first encounter “reflectionist criticism,” which shows how films comment on society, culture, and our collective psyche at the time of their production. Moving deeper into subtext, we then find “ideological
criticism," which argues that films actively influence how audiences view their society, producing (hidden) meanings, by, for example, presenting photographic images as objective records of reality. Subtext becomes detached from society in "psychoanalytic criticism," which considers films as repositories of repressed meanings which can be exposed using the concepts and methods of psychoanalysis. The audience comes into the picture in "spectatorial criticism," which explores how films generate meaning in their relationship with the viewer by, for example, choosing particular strategies for providing and withholding information. Heavily influenced by psychoanalysis, this approach also reaches beyond the theater to consider matters of industry and market—film as a commodity whose rates of exchange involve pleasure as well as dollars. Finally, postmodernism comes to the fore in "intertextual criticism," which focuses on the ongoing dialogue of influence both within and between genres; this form of cultural in-breeding, which involves both incorporation of genre conventions and overt quotation from earlier films, has become pervasive in recent works like Blade Runner and Alien.

These essays raise a host of fascinating questions. What ideologies are implicit in the portrayal of technology in films such as Blade Runner and Logan's Run? How does the self-consciously schizophrenic nature of special effects (ostensibly real yet so obviously artificial) that dominate many recent SF films affect audience perceptions? How do SF/horror films such as Alien and Altered States play off science against humanism? And so on. Unfortunately, whatever answers these critics may have are only dimly visible through the clouds of mind-numbing lingo and oblique syntactical structures that enshroud most of these essays. On page after page we stumble over abstruse, specialized arguments based on the theories of Roland Barthes, Fredric Jameson, Michel Foucault, Jacques Lacan, Jean-Francois Lyotard, and others, whose academically trendy names are prominently displayed throughout this volume, as if to warn off readers who are unacquainted with modern literary theory at least at the level of, say, Terry Eagleton's Literary Theory: An Introduction (University of Minnesota, 1983)

Only a few of these critics both make accessible and effective use of the ideas and approaches of contemporary cultural theory. Vivian Sobchack, writing on the detachment of women from sexuality in American SF films, and Constance Penley, on the primal scene in The Terminator, develop subtle, provocative, readable essays around psychoanalytic concepts. And Scott Bukatman incorporates postmodern ideas from Jean Baudrillard, Arthur Kroker, and others into a (necessarily) difficult but extremely interesting juxtaposition of works by David Cronenberg, William S. Burrows, and Philip K. Dick. But these—and three lucid "empiricist" essays by H. Bruce Franklin
(on the pessimistic visions of the future in SF films of the '70s and '80s), Hugh Ruppersberg (on the benevolent alien messiahs that parade through films of this period), and Thomas B. Byers (on the values embedded in films that extrapolate high-tech corporate capitalism)—are exceptions.

The rest, straining under the weight of their stultifying, prolix prose, seem to be addressing themselves rather than the reader. They shed little light on SF, film, or culture, and they certainly don't inspire one to re-visit the films they discuss. (I emerged from reading the feminist, Althusserian, Marxist, Freudian, semiotic, and deconstructive analyses of Alien in this book heartily sick of the film.) So I cannot recommend this collection except to large academic libraries, which will buy it anyway. Readers in search of serious, thoughtful, accessible film criticism would be better off with George Slusser and Eric Rabkin's collection of papers from the 4th Eaton conference, Shadows of the Magic Lamp (Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1985) or Danny Peary's critically balanced, jargon-free volume Omni's Screen Flights/Screen Fantasies (Doubleday, 1984). Alien Zone, by contrast, serves mainly as a demonstration that if film criticism is to fulfill its promise and its responsibility—to inform, enlighten, and stimulate the viewer—it must break out of this incestuous loop of gratuitous difficulty; it must speak to us and stop talking in the dark.

Michael A. Morrison

Stapledon's Literary Rank


As editor Patrick Murphy points out in his introduction, Olaf Stapledon is more widely respected than read. His work is very seldom cited by science fiction fans, though he has influenced many philosophically inclined SF writers, such as Arthur C. Clarke and Brian Aldiss, who, in his history of the genre, Trillion Year Spree, called Stapledon “the ultimate SF writer” and his novel Star Maker “the one great grey holy book of science fiction.” Aldiss went on to wonder “how it is that the funeral masons and morticians who work their preserving processes on Eng. Lit. have rejected Stapledon entirely from their critical incantations,” given the high quality of his work. Recent signs indicate that this academic snub has been more a case of benign neglect than active rejection: in 1982, the journal Science Fiction Studies devoted a special issue to Stapledon’s work (edited by McCarthy); in 1984, Harvey J. Satty and Curtis C. Smith brought out the definitive Stapledon bibliography (Greenwood); between 1983 and 1986, biocritical studies of the author have appeared in series published by Twain, Oxford and Starmont
House, written by McCarthy, Leslie Fiedler and John Kinnaird, respectively; in 1987, Robert Crossley published a collection of the author’s letters to his fiancée, called Talking Across the World (University Press of New England), and is currently at work on a full-scale biography; and now McCarthy, Charles Elkins and Martin H. Greenberg have gathered six new critical essays, plus an unpublished manuscript (edited by Crossley).

The book aspires to synoptically reassess the literary, philosophical and political significance of Stapledon’s work. Though most of the essays focus on his science fiction novels, one, “The Moral Philosophy of Olaf Stapledon” by Robert Shelton, excavates his virtually forgotten philosophical writings, offering a careful discussion of their relevance to his later fiction. Shelton’s analysis of “Stapledon’s modernization of the dialectical process” is intelligent and convincing, but he does not extrapolate the implications for Stapledon’s fictional narratives beyond the merely thematic level. Obviously, an effort to undermine classic dialectical reasoning in favor of a language system that is “instantaneous rather than sequential” would have serious effects on the fictive representation of temporality, but Shelton leaves this area unexplored. An essay that suggests how such an exploration might proceed is John Huntington’s “Remembrance of Things to Come: Narrative Technique in Last and First Men,” with its treatment of Stapledon’s weaving of proleptic (forward-looking) and analeptic (backward-looking) narrative strategies; unfortunately, Legacy contains only new pieces, and Huntington’s was published in that special issue of SF Studies.

Actually, this focus on the new is not really “unfortunate,” given the generally high quality of this book’s contents. (Even when one wishes an author had pressed his or her argument further, it is only because that argument is so suggestive and/or provocative.) As McCarthy remarks in his introduction, all of the essays are in some way contextual, examining Stapledon’s work within or against various systems or processes. McCarthy’s own contribution, “Stapledon and Literary Modernism,” argues for the pertinence of considering the author’s work within the general ideological scheme of British Modernism. His analysis of how Stapledon’s narratives converge with Virginia Woolf’s and James Joyce’s is more convincing as a negative than a positive argument: admittedly, all three writers rejected the formal restraints of the traditional realist novel, and McCarthy is quite sure-footed in his treatment of their similarities on this score; but his efforts to argue for more specific thematic correspondences—e.g. Stapledon’s aestheticism mirroring Joyce’s—seem less compelling. Still, his essay is an important attempt to work beyond the narrow categorical terms of e’lite versus genre literature which has, at least since Henry James’ notorious blow-up with Wells, made any effort to discuss SF as a legitimate part of 20th century British fiction very difficult.
Other contexts into which Stapledon’s fiction is profitably inserted include the ritual/mythological (Louis Tremaine’s fine study of *Odd John* and *Sirius*, two of the author’s less daunting, more humanly appealing texts that have till now received almost no extended critical treatment); philosophy of history (Charles Elkins’ good discussion of Stapledon’s vision of totality which situates his work in the axis of Hegel-Spengler-Marx); contemporary politics (Curtis C. Smith’s brief but fascinating review of a spirited epistolary exchange with an anonymous militarist, known only as “Ignotus,” that effectively sketches Stapledon’s frequently ambivalent pacifism); and the postmodern (Cheryl Herr’s excellent analysis of Stapledon’s conception of the constraints language and culture place on the individual). The unpublished manuscript, “Letters to the Future” (addressed, Hari Seldon-like, to an imaginary great-grandson, as a kind of prophetic time-capsule), speaks from an egoistic “age of perplexity” to a coming era of “radical worldliness,” where a new organic community has been achieved; the manuscript effectively places Stapledon within contemporary debates over ethical and religious relativism.

It is regrettable that none of the essays (save briefly for Herr’s, which at the end compares and contrasts *Star Maker* with Samuel R. Delany’s *The Einstein Intersection*) undertakes to place Stapledon squarely within the context of modern science fiction, since there exist (so far as I know) no adequate analyses of his influence on subsequent generations of writers. It is laudable that the editors should wish to broaden the intellectual and cultural horizon within which Stapledon’s work may be seen to operate, but one thorough study of his position in modern SF would have been welcome. Otherwise, Charles Elkins’ assertion that “Olaf Stapledon’s place in the literary history of science fiction is assured; he stands out as one of the four or five most influential writers in the genre” remains open to question—a question which a book with the title *The Legacy of Olaf Stapledon* should have definitively answered. In any event, this is an especially rewarding collection of essays that bodes well for the future of critical stock in Stapledon’s work.

*Rob Latham*

**A Gadfly on the Rump**


Chancy Gardner liked to watch. Kenneth MacKinnon wants us to practice active *looking* within cinema. Not only does he want us to look, he demands that we shed our assumptions when doing so, especially when we view the argumentative Brian De Palma.
What MacKinnon does best here is ask unsettling questions. The book is about the controversial and the value of controversy. MacKinnon refuses to let the debate about De Palma stand and in that effort, he asks us to continue debate about all cinema in general. MacKinnon goads us, not wanting us to get too contented with our old arguments and accepted conclusions.

In this study MacKinnon uses the feminist critical view of “active reading” of film texts to dislodge preferred or accepted interpretations as the only possible understanding of De Palma. By doing this, MacKinnon attacks the paradox which has caused De Palma to be considered a “bad object” among film critics who base their reviews on feminist arguments. In other words, for MacKinnon, the colloquy is not over in any sense. In the best of scholarly tradition, he continues to make disturbing inquiries, especially regarding those issues which are presumed closed.

From his excellent introduction which gives an overview of De Palma’s work, through his first chapter on “Feminism and Film,” MacKinnon lays the foundation of his argument. The subsequent chapters are a clear development of his bias, a reexamination of the “Look” within the framework of sexual politics. The lucidity of his viewpoints regarding the issues of pornography and horror further the debate he is hoping to reestablish. His exploration of three De Palma works, Carrie, Dressed to Kill, and Body Double, as well as Alfred Hitchcock’s influence help bring once again to the front the feminist belief and attitude that there can be no “final” analysis of a question.

Kenneth MacKinnon knows what he is doing by choosing De Palma as the subject of a feminist critical approach. Because De Palma is held to be a notorious woman hater, for the “politically correct” it is very tempting to accept this classification and dismiss him. That is certainly the more comfortable route. If De Palma can be looked at anew, however, then other settled and sealed-off areas of film can also be queried again. In this way, orthodoxy may be shaken off and we can all be liberated to ever growing insights about filmmaking, ourselves, and society.

In bringing us Misogyny in the Movies MacKinnon has done scholarship a service, reminding us once more not to get too cozy with our ideas but rather to keep testing them. His excellent bibliography and extensive end notes demonstrate the breadth of his research; he practices what he preaches. The book is well organized, well written, and easy to follow, characteristics often rare among critical works.

The one great fault of the book is beyond MacKinnon’s control. The study is ultimately about the visual and looking, but the book has few pictures. The conscientious student should review the films in conjunction with the book. MacKinnon asks discomfitting questions and accomplishes his goal, the furtherance of open debate. For the serious film student and the hobbyist alike, Misogyny in the Movies is worth the price of admission.

Lou Liberty
The Sirens of Eden


Leonard Mustazza’s previous book was a study of John Milton, and it is therefore less surprising that Milton plays such a large role in his current study of the novels of Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. In fact, Milton is mentioned more often than any author other than Vonnegut himself, and at times one almost gets the dizzying sensation that Vonnegut put Mustazza up to the whole thing—such as when the Tralfamadorians from *Slaughterhouse-5* are compared to Milton’s angels, or Billy Pilgrim’s geodesic dome to the starry crown of Adam. Is Mustazza trying to convince us, this late in the game of Vonnegut studies, that the author we had once viewed as the heir to Mark Twain is really a singer of religious epics?

Not quite—and perhaps that last statement is a little unfair to this book. What Mustazza *does* want to show us is that Vonnegut’s characters are all, in their various ways, seeking to establish or regain some kind of Edenic world for themselves, that they are most of them innocents buffeted by the random forces of an imperfect, or “fallen” world. That much I think most of us can accept without much argument. The question is how effectively Mustazza can convince us that Vonnegut’s novels cast these fairly universal concerns into specifically Biblical terms, and the answer is, a bit unevenly. Mustazza has identified a lot of biblical allusions in twelve Vonnegut novels, from *Player Piano* to *Bluebeard*, and has mustered much support for his readings from previous Vonnegut scholarship, and he indeed makes a number of telling points about the novels themselves—such as when he argues that the ending of *God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater* works better than most other critics think it does because for Vonnegut, “The gesture is all” (p. 101).

However, I remain a little skeptical about how much of this is deliberate Genesis-mongering on Vonnegut’s part, and how much of it might be accounted for by the characters’ involvement with the culture at large, or with other systems of myth. When Mustazza states that *Galapagos* works partly because of a “unique fusion” of narrative materials from science fiction and from myth, I wonder if he’s aware of how much mythic content is embedded in science fiction as a form, and if he has considered Vonnegut’s many pop culture influences. Furthermore, if there is indeed a kind of epic striving toward innocence in Vonnegut’s world, I would hope to see it reflected in the Vonnegutian “meta-novel” that is implied by all the cross references and repeated events and characters from the twelve novels discussed. But the last chapter, where one expects this discussion, is merely a three-page summary.
We are left, then, with a rather methodical and sometimes convincing account of a recurring theme, but one that stops short of integrating this account with an overall moral vision. Perhaps Vonnegut himself isn't that consistent, and perhaps Mustazza has gone about as far as one can go in pursuing genesis in Vonnegut; he's certainly added something useful to the growing body of Vonnegut criticism. The book is not to be recommended as an introduction to Vonnegut, although it does provide a good summary of previous critical thought, but for big brains who want to explore the idea of Vonnegut as heir to the tradition of the American Adam, Mustazza has given us something to think about.

Gary K. Wolfe

Looking at Bellamy


Edward Bellamy's Looking Backward is a classic of American utopian literature which, despite coverage in most general surveys of 19th century American literature, has never really been submitted to the extended and careful critical analysis it undoubtedly deserves. Daphne Patai's new collection of essays rectifies that neglect, offering nine substantial essays on the novel on the centennial of its publication. It is possible that Bellamy's work in general will soon enjoy a renaissance, since alongside this collaborative study of Looking Backward there appeared Edward Bellamy: An Annotated Bibliography of Secondary Criticism, edited by Richard Toby Widdicombe for Garland Press. This bibliography provides scholars as well as potential students of Bellamy with a comprehensive overview of the relevant criticism, while Patai's volume indicates routes current study might follow.

The essays collected here make use of a variety of critical strategies—from straight bio-criticism to reader-response theory to ideological analysis and critique. In this last category must be placed the best essay in the book, Sylvia Strauss's "Gender, Race and Class in Utopia," which argues, I think conclusively, that Bellamy's utopian aspirations remained inextricably entangled with contemporary biases and exclusions, rather than effectively transcending them. Along these lines we can include Milton Cantor's "The Backward Look of Bellamy's Socialism," which alleges that Bellamy's vision was one of the past rather than the future, marked by an anti-democratic pastoral nostalgia. On the contrary, Howard Segal argues in "Bellamy and Technology: Reconciling Centralization and Decentralization," Bellamy's
novel manages a subtle critique of both agrarianism and urbanization, and the world-view subtended by each, propounding a fruitful synthesis in the future rather than a naive return to the past. The most thoroughgoing brief for Bellamy’s genuine progressiveness is Franklin Rosemont’s “Bellamy’s Radicalism Reclaimed,” which synoptically reviews the author’s entire oeuvre in a defense of his socialist ideals.

Other essays study Bellamy’s utopia as a discursive as well as a political formation. Three pieces analyze the rhetorical operation of systematic dualisms in the novel: Jean Pfaezel’s “Immanence, Indeterminance, and the Utopian Pun in Looking Backward” offers an examination of the fusion of mimetic and fantastic narrative strategies; Kenneth Roemer, in “‘Getting Nowhere’ beyond Stasis: A Critique, a Method, and a Case,” analyzes the tension between stasis and dynamism in utopian texts in general, and in Bellamy’s in particular; and Lee Cullen Khanna’s “The Text as Tactic: Looking Backward and the Power of the Word” traces the imbrication of philosophical realism and idealism. An essay which contextualizes Bellamy within the discourse of contemporary utopian writing is W. Warren Wagar’s “Dreams of Reason: Bellamy, Wells, and the Positive Utopia,” which offers a view of Bellamy as a “scientocrat,” converging with Wells in his advocacy of a society ruled by enlightened expertise. Wagar does not suggest connections with the genre of 20th century science fiction, but they will occur readily to the informed reader. (Indeed, the volume’s general silence on the matter of SF—this despite the fact that Looking Backward has clearly influenced many scientifically inclined SF writers—is rather puzzling, suggesting a provincial segregation of genre studies that seems to me indefensible on both theoretical and practical grounds.)

The book concludes with Nancy Shell Griffith’s selected bibliography of works by and about Bellamy and Looking Backward. It is derived from her 1986 bibliography of Bellamy, which is usefully supplemented by the Widdicombe book mentioned above. Alas, there is no index.

Rob Latham

Too Advanced for Its Audience


This is the second single-author guide in the series “Understanding Contemporary British Literature,” aimed at “students as well as good nonacademic readers.”
There has been no shortage of book-length attempts to understand Doris Lessing recently, though most of these monographs have concentrated on specific aspects of the oeuvre: Budhos on enclosure, Draine on thematic coherence, Fishburn on the space fiction, Sprague on narrative doubling, and so on. Pickering’s project of surveying the major fiction from *The Grass is Singing* (1950) to the present is potentially valuable, given that the vast and intimidating design of Canopus now seems complete, since which Lessing has produced, in *The Good Terrorist* (1985) and *The Fifth Child* (1988), two major works that are actually likely to be read by “students and good nonacademic readers” and almost cry out to be “accounted for” within the unpredictable Lessing canon.

However, in 1988 in the Macmillan Modern Novelists series appeared Ruth Whittaker’s *Doris Lessing*, a work of almost identical intention and scope. Pickering has done what she can to avoid repetition, but the result is a work which, though it has its merits, is simply too advanced for its intended readership.

To take some examples: Whittaker’s overview of Lessing’s career clarifies, en passant, the colonial, feminist, Jungian and Sufi influences on Lessing, assuming (reasonably) that the intended reader will profit from such basic instruction. Her use of biographical anecdote is very useful: the story about Lessing’s father gazing at the stars in Africa while remarking, “Well, if we blow ourselves up, there’s plenty more where we came from!” enormously illuminates the Canopus quintet.

Pickering’s equivalent chapter, though dealing with the same material, is far more abstract, emphasizing instead the “dialogic development of narrative forms,” and noting that “Lessing has deliberately textualized herself as a defense against false division.” These are subtle points, but they assume a familiarity with dialogics and textuality highly unlikely in the intended readership of this guide.

The strengths of Pickering are in her ability to relate all of Lessing’s work to a central theme, that of “the relation of the individual to the collective and of both to a transcendent whole,” in her obvious familiarity with a huge and often quite intractable oeuvre, and in her ability to follow comfortably Lessing into non-standard modes (e.g. catastrophe or space fiction or the fabular) and back to realism. Her weaknesses are in a humorlessness, in a reluctance to make aesthetic discriminations, and finally in a failure to convey the excitement of an engagement with Lessing’s extraordinary fiction. This is an earnest book, but has neither the necessary enthusiasm and clarity of a guide for non-specialists, nor the focus of a scholarly monograph.

*Nicholas Ruddick*
Two Dick Biographies


There is every evidence that Philip K. Dick is becoming the most critically studied American SF writer, his work generating books and articles in the late ‘80s with the same frequency Le Guin’s did in the early ‘80s. Following studies of his fiction like Kim Stanley Robinson’s *The Novels of Philip K. Dick* (UMI, 1984) and Patricia Warrick’s *Mind in Motion* (So. Illinois, 1987), we now have two biographies of the author published simultaneously. Sutin’s *Divine Invasions* examines his life as a whole, while Rickman’s *To the High Castle* is the first of two volumes, the second forthcoming as *Firebright Philip K. Dick: A Life 1962-1982.* The two books combine to paint the compelling portrait of a complex, divided man, at war with his parents (especially his mother), incapable of finding enduring love (he was married five times, but never seemed to meet the perfect “dark-haired girl” he longed for), and torn between his adolescent passion for science fiction and his desire to be accepted as a mainstream writer (his many non-SF novels—with the single exception of *Confessions of a Crap Artist*—remained unpublished during his lifetime). The Sutin (as, presumably, will the second volume of Rickman) also portrays a man who was overwhelmed, in early 1974, by a purportedly supernatural vision, the analysis of which dominated his later fiction and the remaining years of his life.

*Divine Invasions* is, far and away, the better of the two biographies. Sutin shows a novelist’s flair for deft portraiture, giving a balanced and convincing picture not only of Dick, but of his mother and his wives. He anatomizes the complex roots of Dick’s art in his omnivorous, polymathic reading, his epistemological questings and questionings, and his abiding love for music. Moreover, he displays the autobiographical elements Dick wove into his fiction in such a sure-handed way that the discussions of his work and his life form a seamless whole. Sutin is compassionate when presenting Dick’s many physical and emotional problems—from severe vertigo and agoraphobia to drug addiction and suicidal depression—but he does not spare Dick when it comes to his often vicious treatment of the women in his life. Sutin also shows incredible finesse when dealing with Dick’s religious vision; while never completely reducing it to mundane causes (drugs, nervous disorders), he nonetheless manages to make it seem comprehensible within the context of Dick’s life and career—not an insignificant achievement.
Sutin's scholarship, too, is quite impressive: not only has he apparently read everything in the vast Dick archives and interviewed dozens of friends and colleagues of the author, but he has managed to weave this material into a well-organized and unfailingly readable narrative. Though obviously a fan of Dick's fiction and an admirer of him as a man, Sutin does not fall prey to Dick's penchant for subtly rewriting the facts of his life; he is aware, throughout, of "the usual Phil Dickian inaccuracies and omissions" in his autobiographical writings and strives to correct these whenever possible in his own account. The result is one of the finest biographical studies of an SF author yet produced.

To the High Castle, on the other hand, suffers from many problems. One is Rickman's obvious deep devotion to Dick, which prevents him from exercising any intelligent selection of data. Rickman spends almost 400 pages relating the years of Dick's life Sutin covers in about 100; most of the additional material is repetitious and/or digressive, adding nothing essential to Sutin's portrayal. Indeed, Rickman's lack of selectivity makes Sutin's treatment seem even finer by comparison: Sutin manages to sketch a period in Dick's life by means of one or two well-chosen details, while Rickman's encyclopedic outpourings ultimately drown Dick in an ocean of trivia. As a result, Rickman's writing style lacks the flowing assurance of Sutin's.

Moreover, Rickman is given to psychologizing, especially in the absence of facts. He is convinced Dick was abused and sexually molested at an early age, probably by his maternal grandfather, and that this trauma was at the root of his various health problems in later life. To support this conclusion he adduces reams of medical and psychiatric data, but no real proof. For his part, Sutin considers the possibility, but ultimately concludes that "the evidence simply does not allow for certainty." This lack of evidence, however, does not bother Rickman, who fills in the gaps with a tissue of interpretations none of which seem to me very convincing. (He promises medical/psychological explanations for Dick's religious visitations in the second volume.)

Now, it should be admitted that Sutin does essay psychological speculations at times, but these are always well-grounded in supporting detail: his analysis of Dick's lifelong search for a love-object to replace the fraternal twin sister who died shortly after birth is corroborated by many interviewees—including Dick's wives—as well as by Dick's own self-examinations. Rickman also treats this theme, but he feels the need to buttress his discussion with quotations from medical authorities—an approach which, in my view, tends towards the reductive. Perhaps this is just my unreasonable preference for a kind of "common sense" methodology, but I also think it almost paradoxical to submit a writer so paranoiacally alert to systematic surveillance as was Dick to the scrutiny of psychological jargon.
Rickman's book is not all bad. Its analyses of Dick's fiction rival Sutin's in perspicuity, and even excel them in displaying the influence of various SF writers on Dick's work. I like the fact that Rickman integrates his discussion of all the novels into the text itself, rather than merely highlighting certain key works, as does Sutin (while consigning the rest to a "Chronological Survey and Guide" at the end). But despite these strengths, the overall effect of Rickman's litany of small facts and the psychiatric apparatus he erects to filter them is numbing. I would recommend To the High Castle only to obsessive fans who cannot get enough of their beloved PKD and to scholars seeking speculative interpretations of his life which might shed light upon his work. For the general SF reader and critic, Divine Invasions is the book to buy.

(For an autobiographical portrait of two key years in Dick's life, 1970-1972, readers are also referred to The Dark-haired Girl, a gleaning of Dick's journals, essays and letters, including much material previously unpublished, which appeared from Mark V. Ziesing in late 1988.)

Rob Latham

007 A TO Z


The most successful film series ever made demonstrates an ambiguous attitude toward technology. Bond's gadgets are small, personalized, user-friendly and often funny, like the magical Elvish tools in Tolkien, while the high technology used by the Bond villains to threaten the world is always gargantuan, depersonalized and destructive, the sort of technology Tolkien disliked. Whenever the Bond films became explicitly science fictional or fantastic, they failed. Live and Let Die (1973), the only occult film in the series, and Moonraker (1979), the only Bond film to venture into outer space, were two of the weakest entries.

Rubin covers all sixteen films produced by Albert Broccoli from Dr. No (1962) to Licence to Kill (1989); Never Say Never Again (1983) the only straight Bond film not made by Broccoli; and two versions of Casino Royale, a 1954 short TV film (with an American Bond!) and the foolish 1967 farce. For each film, Rubin provides full credits and terse, usually sensible criticism but no synopsis. Additional entries discuss the work of all major contributors to the films and hundreds of individual details, including gadgets, stunts, vehicles, special effects, sets and even lines of dialogue. There are separate
entries for the characters and the actors who portray them. Rubin’s main interest is the production of the films; the longest entries are devoted to the directors, writers, designers, editors, score composers and stunt performers who worked on several films in the series. Other long entries describe the Aston-Martin car; the incredible volcano crater set in You Only Live Twice (1967); and the terrifying ski-parachute jump which opened The Spy Who Loved Me (1967). Rubin has unearthed a rich harvest of anecdotes, as one would expect of a film series which devoted vast technical and financial resources to the production of pure escapism. During the filming of Thunderball (1965) in Jamaica, director Terence Young muttered a line worthy of Bond himself, “God, this is a rough location. My champagne is warm.”

Rubin makes a few errors, which include giving Timothy Dalton’s birthplace as “North Wales, England”; his enthusiasm sometimes runs away with him, as when he says that Ursula Andress’s first appearance in Dr. No “is the most famous introduction for a performer in screen history.” More important, the Encyclopedia is organized more for browsing than for reference. The alphabetical arrangement scatters information and insights which should be brought together. Separate discussions of Never Say Never Again are found under the film’s title and under the director, Irvin Kershner; the entry under Kershner is more detailed and analytical. Rubin’s interesting observation that the last three films, A View to a Kill (1985), The Living Daylights (1987) and Licence to Kill, have seen fewer sexual conquests by Bond (a belated concession to both feminism and safe sex), is buried in the entry for Tanya Roberts, the leading lady in View. The controversy over the excessive running length of On Her Majesty’s Secret Service (1969) is under “0” for “140 minutes” and Bond’s only marriage is discussed under “W” for “Will you marry me?” Despite these deficiencies, Rubin’s Encyclopedia is the most complete source of information on the Bond films and belongs in all good-sized film collections. For true fans, this book is as intoxicating and irresistible as the best of the Bond movies.

Rubin’s The James Bond Films (1981) covers the series through For Your Eyes Only (1981) and contains far less detail than the Encyclopedia but is a better introduction to the films since it is narrative rather than encyclopedic in form. Libraries should not discard Rubin’s first book if they acquire his Encyclopedia. The other book-length study, John Brosnan’s disappointing James Bond in the Cinema (2d ed., 1981) has unnecessarily detailed synopses (through Moonraker, 1979), often nitpicking criticism and less production information than Rubin.

Michael Klossner
Revised SFWA Handbook


Like the original *SFWA Handbook*, produced in 1976 and long outdated, the new edition is designed to be part of the introductory packet for new members of the Science Fiction Writers of America, the professional association for published authors of genre fiction. As such, it presumes that the reader has already negotiated the difficult rite of passage into print and therefore needs no advice about plotting, characterization, and style. It is, in other words, not aimed at the workshopping would-be writer still struggling to break out of the slush pile, but at the new professional already standing on the first rung.

In thirty-one short pieces—some informative articles, some discursive essays—a selection of writers, editors, and agents pass along their wisdom and advice about the business and craft of being a science fiction/fantasy/horror author. Some of them are casual, chatty, even droll—the sort of advice you might hear in the hotel bar during a con or around the table at an SFWA banquet. Others go into considerable detail over the fine points of choosing an agent or reviewing a contract.

Left over from the 1976 handbook are essays such as Frederik Pohl's introductory "The Science Fiction Professional," dealing with agents, marketing, touring, and publicity, the advice based on Pohl's own considerable experience. The majority of the essays, however, are either brand new or at least significantly re-written from earlier ones. The editors, both active writers and publishers themselves (Rusch was recently selected to replace Ed Ferman as editor of *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*), apparently exercised as little oversight as possible in dealing with their fellow professionals. The volume, taken as a whole, is uneven in its usefulness: sometimes redundant, sometimes contradictory, and in a few places frivolous.

The most helpful articles, in my opinion, stand at the opposite ends of the spectrum. The best organized, most detailed, and thus most purely informative are those by Richard Curtis on copyrights, contracts, and publishers' profit-and-loss statements. But gratifying for their insights into the creative process are the personal pieces by Orson Scott Card and Charles de Lint; Card's "To Make a Short Story Long . . ." considers the problems of evolving from a short story writer to a novelist and looks intimately at the differences between the two forms. De Lint's "Death Threats" confronts a
crisis that—it is good to know—even successful professionals face: namely, the
cold fear that comes upon a writer halfway through a novel when he/she sud-
denly decides that it is a terrible book and he/she would be better off digging
ditches.

At moments like these, you feel a part of the inner circle of genre writ-
ers. Unless you are, the book may not have a place on your bookshelf. For
detailed information, it cannot compete with Richard Curtis’s own two
collections (from his Locus columns): How to Be Your Own Literary Agent
(1983) and Beyond the Bestseller (1988). If it’s guidance you want on
merely getting a story on paper, this is definitely not the right book; seek out
instead one of the guides aimed at the unpublished and unpracticed, such
as Damon Knight’s Creating Short Fiction.

In short, I can recommend the present volume only for its intended au-
dience, journeyman professionals, or for those readers curious to know what
it is genre authors discuss at that hotel bar.

Stephen W. Potts

New Insights on Lovecraft

Kuttner, West Warwick, RI: Necronomicon Press (101 Lockwood Street,
West Warwick RI, 02893), October 1990. 32p. $5.95 pb. 0-940884-34-8.

The introduction to this chapbook collection of ten letters reminds
readers of the enormous number of letters that constitute part of Lovecraft’s
legacy. Noting shortcomings in the five-volume Selected Letters (1965-
1976), the editors suggest an alternative: systematic publication of separate
volumes, each reproducing all of Lovecraft’s letters to a particular corre-
spondent and, where possible, the correspondent’s replies.

This chapbook begins the process with Lovecraft’s letters to Henry
Kuttner, dating from 12 March 1936 to 8 February 1937; the final letter in-
cludes oblique references to the illness that a little over a month later would
kill Lovecraft. The first letter begins with a formal salutation to “Mr. Kuttner,”
but a year later, the relationship had intensified until Kuttner becomes “Khut-
N’hah” and Lovecraft, “E’ch-Pi-Ei.” Along the way, the letters provide insight
into Lovecraft’s theories of weird fiction, his critical stance, and his obses-
sion (both positive and negative) with Providence, Salem, and the rest of the
New England milieu prevalent in his works. The letters are reproduced from
Kuttner’s copies, and incorporate Lovecraft’s own maps and illustrations as
well as occasional footnotes by Kuttner and the editors. There is a brief
biographical list of names mentioned in the letters, but no index.

Although seemingly slight, H.P. Lovecraft: Letters to Henry Kuttner nevertheless
contributes to our understanding of this often frustrating, often enigmatic figure.

Michael R. Collings
More Mary Shelley


Although many scholars consider the 1818 first edition of Frankenstein superior in both style and content to that of 1831, it has until now been available only in the academic edition of James Rieger. Most instructors have therefore opted for easily obtained inexpensive reprints of the 1831 edition. The Mary Shelley Reader now makes this better text available for classroom use. It will also be welcomed by students of the Romantic Period and the Gothic whose interest in Mary Shelley goes beyond Frankenstein, and by those concerned with women writers of the period.

This well-edited compendium contains not only Frankenstein itself but also the out-of-print and little-known novella Matilda, and a representative selection of Shelley's short stories, essays, and letters. Many of these reveal a concern with dreams, ghosts, and the supernatural that continued throughout her life. The Reader also contains the 1831 Introduction with its account of the genesis of the novel, a chronology of Shelley's life, and a select bibliography. The black and white illustrations include the famous frontispiece to the 1831 edition and portraits of Shelley and her contemporaries.

An excellent introduction to Mary Shelley's life and work, recommended for students and general readers.

Lynn F. Williams

Milne Biography


A revival of J.M. Barrie's Peter Pan, starring Cathy Rigby, has just closed in New York: and in London, a new dramatic version of Kenneth Grahame's The Wind in the Willows has opened to enthusiastic reviews. It seems appropriate, then, that Ann Thwaite's biography of the third man of that famous trio, A.A. Milne: The Man Behind Winnie-the-Pooh, should appear now. This first biography of Milne is no opportunistic endeavor, though, but a thoroughly researched and carefully written study of a complex man and serious literary craftsman.

A.A. Milne himself might have flinched a bit at the subtitle of this biography, for although he seems to have come to terms with his fame as a children's writer toward the end of his life, he was for many years rather annoyed that four books for children—When We Were Very Young (1924),
Winnie-the-Pooh (1926), The House at Pooh Corner (1927), and Now We Are Six (1928)—almost totally eclipsed a significant career as a playwright, essayist, and novelist. Otherwise, Milne would quite probably have been pleased with Ann Thwaite’s work which presents a very even-handed portrait of the man who was behind Winnie-the-Pooh and, more important, the man who existed apart from Winnie-the-Pooh.

Readers who know only Milne’s writings for children are in for an eye-opening experience. Although the children’s books are mentioned throughout, and especially in the second half of this biography, Thwaite takes four chapters to describe Milne’s childhood and education, four chapters for his nearly ten-year career as editor and essayist at Punch, three chapters (and parts of all of the rest) to deal with Milne the playwright, three chapters (and parts of the rest) on the children’s books, and the last five chapters on Milne’s decline as a playwright but emergence as a novelist and political activist. Milne’s life does not fall that neatly into segments, of course. His career at Punch was interrupted and perhaps ended by World War I, and it was during that period that he began his first plays. But it is important to note that, of the total eighteen chapters, only three and a half focus on Milne’s writings for children; the rest present a comprehensive picture of A.A. Milne as a thoughtful artist, committed family man, and ardent pacifist.

Thwaite not only presents a well-rounded picture of A.A. Milne, she presents it in a very readable form. This is partly due to Milne himself. In a time when we seem to be discovering that quite a few children’s writers were unhappy children or maladjusted adults (or both), it is comforting to read about a writer who seems to have had a rather pleasant time of it. Milne’s early home life was almost idyllic. His father was a teacher we might admire today, and he and his brother, Ken, were fast friends all their lives. Only Barry, his eldest brother, was something of a cad. Milne’s marriage survived his artistic successes and failures, an affair or two (his and hers), and two World Wars and the Great Depression. Only the popularity of the children’s books seems to have come between Milne and his son, Christopher Robin Milne, who grew to resent his being identified with the fictional Christopher Robin.

A.A. Milne is also very readable because Thwaite is a good writer. The book flows with an ease and smoothness that one generally associates with novels, not biographies. The only time the book bogs down at all is when Thwaite relies, perhaps too much, on the seemingly great body of correspondence—letters to, from, and about Milne—on which she was able to draw. The type for those letters is considerably smaller than that of the main text, a few of which run quite long, and some (not Milne’s) suffer by comparison to Thwaite’s own prose. Otherwise, this is an excellent book “to curl up with,” whether it’s a cold winter’s evening or not. Highly recommended.

C.W. Sullivan III
Tolkien’s Methods of Composition


Over a decade ago, Christopher Tolkien began the arduous, complex task of sifting through his father’s voluminous manuscripts for materials relating to Middle-Earth and *The Lord of the Rings*. Beginning with *Unfinished Tales* (1980), Tolkien formalizes his efforts in a series of volumes designated as ‘The History of Middle Earth,’ including *The Book of Lost Tales* (Parts One and Two), *The Lays of Berleriand, The Shaping of Middle-Earth,* and *The Lost Road and Other Writings*. With volume six, *The Return of the Shadow: The History of the Lord of the Rings, Part One*, Tolkien turned his attention specifically to *The Lord of the Rings*. In subsequent volumes (including *The War of the Ring* and at least one further volume in preparation), he examines the manuscript versions of Tolkien’s saga, page by page, chapter by chapter, and develops not only a sense for his father’s enormous learning and wide-ranging interests, but also for the creative process that resulted in *The Lord of the Rings*. *The War of the Ring*, although nearly 500 pages in length, limits itself to the episodes from Helm’s Deep in *The Two Towers*, to the confrontation between Gandalf and Sauron’s ambassador at the Black Gate of Mordor.

*The War of the Ring*, like earlier volumes in the series, is not specifically designed to present a smoothly readable text; those looking for a continuation of the narrative from *The Lord of the Rings* will be disappointed. Instead, Christopher Tolkien intersperses excerpts from his father’s manuscripts with his own commentary, often pointing out how his father overcame obscure problems in characterization, chronology or geography. In several instances, he highlights the stages by which key episodes in the overall narrative gradually took shape over a succession of drafts, including the sudden introduction of ideas or characters that altered the movement of the entire story.

Copious footnotes, careful recreations of Tolkien’s chronologies as related to each chapter, exhaustive references to and quotations from Tolkien’s correspondence with his son and with others, a complete index, a meticulous examination of literally every extant version of every page of *The Lord of the Rings*, and frequent reproductions of Tolkien’s handwritten (often unintelligible) pages, maps, and other diagrams make the entire series invaluable to any reader or scholar interested in the development of Tolkien’s vision.

This is not a book to be read cover to cover in one or two sittings; instead, it invites the reader to return to *The Lord of the Rings* and compare, assess, and analyze.

*Michael R. Collings*
History as Tale of Terror


Readers of Martin Tropp's first book, a lively study of the Frankenstein myth in popular culture called *Mary Shelley's Monster* (1977), may be astonished at the scope and ambition of his second. In *Images of Fear* he argues that during the hundred years between the beginning of the Industrial Revolution and the First World War—a period when virtually every facet of society, from gender and class relationships to attitudes toward the future itself underwent radical dislocations—horror fiction provided an instrumentality of images and metaphors, narrative frames and conventions that the common reader used to articulate, bring coherence to, and thus domesticate otherwise incommunicable and uncontrollable fears. Beyond this, Tropp argues that during this century Gothic novels and their offspring provided the primary means by which British and American readers ascribed meaning to their lives.

To establish his case, Tropp marshals an impressive armament of biographical, political, historical, sociological, and textual analyses. His expository goals are as ambitious as his thesis: "to speak to the common reader in our common language." In this he is wholly successful: eschewing the jargon and languid prose style of the academy, Tropp writes consistently lucid, engaging criticism.

With his thesis, though, there are problems. In addition to presenting detailed readings of *Northanger Abbey* (1818), *Frankenstein* (1818), *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1866), and *Dracula* (1897) and brief discussions of a host of other novels and non-fiction tracts, Tropp tells many stories: how the horror story evolved from the displaced artifice of the British Gothic to the immediacy of modern tales of techno-horror and psycho-killers; how the emerging "New Woman" altered the late-Victorian view of the female gender as bifurcated into fair-haired asexual goddess and dark-haired wanton seductress; how the Gothic craze conspired with the rise of literacy in early 19th-century England to produce a mass readership saturated with patterns of fear and desire that informed nearly every aspect of British society; how the rise of scientific rationalism challenged the dominance of Gothicism in such mid-Victorian architectural wonders as Joseph Paxton's Crystal Palace, the centerpiece of the Great Exhibition of 1851, and how novels like Charles Dickens' *Bleak House* (1852-3) exposed the essential failure of a technological society to realize the dream implied by Paxton's edifice; how Charles Darwin's evolutionary theories altered forever the Victorian view of the nature of man by laying bare the atavistic pre-human
beast whose suppression was the business of Victorian social norms and whose release in the wildly popular *Jekyll and Hyde* so entranced readers that they confused the fiction of Stevenson’s "Gothic gnome" with the reality of the (contemporaneous) Ripper murders; and more—too many stories to tell coherently in 250 pages.

This lack of coherence makes *Images of Fear* a fascinating but frustrating book, whose many excellent parts never add up to an intelligible whole. While juggling all these fragments, Tropp often wanders from his thesis; more seriously, he fails to provide sufficient evidence of its viability. In his chapters on the First World War, for instance, he notes provocative parallels between the experiences of soldiers at the Western Front, as recounted in their diaries, letters, and memoirs, and the imagery and plot contrivances of Gothic fiction, with its endless mazes and labyrinths, its veiled corpses and terrible discoveries, its pervasive darkness and sublime desolation. But he fails to lay an evidentiary foundation for the leap from these "remarkable coincidences" to the conclusion that the soldiers (who, one suspects, knew Gothic literature far less well than does Martin Tropp) drew upon horror fiction for patterns to make sense of their ordeal and that therefore in this cataclysmic conflict "an entire generation learned from popular literature how to read meaning into their lives."

Nevertheless, I recommend *Images of Fear*—for the audacity of its premise and scope, for its fascinating nuggets of history, sociology, and literary analysis, and for the pleasure of reading Tropp’s pellucid criticism. Only a few critics have assayed the complex dialogue of mutual influence between horror fiction and popular culture—Stephen King in *Danse Macabre* (1981) and James Twitchell in *Dreadful Pleasures* (1985) and *Preposterous Violence* (1989)—but none has thrown as wide a net over his subject as Martin Tropp. That he does not wholly succeed to convince us does not make his book a failure.

*Michael A. Morrison*

**Banal, Flat Overviews**


Self-defined as the first "critical overview of the complete works of Stephen King and Clive Barker," the *Illustrated Guide* is in fact a series of reviews, interviews, and graphics by Van Hise, Stanley Wiater, Kevin Mangold, Phil Gardner, Bob Strauss, and others. The presentation is slick and professional—the pages well designed, the print clear. But the material is largely at a fan level. Complex stories are often treated in a paragraph of
plot summary; several receive only a sentence or two, as do most of King's poems. Novels fare better, but even *It* is covered in a single page.

After only 87 pages of King, the book shifts to Barker, where the coverage seems fuller—in part because Barker has written less than King, in part because far less has been written about Barker than King, and the material seems at times fresher and more insightful. Even here, however, the slant is fan-oriented, with page-long segments devoted to interviews, responses, and films credits for producers, directors, actors, and special effects companies involved in *Hellraiser* and *Hellraiser II*. In a sense, the difficulty in this section is the opposite of that in the King part—the feeling remains that there is too much material untouched in the reviews that needs to be said and that has not been said elsewhere.

*The Illustrated Guide* may disappoint readers looking for more than fan-level, plot-summary oriented reviews. There is no index, and I could find no listing of contributors, either for the prose or for the graphics. At worst, the text is banal and flat. At best, it represents the responses of widely read horror fans to some of the most stimulating works available.

*M. R. Collings*

**FICTION**

**Fantasy as Generic Commodity**


"Cap'n" Garett Starlen of the night watch has to find out who or what has been murdering the wizards, high priests, magicians, and seers in the "Free City of Greyhawk" (map provided). The "Cap'n" gets help from side-kicks like Burge the half-elf and Blossom the seven-foot blonde. Menaced by mysterious black birds, predictable bad folks (the Horned Society), and miscellaneous magical forces, Starlen still manages to fall asleep for his dream vision in which Merlinesque Mordenkainen, leader of the Circle of Eight, tells him where (Mist March) to find Guardian, the seventh of the twelve swords called the Pillars of Heaven. Our gang goes to retrieve it and, luckily, Blossom remembers her sling so she can propel magic crystals into the green-glowing eyes of Guardian's guardian Worm ("a pool of ichor" drains from them). Garett gets the sword (I'm impressed," says Burge) and saves the city from murderous evils too conventional to describe.

Like the generic house-brand foods and goods for sale in large supermarkets, the mass-market genre of fantasy novels generally includes little beyond the minimum acceptable published commodity. *Night Watch*
should be shelved with the soggiest potato chips and most watered-down ketchup; it's soporific sword-and-sorcery without style or substance. Readers will be menaced by banal dialogue, feeble plotting, and unimaginative imitation of the imitators of Howard and Leiber. Not recommended.

*Philip E. Smith II*

**A Fantastic Illustrated Journey**


*Expedition* is a pseudo-documentary reporting the fantastic journeys of artist Wayne Barlowe across Darwin IV, the fourth planet in the F-Class binary system, from 2358 to 2361. Because of the ecological disasters destroying most Yma, benevolent dictators of our ravaged planet and lovers of nature, select Barlowe to depict the life forms on Darwin IV. The purposes of this voyage are to enlighten and to re-educate human-kind. Unlike *Barlowe's Guide to Extraterrestrials* (Workman, 1979) which relies upon numerous literary sources for its inspiration, *Expedition* is a "subjective and atmospheric impression of Darwin IV and its life forms by a recognized artist of extinct Earth fauna. This work should appeal to readers interested in visual, futuristic encounters with alien, though not necessary sentient, life forms.

*Expedition* begins with an introduction by Barlowe, who justifies and describes his voyage to Darwin IV. Through copious notes and graphic artwork, he then describes the fauna observed during his three year stay on the planet. His study encompasses the ecospheres of Darwin IV: grasslands, forests, mountains, tundra, air, and amoebic sea (a gelatinous glob of symbiotic organisms living within a matrix colony). Approximately thirty members of the fauna are discussed and drawn. Of special interest are the sociability of the Daggerwrist, a "gliding predator" dwelling in the treetops; the immensity of the Emperor Sea Strider, a beast so large "virtually no force in Nature could affect" it; and the locomotion of the Tundra-Plow, "a creature uncomfortable with its method of movement."

*Expedition* is provocative because of its paintings which aesthetically fascinate us. The visual effects challenge our biological assumptions of other life forms, and these graphic paintings effectively subvert our usual anticipation of those forms. Although Barlowe's full-color paintings disturb our traditional notions, thereby quickening our imagination, his sketches are
sometimes perplexing, and his notes are often superficial. The sketches and rough drawings are frequently difficult to interpret in light of the narrative. The narrative is episodic, and it is occasionally shallow, especially those notes on the Stripewing, Bladderhorn, and Rugose Floater.

Despite the occasional artistic ambiguity and narrative unevenness of Expedition, the most serious weakness is the narrator and his undeveloped personality. As an artist, Barlowe is exceptional; as a narrator, he is uninspiring. He seems to resemble the conventional narrator of early modern travel literature who is more concerned with the objective surface appearances of reality rather than a subjective consideration of moral implications. A more forceful narrative personality could have unified the pictorial brilliance with its theoretical assumptions. Unlike Barlowe’s Guide to Extraterrestrials which presents familiar literary life forms, Expedition depends upon the selective and limited observations of its artist in an alien environment. Thus, Expedition is recommended with some reservations because of its limited appeal to those who may appreciate the unusual freshness of graphic excellence to the exclusion of a compelling narration.

James E. Hicks

Loved the Movie, Hated the Book


Occasionally the writer of a film novelization is able to develop the film’s characters and ideas and produce a work that is superior to the movie and well worth reading. Wayland Drew’s Dragonslayer (1981) is a case in point. More often a novelization is merely a padded marketing device. Such is Boyll’s Darkman.

The film, directed by Sam Raimi, was one of the best-received genre movies of 1990. Darkman, a scientist and burn victim, seeks revenge against his many enemies, equipped with enhanced strength, dead nerves that feel no pain and artificial skin that lasts 99 minutes per application. Where the movie is sharp and fast, the book is bloated and fat, filled with needless detail, clumsy colloquialism and elephantine humor. Actors Liam Neeson and Larry Drake did more than Boyll does to eliminate the hero and chief villain. Not even recommended as teenager-bait for public libraries.

Michael Klossner
The Fourth Dance


Jack Chalker is one of the most visible SF authors today. *Songs of the Dancing Gods* is his fourth book in the Dancing Gods series. It does stand alone rather well, containing its own quest, and sufficient background information is presented to keep the reader from being lost. However, reading the previous three volumes helps to fully understand the significance of the events.

The major premise is that, when God created the Earth, a backlash resulted in the formation of an alternate Earth. While our Earth functions under the rules and regulations set up by the Creator, the other one was ignored until the Creator allowed lesser spirits to develop the rules. Not being as omniscient as the Creator, they only did a hurry-up, partial job which allowed a certain amount of flexibility. Consequently, powerful mortals, human and otherwise, were allowed a hand in developing the rules which resulted in what we would call magic.

Moreover, those rules are still being written. What is unique is that they control the behavior of individuals to the extent that they become what they see themselves to be and are satisfied being such. Wizards can act only as the rules allow them to act; slaves, thieves, courtesans, heroes are all bound by the rules of behavior and accept those constraints as normal. To act otherwise becomes distressing, as one of the heroines, initially a powerful queen and then a slave, finds out. She finds happiness and fulfillment as a slave, totally dominated by her master, initially a man who had been her husband. Skinner's *Walden Two* comes to mind.

The struggle for control of the universe between Good and Evil is presently being fought here. While Evil has been ejected from heaven, that is only one battle, with the final conflict yet to come. Evil manifests itself on this alternate world in the guise of the Dark Baron, whose armies are on the march. Magic will play a role, but since both sides are about evenly matched, the struggle will be won or lost as a result of the courage of the mortal armies.

In the first volume, *The River of Dancing Gods*, Joe, an Earth truck driver who is going nowhere but downhill, and Marge, a suicidal loser who is hitching a ride with Joe, are given the opportunity to leave Earth and join a quest to defeat the Dark Baron. Both accept. Joe, after training, becomes a barbarian hero. Marge discovers magical powers and learns to develop them. Their first quest is to gain control of a magic lamp (Aladdin's Lamp) before the Dark Baron can grab it and use it to tilt the balance of power in his direction. Numerous companions with various powers and attributes assist them, but one of these will prove to be a traitor.

The second and third volumes, *Demons of the Dancing Gods* and *Vengeance of the Dancing Gods*, detail subsequent quests of Joe/Marge. Presumably, this fourth book features the concluding struggle between the forces of Evil (Baron) and Good (Joe/Marge). Once again they must make an impossible quest journey.
How does this differ from any number of sword-and-sorcery clones? First, this is a Chalker book, filled with his favorite themes. As usual, various characters undergo shape changing at least once throughout the work. Second, magic is related to science in that there is a mathematical basis. Moreover, the government forces opposing Evil aren’t much better than their opponents.

Individuals can be good, decent, and caring, but governments or ruling elements seldom are. This series is no exception. And, Chalker’s heroines frequently are dominated in some way.

What also distinguishes this work from a thousand others is Chalker’s deliberately self-conscious format. He has abstracted the rules for this genre and turned them into The Books of Rules which govern behavior on this alternate planet. In addition, the wizards are busily creating more rules to further control the behavior of all who occupy this planet. In essence, his characters are creating themselves, a concept dear to many post-modern critics.

Chapters begin with excerpts from the rules and exemplify those rules. For instance, Chapter 13 begins with the note “No conclusion of an epic saga is complete without a wizard’s battle.—The Books of Rules, xv, 397 (a).” And, since that chapter contains the final battle, it is a wizard’s battle.

Chalker’s characters come right off the cover of a typical sword-and-sorcery novel. Joe, the barbarian hero, is forced to run around in a loin cloth and carry a sword, because The Book of Rules states, “Volume 46, page 293, section 103 (c) —‘Barbarian male heroes in southern temperate climes shall wear their hair long, nor shall they shave their beards, and will dress appropriately in sword belt, loins, and sandals.’” Marge chooses a very skimpy costume because “Volume 46 ... page 119, section 34 (a)” states,”Weather and climate permitting, all beautiful young women will be scantily clad.” But, as is typical for Chalker, the heroines actually find themselves nude a considerable amount of the time.

Why read the Dancing Gods series? The most intriguing part is the bringing to awareness the constraints of or rules of the genre. This adds a dimension generally not found in these works. One almost accepts Chalker’s explanation that the sword and sorcery writers are really dreaming about events in the alternate world, which is why they all seem to follow the same pattern. Mainstream novels about our Earth also have the same ground rules, so why not these? Moreover, Chalker seems to be satirizing himself in that his characters go through a bewildering number of physical alterations and body swapping. Joe, the barbarian hero, becomes a barbarian hero, himself again, a wood nymph, a horse, a pixie . . . .

Suggested reading for those who are curious about the rules governing those works proliferating on the bookshelves, most of which are covered with muscular, young, sword-wielding, long-haired males, and well-endowed, scantily clad young females.

Fred Runk
Crowley's story collection contains four pieces (one novella and three short stories)—one of them fantasy, two science fiction, and the last a sort of ruminative dialogue of the writer with himself, more essay than anything else. All four of them center around a single theme, probably first enunciated in this century by Freud's "Civilization and Its Discontents": the eternal and inevitable conflict between impulses to preserve and to innovate/destroy, or between security and novelty as the author puts it in the title piece (printed last).

The "major piece" (about 100 pages) is "Great Work of Time," a time travel exercise founded on nostalgia for the British Empire. The Otherhood (a play on brotherhood), is a secret organization of British patriots founded in an "alternate universe" via a bequest in the will of Cecil Rhodes, the African explorer who founded Rhodesia, among other white supremacist African states. In this universe, of course, Rhodes died young, there was no Boer War, England won World War I singlehanded in 1915, and there was a generous settlement with Germany followed by another century of the Pax Britannica. (Hitler remained a housepainter, the U.S.A. never achieved world leadership, and the Empire rolled merrily on its way, essentially unchanged.)

This history is the deliberate creation of the Otherhood, whose timely interferences are responsible for all its major features, including the early death of Rhodes. The time travel necessary for this meddling is the invention of a naive American genius, who is tricked by the Otherhood into selling to them the secret of "orthogonal" movement in time. (The details of this process are deliberately muddled, I suspect, to veil at least some of the paradoxes involved. The relationships of the various "alternate" histories are never clear, though the universe we know is also known to the Otherhood, and avoidance of its horrors is the main motivation behind their meddling.)

Ultimately, though, the Otherhood must choose between preservation of their beloved empire and a future pictured (rather unconvincingly) as a total paralysis of the biosphere. This can only be accomplished by "uncreating" the Otherhood, and naturally they do the "right thing." The obvious theme, the essential conflict between innovation and preservation, novelty and security, gets more overt discussion in the final piece ("Novelty").

With "In Blue," Crowley approaches the conflict from another angle: in this future, society has finally solved its sociopolitical problems through the
“differential social calculus” and “act-field theory.” Violence and rebellion are not eliminated, but predicted, anticipated and controlled. The result seems to be (though it is not quite) another form of stasis. The narrative centers on a member of the “revolutionary cadre” for whom the truth of the theory comes to have the same oppressive weight as the old notion of pre­destination had for the damned. He is eventually rescued from the paralyzing frustration of his sense of individuality (his freedom) by something like an existential moment of truth: the recognition of the "void" between himself and the theory, and even the "act-field" (the world) itself.

The opening piece (“The Nightingale Sings at Night”) is a kind of “al­ternate Eden” fantasy, in which the primal pair learn the secret of time and mortality from the inconstant moon, against the express advice of Mother Nature. Having destroyed their innocence and their Eden, they cannot regain it of course, but they set out to make new worlds instead. The Nightingale’s song, “It’s all right,” is ambiguously comforting.

These are all thoughtful pieces, as I hope my review indicates. They are not easy reading, though, and not entirely successful as fiction. The open­ing fable is pleasant enough; the time travel story is entertaining for its caricatures of the ideals of the British empire, but ultimately confusing and anti-climactic in dramatic terms; “In Blue,” like so many alienation stories, is dreary and oppressive—the “turn” at the end does little to relieve it; and the author’s final ruminations, though witty and reflexive, do little to excite the reader. After a blockbuster like Aegypt, this collection will hardly enhance the author’s popularity.

Adrian de Wit

A Competent Tale


DeHaven always tells a lively, intelligent story, often with considerable humor. The pace of his latest narrative never slackens, with the fate of universes dependent upon their actions. DeHaven’s characters frequently have the grandiosity of classic comic book heroes. Jack, a Walker of Worlds cut from the mold of adventurers in nursery sagas and adolescent romances, is stalked by his colorful enemies down mean streets of Earth and less familiar worlds. He encounters Geebo, a man without a memory, Peter Musik, an investigative reporter, and Eugene Boman, a millionaire pharmacist. Money Campbell, a Madonnaesque vamp, completes a triangle with Peter and Eugene. Jere Lee, on the other hand, is the good girl, wronged but unvanquished, waiting for her defender. Yet despite the stereotypical
characters and stock situations, DeHaven's wit and literary flare keep the story moving. Vivid imagination and constant inventiveness are evident in each chapter, and the reader remains alert as the story moves to its climax. Afterwards, there is the sense of having read a competent tale which failed to ignite any passions or new thoughts. Though DeHaven's fans will not be disappointed by this new book, they will find it entertaining rather than memorable.

The subtitle promises more adventures to come which will be awaited by fans. The quality paperback format, with its formidable price, makes the book more desirable for this group than for casual readers who may find $8.95 too steep for a single reading.

Allene S. Phy-Olsen

Mystery-Romance in 2044


Thomas A. Easton's Sparrowhawk takes places in a 2044 California setting. Scarcity of fossil fuels has sped biotechnology into the genetic engineering of animals and plants that perform many of the tasks done by motor driven machines in the Twentieth Century. Cockroaches and tortoises have been modified into automobiles, birds into airplanes of all sizes, dogs into buses and trucks, vegetables of the squash family into houses and other buildings, grass into home defense systems. Silly as this technology sounds, Easton succeeds in making it believable and in constructing a world in which such developments seem reasonable and natural. Having a car that is also a pet, with a stable that must be cleaned daily, is not so different from using horses for travel and work.

Easton's vision of a biotech future is not matched by his pedestrian plot. It combines a mildly interesting detective story with a fashionable dash of soap opera romance for an age of greater sexual equality. Someone is trying to kill Emily Gilman, a top genetic engineer, by inserting rogue chips in the controls of various genimals (genetically engineered work species) with which she comes into contact. Bernie Fischer, a police detective who loves to fly in his modified bird, the sparrowhawk, gets her case and eventually becomes her lover. This complicates Emily's marriage to househusband, Nick, who experiences many of the problems and conflicts known mainly by housewives in the Twentieth Century. She has to decide whether she likes the macho policeman or the gentle husband better. Bernie has to decide whether he prefers this curvaceous inventor to the lean and muscular policewoman who is also his lover. Nick needs to decide how to handle
his suspicions of Emily's infidelity while dealing with their five-year-old son, the household chores, and the almost daily attempts on Emily's life. The mystery plot involves organized crime, the attempt through genetic engineering to revive an almost dead drug trade, and intrigues that grow out of various extensions of twentieth-century racisms and nationalisms.

Terry Heller

Cinderella With a Twist


In an alternate sixteenth century Germany, magic still exists, but the rules are strict. The Gold Way is reserved for sorcerers, and the Green Way for witches. Learning that a witch has encroached upon the Gold Way, King Leopold kills one. He soon learns he chose incorrectly. It had been her daughter Ilse, not she, who had been using both Green and Gold. In revenge, Ilse then uses forbidden magic to kill the King and his friends; yet, her feeling of responsibility for her mother's death is not assuaged. As she seeks greater revenge, she draws two innocent young people together in a variation of a most unforgettable folk fairy tale, "Cinderella."

The familiar tale is of Sofia, a beautiful maiden who lives with her nasty step-mother, Beatrix, and her ugly, spiteful stepsisters, Johanna and Isabelle. The cruel three make life miserable for Sofia. Meanwhile at the death of the King, the Queen Regent had recalled her son, Prince Conrad, from France. Now, wishing him to marry, the Queen determines to hold a ball, and Sophia's prayers appear to be answered. Though Sophia has no pretty gown to wear and is locked in a room by her cruel stepmother on the night of the ball, we know her fairy godmother will appear and make Sophia the toast of the ball. Unfortunately, this fairy godmother is one that no one would wish for.

At the stroke of midnight, Prince Conrad must race against time to save all that is dear to him, including, of course, Sophia. Yet, he must kill Sophia because she is believed to be a witch. Only Rose Magic, the magic of love, can save the cursed lovers.

Every page is action-packed. The letters that the Queen Regent writes to her confidant, the Duchess Marie Helene, are both informative and charming. The plot interweaves sorcery, revenge, and love. And since this is indeed a fairy tale, it can be no sin to say the fantasy ends, if not with the exact words, with the idea that "they lived happily ever after." This is a variant that is worth reading.

Salvatore Di Nardo
Thoughtful Laughter Anthologized


Robert Sheckley, John Collier, William Tenn, and Esther M. Friesner are known to write light humorous stories. That’s not normally what we expect from Mike Resnick, Roger Zelazny, or Harlan Ellison. Yet, these authors are among the eighteen whose short stories, published between 1939 and 1990, have been gathered for this anthology. Readers will find therefore that each and every story is not hilariously funny; nonetheless, every one does succeed, at the very least, in making us smile. In addition, Alan Dean Foster, in the introduction, expresses his belief that "in addition to making us laugh or smile, each of the stories in this collection has something to say to us."

With charm and without moralizing, the stories do confront issues that are relevant to today’s world, several providing valuable lessons for change. The extinction of the animal world serves as a backdrop while a game of chess is played for the survival of mankind in Roger Zelazny’s “Unicorn Variations.” In Horace Gold’s “Trouble with Water,” we can envision what happens when we take for granted one of our precious natural resources. Mike Resnik speaks of how important one’s inner soul is in “Beibermann’s Soul.” And so on. Thus, by mixing the sedate with devices of humor, we are always reminded that humor can be found anywhere, even where you least expect it.

*Joseph Jeremias*

Cyberpunk Thriller


William Gibson is the Nebula, Hugo, and P. K. Dick award-winning author of the cyberpunk space trilogy that includes *Neuromancer* (1984), *Count Zero* (1986), and *Mona Lisa Overdrive* (1988). Bruce Sterling received high praise for his 1988 *Islands in the Net.* In *The Difference Engine*, the two team up to produce a thriller set in an alternative past. Rich in texture and atmosphere, this novel differs from fantasies in alternative pasts such as *The Lord of the Rings* and Orson Scott Card’s *Tales of Alvin Maker* in its attention to the effects of a technological difference.

Gibson and Sterling imagine the impact upon the Victorian era in England of the invention of the mechanical computer in about 1820. Nineteenth-century industrial technology was unable to produce large-scale models of the mechanical calculating machine that Charles Babbage (1792-
1871) invented, but in this novel gigantic calculators, their programs and data stored on punched tapes and cards, are the center of British culture in 1855, when most of the story takes place. Some of the resulting changes are unexplained, such as that John Keats and Lord Byron, instead of dying young, live on to achieve fame in computer imaging and politics. Changes clearly attributable to the computer include: a great increase in British power that leads to the collapse of the American Union as a major rival, the reorganization of England into a meritocracy in which various Royal Societies hold sway, the more rapid deterioration of the environment, and an accelerated movement towards elements of cultural change that actually occur near the end of the Twentieth Century.

The story moves through four stages held together by the fate of a set of punch cards as they change hands. In the first stage, Sybil Gerard gains possession of the cards when she becomes involved in Sam Houston's attempt to raise money in Europe for an army to regain the Republic of Texas, from which he has been exiled. Gerard is the daughter of a Luddite leader destroyed in an anti-industrial uprising. Ruined and betrayed by Charles Egremont, now a member of parliament, she has become a high class prostitute. Houston's press agent, Mick Radley, offers her new work as an adventuress, but this ends with his death at the hands of a Texas Ranger, who attempts to assassinate Houston, and with her flight to France, carrying the mysterious cards and a bag of jewels as booty.

The second stage is the longest portion of the novel. There Edward Mallory, a newly successful paleontologist, achieves wealth and comes into possession of the cards on Derby Day, when the steam automobile comes into its own. His adventures result from the attempts of a Marxist/Luddite revolutionary, Captain Swing, to regain the cards. Mallory's story reveals in rich detail the social, cultural, economic, political, and ecological effects of the new technology on the Victorian culture familiar to the Twentieth Century in the novels of Charles Dickens, a writer of whom both Sterling and Gibson have spoken admiringly.

The third stage follows Laurence Oliphant, a detective, as he attempts to understand the importance of the cards, which he obtains when remnants of the temporarily defeated rebels try to take them from their hiding place in the skull of Mallory's most illustrious discovery, a brontosaurus skeleton. While Mallory's adventures occur in the context of an almost successful revolutionary attempt to capture London, Oliphant's adventures occur in the context of a reaction to these events and to the leadership vacuum created when the powerful prime minister, Lord Byron, dies. Oliphant successfully prevents Egremont from assuming dictatorial power by means of securing control over the now awesomely powerful police records bureau, which can create and destroy people by manipulating their punch cards and identification numbers.
The fourth stage is a complex set of pieces that provide a sketch of the altered history behind the novel's events, a tying together of some loose ends, and an explanation of the cards. It would appear that the cards represent an attempt to create an artificial intelligence, that they have "corrupted" France's main computer, making it self-contemplative in ways that cannot be used or reversed and so, mainly, slowing it down and making it less reliable. However, Lady Ada Byron, who seems to understand this, looks forward to a day when a computer will be large enough to run such a program. The novel ends with a glimpse at a newly extrapolated London of 1991, in which such an artificial intelligence is a kind of god devoted to creating individual beings in the attempt to see and understand itself by gaining a point of view outside itself from which to see. The computer, then, has become human in spirit.

This description should make clear that though Gibson and Sterling have set their story in the past, they have not shifted significantly from the cyberpunk themes that inform their previous books. Despite a few tedious moments, such as the detail of Mallory's London sexual adventures, this is an interesting and exciting read.

_Terry Heller_

**Gothic Wasteland**


This first novel plunges the reader into a phantasmagoric, post-holocaust wasteland, the result of centuries of biological warfare. Amid the ruins of Washington, D.C., dwell the Curators, custodians of half-forgotten knowledge, and the Paphians, a band of sacred prostitutes. Their decadent lifestyle is under siege from hostile plants, diseased children who practice cannibalism, bioengineered creatures known as geneslaves, and political forces beyond their control. Their downfall is finally achieved through Wendy Wanders, a neurologically altered autistic girl, and her twin brother, the beautiful courtesan Raphael Miramar. Separated at childhood, they are drawn together by an inescapable destiny to meet at last in the ruins of Cathedral Church to re-enact the ancient rite of Baal and Anat.

Fertility rituals like this imbue the novel with powerful mythic resonance: the Dying God and Mother Goddess of Near Eastern mysteries; Venus and Adonis of Classical myth; the Wasteland, Perilous Chapel, and Maimed King of Grail legend. Moreover, the learning process undergone by the twins, particularly Wendy's involvement with a troupe of strolling Elizabethan players, leads us to the heart of the myth.
This world is created with imaginative power, but it is often confusing: the political forces that have so disastrous an impact upon events are glimpsed only in disconnected fragments; and where are the mothers of all these children who live and (more often) die in such numbers? Hand is working on a sequel, Aestival Tide, that may offer some illumination. Meanwhile, Winterlong provides an impressive debut. Indeed, the confusion and alienation that can frustrate the reader are a reflection of a world in which the characters are forced to struggle for survival against forces they do not comprehend. Only those precious few who learn to care for others achieve redemption. Whether they can transform their world remains to be seen, but it will be worth finding out.

Ray Thompson

Is Dust Jacket Super Praise Valid?


Robert Jordan's The Eye of the World, a 670-page novel and only the first in a projected series, carries the endorsements of ten authors, from Andrew M. Greeley to L. Sprague de Camp, and two specialty publications, Locus and Science Fiction Chronicle, on its dust jacket. Is this book (and those that will follow) "the next major fantasy epic" and a work which, once completed, "is certain to establish Jordan as one of the leading fantasy novelists"? Perhaps.

Rand al'Thor does not know that he is anything more than an awkwardly-maturing young man in the backwater community of Emond's Field as the novel opens; but he is much more than that, or has the potential to be. Others, however, do know that someone of a certain age in Emond's Field has special potential, and the forces of both Good and Evil send agents to find Rand and his friends, Mat and Perrin. This first book sees Rand leave the ordinary world of Emond's Field for the wider world of magic and adventure in which he is challenged by internal doubts as well as external forces and enemies.

Rand, Mat, and Perrin are accompanied by two other Emond's Fielders, Egwene, a young woman of their age who has a developing relationship with Rand, and Nynaeve, the village" Wisdom," part foreteller and part healer. They are joined by Thom Merrilin, a wandering gleeman (minstrel), and led by Moiraine and Lan, the former a woman of magical power and the latter an elite warrior who accompanies her. Like Rand, the other Emond's Fielders begin to discover their own special powers as the story progresses. All of them are opposed and hunted by agents of the Dark One, the ultimate Evil Power who may be about to escape eons of confinement. The plot follows the fortunes of Rand and his companions, while the overriding theme concerns the struggle between Good and Evil.
The overall structure of Jordan's novel is very traditional. Rand's journey is the same one which many other modern fantasy heroes, from Bilbo Baggins to Luke Skywalker, have undertaken. It is the journey to maturity which occurs within a conflict that will determine the fate of the world. It is also the journey on which the epic hero loses and regains his identity, a journey which Northrop Frye, among others, sees as a basic pattern in literature. And because of the familiar structure of the story, the kind of originality so important to mainstream or elite literature takes second place here to style. Therefore, whether or not Jordan's Wheel of Time series is the next fantasy classic will rest, in a large part, on how well he tells the story.

The almost 700 pages of text allow Jordan to develop both characters and setting more fully than is possible in most fantasy novels—and he takes full advantage of that space. Mat and Perrin are not just Rand's companions, they are characters in their own right with individualized personalities and abilities; Egwene and Nynaeve share a similar potential, but each reacts to the knowledge of that potential quite differently. Many of the minor characters, from innkeepers to ship's captains, have enough room to become individuals as well. Moreover, the places in which the characters find themselves, from Emond's Field to the great city of Caemlyn, are described in detail sufficient not only to differentiate them but make them real to the reader. And even with all of that detail, Jordan manages to move the action smartly along.

One element of Jordan's style, however, is troublesome. Many of the names in the novel are from other sources, but he changes the spellings of the borrowed names slightly or creates new functions or roles for the borrowed characters. Jordan's Trollocs, are pretty obviously, Trolls. He refers to a King Artur Paendrag but makes no connection with Britain's King Arthur Pendragon. His Thom Merrilin is a minstrel, but, seemingly, no kin to Britain's Merlin. The Tuath'an are wandering Tinkers of no relation to the Tuatha de Danaan of Celtic myth. And there are many more such instances. Is Jordan merely looting older narratives for names, or does he have some other intent? If this similarity of names is an attempt to link The Eye of the World to some eternal struggle between Good and Evil which also appears in the Arthurian romances, Celtic mythology, and elsewhere, Jordan does not make that connection for the reader, nor does he provide the evidence within the text that would allow the reader to make that connection on his/her own. The reader may, as this reader did, begin to wonder why the names are so similar to those found in myth and legend, become increasingly distracted by that similarity, and find himself/herself wondering, for example, whether Lan is Lancelot or whether Morgase is Morgause.

In other respects, The Eye of the World is first rate and certainly the beginning of what will be a major fantasy work if the promise of this first novel is fulfilled in the rest of the series. Recommended.
Well-Told Sequel

The second book in this series, *The Great Hunt*, has appeared less than a year after the first and is every bit as good.

Once again, the main characters split up, and the reader must follow as many as five simultaneous plots to keep track of Rand, Perrin, and Mat (who, with some new secondary characters, are attempting to find Horn of Valere which has been stolen by someone working with or for the Dark One), Egwene, Nynaeve, and Elayne (who are beginning their training as Aes Sedai), and several other characters either new to this book or, like Thom Merrilin, reappeared (having been thought dead) from the first book. By the end of the book, all have played some part in the hunt for the Horn of Valere, a powerful instrument that can call up the dead heroes of past ages to fight in the Last Battle. Jordan, perhaps taking his cue from C. S. Lewis’s uses of Merlin in *That Hideous Strength*, makes the Horn of Valere unaligned, so that whoever blows it, whether good or evil, can command the returned heroes.

Once again, Jordan uses the length of his book to develop characters and settings more fully than would be possible in a shorter novel, and even with all of that detail, as in the first book, he generally keeps the action moving along nicely. Rand’s increasing ability as a swordsman is nicely developed and his duel with Turak, a Seanchan commander, is as fine and satisfying as any sword duel in fantasy fiction. Similarly, Egwene’s capture and enslavement by the Seanchan is as frightening and horrible as any heroine’s capture, because once caught there is no way she can resist or escape, physically or mentally. In addition, Jordan’s more original creations, like the Ogier, receive more attention in this second book than they did in the first.

One bothersome aspect of *The Great Hunt* is that in spite of overwhelming evidence so many characters are still denying their roles, themselves, or the obvious reality of the situations in which they find themselves. Rand continues to refuse to believe that he is the Dragon Reborn. Perrin refuses to reveal his connection to the wolves, and both he and Mat only slowly come to trust Rand. Nynaeve accepts Aes Sedai training to get revenge on Moraine for taking them all from their small-town birthplace (as if they could have stayed in safety there with Trollocs and Darkfriends after them). And all four of them feel that the Aes Sedai are using them as puppets in schemes of their own. Only Egwene seems to trust the Aes Sedai and has some notion of what all this means.

The other minor problem with the book, Jordan’s use of Arthurian/Celtic names without perceivable reason continues. Why do Elayne and Gawyn, and their half-brother Galad, have names similar to those of characters in the Arthurian materials? Is Artur Hawkwing’s return the return of the Once and Future King? If there is no point to the parallels, why are they there? If the names are merely a cultural shortcut so that the reader can “know” the characters more quickly, then there is a serious flaw in this series.
Jordan is still telling his story very well, and the readers of the first two books will eagerly await the publication of the next. Whether this is the next major fantasy epic or not, however, must await on the completion of The Wheel of Time. Recommended.

C. W. Sullivan III

Feminist Mercenary Takes a Stand


The Official Timeline for the Heralds of Valdemar Series prefacing By the Sword reveals the relationships among Mercedes Lackey’s two Heralds of Valdemar trilogies and her Vows and Honor duology. Maintaining complete consistency with the earlier eight novels, Lackey now prepares a transition to the forthcoming Mage Winds trilogy. Her primary means is the introduction of Lady Kerowyn, granddaughter of the Kethry, the sorceress who had been featured in Vows and Honor.

We learn that Lady Kerowyn had convinced her father’s armsmaster to teach her knife-fighting. Yet, daughter to a Lord, her life, like that of most noble women in her world, was to be spent on women’s tasks. And hers was even more restricted than most. Her miserly father had insisted she function as the Lady of the Keep (actually housekeeper) after her mother’s untimely death. Yet, it wasn’t the responsibility that discouraged Kerowyn, whose preference was for men’s duties; it was the sheer tediousness of woman’s work.

As the novel opens all this is about to change. Kerowyn’s home is ravaged by mysterious soldiers at her brother’s wedding. Her brother is hurt, his bride is kidnapped, and Kerowyn, one of the few who survives the bloodbath, rides to the tower of her sorceress grandmother to seek aid. With her grandmother’s own geas-blade, Need, a sword with a “mind” of its own, Kerowyn rescues her brother’s bride. That miraculous accomplishment did not result in the appreciation and acceptance she expected. Feeling like an outcast at home, Kerowyn goes to live in her grandmother’s tower, to be trained by the sorceress and her Shin’ain warrior partner, Tarma. Book One, Kerowyn’s Ride, ends as Kerowyn rejects an opportunity for love and romance. Girding on Need, the sword to which she is now bonded, she sets out to become adept as a mercenary. The second section, the Two Edged Blade, follows her many adventures.

In all of Mercedes Lackey’s books, characterization is central; even supporting characters are three dimensional throughout, having qualities and faults, no one completely perfect or imperfect. By Book Three, The Price of Command, Kerowyn, herself, has risen from a simple mercenary to a com-
mander, has developed from a stubborn loner to a resolute young woman, and is now willing to accept a partner as a full equal. Without question, Kero's journey toward independence even anti-feminists would appreciate.

Another major strength Lackey reveals is in her creation of a realistic fantasy world; Lackey deals with politics, strategies, and morals. In each plot development, she demonstrates a knowledge of human inner strife, human relationships, and human needs. Three books in one, *By the Sword*, rich in description and in human awareness, is highly recommended.

_Wells Zagorski_

**Cyberdead**


These four novels have in common both their cyberpunk origins and their unreadability. Cyberpunk began as a bunch of guys (almost exclusively) writing about "computer technology, corporate power structures, Japanese economic ascendency . . . [and] global culture, anarchy, and high-energy prose." That is how Lewis Shiner defines it in a January 7, 1991, _New York Times_ article, "Confessions of an Ex-Cyberpunk." He goes on to talk about how cyberpunk became a cliche and how he is searching for "a new literature of idealism and compassion." Shiner's aims have probably always been higher than those of McKinney, Swycaffer, and perhaps, Milan, though one never knows. But these four novels certainly illustrate how cyberpunk has become a cliche, and a boring one at that.

*Robotech: The End of the Circle* is number eighteen (!) in a series. It is connected, one learns from the forward, with animated cartoons, comic books, art and role-playing books, and a fannish network. I am not a *Robotech* fan, I must admit, and will assume that if I were, I would somehow find this novel interesting. Instead it seemed to me an endless military/computer/save-the-universe ramble, sort of a *Dorsai!* gone wrong.

McKinney's *Kaduna Memories* is shorter and much closer to the cyberpunk cliche formula. As the dedication puts it, "thanks to Hans Moravec, John Brunner, William Gibson, and numerous others for opening up the territory and making it safe for tourists." The tourists have spoiled the cyberbeach. Jack McKinney is, by the way, two authors who have cagily remained anonymous.
Jefferson P. Swycaffer's *Warsprite* is a final confrontation novel, this time between sibling robots. Its prose style is the least workmanlike and most predictable of the group. I'm always looking for a tough heroine to break the earth mother monopoly in feminist SF, but Delta, the thinking woman's robot, who doesn't need a brass brassiere for her silver breasts, didn't fill the bill.

*The Cybernetic Shogun* by Victor Milan is the most serious effort of the four novels. A hardback from Morrow publishers, and a sequel to *The Cybernetic Samurai* which won the Prometheus Prize, this novel features sibling computers in a—yes—final confrontation. Milan has thematic concerns and pays attention to the Japanese milieu he evokes, but I found the cyberspace descriptions and the Japanese color led to a jargon-laden text that sapped the narrative of any excitement for me.

Real military actions in the Persian Gulf made these four military fantasies both naive and distasteful. Cyberpunk's flaw was always its callous, even gleeful handling of violence. Its degenerated descendants exaggerate this flaw. Like Lew Shiner, I hope for "a new literature of idealism and compassion."

*The Blind Turtle Misses Again*


We learn from the dust jacket that the author has had a lifelong interest in cosmology and comparative religion. I took this to be a bad omen, and I'm afraid I was right.

The book is an adventure story of sorts, set not too far in the future. R. Clark Juna, the protagonist, is a government accountant who accidentally rescues an important figure in the intelligence community. On the spur of the moment, the man offers him an assignment checking out a lead to what may be a plot against the government. This involves a flight to the moon, where, in the course of his adventures, he is suddenly overwhelmed by lust and rapes the sister of the Dalai Lama. Eventually he is converted to the side of the plotters and participates in the salvation of humanity.

This is an unkind way of summarizing the plot, but what can I do? Everything in the book is drenched with *Significance*. Our hero is, if you haven't caught it by page ten, Arjuna, who was taught by Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita. Krishna shows up as his guide and chauffeur (i.e., charioteer) Kris. The slightly crazed monk Joe Shoe is the great Chinese Zen master Joshu. And then, there is old John Cross. (St. John of the Cross—get it?) The author also makes extensive symbolic use of lunar place names, and his explanation of the space drive then in use is, well, meaningful.

As an adventure story, the book doesn't work because the allegory gets in the way. As an allegory, the book fails because it is vague. Not recommended.

*William M. Schuyler, Jr.*
Additions to Heechee Lore


For enthusiastic fans of Frederik Pohl’s Heechee series, this multi-part chronicle of human relations with the Heechee may be of some interest. Pohl is an entertaining writer of imaginative science fiction adventure, and this volume contains one long story that is typical Pohl. “The Merchants of Venus” is a cliff-hanger set after the colonization of Venus. Professional guide Audee Walthers makes a last attempt in the adverse economy of Venus to preserve his life. In desperate need of money for a liver transplant, Walthers finds a rich tourist who might make it possible for him to make a major discovery of valuable Heechee artifacts. Nearly everything goes wrong, but Walthers manages to turn catastrophe into personal success, getting both the liver and the girl.

The vignettes of the chronicle are witty and imaginative, but less than riveting. They concern mainly the Gateway asteroid, which contains about a thousand apparently abandoned Heechee spaceships. Many vignettes describe the adventures of the early explorers who took pre-programmed trips in these ships, not knowing where they would be taken, for how long, or whether they would return. These adventures are ironic, amusing, and tragic by turn. One unifying pattern in these vignettes is the development of a technological utopia as humans slowly master Heechee machinery.

Though this book does not sustain the level of interest of the other Heechee books, it offers an entertaining addition to the series.

Terry Heller

Witch Series Begins


*The Witching Hour* is, rumor has it, the first in a new series by Anne Rice, author of the best-selling Vampire trilogy (as well as the soft-core porn “Beauty” series written under the name A. N. Roquelaure). This epic (965-pages) book is unsatisfying on its own, but as the first book in a series, it sets up everything we’ll need to know for another thrilling romp through the supernatural. This time witches, not vampires, are the focuses—specifically, a family of witches, the Mayfairs.

Though the story is ostensibly about Rowan Mayfair, a contemporary witch, there is a lengthy “digression” in mid-book which outlines the history of the Mayfair family for the seventeenth century to the present. I found this section to be the most interesting in the book, and there is enough information packed into this section alone to set up a dozen sequels. The Mayfair family has been “cursed” through the ages by the presence of a spirit named
Lasher, who sometimes appears to people with the “sight” as a slim young man. Though Lasher brings riches and power to the woman who controls him, it becomes clear through the course of the book that it isn’t the witch doing the controlling. Instead, Lasher has been controlling each of the women, breaching them with other members of the Mayfair family (often incestuously) to strengthen the witches’ power. His goal is to attain humanity himself, but he must first create a witch with the power and knowledge to help him do this. The culmination of his experiment is Rowan Mayfair, a young doctor who doesn’t know anything of her witch heritage. Aaron Lightner, a Talamasca field worker, and Michael Curry, Rowan’s lover and later her husband, learn of Lasher’s plan and try to stop it, but are too late. Lasher succeeds in bending Rowan to his will, and the book ends on an unsatisfying (and grisly) note.

There is much, much more in this book. Each of Rowan’s twelve witch ancestors is described, some in great detail, and constant reference is made to them throughout the book. It isn’t really a chore keeping them all straight, but there are so many characters in this volume that are never referred to again, yet described in great detail, that I can’t help but think that the sequels must feature some of these women. Even if nothing comes of it in later volumes, the endless history lessons and constant references to long-dead characters give the book depth. Rice unfolds Lasher’s story slowly and from many points of view; by the end of the book, he has become an unknowable being with frightening powers, unstoppable and relentless in his pursuit of humanity. The other characters are more direct, and most are believable, though Rice tends to make all her heroines a bit too beautiful and smart (Rowan, a sexy blonde, is an ace brain surgeon as well as a witch) and her heroes are a bit too virtuous. Her husband, Michael Curry, is a bit of an enigma. After a near-fatal accident, he has gained an odd power: he can grasp an object and tell everything about the people that have handled it. Though Rice hints that he was given the power to find out something important about the Mayfairs, nothing revolutionary ever happens with it, and Michael is relieved when the power is lost near the end of the novel.

This feeling of let-down is the feeling I shared at the novel’s conclusion. Rice is setting something up, but what? Is she going to begin the sequel immediately after the finish of this novel, or will she detail more of the past? The Mayfairs are interesting, their history fascinating, and Rice has obviously spent a lot of time and effort making sure details in The Witching Hour are historically accurate. The 965 pages don’t always go easily; some sections have to be plowed through, but Rice’s flowing (often overwritten) prose usually carries the reader along. The unsatisfying finish is a problem (so Lasher has a body—what now? What exactly has he won?) The book doesn’t really stand on its own merits. It needs a sequel; and I look forward to one.

Karen Hellekson
Glides in Circles


What do The Chronicles of the Cheysuli have in common with nineteenth century Russian novels? It’s not the names (which are among the most pronounceable fantasy names I’ve come across). It’s not a sense of microcosmic metaphor (which is glaringly lacking, although not that Roberson didn’t try). It is the incestuous, interrelated, and nearly hopelessly knotted interweaving of characters. Without some prior tour of Homana, you will probably spend more mental energy sorting out the characters and their relationships than enjoying the plot. Although a four page overview is provided, it is like reducing the plot of *The Brothers Karamazov* to a similar size: not that it can’t be done—but that it shouldn’t.

If I go beyond the complex set of characters, which is actually a given in any “alternate world” type saga, I run headlong into another major dilemma. Why? I mean, what’s the point? The problem begins with THE PROPHECY on which the entire saga is based: “One day a man of all blood shall unite, in peace, four warring realms and two magical races.” That’s all. Who said it? I don’t know. What’s wrong with the state of Homanian society when the events in this novel take place? I don’t know. Roberson poses questions without answering any.

Come to think of it, that is the plot of *Flight of the Raven*. Prince-to-be Aiden, heir to the Throne of Homana-Mujhar, spends all of his time seeking answers to a question which he hasn’t exactly formed, but about which he does have a vague sense. His question springs from a recurrent nightmare he’s had since childhood, a dream which pushes him to discover his “tahlmorra,” his destiny.

Perhaps THE PROPHECY is examined in greater detail in one of the preceding five Chronicles of the Cheysuli and so might render my main complaint moot. However, the explanations I needed were not in the first novel of the series, *Shapechangers*, which I did find enjoyable. So, unless you read some or all of the novels between, you may find *Flight of the Raven* is earthbound.

Margoleath Berman

Third of the Orange County Series


Kim Stanley Robinson’s *Pacific Edge* is the third in his Orange County series. Set in 2065 in California, this novel deals less with technological change and exotic adventure than with personal and communal relationships. In fact, it is a kind of realistic utopia.

A gradual revolution has broken down the most powerful structures of the energy wasting and poverty generating economy of Western Civilization.
The results in the United States include the decentralization of political and economic power. Within a network of state laws governing the use of scarce resources such as water, the town of El Modena determines democratically every aspect of its economic life. This does not produce a perfect society, but it is notably freer and healthier than the violent and wasteful society in The Gold Coast, the previous novel in this series.

Ordinary life in this quasi-utopia continues much as usual. Kevin Clairborne, his grandfather, Tom Barnard, and several other main characters undergo the adventures of normal life in a small, integrated community: love and death, work and play, success and failure.

A unifying thread is the conflict over undeveloped land generated by the usual human weaknesses: greed, desire for power, ignorance, and egotism. Forces of unrestrained, individualistic capitalism remain, and the community must struggle through yet another in an endless series of tests of their will to sustain the society they have created.

Robinson tells a good story about well-developed characters. He avoids on the whole the bane of utopian fiction by working in graceful and brief statements rather than dull dissertations to explain this utopia.

Terry Heller

Oriental Flawed Fantasy

The Empire is in turmoil because the new Emperor is trying to eliminate any threat to his total power. He worries about the influence of Lord Shonto Moturu. He fears the Botahists, a martial and spiritual order established by Lord Botahara, the Perfect Master, whose members have been spiritual advisors to all the Great Houses. Aware of the Emperor’s dislike, the Supreme Master of the Botahists enters Shiyun, an Initiate with astounding martial and magical skills, into a prestigious kickboxing tournament. The botahist Master expects Shiyun to win, thus reminding everyone of what even the lowest member of the order can achieve. Shiyun does win even against the former champion, Jaku Katta, the Black Tiger, who is the Emperor’s devoted officer.

Several years later, the young Botahist, Shiyun, is assigned to be Spiritual Advisor to Lord Shonto. As a member of the household, Shiyun discovers that the Lady Nishima, Lord Shonto’s adopted daughter and one of the old royal blood, has been practicing teachings that heretofore had been reserved only to male Botahists. Shiyun hasn’t time to investigate the matter because he must accompany Lord Shonto to an outdistrict of Seh where Lord Shonto had been ordered to go by the Emperor. At the same time, the Emperor had connived to keep the Lady Nishima as a hostage in Wa. His secret hope is that Lord Shonto will be killed. Then, enhancing his own
power, the Emperor could direct a political marriage for the Lady Nishima. He
isn't aware, of course, that Jaku Katta, whom he believes to be his faithful servant,
has his own agenda involving the Lady Nishima—to seduce the Lady Nishima,
marry her, and, as consort to one of royal blood, gain ascendancy himself.

There are plots and counterplots. A skeleton of a Great Dragon has been
found. Rumours arise that a Great Kahn has united the barbarians into a fighting
force that could conquer Seh and all of Wa. The guarded writings of the Perfect
Master are missing. Botahists are disappearing. Predictions increase that a
second Enlightened Master will appear.

I look forward to the next in the series; though the conflicts presented in this
opening novel were all resolved, there are questions and issue still to be an­s­
swered. Whom will the Lady Nishima marry? Who will be the next Emperor?
Will an Enlightened Master appear? Furthermore, the oriental venue is this
projected series offers a welcome change from the medievalism so prevalent in
fantasy.

Salvatore Di Nardo

A Tasteful Morsel

Saberhagen, Fred. *A Matter of Taste*. NY: Tor, 1990, 284p. $16.95 hc. 0-312-
85046-8.

Fred Saberhagen's *A Matter of Taste* is a known quantity. Like *An Old
Friend of the Family* and like the *Dracula Tape* volumes, this is a smooth, witty enter­tain­ment with a benignly urbane vampire in the lead role.

Saberhagen employs two plots, a contemporary one involving young lovers
and nasty vampires from kindly vampire Matthew Maule's past, and a renais­sance Italian plot which explains those nasty vampires while employing ap­propriately Machiavellian intrigues. Both are, of course, excuses for riffs on
vampire lore, exertions of Maule's charm, and edifying moments in gore and
history.

*A Matter of Taste* invites comparison with Chelsea Quinn Yarbro's series on
the vampire Saint Germain. Like Saint Germain, Matthew Maule is the perfect
gentleman, solicitous of his "victims," and like Yarbro, Saberhagen is less in­terested in horror than in history. However, tone is the great difference between
the two series. Yarbro's is serious-minded historical fiction, and sometimes a trifle
full as a result, with thoughtful and imaginative spins on the vampire legend.
Saberhagen's books are more light-hearted, the history never bogging down the
yarn, the emphasis more on yarn than on morality, their variation on the vampire
theme more playful than Yarbro's.

Though the two series invite comparison, because their aims are quite dif­ferent, they don't invite ranking. I find Saberhagen's vampire novels charming,
their only faults a certain preciousness, but *A Matter of Taste* manages to avoid
that flaw and is, therefore, a delightful vampiric diversion.

Joan Gordon
Horror Without Surprise


In 1845 a pioneer wagon train trapped and starving in the snow of the Sierras is rescued after half of their number succumb to a virulent disease. Now the descendents of the survivors of this ordeal have settled a town and founded the prestigious Thorburn Colony for Artists and Writers on the site of the disaster. Paul Fleming, a recently-divorced author sent by his agent to the Thorburn Colony to break through his writer's block, finds not only the beginning of his next novel, but also the love of a reclusive artist he meets at the Colony, and the chilling evil kept secret by the townspeople for well over a century.

The nature of this secret is so predictable that it is obvious to the reader before the end of the Prologue recounting the pioneers' ordeal; thus any suspense here is generated not by what the horror is, but by whether Fleming and his friends will manage to both uncover and escape it. Though marred by annoying shifts in point of view, the novel is peopled with engaging eccentrics and is particularly enjoyable when it relates the travails of a working writer. Neither memorable nor masterly, this novel will, however, entertain.

*Agatha Taormina*

Juvenile:

**Gamearth Trilogy**


"Rule #1: Always have fun!" . . .and Kevin J. Anderson does just that in his wonderful *Gamearth* Trilogy, a trio of books set in a new and exciting world of role-playing games.

"Rule #12: Authors who set out to write a quest/adventure fantasy trilogy should make every attempt to add new twists to the genre, while following the established form." . . .and does he ever add new twists! The books follow established guidelines of the fantasy-gaming novels of yore; Anderson fully explains gaming for the novice/non-gamer, while keeping it exciting enough to not bog down the experienced player. But, oh, the new twists!
Another interesting twist is the interaction between the players and the game characters. The characters are aware that they are not "real." They are also aware of the presence of the "Outsiders"... much like gods to them. Scott inspires the Sitnaltan scientists through their dreams; Melanie interacts with select characters and is known as the mysterious Rulewoman; David appears as some of the "evil" gods. But the game begins to affect the players! Melanie and David have dreams of the game as it continues to play without them; magic somehow affects the phone lines and David's car, rendering them useless; the game shoots at David and injures him; and wait 'till you read what happens to Tyrone! And the ending...well, I won't give the best part away...after all, it's the best twist of all!

"Rule #14: The three books in a trilogy should be considered a unit, plotted together, with the second and third volumes building upon the preceding story. This is much more effective than one novel and two sequels added as an afterthought."...Anderson's trilogy indeed is a unit. The three volumes flow together very well, following the same format of point-of-view, and writing, climaxing with all kinds of action and suspense as the third book closes.

"Rule #7: The author, like the characters in his books, is himself bound by Rule #1!"... and so will you be while reading!

Fantasy Turned Reality


*Game's End* concludes Anderson's trilogy about the world of Gamearth. Four teen-age characters, David, Melanie, Scott, and Tyrone had created Gamearth, world-within-a-world, peopled by monsters and beings of various races. Now, however, the young people realize they've lost some control of the fantasy game they've been playing for two years. The game has turned into a reality that affects their lives. Too late, trapped in David's house, they continue playing, forced by the magic of Gamearth to finish the game for now the people of Gamearth know they themselves are merely characters in a game, and they decide to break the rules in order to provide Gamearth with an existence of its own.

To do so, they must defeat the manticore Siryky's monster army, an army controlled by David. Thus the fantasy character Delreal leads an attacking force while, at the same time, the sorcerers Tareah and Bryl search for four powerful magical gems. If the Earth, Air, Fire, and Water Stones are combined, the people of Gamearth believe the resultant magic might be enough to separate their world from the Outsiders' control.

The progression in plot, the sequence of events, the characters' motives, the descriptive settings, and especially the connections between Gamearth and our real world are presented simply. Readers will find it easy to see themselves at the scene of the action. They will certainly enjoy the surprise ending. Highly recommended as a good read.

Becky Smith
Imagine yourself a young scientist fascinated by the mysteries of Atlantis, that wondrous island civilization Plato reports having disappeared, sunk beneath the sea after "violent earthquakes and floods... and a single day and night of rain." In the twenty-first century in which you live, metaphysical time travel is available. Your body remains safe in your own era while your persona—your essence—is secretly implanted in a host living in the past. The journey between is eased when undertaken by pairs with strong emotional attachments. Unfortunately, there's so many historical mysteries that the pair must separate, each to research a different culture. Thus, you, Roy Colton, become a Prince of Atlantis. Meanwhile, the persona of your travel companion, Lora, is sent into a host living in the savage Paleolithic Ice-Age world of Eastern Europe, in the same prehistoric year, yet a continent away on the Western Atlantic Ocean.

Imagine you feel lonely. You long to share your experiences with Lora. The only way you can do this is to direct your host to write for you while he is sleeping or in trance, the missive to be "slipped into the regular diplomatic pouch." You do it.

Robert Silverberg, many times Hugo and Nebula winner, selected the epistolary form, long vital in literature. Though we never do meet Lora, for example, Roy's candid written confession that he yearns to "touch her" brings her close. Roy's writing style, too, maintains the somewhat dry, measured pace resembling that found in respected scientific journals, but Silverberg humanizes him. There are intermittent flashes of earthy, colloquial language that brighten and vivify Roy's letters to Lora. Silverberg doesn't coin futuristic expressions; Roy uses old-fashioned terms: "cockeyed," "freezing your butt off," "fake me out," "pesky," "stay cool," "flabbergasting," and so on. The effect actually subjectifies time displacement as future, near past, and far past blend.

The letters also show the writer to be sensitive, perspicacious, meticulous, and open-minded. Roy is astonished to learn that the people of Atlantis, 180 centuries ago, travel in steamships and use electricity but derogate the mainlanders of the "frozen hinterland" where "woolly mammoths... still wander around," as "dirt people." Roy considers this racism an explanation for the absence of Atlantean artifacts from Paleolithic sites. Surely, Roy feels, after the crisis, the "dirt people" would have destroyed every material thing that reminded them of their earlier subjugation.

Conceptually, Silverberg's explanation of Atlantis as a place inhabited by time-traveling aliens, ultimately forced to flee from a volcanic eruption, offers nothing new. On the other hand, Silverberg has written many works of fiction and non-fiction for young people: his logical application of current data to this etiology is absolutely clear. In addition, the careful, consistent
build-up of narrative and descriptive detail—especially that of the tender relationship developed between Prince and King and that of Roy’s increasing concern for his hosts—is intriguing both for young people and for adults interested in Atlantis.

_Sybil B. Langer_

**Four for Freedom**


Four human siblings, introduced in *The Night of the Solstice* (1987), continue their magical involvement with Morgana Shee, a Wildworld sorceress currently living in Southern California, and with Wildworld, a land of sorcerei [sic] and fairies. Ranging in age from about eight to sixteen are Alyx, the protector of her brother and sisters; Charles, with the mark of a Quislai kiss on his forehead; Janie, an apprentice sorceress; and Claudia, a third grader who can communicate with Morgana’s vixen-familiar and with all other animals. In the first in the series, the young people had helped Morgana save the world from the mad Cadal Forge but not before the power-hungry Thia Pendriel had stolen from him (Cad) an uncut ruby called *The Heart of Valor.* Now, in this second novel, California ground tremors appear to be following the fault into the Wildworld that had been so carefully closed in the earlier book. In the belief that Thia Pendriel has opened the gates between Wildworld and the human world and aims to use the gem she has to control both worlds, Morgana goes north to prevent Thia Pendriel from achieving her sinful goals. Then elementals attack the Hodges-Bradley young people. Since their parents are currently in China (an obvious contrivance), the four decide to follow Morgana. They know that by Beltane, May first, they must help Morgana discredit Thia Pendriel.

Young adults will enjoy the plot twists and turns of these adventures in a world of legend, fantasy, and sorcery. Surely no reader will forget the image of Charles as he participates in “The Hunt.” And particularly interesting is that the opening of the passage to Wildworld reactivates the legend of King Arthur and his mentor, Merlin. As Janie had said earlier, “Don’t be too sure the storybooks are right when they say Morgan LeFay (Morgana Shee) was bad.”

Other children’s and young adult writers have used family groups in fantasies. Any single novel in Susan Cooper’s, Alan Garner’s, or Madeleine L’Engle’s series can stand alone, though undeniably enhanced by reading the full series. The major drawback to *Heart of Valor* is Smith’s assumption that every reader knew how the four had met Morgana Shee and how each of their talents had developed. Frequent allusions to past events without clear explanation are quite disconcerting and could easily impede understanding. However, Smith’s plot and theme are strong, and the characters come to life. Actually, I look forward to a third novel in the adventures of the Hodges-Bradleys. I would ask for clearer exposition and request an emphasis on Charles.

_Courtney Nilo_
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Joint* | 55 | 60 | 65 | Other ______
Student** | 35 | 40 | 45 | Total ______
Institution | 65 | 65 | 65

If you wish to receive the British journal *Foundation* (3 issues yearly), add $14 to your dues.

*Joint membership is for two members in the same household, who will have separate Directory listings, receive two copies of the Newsletter, but will receive one set of the two journals.

**Student membership rate may be used for maximum of five years.

My membership is____ renewal____ new____ reinstatement (Year you were last a member: ___ for calendar year 199___.

(This next information will appear in the SFRA Directory:)

Name: ____________________________________________

Mailing Address ______________________________________

__________________________________________________

Telephone: [Home] (___)___—_____

[Office] (___)___—_____

[Fax No.] (___)___—_____

My principal interests in fantastic literature are (limit to 30 words): ___ Repeat last year’s entry.

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

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