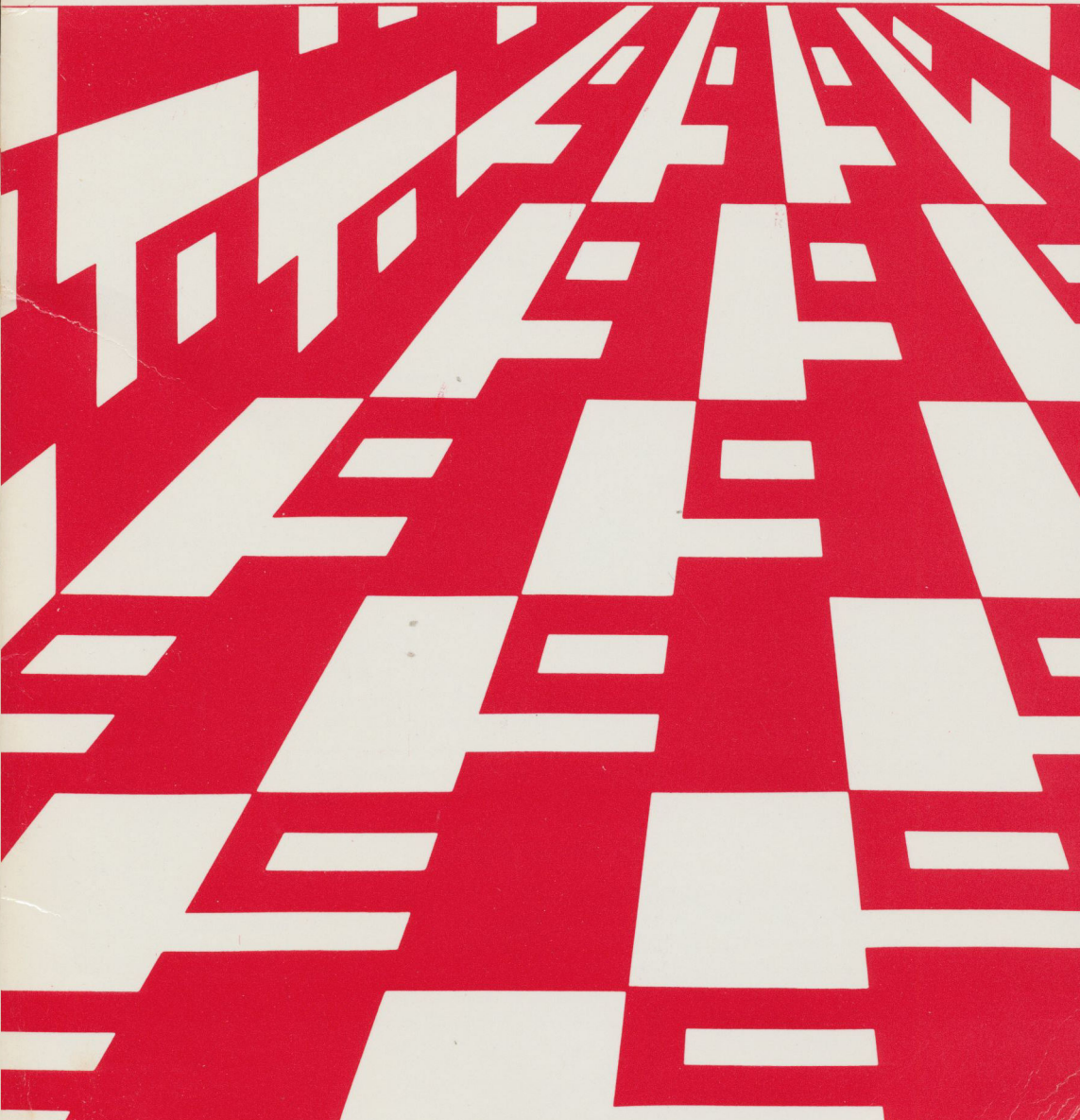


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Vol. 21, No. 2

# EXTRAPOLATION



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## Contributors

**Mary Kay Bray** is an Assistant Professor of Literature and Language at Wilmington College of Ohio, where she teaches a wide range of courses, including science fiction.

**Steven R. Carter** is an Assistant Professor of English at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington. A former Fulbright scholar, he has published articles on mystery writers, such as Ross Macdonald and Julian Symons, and on science-fiction writers, such as Isaac Asimov, Alfred Bester, Stanislaw Lem, and Arthur C. Clarke. He is currently working on a book about Lorraine Hansberry.

**John L. Espley** is the Preparations Department Automation Supervisor for the Carol M. Newman Library at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in Blacksburg, Virginia.

**S. James Jakiel** is an Associate Professor of English at the State University College at Buffalo, New York, where he has taught science fiction for several years. In addition to *Adolescent/Young Adult Literature*, published by the State University of New York, he has also published articles in both literature for young adults and science fiction.

**Merrell A. Knighten** is an Associate Professor and Chairman of the Department of English at Southern University in Shreveport, Louisiana. Chairman of the 1979 SCMLA Section on science fiction and fantasy, he is a frequent newspaper columnist and the coauthor of a recent study on the early career of Lyndon Johnson.

**David L. Lavery** teaches in the English Department at the University of North Florida. A specialist in film and American literature, he has presented papers on Calvino, Bob Rafelson, and time-lapse photography. He has published in *Vision* and has articles forthcoming in *College English*, *Literature/Film Quarterly*, and *Parabola*.

**Rosandra E. Levinthal**, a former junior high school English teacher, is currently editor of and writer for the Western New York ASPO (American Society for Psychoprophylaxis in Obstetrics) Newsletter.

**Patrick G. McLeod** is an Associate Professor of English at Jacksonville University, where he teaches modern and contemporary literature, including science fiction and film. He introduced science fiction and film courses at both Jacksonville University and the University of North Florida and has read numerous papers on science fiction and fantasy at a variety of professional meetings, including the SFRA, the Popular Culture Association in the South, and the annual Florida State University Conference on Literature and Film.

**Carol D. Stevens** is a Visiting Assistant Professor of Learning Skills at Oakland University. Her interests are in Renaissance literature, rhetoric and composition, children's literature, science fiction, and fantasy. She has published an essay-review of Harlan Ellison's short fiction in *Survey of Science Fiction Literature* and is completing a book on Tolkien with David Stevens for Starmont House.

**Carl B. Yoke** is an Associate Professor of English and Assistant to the Vice President for Regional Campuses at Kent State University. He is also Associate Editor of *Extrapolation*. His science-fiction publications include *A Reader's Guide to Roger Zelazny* for Starmont and *Roger Zelazny and Andre Norton: Proponents of Individualism* for the State Library of Ohio.

## THE LAUNCHING PAD

■ Robert Silverberg has returned.

Because of his constant editing, he was almost never totally absent from the field, but in the spring of 1975 when he announced that after the publication of *Shadrach in the Furnace* he would give up the field of science fiction, many of us regretted the passing of one of the finest talents in the field.

Now he is back with *Lord Valentine's Castle*, published this March by Harper & Row, and it shows that he has lost none of his technical powers nor his ability to tell a fine story. In creating the vast planet of Majipoor he has constructed an exotic world surely comparable to such worlds as Herbert's *Dune*. Significantly *Lord Valentine's Castle* is not "hard" science fiction but is instead the quest of Valentine to regain his position as ruler of the planet. One of the interesting debates that will arise in the criticisms of this novel is whether it is science fiction or heroic fantasy. He certainly brings to a

head once more the old critical debate of the close relation of fantasy and science fiction. Very little science-fiction paraphernalia is present: Majipoor is off the main paths of interstellar travel and is some time in the past when human beings inhabited it, joining an intellectual species native to the planet.

I will not go further into the plot because I do not want to deprive the reader of the pleasure of reading the novel. Surely it must be considered for any awards in the field for books published in 1980. Significantly, too, in its book form it includes 100 pages that did not appear in its serialization in *F & SF*. This brings up the debate about quality in science-fiction magazine and book publication.

It will certainly command a wide audience, and its final reception may well determine what occurs within the field during the next few years at least. One thing is certain: it provides an epic stage upon which a



hero seeks his destiny. Thus it leaves behind the dystopian mood that characterized Silverberg's work in the 1960s and early 1970s, as well as the works of his contemporaries.

Welcome back, Bob. Don't let the haggling critics nor the nagging fans silence you again, if that was a significant factor in 1975. We look forward to more of your work, for yours is one of the finest talents that science fiction of the latest generation has given the field.

TDC

### Announcements

By the time you read this issue, SFRA will have met at Wagner College, Staten Island, to celebrate its tenth anniversary. We hope that much of the papers, panel discussions, and interviews which take place there will find their way to *Extrapolation*.

The Gregg Press series of bibliographies of individual authors, edited by Lloyd Currey, has begun publication of books devoted to individual authors. An extended review of the first volume will appear in the next issue of *Extrapolation*.

Particularly since we are now a quarterly and thus have more space to work with, we encourage you to respond to articles in the magazine. While we might still prefer that you answer in the form of rebuttal articles, we welcome letters and with this issue inaugurate "Reac-

tion Time" (page 187). If you have any questions concerning your own research, please address them to *Extrapolation*; we may well have among our readers some who can help you obtain the needed information.

In a recent conversation the question arose: what science-fiction book or story would you recommend to someone who said they didn't like science fiction? Someone who perhaps had tried a "hard science" fiction novel, didn't like it, and hence has an antipathy toward the whole genre? Or someone who didn't know science fiction but didn't think he or she would like it? Various favorites were nominated, different approaches put forward: Ursula Le Guin. C. S. Lewis. Vonnegut. Perhaps the "mainstream" writers who entered the field—Doris Lessing or Pynchon. Or maybe the historical approach, beginning with, say, H. G. Wells.

There was no agreement, and doubtless there never will be. But we'd like to throw the question at our readers and see what a completely self-selected survey will reveal. Send your nominations to Carl Yoke, Associate Editor, *Extrapolation*, The Kent State University Press, Kent, Ohio 44242. What do you think is the best science-fiction book for the non-science-fiction book reader?

TDC

(continued on page 190)

# **“The Genius of the Sea”: Wallace Stevens’ “The Idea of Order at Key West,” Stanislaw Lem’s *Solaris*, and the Earth as a Muse**

DAVID L. LAVERY

It is for a later period to discover the closer unifying laws that are already present in the works themselves. When this true conception of art is achieved, then there will no longer be any possible distinction between science and inspired creation. The further one presses forward, the greater becomes the identity of everything, and finally we have the impression of being faced by a work not of man but of nature.

Anton Webern

■ In “The Idea of Order at Key West,” Wallace Stevens describes and then seeks to define the creative relationship of a woman walking on a beach with the sea before which she walks. His conclusions are clear enough: the order of the scene is the product of the woman’s genius. “She sang *beyond* the genius of the sea,” Stevens explains, for the sea is only “a body wholly body,” devoid of the capacity for articulation which the woman possesses so abundantly. Its arms are only “empty sleeves” of water and waves; its sound is not even worth heeding, at least not in the presence of the woman. The sea is “merely a place by which she walked to sing.”<sup>1</sup>

Although in its “mimic motion” the sea makes a kind of “constant cry . . . / That was not ours although we understood . . .,” the woman’s song does not, and indeed cannot, merge with it into one “medleyed sound.” For her singing, Stevens reminds us, “uttered word by word,” is of a completely different order from the “language” of the sea: “she was the maker of the song she sang . . . the single artificer of the world / In which she sang.” Neither the sea nor the earth which contains it is her muse; for her song is—to borrow the favorite metaphor of the

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American poet Robinson Jeffers—"incestuous" and not the product of any real intercourse with the world. As Stevens explains in his *The Necessary Angel*, poetry is only a "transcendent *analogue*" composed of the "particulars of the world." As an analogue, poetry parallels reality, just as the woman of the poem walks parallel to the sea along the beach. And parallel lines meet only in infinity.

In Stanislaw Lem's science-fiction novel *Solaris* (1961),<sup>2</sup> however, the poem's sea of "mimic motion" attains a kind of revenge against Stevens' solipsistic slight. *Solaris* is a distant planet, covered almost entirely by a vast ocean which seems to be a living, sentient organism. *Solaris'* ocean is capable of reproducing—out of the minds and memories of all those humans who venture near it—almost exact, biologically functional, replicas of individuals dear to them, and, although its motives in doing so are never fully understood, it seems to offer them as gifts and as experiments in understanding, despite the disastrous effects which result. (Among its replications is the ex-wife of the novel's narrator, Kris Kelvin, a woman he helped drive to suicide years before.)

But the externalization of the internal is not the only result of this thinking ocean's "mimic motions." The ocean is able to create periodically a panoply of formations as part of its very texture, which thousands of Solarian scientists during years of extensive study of the mysterious planet have classified variously as "tree-mountains," "extensors," "fungoids," "symmetriads," "asymmetriads," and "mimoids." It is the last of these on which Lem's own imagination concentrates.

Mimoids are wave formations of hundreds of thousands of tons of water, lasting in duration from a day to a month, in which objects external to the ocean are imitated within its textures. Viewed from above, we are told, "the mimoid resembles a town, an illusion produced by our compulsion to superimpose analogies with what we know." The mimoids are awakened out of the ocean commonly by a cloud passing overhead, an object that the mimoid's original seed crystal—a large flat disc beneath the surface of the ocean—then seeks to reproduce. The mimoids, Lem informs us, have a particular fondness for all human artifacts, producing facsimiles of machines and other objects within a radius of eight or nine miles with great facility. A mimoid, which lives in slow motion, pulsates at a rate of one beat every two hours, thus allowing explorers to enter and examine it closely. In addition, mimoids have what are termed "gala days," on which each of them goes into hyperproduction and performs with wild flights of fancy, playing "variations on the theme of a given object" and embroidering "formal extensions" that entertain it for hours, "to the delight of the nonfigurative artist and the despair of the scientist, who is at a loss to grasp any common theme in the performance" (pp. 122–24).

At the novel's close, after enduring the agonizing second loss of his wife's

double, Kelvin confides to Snow, the Solaris station's expert on cybernetics, that he has come, after a futile effort at comprehending Solaris' mysteries, to think of the planet-ocean as an aspect of an evolving god, which in an early stage of development approached "the divine state," but "turned back into itself too soon," and became instead of a god, an "anchorite, a hermit of the cosmos," completely under the sway of repetition, as witnessed in endless formations gestated by its waters. But soon afterward he leaves the station to explore the surface of Solaris directly for the first time, and he undergoes before its presence an epiphanal realization which does not permit him the luxury of singing, like Stevens, beyond the sea's genius.

Flying in a small aircraft over the ocean's depths, Kelvin perceives that "the alternating motion of the gleaming waves was not at all like the undulations of the sea or the billowing of clouds. It was like the crawling skin of an animal—the incessant, slow-motion contractions of muscular flesh secreting a crimson foam." Kelvin lands on a mimoid in the form of a "Moroccan city tens of centuries old" and descends to the beach, feeling its swaying motion, "moving forward, propelled by the dark muscles of the ocean towards an unknown destination . . ." (pp. 207–09). Stretching his hand into the water, he watches a wave envelop and then explore him as a potential object of its mimicry. Again and again he inserts his hand and witnesses the final result: "A flower had grown out of the ocean, and its calyx was molded to my fingers" (p. 210). Yet finally the ocean refuses to be interested any longer in the repetition and its curiosity ebbs.

But from the experience Kelvin finds himself "somehow changed":

The contrast was inexpressible between that lively curiosity and the shimmering immensity of the ocean that stretched away out of sight. . . . I had never felt its gigantic presence so strongly, or its powerful changeless silence, or the secret forces that gave the waves their regular rise and fall. I sat unseeing, and sank into a universe of inertia, glided down an irresistible slope and identified myself with the dumb fluid colossus; it was as if I had forgiven it everything, without the slightest effort of word or thought. (p. 210)

This identification is, of course, precisely what Stevens was incapable of achieving in "The Idea of Order at Key West"; consequently, the sea remains for him always a power necessary to transcend, for it is a kind of rival creator and he feels himself secretly challenged by it.

The works of Stanislaw Lem have often been characterized as disguised parables, and *Solaris*, I would like to suggest, is at bottom one such parable. *Solaris* is but a figure for the earth itself, and the novel's message concerns the nature and source of human imagination. Throughout the course of the novel, as part of Kelvin's attempts to understand his situation, he explores the vast library of over one hundred years of Solarian research, and it becomes readily apparent that Lem, in having him do so, intends to

parody the history of human thought by telescoping it into a more assimilable span of time. Yet for all this fantastic theorizing of Solaris' scholars, the planet-ocean remains an unfathomable mystery and Kelvin, with this vast library of "knowledge" at his fingertips, can ultimately understand the immense being that confronts him only by yielding himself over to its sway. A similar wisdom may be overtaking the modern mind.

In his *The Lives of a Cell* Lewis Thomas has argued that it is time to recognize that the earth itself is the equivalent of a living cell, whose atmosphere is its permeable membrane and whose "organelles" include, among many, the human race, although our biological function is obscure and our effect on the whole organism potentially disastrous.<sup>3</sup> This same conception has been designated recently by two British scientists, James Lovelock and Sidney Epton, as the "Gaia hypothesis": the belief that the earth itself, like the mother of the gods in Greek mythology, generated out of itself all those beings that live upon it and that they remain inextricably part of an organismic whole.<sup>4</sup> In some form this idea permeates the work of Loren Eiseley, Teilhard de Chardin, Claude Lévi-Strauss, and especially the poet Rainer Maria Rilke, who, at the end of the Ninth Duino Elegy, turns in direct address to the earth as to a lover and pledges to it his undying poetic faithfulness:

Earth, you darling, I will! Oh, believe me, you need  
your Springs no longer to win me: a single one,  
just one, is already more than my blood can endure.  
I've now been unspeakably yours for ages and ages.  
You were always right, and your holiest inspiration's  
Death, that friendly Death.  
Look, I am living. On what?<sup>5</sup>

Kris Kelvin's identification with the "dumb fluid colossus" of Solaris is a miniature of, but identical in spirit to, Rilke's tremendous realization that as a poet he has been "unspeakably" dependent on the earth, as have all poets, because the earth sustains his body and only within the body can poetry be born. Both know that they are themselves "mimoids," in which nature speaks through them as ventriloquists. Both know, as did Shakespeare long ago, that

Nature is made better by no mean  
But Nature makes that mean; so, over that art  
Which you say adds to Nature, is an art  
That Nature makes. . . . we marry  
A gentler scion to the wildest stock,  
And make conceive a bark of baser kind  
By bud of nobler race. This is an art  
Which does mend Nature, change it rather, but  
The art itself is Nature. (*WT*, IV.iv.89-97)

To any visitant of Solaris, Stevens' definition of poetry would seem almost absurd and certainly solipsistic and self-righteous. For poetry is no "transcendent analogue"; it is rather, if seen with the proper vision by a nonincestuous mind, an immanent homologue of the particulars of reality, in which an almost biological mimicry of the poet's world works toward identification with an earthly genius impossible to sing beyond.

## Notes

1. *The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens* (New York: Knopf, 1954), pp. 128–30.
2. Trans. Joanna Kilmartin and Steve Cox (New York: Berkley Medallion, 1971). All future references will be cited in the text.
3. See *The Lives of a Cell: Notes of a Biology Watcher* (New York: Bantam, 1974), p. 4.
4. "The Quest for Gaia," *New Scientist*, 6 February 1975, pp. 304–09.
5. I am using the translation of the *Duino Elegies* by J. B. Leishman and Stephen Spender (New York: Norton, 1967), p. 77.

# Personality Metamorphosis in Roger Zelazny's "The Doors of His Face, the Lamps of His Mouth"

CARL B. YOKE

■ Renewal is an abiding concern of Roger Zelazny's writing, especially his early work. In fact, this theme is so deeply engrained in his thinking that most of his significant fiction uses it in one way or another. "A Rose for Ecclesiastes" treats the restoration of fertility to a barren Mars and the salvation of the natives from racial suicide. *This Immortal* treats the restoration of an irradiated Earth. *Lord of Light* treats the renewal of a society. The five "Amber" novels treat the restoration of the land and the salvation of the world of form from Chaos.

In Zelazny's writing, renewal comes in two distinct forms: renewal as a physical objective and renewal as a psychological objective. Most of the guises in which it appears are of the physical kind, such as the revival of a planetary ecology, the restoration of fertility, the restructuring of a culture, the remolding of a religion, and the salvation of a species. The most persistent form, however, is psychological. It manifests itself as a metamorphosis of personality, a general raising of consciousness.

Inevitably, Zelazny's protagonists must achieve what Carl Jung has called "individuation," that is, the psychological state created when a person has successfully integrated the opposing systems of his personality into a separate, individual unity—a whole. With this integration also comes complete knowledge of self.<sup>1</sup> As Zelazny views it, however, the change it produces is so complete that enormous consequences are produced in the individual's life. Mahasamatman, of *Lord of Light*, for instance, leaves his wife and his place among the ruling gods for a life of wandering across Urath, and Conrad Nomikos, of *This Immortal*,

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renounces his leadership of the revolutionary Radpol organization and stages his own death so that he can assume a new identity.

The key to these dramatic changes of personality is the accumulating experience of the character. That experience comes, in turn, through the adventures of the protagonist as he pursues his physical objective. Often the metamorphosis occurs within the story, but on some occasions, it has actually occurred prior to the start of the action. Conrad, for example, has achieved an elevation of consciousness before Cort Myshtigo, of the Superior Vegans, shows up on earth and antagonizes the revolutionary group, Radpol. In any case, however, the metamorphosis is integral to the playing out of the story. In Conrad's case, it is his enlightened state and his immortality that qualify him as a candidate to inherit the earth.

Despite the fact that most of Zelazny's heroes achieve metamorphosis, he is enough of a student of human nature to realize that this is not always the case, and in *The Dream Master*, he presents a failure. In marked contrast to Mahasamatman, Conrad, and Gallinger of "A Rose for Ecclesiastes," stands Charles Render, neuroparticipation therapist and prisoner of his pride. Because he fails to supersede his personality fault, Render is trapped in one of his created fantasies by an insane female patient who has an incredibly strong mind. He is a striking and tragic figure.

Zelazny also recognizes other individual differences. He knows, for example, that people grow at their own rates and that it may take more experience to produce the same change in one person than it does in another. He also knows that the quality and intensity of an experience may alter the rate of psychological growth, and he recognizes that such growth is a process which will continue, in a healthy individual, as long as that individual is alive, even though there comes a point where the change is so marked that it can be identified as a metamorphosis.

There are many excellent examples of such a metamorphosis in Zelazny's work, but perhaps the best one is found in Carlton Davits, the protagonist of his Nebula-Award-winning novelette, "The Doors of His Face, the Lamps of His Mouth." In the pattern of his development, Davits mirrors the psychological evolution of many Zelazny protagonists. Prototypically, some negative element of personality becomes dominant in the character and blocks further *healthy* psychological growth. In the case of Davits and Gallinger, it is pride, but it can be any abnormally strong desire. Greed, power, or revenge, for example, are other frequently occurring personality faults in Zelazny's characters. The next stage of development for the evolving personality, however, is a personal failure or some other traumatic event which makes the character aware of his fallibility. This is followed by a period of readjustment. Finally, there is an integration of disparate elements which brings a broader and deeper awareness not only of self but also of humanity. The integration

subsequently brings certain benefits, such as productivity, fertility, increased capability, or psychologically healthy love.

All of the elements of “The Doors of His Face, the Lamps of His Mouth” are geared to expanding and emphasizing Davits’ individual metamorphosis, and many of them are adapted for the novelette from the Book of Job. In the character of Job, Zelazny found a broad model for Davits, though the baitman is not simply a recasting of the biblical sufferer in a science-fiction context. The first indication that there is a connection between the two works is found in the story’s title “The Doors of His Face, the Lamps of His Mouth.” It was constructed by placing the italicized words in line 18 of the following passage into parallel construction with line 14:

Who can open *the doors of his face*?  
his teeth are terrible round about.  
His scales are his *pride*.  
shut together as with a close seal.  
*Out of his mouth* go burning *lamps*,  
and sparks of fire leap out

(41:14–19; emphasis mine)

The specific referent for the passage is the leviathan of Job, which in that book, as in Zelazny’s novelette, symbolizes pride. Not only does this passage then generate Ikky, the beast of “The Doors of His Face, the Lamps of His Mouth,” it also provides the fault for Davits’ characterization. Job stands in the same symbolic relationship to his leviathan as Davits does to Ikky, even though the dramatic context is vastly different.

The similarities between Davits and Job do not end here. The pattern of their character development is also very similar. Both have at one time held high status in their respective cultures, both fall from that state, both are tested, and both suffer physical damage as a result of their testing. Both finally resolve their problems and achieve a higher maturity. A comparison of the two will show Davits’ debt to Job.

Both men have attained wealth and status. Job is touted as “the greatest of all the men of the east,” and his wealth includes 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, 500 she-asses, and a very great household (1:3). Davits’ wealth and status are indicated by the fact that he, of only a few men in the solar system, can afford to purchase “Tensquare,” an atomic-powered raft the size of a football field, to go fishing on Venus.

There is a significant difference in what wealth and status has brought each man, however, in terms of his personal relationships. Job has deep and meaningful relationships with family and friends, and at least as the Book of Job begins, he believes that his relationship with God is secure and that his affluence is a direct reflection of a long life of doing right.<sup>2</sup> This view is quickly destroyed when randomness is inserted into that relationship,

and this brings Job's subsequent confusion and eventual despair.<sup>3</sup> Davits, on the other hand, has too much money and too little responsibility. He is very immature, and he has no real friendships because he does not understand that true friendship requires giving as well as taking. Wealth and position have brought him nothing of value in his personal relations. The difference between the two men is significant because in Zelazny's characterization of Davits, he is reflecting a prevalent view of our times—that money and influence are more desirable values than meaningful relationships.

A significant difference between the two can also be seen in the cause of their falls from high estate. Job falls because God permits Satan to test him. Richard E. Singer writes that regardless of Job's unworthiness to question God, he has been "as a despised tool in the power of two mighty creatures—God and Satan" and that he "really does have a case against God."<sup>4</sup> There is no question that Job's fall has been generated outside of himself. By contrast, Davits' fall is self-generated. It is the result of overplaying his hand, of being too sure of himself. And this change of motive from Job to Davits is Zelazny's attempt to make Davits a character more identifiable to modern readers. Regardless of the stimuli, however, both Davits and Job fall for the same psychological reason—neither is mature enough to handle failure, whether real or imagined, because each is blocked from insight into his own unique circumstances by his pride.

Another example of Zelazny's attempt to make Davits more credible to his readers by psychologizing the character is found in the testing of the two figures. Job's trials are imposed on him by Satan, while Davits' are imposed on him by his own fear. And though the tests are different, the pattern of results is very much the same. Both men lose material wealth, suffer losses in personal relationships, and sustain physical injury. Job loses his oxen, asses, camels, sheep, and servants; Davits suffers bankruptcy and loss of property. Job's sons and daughters are killed when "a great wind from the wilderness" (1:18–19) causes their house to collapse on them; Davits receives a severe emotional blow when he and Jean, his ex-wife, are divorced. She is the only person with whom he has developed a meaningful relationship up to that time. Job receives "sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown" (2: 7–8); Davits is left with partial hemiplegia by his first attempt to capture Ikky and later receives bad wounds in a diving accident from the screw of a ship called the *Dolphin*. Though Davits is cast as a restless rebel, more interested in the love of woman than of God, more highly personalized and psychologized than Job, there can be little question that Zelazny's protagonist is drawn from Job.

Ikky, the symbol of Davits' pride and the object of his fear, is also drawn from the Book of Job. The biblical leviathan is so fierce that no one dare stir him up, so overwhelming that a man is cast down at his sight, so strong that

iron is as straw and brass as rotten wood against him. His scales are welded together like armor, his teeth are "terrible round about," and a light shines by his neesings (gill slits). Fire burns from his mouth, his breath will kindle coals, and smoke pours from his nostrils. His eyes are like "the eyelids of the morning."

As impressive as this description is, it is not an easy one for a contemporary reader to handle. It is highly subjective and couched in terms designed to make man feel insignificant, but its imagery and language are difficult. Zelazny's problem is to make the beast concrete. He accomplishes this primarily by delimiting the image and by giving it a definite referent. Specifically, he combines certain characteristics of the biblical monster with those of the plesiosaur, a thought-to-be-extinct marine reptile of the Mesozoic era. No doubt Zelazny had the Loch Ness Monster in mind as his specific referent. It is a subject which has been of interest to him for some time, and many speculators feel that Nessie is a plesiosaur.

Zelazny retains the general impression of huge size, awesome strength, and heart-stopping fearsomeness from Job but delimits the image as follows. First, he gives Ikky a more or less definite dimension of one hundred meters. Then, he makes the teeth into fangs and the "eyelids of the morning" into round, lidless eyes, like roulette wheels. He eliminates any mention of scales, except as articulations over the eyes, colors the creature green, and gives it a neck "like a giant beanstalk." He makes the head fat and craggy and indicates that Ikky is of limited intelligence. Finally, he suggests that Ikky has some sort of flipper arrangement when Carl remembers that the monster took "a half-minute *walk* across Tensquare"<sup>5</sup> (emphasis mine). Making Ikky more identifiable to contemporary readers is important because the monster is a major symbol in the story, and the nature and extent of Carl's psychological problem is conveyed through it.

But the title of Zelazny's novelette, the paralleling of Davits with Job, and the general description of the sea-monster are not all that Zelazny has drawn from the biblical book. He has also taken his dominant field of imagery from it. Job is heavy with water images, particularly Chapters 9–14 and 38–42. The sea/ rain/ brook/ tears/ dew/ ice cluster symbolizes the randomness of life, a fact Job comes to accept only after he has gained a new maturity. In its capacity to be either creative or destructive, water illustrates the final relationship between Job and God. In discussing how Job finally decided to come to terms with God, Singer says, "Man can approach such a deity only in fear and trembling, for man can never know how such a God will respond."<sup>6</sup> In its various forms, water reflects much this same relationship to Job. It can be creative by bringing forth and sustaining life, or it can be destructive by means of tidal waves, storms, and floods. In such passages as "Because thou shalt forget thy misery / and remember it as waters that pass away / and thine age shall be clearer than the noonday / thou shalt shine forth, thou shalt be as the morning" (11:

16 17), water is clearly purgative. In such passages as “As the waters fail from the sea / and the flood decayeth and drieth up / so man lieth down and riseth not” (14:11–12), and “The waters wear away the stones / thou wastest away the things which grow out of the dust of / the earth” (14:19), it is clearly a destructive force.

In the novelette, the water pattern not only forms the dominant submetaphor of the story but also stands in a much more complex relationship to it than the water pattern does in Job. So well is it integrated into the story, in fact, that it serves multiple purposes. First, it functions at the literal level as the medium through which Davits must travel in order to catch Ikky. Second, as rain it marks the purgation of his vanity and the beginning of his maturity. (As tears, it marks the same transition for Jean Luharich.) Third, as the sea, it functions both psychologically as an equivalent to Davits’ mind and mythologically as an equivalent to Hell.

Tied closely to the water pattern is the voyage motif. During the course of the story, Carl makes both physical and mental journeys. At the physical level, he travels both across the seas of Venus and down into their depths. At the psychological (or mental) level, he travels deep into the recesses of his own mind to confront his fear, symbolized by Ikky. Also tied into the water pattern is the sea-serpent. Ikky is, at once, the physical object of his fishing trip and the symbolic manifestation of his fear. The variations of the water pattern are appropriate to the purpose of the story, which is Carl Davits’ journey to maturity, because they help to reinforce, focus, and define it.

The water pattern is supported by a very important secondary pattern—sight-insight. Like so many elements of “Doors and Lamps,” this pattern also functions at multiple levels, in this case the physical one of sight, or lack of it, and the psychological level of insight, or, again, lack of it. It too finds its genesis in Job, specifically in the following passage, “Behold, the hope of him / is in vain: shall not one be / cast down even at the sight of / him? [the leviathan]” (41:9). This is, of course, exactly what happens to Davits in his first encounter with Ikky. The beast’s look paralyzes him, and he fails to press the Inject. In a more general sense, insight is fundamental to both Job’s and Carl’s personality problems. Neither has the capacity initially to grow from his experience. In both men, maturation is blocked by vanity, and in both cases, physical and mental suffering are necessary to clearing each man’s vision.

The sight-insight pattern in Zelazny’s novelette is developed by many different devices and established almost at the outset of the story by a scene which mirrors Carl’s psychological development. It occurs in the description of his descent to Venus:

When you break into *Cloud Alley* it [the continent of Hand] swings its silverblack bowling ball toward you without warning. . . . Next, you study Hand to lay its *illusion* and the two middle fingers become dozen-ringed

archipelagoes as the outers *resolve* into greengray peninsulas; the thumb is too short, and curls like the embryo tail of Cape Horn. (p. 1; emphasis mine)

In this brief scene, Zelazny sketches Carl's psychological journey for the reader. Before his first encounter with Ikky, his vision is opaque. In other words, his insight is blocked; he does not grow from his experience. Then, after being cast down by the sight of the monster, he goes through a period where most of what he sees is through an alcoholic stupor. Finally, at the beginning of the successful hunt for Ikky, the benefits of his physical and mental suffering begin to take effect, and the distortion resolves to clarity. Zelazny emphasizes the symbolic quality of the passage by the language he uses: "Cloud, illusion, resolve." Each word has a distinct conceptual relationship to the word *sight*.

A second device that reinforces the sight-insight pattern is the scene drawn as a microscopic movie scenario:

Open: landing strip, dark. One mechanic prodding a contrary hopper. Stark-o-vision shot of slow bus pulling in. Heavily dressed baitman descends, looks about, limps across field. Close-up: he grins. Move in for words: "Do you think this is the time? The time he *will* be landed?" Embarrassment, taciturnity, a shrug. Dub something. —"I see. And why do you think that Miss Luharich has a better chance than any of the others? Is it because she's better equipped? [Grin.] Because more is known now about the creature's habits than when you were out before? Or is it because of her will to win, to be a champion?" Reply: "yeah, all of them." —"Is that why you signed on with her? Because your instincts say, 'This will be it?'" Answer: "She pays union rates. I couldn't rent that damned thing myself. And I want in." Erase. Dub something else. Fade-out as he moves toward hopper, etcetera. (pp. 7–8)

This scene is significant because it reflects Carl's general attitude. By the time the story begins, he is, in fact, well on his way toward a realistic perception of both himself and the world around him. Because of this, he has come to view the management of information by the public media as deceitful. The camera, in particular, has come to represent the masking of truth for him.

This attitude is reinforced both by his negative comments about cameras and cameramen and by his feelings toward Anderson, Jean Luharich's publicity man. About him Carl remarks, "But I hate you, Anderson, with your glass full of teeth and her new eyes" (p. 19). The phrase "her new eyes" refers to Jean's contact lenses and links the eyes symbol with publicity and cameras. Other instances of distorted vision occur in the story; for example, Carl's perception of Malvern's cabin "through a glass, brownly" (p. 12), and the many references to Tensquare's underwater video-screens which, at best, see Ikky distortedly because of the problem of light refraction. All of these devices, even though they indicate distortion, reinforce the sight-insight pattern.

The most important supportive device of all, however, is the eyes symbol, especially as it relates to Jean. Before discussing how the symbol fits into the sight-insight pattern, it is necessary to define the relationship between Carl and Jean. Two key comments by Carl show that she is a psychological reflection of himself. Responding to a comment by Mike Dabis, a crew member, which implied that Jean wished to reestablish their previous relationship (they had been married for three months several years before), Carl replies, "No good, no good . . . We're both fission chambers by nature. You can't have jets on both ends of the rocket and expect to go anywhere—what's in the middle just gets smashed" (p. 26). His second comment occurs when Jean freezes during the catch and cannot push the Inject. She is paralyzed when the hooked Ikky turns its eyes on her, just as he once was. She asks Carl to inject another dose of narcotics into the monster. He refuses, saying, "No. If I do, you'll wonder for the rest of your life whether you could have. You'll throw away your soul finding out. I know you will, because *we're alike*, and I did it that way. Find out now" (p. 32; emphasis mine).

That Jean is a reflection of Carl is borne out by the similarity of their personalities. When they first married, according to Carl, both were young, rich, strong, and spoiled. Evidence in the story indicates that both were also stubborn, highly competitive, and very athletic; in particular, both are excellent swimmers, each having saved the other from drowning. Moreover, both do most things well, disregard personal safety when facing a challenge, and have little respect for conventional rules. Most importantly, each felt at one time or another that he or she could do anything. Carl has hunted sharks with poison-darted air pistols and caught one of every fish in the system, except Ikky. Jean has successfully raced torch ships, scuba dove in dangerous waters on Earth, hunted in the Highlands of Venus, and won a golfing trophy on Mercury. For each, the ultimate hunt is the Ikky. The difference is that Carl has tried and failed, thus realizing his human fallibility; but Jean has still to try.

Their vanity is clearly established. Job gives the first clue. Of the leviathan, it is written, ". . . he is a king over all / the children of pride" (41:34). Vanity is the keystone of Jean's personality. When he first hears that she has arrived on Tensquare, Carl calls her "an egomaniac" and then a "rich witch." Her appearance is artificial: she has dyed her hair blonde, wears violet contact lenses, and has acquired an "off-world tan." Moreover, she is the ultimate peddler of vanity. Her business, Luharich Enterprises, sells most of the solar system's lipstick, face powder, and cold cream, and she is its foremost symbol. When she won the Sun Trophy on Mercury for her golfing prowess, for example, the company's stock jumped sixteen points.

If we accept the fact that Carl and Jean are psychological mirror images,



certain important inferences can then be drawn. First, he is as vain as she. Second, their very brief, very rocky first marriage undoubtedly broke up because each was so busy loving himself or herself that he or she had neither time nor room to love someone else. Finally, Carl's drift into alcoholism after losing his catch was probably triggered by his inability to accept the fact that he had failed—pride had prevented him from dealing with his fallibility. There can be little doubt that Zelazny has once again drawn from Job and that Carl and Jean are meant to be the “children of pride” referred to in Job 41:34. Since that verse clearly stipulates that the leviathan is king over all the “children of pride,” then it is obvious that neither Jean nor Carl will be able to catch Ikky until he or she has first conquered the beast within—vanity.

Besides serving as a psychological mirror, however, the character of Jean serves at least two other notable functions. She is, of course, Carl's love object, but of equal importance is her role's third function—to serve as a guide for Carl's maturational development. Jean is not aware, of course, that she is performing this function in her own hunt for Ikky, and Carl, himself, has only a growing awareness of this fact until the time that Jean falters on the Inject. Then, he becomes fully cognizant that what is happening to her is exactly what has happened to him. With that realization, he makes her push the Inject and gives up the opportunity to catch Ikky himself. He knows that if she fails she will throw away her soul trying to find out about herself, and he prefers to have her psychologically whole.

How Jean functions as guide is best illustrated in the important scene in which she and Carl race under Tensquare. Even though Carl does not completely understand it at the time, he senses that Jean is, in fact, a fairly accurate reflection of himself as he existed a few years earlier, and in her actions he witnesses his own former attitudes. It is in this sense that she becomes his guide. And though these perceptions make him angry, Jean has begun to focus his insight. Equally important is the fact that through her actions during the race, she forces him from a passive to an active posture and from a negative to a positive attitude.

The action pattern in the story is a significant supportive metaphor to the sight-insight pattern. In the race under Tensquare, Carl learns an important truth about action through Jean—that there is an immense difference between reckless and right action. This observation is a sign of his developing maturity. Nonetheless, passivity has been a problem for Carl. It began with his traumatic encounter with Ikky: “Then, as Davits learned, one looks into the Abyss itself and is required to act” (p. 7). He did not. He was, in fact, paralyzed by Ikky's stare, and subsequently spent many months in various states of personal paralysis.

Jean's actions, though reckless, are significant. The important aspect of

the race scene is that she initiates it. For example, she provokes Carl from his mental lethargy into competition. "Let's go for a swim," she says. He reluctantly points out how fast the big raft is moving. She prods him, "If you want to indicate the obvious, you may. You said you could make it back to the ship, unassisted. Change your mind?" He answers no but is still not committed to a course of action. She pushes harder: "Then get us two scuba outfits and I'll race you under Tensquare" (p. 15). Only then does he agree. Throughout the race, she leads him. Sensing her role, he lets her. At various intervals, she steps up the pace, until about halfway under the raft she hits the compressed air jets. This is a reckless bit of action which is significant because it also forces him to take chances. A short time later, he must use his own rockets to prevent her from being torn up by the large windmill screws beneath the raft.

As a result of this experience, both Carl and Jean learn a lesson—that there is a correct time, a correct place, and a correct act for each situation. Moreover, they learn that there is a time to be passive and that judging the degree of force to apply in any situation is critical. Both, however, approach this principle from opposite ends of the active-passive continuum. Since his encounter with Ikky, Carl has become overly passive, and he must be driven from it. Jean's actions during the race accomplish this by making Carl examine his attitudes. The perceptions he has regarding his posture prepare him for actions that he will have to take later on in his quest for maturity. Specifically, he learns the lesson of judging how much force to apply and when to apply it. This preparedness is critical if he is to accomplish his two primary objectives: successful confrontation of Ikky and reconciliation with Jean, who is not only his love object but also the symbol of his love of self. Jean must, of course, learn the same lesson, and in the race scene she does this. Her close call with death brings a recognition of her own fallibility and prepares her for her own paralyzing confrontation with Ikky. These events start her toward a realistic perception of self and help her to understand what Carl has gone through. Eventually she makes the same maturational step that he does without suffering the prolonged period of self-doubt and passivity.

Even so, the lesson of the race is not immediately apparent to Carl. His confused emotions toward Jean initially betray him. When she rashly hits her rockets halfway through the race, he is immediately angered and hurt. He wants the swim to be a re-creation of those special moments that the two of them shared on other swims before and during their brief marriage. But, emotionally, he leaps to a conclusion that is not entirely justified: "I should have known," he says, "I should have felt it coming. It was just another race to her. Something else to win" (p. 17).

This is an attitude that Carl understands well, for it is his own attitude of previous years. Yet, he fails to consciously recognize the significance of

three symbolic acts that Jean performs just prior to the race, which signal that she has already begun a metamorphosis to maturity. First, she removes her violet contact lenses. As she does, Carl remarks, "She passed him [Anderson] a box full of her *unseeing* and when she turned back they were the same brown that I remembered" (p. 16; emphasis mine). This act not only marks the clearing of her physical vision but also the symbolic destruction of her barriers to mature insight. Moreover, it eliminates the primary symbol of her vanity. Second, she refuses to let Anderson take publicity pictures of the race and, therefore, prevents the exploitation of the event for the benefit of Luharich Enterprises' stock. Such exploitation would have produced an increase in sales because of the identification of millions of women with her heroic deeds. Her decision shows that, indeed, she is sensitive to Carl's intense dislike of publicity and that the race is more to her than just another stunt to promote her company. Finally, when she recalls her rescue of Carl at Govino, tears flash into her eyes, showing that she is still capable of deep feelings for him. (Zelazny mentions the tears twice to emphasize their significance.)

Besides the action pattern, there is a second significant submetaphor for the sight-insight complex: the light-dark pattern. It is particularly appropriate because of the physical effect of light on sight and the subsequent figurative connection with insight. Even though Zelazny is limited to some degree in his use of the light metaphor by the physics of light, he maximizes its possibilities by the careful planning of scene and time.

In general, he has drawn Venus as a planet of mist and sea and cloud—a setting of minimal light. A typical Venusian day is sketched in his description of dawn: "Dawn is like dumping milk into an inkwell. First, there are erratic curdles of white, then streamers. Shade the bottle for a gray colloid, then watch it whiten a little more. All of a sudden you've got day" (p. 6). Other references support the general impression of a gray-to-dark world. For example, "The *foggy* towers of Lifeline shared their *mists*" (p. 4), and "Two days like icebergs—bleak, *blank*, half-melting, all frigid, mainly *out-of-sight*" (p. 25; emphasis mine).

Moreover, many of the scenes are set at night and/or in storms. For example, "Insomnia tonight and left shoulder sore again, so let it rain on me . . ." (p. 19) and "Later that afternoon, and appropriately, a storm shattered. (I prefer 'shattered' to 'broke.' It gives a more accurate idea of the behavior of tropical storms on Venus and saves a lot of words.) Remember that inkwell I mentioned earlier? Now take it between thumb and forefinger and hit it with a hammer" (p. 20).

Correlated with the storms, night, and the generally gray atmosphere are the descents into the sea. Here, as with the weather, Zelazny is somewhat limited by physical laws. In any body of water, light diminishes with depth.

Nonetheless, by calling the reader's attention to the darkness and by emphasizing the degree, Zelazny is able to use the physical laws pertaining to light to support the sight-insight complex.

In order to understand how the subpattern works, it is first necessary to understand the meaning of two primary symbols in the story. At the psychological level, the sea represents Davits' mind and Ikky, his neurosis. In order for Carl to overcome his neurosis and return to a healthy mental state, it is imperative that he destroy his fear by destroying the leviathan that has come to represent it. Thus, the descents that he makes during the course of the story serve a psychological, as well as a physical, purpose.

There are three psychologically significant descents in the novelette. The first of these occurs with the race under Tensquare, which is important for two reasons. First, it establishes Jean as Carl's psychological guide. Second, it marks the beginning of a change in their present relationship. This scene has, of course, already been discussed in relationship to the action pattern, but it is important to note that Jean leads the race under the raft with Carl's permission. He periodically spots her with the beam of his torch, keeping her in sight, matching his stroke with her own. She looks back to be sure he is following. Eventually the failure of her jets causes Carl to challenge himself in order to save her. She has precipitated a sequence of events which renew his self-confidence, a necessary *psychological* step in his preparation. Moreover, the race marks a change in their relationship. Each of them is locked into a pattern of behavioral response toward the other which is expected by divorced parties. Only an event of significance can change that. Saving Jean's life accomplishes that purpose.

The "thirteenth day" descent is also psychologically significant. It too is preparatory. A very long cast forces Carl to descend much deeper than he has ever gone before (it is, incidentally, made by Jean, who continues to drive Carl towards his inevitable confrontation). Reacting to the great depth of his dive, Carl is gripped by fear: "If I bumped into something enormous and steel-hided my heart had orders to stop beating immediately and release me—to dart fitfully forever along Acheron, and gibbering" (p. 23). Automatically, he retreats into the safety of darkness. "I didn't want to switch my torch on. But I had to. Bad! I still had a long way to go. I clenched my teeth and stuffed my imagination into a straight-jacket" (p. 23). The psychological significance of these lines is that Carl is beginning to gain control of himself. He has become more aware of his problem. "I was near—too near—to where I never wanted to be" (p. 23), he says. Yet, the point is that he is, in fact, there.

His new awareness is underscored by the light pattern. At first unwilling to turn on the torch, he finds out almost immediately that he is then equally unwilling to turn it off. "Loathe as I had been to turn on my light, I was suddenly afraid to turn it off" (p. 23). He does, however, as he starts up.

When he reaches the deck safely, he laughs in relief to himself at his newfound confidence. Nothing was there; his flight was ironic. His hands are steady, rather than shaking as they had been from his hemiplegia and fear. He yawns happily, and his shoulder feels as good as new. All of these positive signs mark the success of his probe into his fear. Most important of these, however, is his capacity to switch on and switch off the light at will. The descent is important from another aspect too. After the dive is completed, Jean apologizes to him for the overly long cast. She displays genuine concern for his safety. Her attitude toward him and her admission of fallibility are yet another step towards reconciliation.

The third descent, and most significant, occurs on "the day of the beast." Inevitably, it brings Carl face to face with both Ikky and his own fear. From a psychological point of view, only confrontation and then mastery will permit Carl to achieve mental health. Whether or not Carl will succeed depends, of course, upon his degree of readiness.

We get a clue to his state of mind in the paragraphs that precede the actual contact, and it is evident that his attitude is much different than it was on the "thirteenth day" descent. Unlike that occasion, Carl does not dwell on his fear. To the contrary, he is fairly confident, ". . . something might be moving up, something big enough to displace a lot of water. I still didn't think it was Ikky. A freak current of some sort, but not Ikky. Ha!" (p. 28). Zelazny reinforces Carl's confident attitude by likening him to a bright comet. It is an appropriate comparison, for he means for the reader to accept the implicit connotation: a body locked on course, speeding towards its destiny. Clearly, Carl has been psychologically prepared.

As before, the light pattern underscores his mental journey and the intrinsic symbols of the story come into play. The sea represents mind, light is awareness (or insight), and dark is its opposite. Zelazny establishes the pattern and the symbols as soon as the dive begins. "The snaking cables burned *black* to my left and I paced their undulations from the yellowgreen down into the *darkness*. Soundless lay the wet *night*, and I bent my way through it like a cock-eyed comet, bright tail before" (p. 27; emphasis mine). Black, darkness, and night each imply the absence of light. Then, when Ikky appears, he ties the beast into the image cluster. "I had finished attaching the leads and pulled the first plug when a big, rugged, *black* island drew beneath me . . ." and "A giant *shadow* [Ikky] and a shock wave" (p. 28; emphasis mine). By connecting the leviathan into the complex of dark images, he establishes it as a creature of the mind.

The contact between diver and beast re-creates the psychological conditions that originally triggered Carl's neurosis. On the first occasion, he failed to act. His failure shattered his self-image, plunged him into doubt and bankruptcy, and caused the death of six men. Unlike that first time, however, this time his courage does *not* desert him. Even though

overwhelmed by waves of death-fear, he performs the only act that will save him—he pulls the rest of the plugs on the squiggler. It immediately phosphoresces. Later he learns that Ikky took his artificial bait. The significance of Carl's deed cannot be overstated. This single act establishes the fact that he has finally gained control over himself. No longer is he the prisoner of his unconscious fear. No longer can he be pushed here and there by it. No longer will it control his destiny.

That he has succeeded is borne out by his comments to "rabbit" as he surfaces. To Carl, "rabbit" has come to symbolize his fear. "One flick of the beam, cried rabbit. One second, to know . . ." (p. 28). Even when he has a strong impulse to turn on the torch and find out if Ikky has taken the bait, Carl realizes that to do so might attract the beast and, in turn, make him the bait. He resists this impulse bred of fear and replies, "No, rabbit, we don't dart before hunters. Stay dark" (p. 28).

Once Carl performs his act of self-survival, the symbolic value for the cluster of dark images shifts and the relationship between "light" and "dark" changes. These developments occur because, for the first time since his initial confrontation with Ikky, the conscious and subconscious elements of his mind have returned to a natural state of harmony. In accordance with Jungian psychodynamics,<sup>7</sup> the period of Carl's neurosis is marked by the trapping of large quantities of psychic energy in the subconscious. The trapped energy feeds that element which Jung labels "the shadow" and which is also manifest in the story by Ikky. (The enormous size of the sea-beast is thus a reflection of the severity of Carl's neurosis.) However, when he pulls the rest of the plugs on the squiggler, Carl not only saves himself but also discharges the energy trapped by the shadow. That, in turn, alters the very nature of his subconscious. Whereas it was once a place filled with terror, it has now become a place of retreat, meditation, healing. It is, therefore, appropriate from a psychological as well as physical point of view that Davits "blacks out" after his panicked swim for the surface. The dark cluster has now come to signify a place of peace, and the relationship between "light" and "dark" is now one of peaceful coexistence.

That Carl has achieved a new state of psychological being is shown through the comments he makes upon awakening. They are couched in a metaphor which quickly sketches the evolution of man. "A few million years," Carl begins, "I remember starting out as a one-celled organism, and painfully becoming an amphibian, then an air-breather. From somewhere high in the treetops, I heard a voice . . . I evolved into homosapience, then a step further into a hangover" (p. 28). At this point, because he has brought himself into harmony with this psychic environment, Carl is quite literally a new man. He has metamorphosed.

Like him, Jean will also evolve to an inner state of harmony because

Jung believes that the best friendships and marriages occur between persons who are fully individuated and who have achieved harmony within themselves rather than between persons who complement one another's weaknesses.<sup>8</sup> Jean's metamorphosis is inevitable even though it occurs through a much shorter time frame than Carl's and avoids his deep-seated neurosis. Otherwise their development is parallel: both require recognition of their fallibility and the destruction of their vanity. Both must be tested. Jean's moment of truth comes in a scene near the end of the story which duplicates Carl's traumatic, initial confrontation with the sea-beast. The notable difference between encounters, however, is that Jean has Carl to urge her to action when she freezes at the sight of Ikky. His urging prevents her from repeating his mistake. In terms of its mental benefits, her act of pushing the "Inject" is psychologically synonymous with Carl's pulling of the plugs on the squiggler a short time earlier. And like him, when the act is completed, she "blacks out." This reinforces the idea that they are going through the same process.

It is only after both Carl and Jean have become fully individuated that they can enter into a mentally healthy relationship. For Zelazny, such a relationship is one which is in balance, which is creative, which preserves the integrity of each party while developing their union. The planet symbol in the last line of the story emphasizes this concept, ". . . but the rings of Saturn sing epithalamium the sea-beast's dower" (p. 32). The image is perfect. The contrast of the glowing planet against the inky black of space visually suggests balance. It is a comment on the new relationship of Carl and Jean as well as reflecting the new relationship between the light and dark clusters of images in the story. No longer are the antithetical elements of the story at war; all have been brought into harmony.

The use of Saturn is also appropriate in other ways. It picks up on the image of the comet rushing bright-tail-before, which was used earlier in the story to suggest that Carl has achieved some sort of internal balance. Moreover, Saturn is appropriate because of its rings. Rings themselves connote union, completeness, and integrity of a system while specifically calling marriage to mind. The fact that the rings *sing* epithalamium emphasizes the harmony that has been achieved and echoes Johann Kepler's concept of the "harmony of the spheres." And, quite literally, the dowery of the sea-beast is equal to the perfect relationship that Carl and Jean achieve.

"Doors and Lamps" can be read at many levels. It is the story of a man's search for maturity. It is a story of mental health. It is a search for love. It is a comment on failure and success. It is an adventure about the ultimate hunt. And, it is a comment on man's ability to supersede himself. In the last analysis, of course, it is all of these and more, for as with all great literature it touches the core of experience that is common to all men. Whether its



nature is conceptual, sensory, or emotional, it is integrated into that field which is labeled the individual personality. All of us share a core of basic experience, but we achieve our uniqueness because of the focus, intensity, or mix of that basic experience.

Because of this tendency of humans to integrate their individual thoughts, feelings, and emotions, it is nearly impossible to separate strictly one chain of experience from other chains of experience. For, at the core of being, all experience is fused together. The deeper into personality a story probes, therefore, the greater is its interconnectedness with other stories which also probe our basic human experience. "Doors and Lamps" is such a story.

### Notes

1. Calvin S. Hall and Vernon J. Nordby, *A Primer of Jungian Psychology* (New York: Mentor Books, 1973), p. 34.
2. Richard E. Singer, *Job's Encounter* (New York: Bookman Associates, 1963), p. 171.
3. Singer, p. 179.
4. Singer, p. 165.
5. Roger Zelazny, *The Doors of His Face, the Lamps of His Mouth, and Other Stories* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1971), p. 7. All subsequent references are to this edition.
6. Singer, p. 167.
7. Most of Zelazny's early stories are based in Jungian psychology.
8. Hall and Nordby, p. 108.

# High Fantasy versus Low Comedy: Humor in J. R. R. Tolkien

C. D. STEVENS

■ To discuss the function of comedy in J. R. R. Tolkien's Middle-earth, we need to distinguish between two of the possible uses of the term "comic": first, laughter-producing or "risible" humor; second, the profoundly regenerative and reintegrating sense in which it is used by Northrop Frye. Risible situations abound in the early chapters of *The Hobbit* (1937; 1965) and to a lesser extent in the first three chapters of *The Lord of the Rings*. But as Tolkien shifts more deeply into the early history of the world—for which *The Silmarillion* represents a somewhat foredoomed attempt at literary creation of "undisplaced myth"—puns, sly commentaries on characters, humorous definitions, ironic witticisms, and other forms of outright joke decrease in frequency. They are replaced by more subtle forms of ironic understatement and the grim heroic jest.<sup>1</sup> This pattern can be explained by examining the tension inherent in Tolkien's attempt to reconcile two disparate and sometimes conflicting sources of inspiration for his view of human existence: the "Commedia" of the Christian mythos with the considerably bleaker view of the universe typified by much Anglo-Saxon poetry, including *Beowulf*.<sup>2</sup> Thus the transition is from humor in a setting distant from the matter of the story to a tale in which comic reintegration and elegiac resignation struggle to dominate tone. Movement in *The Hobbit* from the stock-comic situation to the serious matter of the quest, while done more broadly, prefigures the movement in *Lord of the Rings* toward the climactic events of the Third Age—Frodo's destruction of the Ring and Aragorn's restoration of the kingship to Gondor. In Frye's terms the thrust of the novel proper ought to be termed comic, but the

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profoundly elegiac tone and the overwhelming sense of loss concluding the novel and dominating the Appendices (particularly "The Tale of Aragorn and Arwen") foreshadow the death and loss that form recurrent motifs in *The Silmarillion*, a work in which the only hope of humanity lies in the obscure will of a creator far too remote to provide all but the most tenuous comfort to even the most faithful.

We need no lengthy discussion to establish some fundamental differences between the scope of *The Hobbit* and that of the other works set in a cosmos which includes, but is not bounded by, Middle-earth. Broadly drawn stock-comic situations, especially in the early chapters, are typical of a low mode in which broad irony is also a primary tool. The condescension implied in Tolkien's manner of using such comic devices extends not only toward the characters but in this case toward the audience as well, a fault for which *The Hobbit* has been justly criticized, and which Tolkien himself recognized and publicly repudiated.<sup>3</sup> At least three incidents in the early chapters of this work follow patterns similar to those of sight gags found in the classic sketches of slapstick teams and the plots of television situation comedies. The arrival of the dwarves in "An Unexpected Party" achieves humor through exaggerated use of incremental repetition. Dwalin's entrance, followed by Balin's "I see they have begun to arrive already," followed by Fili and Kili's offhand reference to an impending "throng," fluster Bilbo enough nearly to freeze him into a bewildered immobility that ultimately makes the arrival of one more group of five, followed by the pop-gun entrance of Bifur, Bofur, Bombur, Thorin, and Gandalf all the funnier.<sup>4</sup> Later, in the "Queer Lodgings" chapter, this scene will be repeated almost intact but with the addition of Bilbo to the troupe and the added spice of a shift in the point of view. Here Gandalf makes an assumption concerning Beorn that he had made earlier about Bilbo: that a combined sense of responsibility as a host and desire for adventure would intrigue him enough to make him want to help hobbit, wizard, and dwarves. Between these two incidents is another routine, the argument among those "rude mechanicals" of fantasy fiction, the stone-headed (and afterward, merely stone) trolls, Bert, Bill, and Tom. This sequence also includes Bilbo, with a Cockney accent, attempting to pick a purse (*H*, pp. 46-51). All of these incidents involve a form of humor that is allied to slapstick and that requires enormous skill in exaggeration for its effect, but that is not necessarily associated with any particular elevation of tone.

As we move into the more serious phases of the adventure, even such repetition alters in significance. Consider, for instance, Bilbo's repeated teasing of the spiders of Mirkwood, or the frustrated attempts of the starving dwarves to reach the fires of the wood-elves in the chapter entitled "Flies and Spiders." This alteration of superficially similar patterns does not yet begin to approach the attitudinal shift toward the main character as

the story nears its climax. Before Smaug is overthrown and Thorin made king under the mountain, Beorn can refer to Bilbo as a "little bunny" getting "nice and fat again on bread and honey" (*H*, p. 131). But it is a strange comic pattern indeed that has two of our favorite dwarves fall "defending [Thorin] with shield and body" and that has the restored king succumb with a deathbed speech that is elevated in style, referring to the erstwhile "little bunny" as a "child of the kindly West" and an almost explicitly Christian "good thief" (*H*, pp. 272–73). Bilbo himself is "a kindly little soul" (*H*, p. 273), but no more capable of sustaining such sorrow than Merry and Pippin are in *Lord of the Rings*. Hence there is an odd inconsistency in *The Hobbit*, not merely between the kind of humor we find early in the book and later, but in the events at the very heart of the story, where the fundamentally comic restoration of the king vies for our attention with the loss and sorrow sustained by the three kindreds in the Battle of the Five Armies.

The early chapters of *Lord of the Rings* provide a more sophisticated recapitulation of forms of humor that appear in *The Hobbit*. Part of the exposition takes place in a series of conversations among lower-class hobbits in the pubs "The Green Dragon" and "The Ivy Bush." While we may argue that decorum is the primary influence on the manner of speech among the taverns' customers, we may also note that Tolkien's concept of decorum, not unexpectedly, seems to link noble speech with noble birth and lineage, and only secondarily with noble actions. Puns, apparent throughout *Lord of the Rings*, are characterized in the early chapters by sly condescension. This is especially apparent in the naming: the Sackville-Bagginses are consistently and pointedly referred to as "the S.-B.'s," and a Gamgee relation noted for seeing walking elm-trees on the North Moors is named Halfast, an open invitation to the reader to adopt the pronunciation "half-assed" (*FR*, p. 73).<sup>5</sup> Bilbo's party sign ("No Admittance Except on Party Business") and a mocking definition of sundry (in the phrase "all and sundry," as "those who went out again [*sic*] by a back way and came in again by the gate" to claim additional presents at the birthday party) reinforce a view of hobbits as both simple and inclined to take even pleasures bestowed as gifts for granted (*FR*, p. 50). In the crucial chapter "The Shadow of the Past," which introduces most of the novel's serious themes, Gandalf interrupts his explanation of the Ring's history to threaten Sam with being turned into a toad for eavesdropping, and Sam, literal-minded, replies that he could not have been eavesdropping, because "there ain't no eaves at Bag End, and that's a fact" (*FR*, p. 97). Most of the comic relief is achieved at the expense of the hobbits, most of it occurs early in the tale, and much of it is marred by a larger sense of things passing away, which becomes more dominant as we move toward the East. An early example is Frodo's relief at having his old feud with Farmer Maggot

settled, which he is permitted only with the regret that he may not linger to enjoy the newfound friendship (*FR*, p. 137).

Before he sails into the True West, Frodo remarks to Sam that the simple innocence of the Shire cannot be maintained for the majority of its inhabitants without being sacrificed by a few of them (*RK*, p. 382). And even Sam, perhaps the most consistently laughter-provoking of the hobbits, seems dimly aware of this as he crosses the Brandywine on the first stage of the journey east: "He had a strange feeling as the slow gurgling stream slipped by: his old life lay behind in the mists, dark adventure lay in front" (*FR*, p. 142). From this point the adventure moves steadily into the older world, and every victory is made bitter by a greater sense of what is lost in the winning. At the end of "A Conspiracy Unmasked," we encounter Frodo's dream of the towers and the sea, the first foreshadowing of his final journey Westward. From now on the rusticity of hobbit humor is juxtaposed with a more deadly sort of humor from the high-heroic characters.

The hobbits of the Shire have lost the history of high heroism for which *The Silmarillion* is part mythology, part record. They must relearn it in order to become part of it: thus the odd interval in the house of Tom Bombadil. There is little actual humor here unless perhaps we accept Neil D. Isaacs' view that Goldberry is punning when she refers to "the ring" in Frodo's voice.<sup>6</sup> Tom's character is, however, profoundly comic in the deepest sense: he is merry and wise and innocent, remembering "the dark under the stars when it was fearless—before the Dark Lord came from Outside" (*FR*, p. 182). He is the introduction to the history the hobbits have lost and of which they are about to become part. He sings a tale that wanders from the fall of the North Kingdom "into strange regions beyond their memory and beyond their waking thought, into times when the world was wider, and the seas flowed straight to the western shore; and still on and back Tom went singing out into ancient starlight, when only the Elf-sires were awake" (*FR*, p. 182). Significantly, in Bombadil's house Frodo has the haunting, beautiful dream that is echoed later at the telling of his journey's last end. His introduction to the deeper structure of his universe foreshadows his ultimate place in it—the right, achieved by few mortals, to make the journey into the True West, and the sorrow and loss that accompany and are, in part, the reason for that gift. It is possible to argue that Bombadil represents a comic spirit which ought to underlie the tale, but it is questionable whether that influence is pervasive, since Bombadil has withdrawn to the limits of his own realm, exerts his power only there, and is untrustworthy as a source of aid once the fate of the Ring is decided.

There are unquestionably humorous incidents in subsequent chapters of *Lord of the Rings*, but most of them function to reinforce dramatic irony or a sense of danger or doom. At "The Prancing Pony" in Bree, Barliman's

forgetfulness nearly costs the hobbits their meeting with Strider; Frodo's song, sung to distract the guests from Pippin's account of Bilbo's disappearance, precipitates even greater danger; Strider, "looking foul and feeling fair," wishes, smiling grimly, that just once he could be liked for himself without a wizard to vouch for him. Bill Ferny's getting clipped with Sam's apple as the hobbits leave Bree is an unsatisfying repayment for his betrayal of them to the forces of the Enemy. By the time Frodo reaches Rivendell, virtually all attempts at humor, including Sam's song (*FR*, pp. 276–78), are "whistling in the dark." At the Council of Elrond, Gandalf recounts his frustrated correction of Radagast only as an ironic counterpoint to his fear; Gimli smiles as Bilbo, under jest, achieves heroic stature; Sam's "A nice pickle we have landed ourselves in, Mr. Frodo" is a darkly accurate understatement.

At least one category of "comic relief" is drawn directly from the conventions of the epic poem: the heroic boast, frequently coupled with the bantering "gallows humor" of soldiers under fire. Thus, when in Lothlorien the members of the Company breathe so hard they could be shot in the dark, Sam holds his breath; Legolas and Gimli share a proudly stiff-necked equality in the matter of blindfolds (*FR*, pp. 444, 450–55). After the Company leaves Lothlorien, Gimli boasts to Boromir (himself a version of the braggart soldier) that a dwarf will go on when a man's legs will lag (*FR*, p. 506). When, after the breaking of the Fellowship, the three hunters reach Rohan, Eomer and Gimli engage in a round of teasing. This culminates in Eomer's expressed willingness to learn courteous speech "under the loving strokes of a Dwarf's axe" (*TT*, p. 51). Amid the ruins of Orthanc, Merry and Pippin boast of their well-earned comforts and are teased in kind by their companions (*TT*, pp. 206–07), and when Pippin enters the service of the Steward of Gondor, his first request—for food—earns him the respect accorded a seasoned campaigner (*RK*, p. 37). In Cirith Ungol, Sam takes grisly pleasure in his status as a great Elf-Warrior (*TT*, p. 443). Much later, in "The Scouring of the Shire," he will be reduced to silence by Rose, who says, "If you've been looking after Mr. Frodo all this while, what d'you want to leave him for, as soon as things look dangerous" (*RK*, p. 355).

But most of the comedy (in both senses) in the later chapters of *Lord of the Rings* is mixed with sorrow and resignation. Our gentle smiles at Treebeard's reaction to Merry and Pippin—and theirs to him—are set against the knowledge that the Ents are a dying race. Theoden accepts the fealty of Merry with a promise to be as a father "for a little while" (*RK*, p. 59). Merry, in the Houses of Healing, accepts the loving condescension of Aragorn a little sadly (*RK*, pp. 178–79). In the joyous celebration on the Field of Cormallen, a minstrel sings until the hearts of his listeners, "wounded with sweet words, overflowed, and their joy was like swords, and they passed in thought out to regions where pain and delight flow together

and tears are the very wine of blessedness" (*RK*, p. 286). Shortly thereafter, Legolas promises that the land will be blessed by his people, but only "for a while. For a while: a month, a life, a hundred years of Men" before he and the other elves depart (*RK*, p. 289). In true comic fashion a series of marriages takes place. However, one betrothal is announced at the funeral of Theoden; another is achieved only at the cost of forsaken immortality and a bitter parting between Elrond and Arwen. Rose and Sam wed, but that marriage ties Sam to Middle-earth and is partly responsible for his sorrowful parting from Frodo at the Grey Havens.

If *Lord of the Rings* is basically comic, we ought to be profoundly affected by Sam's return to the Shire (his reintegration). But unlike Merry and Pippin he is unable to sing as he returns home, and his quiet "Well, I'm back" has more of resignation about it than of joyful reunion. On the other hand, Frodo's inability to reenter the society of the Shire is the loss accompanying his achieving of tragic stature. After the manner of tragic romance, several of our heroes depart in the autumn, leaving behind "a diffused, resigned, melancholy sense of the passing of time, of the old order changing and yielding to a new one."<sup>7</sup> The king is restored and weds his beloved, true; at his deathbed he keeps faith that beyond the circles of the world there "is more than memory" (*RK*, p. 428). But what are we to make of Arwen, in whom all light is quenched at the death of her husband, who refuses to accept his consolation, and who allows Aragorn to die even as she is still pleading for him to remain? If not a tragic figure, neither is she a comic one in the deep sense, and Tolkien leaves her in bitter and inconsolable desolation.

Placing *The Silmarillion* in context of this discussion is difficult, partly because of uncertainty concerning the text's reliability, and partly because the five works differ in tone and scope according to their nearness to the heart of Middle-earth's myths. One point can be made: though the absence or presence of humorous situations per se does not necessarily make the works either comic or tragic, the universe in which Dwarves, Elves, and Men operate, though wider than that of *Lord of the Rings*, is no less uncertain. There is really only one jest, and that is both heroic and gruesome: with one hand missing, Beren stands before the throne of Thingol to claim Luthien, having fulfilled his promise that when they met again his hand would "hold a Silmaril from the Iron Crown."<sup>8</sup> The hand holds the Silmaril, but it now lies in the belly of the wolf of Angband. One other mildly humorous passage exposes the "strange tales" noted in an appendix to *Lord of the Rings* concerning the Dwarves' mystery-shrouded origin (*Silmarillion*, pp. 43-44; *RK*, p. 438). As the pitiful results of a furtive secondary creation, Durin's folk may well prefer the cloak of mystery to the role of Middle-earth's laughingstocks. But, on the whole, the records that *The Silmarillion* purports to contain are records of the losses



and griefs of its universe. So consistently unrelieved is the heroic style, and so shrouded in gloom are the dealings of Valar, Elves, and Men, that the work stands in danger of collapsing under its own high seriousness.

In the Christian belief structure, tragedy is frequently considered to have been rendered impossible by the twin facts of grace and redemption. This attitude is moderated in literature (especially in drama of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance) by mutability, the wheel of fortune, and the individual's freedom to accept or reject grace.<sup>9</sup> Tolkien creates in his universe a mythos that shares some important elements with Christianity, notably its moral and ethical implications. But an assured destiny akin to the concept of salvation is not one of those elements. As one of my students put it, "If there is a gospel for the inhabitants of Middle-earth, it is a gospel without resurrection or hope of heaven." In Middle-earth there is no vision of unrestrained joy as there is, for instance, in C. S. Lewis' Narnia at the close of *The Last Battle*. From the point of view of its mortal participants, this "high fantasy" lacks the assurance of blessedness with which Dante's walk through the universe concludes. Hence, as we move toward the heart of the history, the epic nature of the work becomes less and less compatible with either the humorous or the comic. All that is beautiful fades and dwindles; no victory is ever permanent. In such a world, humor is an inadequate means of lifting the spirit from sorrow or of healing the wounds of loss.

## Notes

1. See Northrop Frye, *An Anatomy of Criticism* (1957; rpt. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1971), pp. 139–40.
2. For a discussion of the relationship between *The Lord of the Rings* and the elegiac tone of Old English poetry, see Robert Lee Mahon, "Elegiac Elements in *The Lord of the Rings*," *The CEA Critic*, 40 (January 1978), 33–36.
3. Philip Norman, "The Prevalence of Hobbits," *New York Times Magazine*, 15 January 1967, p. 100, quotes Tolkien: "If you're a youngish man and you don't want to be made fun of, you say you're writing for children. . . . 'The Hobbit' was written in what I should now regard as bad style, as if one were talking to children. There's nothing my children loathed more. They taught me a lesson. Anything that in any way marked out 'The Hobbit' as being written for children instead of just for people, they disliked—instinctively. I did, too, now that I think about it. All this 'I won't tell you any more, you think about it' stuff. Oh, no, they loathe it; it's awful."
4. All citations from *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* are from the Ballantine paperback editions of 1965. Internal citations are abbreviated as follows: *The Hobbit*, *H*; *Fellowship of the Ring*, *FR*; *Two Towers*, *TT*; and *Return of the King*, *RK*. Where chapter titles are cited, I have omitted page references.
5. For a brief but thorough discussion of these and other puns, see Neil D. Isaacs, "On the Possibilities of Writing Tolkien Criticism," in *Tolkien and the Critics: Essays on J. R. R. Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings*, ed. Neil D. Isaacs and Rose A. Zimbardo (Notre Dame: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1968), p. 10.
6. Isaacs, p. 10.

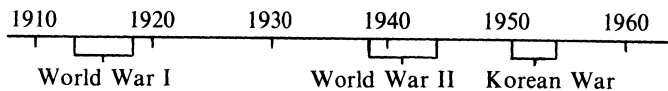
7. Frye, pp. 36-37.
8. J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Silmarillion*, ed. Christopher Tolkien (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977), pp. 168, 184.
9. I am indebted to Roger Schlobin for this insight as it relates to Tolkien. A study of the function of mutability in Tolkien's work, and especially in *The Silmarillion*, would be most useful.

# The Laws of Time Travel

S. JAMES JAKIEL and  
ROSANDRA E. LEVINTHAL

■ The “Laws of Time Travel” were inspired by Isaac Asimov’s Laws of Robotics which he developed so that robots would act, behave, or conform in a particular manner that could be predicted and depended upon. His laws are now considered standards for most science-fiction robot stories.

In a summer graduate course at State University College at Buffalo, “Seminar in Science Fiction,” conducted by me, the students were prompted to talk about and to formulate laws for the traveler in time. The students felt that many science-fiction authors and readers already have some ideas in mind which they felt could or should govern mankind’s attempts to move in time. They also felt that some concepts of time follow a linear pattern. The easiest of all these to recognize is the classic “time line.” In the time line, dates of particular events are linearly projected. In practice, the time line looks something like this:



As one can easily see, the movement is from left to right. The past is to the left, while the future is to the right. Class discussions of various stories involving time travel (to be mentioned later) led to the conclusion that in considering time, most students felt that time did move in a left-to-right direction.

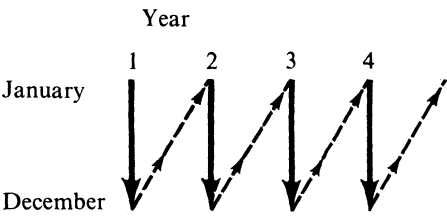
Further discussion made the class realize that time did, indeed, have a dimension somewhat related to the permanent and tangible dimensions of length, width, and height. Our culture has countless expressions such as:

“We used a great deal of time”; “It took longer than we thought”; “Look back into our past”; “Look ahead,” and many others. Our language also admits of other “time-directional” phrases. For example, we speak of “going back and forth in time,” “at this point in time,” “moving forward in time,” and “return to the good old days.”

Some calendars start with January at the top and move *down* to December, or they might have a combined left-to-right and downward movement as in the following diagram:

January	February	March
April	May	June
July	August	September
October	November	December

One writer noted that he looked at the passing of years as an “up-to-down” and “left-to-right” pattern. He felt that each new year started “at the top” and moved “downward” to December 31 (not unlike the sand in an hourglass). When the stroke of midnight comes on December 31, he is immediately transported to the “top” (or “beginning”) of another year. In analyzing this feeling graphically, it looked something like this:



(Note: The time in the year moves downward slowly. When it hits the bottom, it shifts instantly to the top of the next year.)

Diagramming this on the board gave the class another insight. We are almost bound by culture to move from left to right! Our conclusion: time does have a dimension; it has a direction. Our culture forces time relationships on us in a fixed pattern.

The observations and discoveries led the class instructor (Jakiel) to suggest that someone in the class might wish to try to develop some Laws of Time Travel. This would be done in much the same manner as Asimov developed the Laws of Robotics, which have governed most robot stories since their inception. One of the students (Rosenthal) took on the task. In a relatively short (distance again!) time, she produced the beginnings of the Laws of Time Travel, which are listed at the end of this article. As with much science fiction, one may not be able to accept completely all the rules presented. The authors recognize many weak spots and countless contradictions with stories already written—that which is done cannot be undone.

Before discussing our Laws of Time Travel, it is worthwhile to discuss and recommend a provocative work on time travel by an eminent science-fiction writer. The book is *Up the Line*; the writer, Robert Silverberg.<sup>1</sup> Set in the year 2059, the novel tells of the escapades of Jud Elliott, a “time courier.” He could be called a “time voyeur.” While the novel does involve many of the sybaritic distractions offered to Jud, it is a classic in that it spells out some of the laws, effects, and paradoxes of time travel that might escape the casual reader of science fiction or the science-fiction reader who is not “into” time travel.

First, in *Up the Line* things—or people—cannot occupy the same space even though they are widely separated by time. If one starts toward an unoccupied area, “automatic buffers” prevent its happening. Silverberg does not explain this effect, but then neither does Wells explain any of his science fiction. With that as a beginning, let us examine some of the other similarities or equivalents to our laws in Silverberg’s novel.

Jud Elliott discovered that the government did not permit private citizens to venture into “temponautics” until the government felt it safe. This is consistent with our Law 10, which states that the government will license and govern time travelers. This is not difficult to accept in this day of governmental licensing of drivers and pilots. Consider the havoc that could be caused by bodies hurtling uncontrolled through space. (Perhaps this points out the need for a traffic controller.)

Of the many paradoxes Silverberg presents, his idea of the “Cumulative Audience Paradox” is probably the most interesting. Briefly, anyone who ever visited an event is still there for all time travelers to encounter. The example he uses is the Crucifixion of Christ. There was a large assemblage at the original event. The time traveler’s instructor explains that his “now” date—2059—records thousands of Palestinians present at Golgotha, plus about 1,800 time travelers. Yet these large numbers do not appear at the Crucifixion! If the pattern continues, 10,000 will be there shortly, 100,000 by the thirtieth century, and the overflow crowd would spill into Turkey, Arabia, India, and Iran. Again, Silverberg sidesteps the issue by writing that none of the characters in the novel could explain it, although the chief guide for that particular trip knows that he has been there twenty-two times and has even caught a glimpse of himself. A possible solution would be that all groups from previous trips are “wiped clean” or that an intermolecular displacement occurs. On the other hand, it might mean that the problem precludes the development of time travel—certainly a “Dark Ages attitude.” Silverberg glosses over the “Paradox of Temporal Accumulation” (the simultaneous existence of many of one’s self) by having the narrator say, “You can have it.”<sup>2</sup> We suspect this is as reasonable a conclusion as the attempt to prove the existence of white holes and anti-matter. Incidentally, our Law 7 allows one to visit a given time as often as one chooses.

While the authors of this article have wrestled with future travel (as did H. G. Wells in *The Time Machine*, 1895), Silverberg flatly states that one cannot get into his own future. This is a reasonable and convenient way to eliminate the whole problem. It is a separate and distinct idea from those tales that have their settings in the future; therefore, it is difficult and counter-productive to argue the point.

Our first law states that a time traveler may not change history. We are in complete agreement with Silverberg there. He has created a "Time Patrol," a sort of time police whose function it is to monitor time travelers, making "sure that everything happens according to the books,"<sup>3</sup> and putting changed things back in order. In *Up the Line*, Christ was killed at age eleven, Hitler did not die in the bunker, and someone profited in the Crash of '29. But since Silverberg's past is "fluid," it can be changed many times. As a matter of fact, who is to say that it has not been changed? Could there be someone from A.D. 2,500 manipulating us? Think about it. (Incidentally, changes for the good are also forbidden.)

Much time travel can occur because of something Silverberg calls "Transit Displacement."<sup>4</sup> Travelers are detached from their own time matrixes and are adrift in a bubble of "now-time." This would explain the intermolecular displacement theory necessary to prevent the "Cumulative Audience Paradox." It is implied in both our laws and the Silverberg novel that time travel does not include travel through geographic areas.

While we have included the "Grandfather Paradox"—known to most readers of science fiction—in our law forbidding the changing of history, Silverberg makes a special point of stating that if one killed his own grandfather (while in the past) he—the time traveler—would cease to exist as soon as he shunted back into his own starting time. Occasionally some things are deceptively simple. It makes sense on the surface, but if you were not here in the first place, you would not be able to go back in time to kill your grandfather. This is the kind of argument that frequently leads nonreaders of science fiction to shake their heads and decide to stick to conventional literature—whatever that is.

As a caution, Silverberg includes a conversation between Jud and Jeff, another time-guide, who specializes in visiting assassinations. Jeff asks, "Don't people want to see the happy parts of the twentieth century?" "Were there any?" Jud replied.<sup>5</sup>

In *Pebble in the Sky* (1950), Isaac Asimov's hero, Joseph Schwartz, accidentally travels into the future (which is forbidden in Silverberg's work) through the simple process of stepping over a Raggedy Ann doll. The "hole" into the future, caused by a nuclear experiment gone astray, was never reported by the scientist responsible. Who would understand? Who would believe? But Joseph Schwartz was in the future: a time traveler—but not by design.

The first chapter of Larry Niven's *A World Out of Time* (1976) will

sound familiar to anyone who read it as it first appeared in short-story form as “Rammer.” Jaybee Corbell was one of the original “corpsicles” thawed out after two hundred years to have the only salvageable part of him, his personality, placed into the body of a dead criminal. The two-hundred-year time lag put him so completely out of touch with the “then” world that life as a space pilot was the only opportunity available to him. But Corbell was not a “time traveler,” he was a man “out of time.”

*The Time Machine* is the only other book of those mentioned in this article which permits travel into the future portion of the time continuum with the opportunity to return. No laws can be formulated from Wells’s work; it serves simply as a model showing that another author in another age was capable of thinking in still another dimension.

Our attention will now focus on our Laws of Time Travel and those stories<sup>6</sup> which are either in agreement with our principles or which contradict them. An open mind—a valuable asset to any science-fiction reader—is to be used here.

Many interesting science-fiction stories tell of people bringing things back from the future. Law 3 does not permit this. Taking things from the present into the future or from antiquity into the present *is* permitted as these items exist or did exist at one time. The authors thought that movement of individuals might be limited only to their existence on earth. That is, if Mr. Jones is thirty-seven years old, he may only go back in time thirty-seven years, since he did not exist before that time. Law 8 permits (mandates?) natural aging while in another time period. That is, if a time traveler is “abroad in time” for six months, he will be six months older when he returns to his own time. If one person ventures into a different time, he—or a suitable substitute—must return because the energy and mass must remain the same. Balance must be retained.

When formulating the Laws of Time Travel, we tried to devise two or three fundamental rules. However, since we are dealing with an abstract concept, we discovered that only a few laws would not satisfy our purposes. We did conclude that our Law 1 is a basic precept in many science-fiction plots. If a time traveler attempts to change history, even in the smallest way (the accidental killing of a butterfly), he could possibly terminate his own existence, change the destiny of a nation, or even the entire world.

The death of a butterfly in “A Sound of Thunder” by Ray Bradbury does change the destiny of the United States. Eckels, a hunter, joins a time safari journeying to prehistoric times to shoot a *Tyrannosaurus rex*. Extreme cautions and fines have been established to ensure that patrons adhere strictly to all ordinances (Law 10). If the tiniest creature is disturbed, the resulting chain reaction could alter already established events (Law 1). This is why an antigravity walkway is built and a specific dinosaur selected. Travis, the safari guide, explains that they will only hunt animals that have

no future. Prior to this safari, Lesperance has tracked the animals, noting which ones lived the longest, how many times they mated, how they died, and the exact time of death to the second. These animals, marked with red paint, are the only ones to be killed.

Upon seeing his victim, Eckels panics, retreats, and accidentally steps off the path. The other members of the party succeed in killing the correct dinosaur at the appointed time; however, they are shocked when they confront Eckels. Travis, disgusted with Eckels for disturbing the ecology, sends Eckels to retrieve the bullets from the *Tyrannosaurus rex* (Law 2). The trip home is made with trepidation and fear. As they exit from the time machine, they sense that all is not the same. The furniture, air, and signs are all different. Then Eckels asks the key question: "Who—who won the presidential election yesterday?" He drops to his knees when told that the tyrant who had originally lost the election is now President of the United States.

In Alfred Bester's short story "The Men Who Murdered Mohammed," Henry Hassel realizes that his wife is cheating on him. So he time travels into the past and murders his wife's grandfather, grandmother, George Washington, Christopher Columbus, Napoleon, Mohammed, and half a dozen other celebrities in order to prevent his wife's existence. When Hassel returns to the present, he discovers that none of the murders had affected his wife's presence. Henry then confronts his wife, but he can no more touch her than he can make her hear him. Henry tries to beat her when he hears a voice from the late Israel Lennox who was credited with the invention of time machines. Lennox informs Henry that neither of them exists in the present because their time travel made them vanish from the present. Israel, who had "murdered" many of the same people Henry had, tells him that when time traveling, a person can affect only his own past. Therefore, with each destructive act, each man dissolved a little until he no longer existed.

Law 2 states that no futuristic gadget that is unknown in the present may be transported to the present. We have found at least four stories that contradict this rule. Many of the futuristic objects that appear in the present are too advanced for the people to handle them properly. (Does this sound like a much-used idea?) These items which are beneficial in their own time become dangerous weapons and inadvertently change the present. We include this law since we feel that past and present events should not be the subject of tampering with by a time traveler.

On the other hand, we tend to agree that a time traveler could try to alter the future (Law 5), because no one in the past knows what the future will be like. "Twilight" by John W. Campbell shows a futuristic time traveler going even farther into the future to see what civilization will be like. To his horror, he sees malfunctioning machines controlling people. The human



race is dying out because the machines have “forgotten” to instruct the people about reproduction. The compassionate time traveler fixes several of these machines, then, overshooting his own time of 3059, he ends up in the ancient past—1932.

Many of us agree that time travel is or will be possible. Yet once we have perfected time travel, who will be permitted to travel? (See Law 10.) For what reason will people be allowed to travel? (See Law 11.) Who will supervise these travelers? (See Law 1.) We predict that some form of licensing agency will be established in order to screen prospective travelers. Once criteria are formulated and “qualified” people are allowed to travel, will they time travel to benefit only themselves or mankind in general? Although we have not discovered any science-fiction material dealing with this area, we believe that stories involving this information could be most fascinating.

Of course, many stories exist that will contradict the laws. We have tried to give examples that either support or contradict the laws. Some stories do both. We also recognize that there will be conflicts and that the operation of the laws will vary from story to story and from reader to reader. There could be numerous laws established that should be followed when authors deal with time travel which might make some of the stories more believable than stories that have no regulations as part of their foundation. Time travel is infinitely more complex than the movement of robots or the operation of computers. Any comments, suggestions, or additions to these laws are welcome. The exercise in making and applying the laws gave us many hours of pleasant effort, and we believe that anyone who reads science fiction dealing with time travel should attempt to apply the rules and to test their validity.

### The Laws of Time Travel

1. A time traveler may not change history since that could change the present.
2. Nothing or no one that will exist in the future may be brought back to the present since it or they never existed in the present.
3. Anything existing in the future that also exists in the present may be brought back to the present.
4. Anything that existed in the past may be brought into the present since it is already known in the present.
5. A time traveler may try to alter the future if he believes that the change would benefit mankind. This would be possible since the future is unknown, and the change would not affect the present or the past.
6. If one person time travels, only one may return. However, a person traveling in the past may remain and have someone else consent to take his place and travel into the present. (Conservation of energy.)

7. A time traveler may visit any given time as many times as he chooses.  
 8. Normal aging does not affect the time traveler while he is time traveling. However, once he lands in a given era, the normal aging process will begin again.

9. A time traveler may not remain in the past or future for an extended period of time since his lack of presence in the present may change the present or future.

10. Time traveling must be licensed by an agency. This procedure would be similar to that of licensing an automobile driver. Some criteria must be established to determine who would be qualified to time travel and who would not.

11. There must be a reason for a qualified person to time travel besides that of curiosity. (See Law 10.)

And there is one more law suggested by a casual reader of the rough draft of the first eleven laws:

12. If a man is to travel into the past, his appendix or other vestigial organs may begin to function. (Perhaps causing a problem for one who had had an appendectomy!)

Law of Time Travel	Supporting Story	Contradicting Story
1	"The Men Who Murdered Mohammed" (Bester, 1964) "Try and Change the Past" (Leiber, 1958) "The Brooklyn Project" (Tenn, 1948) "A Sound of Thunder" (Bradbury, 1952) "An Infinite Summer" (Priest, 1976)	"Divine Madness" (Zelazny, 1966)
2	"The Business As Usual" (Reynolds, 1952)	"Mimsy Were the Boro- goves" (Padgett, 1943) "The Little Black Bag" (Kornbluth, 1950) "Teething Ring" (Causey, 1953) "And It Comes Out Here" (Del Rey, 1950) "Absolutely Inflexible" (Silverberg, 1956) "The King's Wishes" (Sheckley, 1953)

Law of Time Travel	Supporting Story	Contradicting Story
3	"The Good Provider" (Gross, 1952)	
4	"The Immortal Bard" (Asimov, 1957)	"The Dead Past" (Asimov, 1956) "The Sands of Time" (Miller, 1937)
5	"Twilight" (Campbell, 1934) "Absolutely Inflexible"	"Mugwump 4" (Silverberg, 1959)
6	"The Good Provider" "The Sands of Time" "A Sound of Thunder"	
7	"The Dead Past" "The Good Provider" "The Men Who Murdered Mohammed" "The Sands of Time"	
8	None found	None found
9	"The Business as Usual" "A Sound of Thunder" "The Men Who Murdered Mohammed"	"The Third Level" (Finney, 1952)
10	"The Dead Past" "A Sound of Thunder"	
11	"The Dead Past" "Doorway into Time" (Moore, 1943) "Absolutely Inflexible"	"The Brooklyn Project"
12	Read text of article to see how Law 12 came about.	

Notes

- 1. Robert Silverberg, *Up the Line* (New York: Ballantine, 1969).
- 2. Silverberg, p. 32.
- 3. Silverberg, p. 33.
- 4. Silverberg, pp. 38–39.
- 5. Silverberg, p. 50.
- 6. Some of these sources are: Isaac Asimov and Groff Conklin, ed., *50 Short Science Fiction Tales* (New York: Collier, 1963); Robert Silverberg, ed., *Science Fiction Hall of Fame* (New York: Avon, 1970); and Robert Silverberg, ed., *Voyages in Time* (New York: Meredith, 1967).

# Harry Harrison's *The Adventures of the Stainless Steel Rat*: A Study in Multiple Interfaces

STEVEN R. CARTER

■ The concept of “interface,” defined by *The American Heritage Dictionary* as “a surface forming a common boundary between adjacent regions,” is helpful in considering Harry Harrison’s *The Adventures of the Stainless Steel Rat*, a series in which the desire to entertain frequently interfaces with the desire to instruct. These three novels (*The Stainless Steel Rat*, 1961; *The Stainless Steel Rat’s Revenge*, 1970; *The Stainless Steel Rat Saves the World*, 1972), although delightful to read, might be dismissed as the literary equivalent of cotton candy if one failed to note the number of interfaces in them and the humanistic viewpoint developed from the interfaces. This humanistic approach stresses the need to search for resemblances between things—for points of touching—and to consider them more important than differences. The humanizing interfaces in this series are so pervasive that they seem to be intentional, but intentional or not, they add a significant dimension to Harrison’s novels that lifts them beyond the level of pulp writing.

In *The Stainless Steel Rat*, the first in the series, which lays the foundation for the others, the interfaces begin with the form in which science fiction and crime fiction find common ground. Although the intergalactic setting with its numerous futuristic marvels belongs to science fiction, the plot, which depicts a lawman’s duel of wits with a clever thief and murderess, is derived from crime fiction. The noted science-fiction author Alfred Bester, who also wrote many radio scripts for various detective shows, helped develop this type of plot and describes it as “a style

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of action-mystery writing in which everything is known to the audience, every move and countermove, with only the final resolution coming as a surprise.”<sup>1</sup> Bester himself used this type of plot in *The Demolished Man* (1951), his highly acclaimed merger of crime fiction and science fiction. This novel may have provided a model for Harrison, though it is quite possible that Harrison worked out his own blend. Although Harrison has stated that he had no interest in “straight detective fiction” as a boy,<sup>2</sup> he is obviously well acquainted with the conventions of action-centered detective fiction, as in the hard-boiled school of Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler, and, as Harrison admits, of John Buchan’s espionage novels.<sup>3</sup> His expertise in the conventions of private eye and espionage fiction is readily observable in his two mystery novels, *Montezuma’s Revenge* (1972) and *Queen Victoria’s Revenge* (1974). Both of these novels are put-ons, but the spoofing could not have been done without a thorough knowledge of the subject. For example, the plots involve a reluctant F.B.I. agent in countless John Buchan-esque chase sequences with enemy agents of various countries lurking everywhere (*Queen Victoria’s Revenge* depicts “an Al Fatah-Scotch-Cuban plot”<sup>4</sup>) and in cases of murder by unknown assassins who are identified only at the end by typical detective story clues. (In one instance in *Queen Victoria’s Revenge*, the clues point to the wrong man, and simple police work then identifies the right man.) Harrison also shows a thorough understanding of the police procedural form of detective fiction in *Make Room! Make Room!* (1966), since over half of this nightmarish novel about the population explosion concerns policeman Andrew Rusch’s attempt to discover the murderer of an important politician. The police techniques and social perspective—even the preaching—of this book closely resemble those of Maj Sjöwall and Per Wahlöö’s police procedural series about Inspector Martin Beck, a series that makes a scathing analysis of Sweden’s many social problems. Given the fact that Harrison is primarily a science-fiction writer, his involvement with crime fiction is considerable, and he is obviously qualified to develop his own fusion of the two forms without any help from Bester.

Nevertheless, the parallels between *The Demolished Man* and *The Stainless Steel Rat* are many. Both Bester and Harrison would undoubtedly agree with Isaac Asimov’s contention that science fiction can interface with almost any other genre, “for s.f. is a literary response to scientific change, and that response can run the entire gamut of human experience.”<sup>5</sup> They would probably also agree that science fiction can project the conventions and themes of other genres into the future or, drawing upon the genre of historical fiction, pose an alternate path taken by any society at any time in the past. They achieve their own mergers of two forms by extending the concerns of the crime novel with the science-fiction premise: what if society advanced in some important way and then

used this advance as the basis for an all-out attack on crime. Bester assumes a mentally advanced society in which members of the police as well as of other important professions possess ESP. Harrison posits a technologically advanced society that can employ robot assistants, complex communication and police systems, and elaborate new weapons in the war against crime. Both Bester and Harrison conclude that in such circumstances the criminal must possess extraordinary abilities, including a large measure of ingenuity, in order to perform his crime. They also conclude that it would be a shame to throw away those valuable qualities by destroying the criminal after he is caught.

In addition to the interface between crime fiction and science fiction, Harrison's Stainless Steel Rat series also joins adventure with humor. The adventures abound and are spectacular; there are robberies, confidence games, murders, individual shoot-outs, military attacks, revolutions, wars carried out with time machines, spying, plotting, and lots of derring-do. However, it is hard to take seriously a hero named Slippery Jim DiGriz or a title like *The Stainless Steel Rat Saves the World*. Obviously, some of this derring-do is mock heroic. Consider, for example, the hero's comments when some men attack him: " 'Tell them that Jim DiGriz died like a man, you dogs!' I shouted, not without a certain amount of slavering and foaming."<sup>6</sup> Clearly, slavering and foaming are not the best ways to prove oneself a man rather than a dog. Or one might note that when Slippery Jim tries to assert his authority as a male, his wife quietly and sweetly punctures his pretensions by reminding him of a simple means of locating the villain that Jim has neglected to try (p. 392). Thus, the adjacent regions of action and comedy establish a common border in these novels. In a genre little known for humor, Harrison's ability to mingle it with action is a very special contribution. Although he has written several serious-minded and serious-toned science-fiction novels, such as *Make Room! Make Room!*, *Captive Universe* (1969), and *Skyfall* (1976), he has also written a substantial number of comic science-fiction adventure novels, such as *Bill, the Galactic Hero* (1965), *The Technicolor Time Machine* (1967), *A Transatlantic Tunnel, Hurrah!* (1972; unfortunately retitled *Tunnel Through the Deeps* in the U.S. edition), and *Star Smashers of the Galaxy Rangers* (1973), which amalgamate these elements as skillfully as the Stainless Steel Rat series does.

The hero of Harrison's series, Slippery Jim, is a confidence man and bank robber whose amoral individualism eventually interfaces with social concerns. At the beginning of the series, he considers himself a rat "in the wainscoting of society" and comments that since society is now "all ferroconcrete and stainless steel there are fewer gaps between the joints, and it takes a smart rat to find them. A stainless steel rat is right at home in this environment" (p. 8). He notes further that "it is a proud and lonely

thing to be a stainless steel rat—and it is the greatest experience in the galaxy if you can get away with it” (p. 9).

Slippery Jim does not get away with it indefinitely, however. He is finally trapped by the Special Corps, the most efficient police force in the galaxy, and is offered the chance to join them. Harold Inskipp, the man who makes the offer, had once been known as Inskipp the Uncatchable until the Special Corps caught him. He is now the Head of the Corps and is surrounded by senior officials who are all former criminals. Considering the company he would be keeping, Jim decides to accept the offer, though he never goes completely straight—and never returns to being completely crooked. Between cases, in which he invariably saves the world from some impending catastrophe, he usually vacations on funds newly extracted from highly reluctant banks (as Jim well knows, this money will be repaid by the governmental agency he works for).

Since all the most important lawmen in this future society have been recruited from captured criminals, there is an obvious interface between criminal and police activities. Crime remains crime and the law remains the law, but the two regions touch in the minds of individuals and even of an entire group. In this generally peaceful, stable, and dull society—dull because the “goodness” of the citizens has been programmed, as in Anthony Burgess’ *A Clockwork Orange* (1962)—the criminals and lawmen share a love of adventure, an understanding of psychology, and an ability to use their wits. Slippery Jim is willing to become and to stay a lawman (with periodic lapses) because police work provides him with as many chances to exercise these qualities as crime does.

The humanistic impulse behind Harrison’s concept of interfacing is evident here in the treatment of criminals. Often, though not always, in the Stainless Steel Rat series, the criminal is regarded not as a unique, totally evil creature to be destroyed but rather as a warped human being to be salvaged and set in a new direction. If sharp distinctions cannot be made between criminals and lawmen, if good and evil can meet and form a surface between them, then one should not be overly eager to mete out harsh and, even more, irremediable punishments like death, to wrongdoers.

In *The Stainless Steel Rat*, Slippery Jim’s first assignment as a law officer involves a female criminal named Angelina who matches him in almost every respect. She is intelligent, cunning, and able to anticipate Slippery Jim’s moves as often as he anticipates hers. She differs from Jim in that she uses feminine charms to manipulate men and in that she is willing to kill without compunction when someone gets in her way. However, in general her personality resembles Jim’s so closely that he falls in love with her as with a mirror image of himself. At the end of the novel, Jim has the opportunity of turning her over to the law, but hesitates because of his

attachment to her and his boss Harold Inskipp has to step in to capture her. As with Jim, Inskipp seeks to covert her to police work rather than to punish her.

In the next two books, Angelina marries Jim and assists him in both his criminal and police activities, thus displaying an interface similar to her husband's, between reckless individuality and social responsibility. In both types of endeavor, she proves to be as ingenious and dangerous as her husband, and she saves his life as many times as he saves hers. If anything, she is even more dangerous than her husband because she is more prepared to kill, in spite of the conditioning by psychologists to remove her murderous impulses.

These extensive parallels between Slippery Jim and Angelina suggest that there is an interface between male and female personality and also between male and female intelligence and ability. There remain sexual differences between them, such as Angelina's far greater concern with their children and Jim's occasional macho posing. However, the two clearly have a great deal in common and stand as equals. In spite of (or possibly because of) Jim's scattered, comic attempts to assert that only he has the right to wear the pants in his family, it is obvious that Harrison is on the side of women's liberation.

The view of the sexes that is implicitly developed in this series resembles that of Ursula K. Le Guin's Annarresti in *The Dispossessed* (1975). In it Le Guin implies through the attitudes and behavior of the people of Annarres that if society did not pressure them into living according to traditional roles, men and women would be able to perform the same variety of tasks and develop the same variety of personality traits. She also notes through her spokesman Shevek that treating men and women exactly alike "would be a waste of good equipment."<sup>7</sup> The physical differences remain, though they should not be regarded as paramount. In her view, the interfaces between men and women are so extensive that they should be considered more important than the differences.

Although Harrison has not consistently adhered to this view of the sexes in all of his novels, it plays a fundamental role in much of his work. Regrettably, some of his novels present only stereotyped images of women as sex objects, self-worshippers, empty-headed trinket-lovers, good girls on pedestals, homemakers, and clinging, complaining mothers. Notable among these novels are: *Bill, the Galactic Hero*, *The Technicolor Time Machine*, and *A Transatlantic Tunnel, Hurrah!* (though the portrayal of women in this novel can be justified to some extent since it deliberately presents, with mocking overtones, a wide range of Victorian attitudes, including those toward women). However, a number of his works present women who are as clever, courageous, and resourceful as Angelina and who yet maintain an intriguing individuality so that none of them could be



mistaken for another. Consider, for example, the Arab stewardess Jasmin Sotiraki and the Israeli agent Esther Ben-Alter in *Queen Victoria's Revenge*, the pilot Meta in *The Deathworld Trilogy* (1960; 1964; 1968), and the Soviet astronaut Nadya Kalinina and the black doctor Coretta Samuel in *Skyfall* (a novel that directly addresses the issue of women's liberation by depicting a male chauvinistic space pilot who is forced to acknowledge that the woman he loves has an ability and a right equal to his to pursue a life of risk and responsibility as a space pilot). The existence of these characters makes it clear that Harrison's portrayal of Angelina is indeed representative of his most firmly held attitudes toward women.

Several additional significant interfaces are developed before the marriage of Angelina and Jim, when Jim is acting as a lawman and Angelina is still a warped murderess. Since Jim wants very much to understand the pathological side of Angelina's character, he hopes to create an interface between reason and intuition that will gain him access to her mind. To accomplish this task, he employs another interface, psychomimetic drugs. These drugs stimulate states of mind; they artificially induce real feelings. With their help, Jim touches his sanity against Angelina's insanity and finds that he can now easily comprehend her since he has the same capacity for insanity in his own unconscious. As he remarks afterwards, "I have read many times about the cesspool of dark desires that lies in our subconscious minds, but this was the first time I had ever had mine stirred up. It was quite revealing to examine some of the things that had floated to the surface" (p. 87). Since one of the things that floats to the surface is his awareness that he both loves and hates Angelina, in the same way that he both loves and hates certain aspects of his own personality, he becomes less and less sure about what he wants to do when he finally catches up to her. All of this interfacing has made him uncomfortably conscious of the complexity of life, of the large areas of grayness that stand between the blacks and the whites.

Finally, there is a highly important interface between humanistic concerns and technological advances in Slippery Jim's philosophy about killing, a philosophy based in part on his newfound awareness of the complexity of human character:

Cold-blooded killing is just not my thing. I've killed in self-defense, I'll not deny that, but I still maintain an exaggerated respect for life in all forms. Now that we know that the only thing on the other side of the sky is more sky, the idea of an afterlife has finally been slid into the history books alongside the rest of the quaint and forgotten religions. With heaven and hell gone we are faced with the necessity of making a heaven or hell right here. What with societal and metatechnology and allied disciplines we have come a long way and life on the civilized worlds is better than it was during the black days of superstition. But with the improving of here and now comes the stark realization that here and

now is all we have. Each of us has only this one brief experience with the bright light of consciousness in that endless dark night of eternity and must make the most of it. Doing this means we must respect the existence of everyone else and the most criminal act imaginable is the terminating of one of these conscious existences. (pp. 181–82)

This statement goes to the heart of Harrison's philosophy as represented in various works since it offers a key to his ideas about the brutalizing effects of war (as in *Bill, the Galactic Hero*), a key to the dangers of superstition and too great a respect for any type of authority, including religious authority (as in *Captive Universe*), and a key to the need for international cooperation to solve the worldwide problems of overpopulation, poverty, and dwindling resources (as in *Make Room! Make Room!* and *Skyfall*). To make this speech, Slippery Jim DiGriz, the Stainless Steel Rat himself, must have had an all-too-brief interface with nobility. In him, the mock hero meets the true hero to form the most interesting interface of all.

## Notes

1. Alfred Bester, "My Affair with Science Fiction," *Starlight: Great Short Fiction of Alfred Bester* (New York: Berkley, 1977), p. 443.
2. Harry Harrison, "The Beginning of the Affair," in *Hell's Cartographers: Some Personal Histories of Science Fiction Writers*, ed. Brian W. Aldiss and Harry Harrison (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), p. 77.
3. Harrison, "Beginning of Affair," p. 77.
4. Harry Harrison, *Queen Victoria's Revenge* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1974), p. 117.
5. Isaac Asimov, "Introduction," *Asimov's Mysteries* (Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett, 1968), p. 11.
6. Harry Harrison, *The Adventures of the Stainless Steel Rat* (New York: Berkley, 1978), p. 279. Further references in the text are to this edition.
7. Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Dispossessed* (New York: Avon, 1975), p. 13.

# Mandalic Activism: An Approach to Structure, Theme, and Tone in Four Novels by Philip K. Dick

MARY KAY BRAY

■ The dominant attitude in Philip K. Dick's novels has been characterized as everything from one suffused by light, form, and beauty,<sup>1</sup> to one "basically tragic and pessimistic."<sup>2</sup> Certainly Dick's writing is multiplicitous enough to admit both approaches; like Kurt Vonnegut, Joseph Heller, Tom Robbins, and other contemporary satiric novelists, Dick builds his fictions from materials wrought of both darkness and light. Yet it is an uneasy business to dismiss this paradoxicality as unresolvable, for it is possible to see how, both structurally and thematically, Dick's works build a consistent tone and operate out of a consistent set of metaphysical assumptions. Structurally, thematically, and tonally, that distinctly Dickian approach arises from a blend of what I shall call "mandalic awareness"<sup>3</sup> and social activism, of Eastern and Western modes of perception and experience.

Visually, a mandala consists of a symmetrical arrangement of repeated designs radiating outward from the center of a circle. In Eastern thought the visual mandala symbolizes all of creation manifesting or radiating outward from an eternal center of unmanifest pure awareness or Being. In Sanskrit, "mandala" means circle *and* center.<sup>4</sup> The principle of mandalic thought is the principle of microcosm and macrocosm: "The Mandala is earth and man, both the atom that composes the material essence of man, and the galaxy of which the earth is but an atom. Through the concept and structure of the Mandala man may be projected into the universe and the universe into man. Such mutual interpenetration is the synthesis of the various polarizing tendencies now manifest upon the planet."<sup>5</sup> The

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essential concept in mandalic thought is the concept of the center as the “origin of all form and of all processes, including the extensions of form into time.”<sup>6</sup> C. G. Jung, in his essay “Concerning Mandala Symbolism,” states the idea of the mandalic center in explicitly psychological terms, calling it “a kind of central point within the psyche, to which everything is related, by which everything is arranged, and which is itself a source of energy.”<sup>7</sup> Whether one takes the Jungian psychological approach or the classically Eastern philosophical one, all reality—all of the infinite possible “extensions of form into time”—consists of awareness, consciousness.

Mandalic thought contains and is contained in the monistic metaphysical tradition of India and the Far East. Mind *is* matter: infinite potential energy and creativity manifest as form. Human beings, themselves mandalas of mind and form, are microcosms of this unity manifesting as diversity. Concentricity is important here: just as sentient beings are emanations of pure awareness, so what we call “reality” is an emanation of the combined awarenesses of sentient beings. This very fragile and provisional reality, constantly changing, is viewed in Eastern thought as *maya*, literally, that which is not. Those individuals who become aware of the level of pure consciousness, of absolute reality at the heart of the changeable and impermanent forms accepted as reality by most, are the only ones who stand beyond the veil of *maya* and have the conscious power to shape it, should they have any wish to do so.

As a visual image, a symbol, the mandala encapsulates this Eastern mode of thought. A visual mandala is a focal point through which the individual may start the journey back to his center; it is a gateway between levels of reality,<sup>8</sup> designed to aid him in “transcending the world of psychological and spiritual materialism”<sup>9</sup> so characteristic of Western thought. Dick is not unaware that his works, filled with the artifacts of just such materialism, have a mandalic function. He is no stranger to Eastern thought: “You may say if you prefer, ‘Reality is collapsing; it’s all turning to chaos,’ or, with me, you may wish to say, ‘I feel the dream, the *dokos*, lifting; I feel Maya dissolving; I am waking up, He is waking up: I am the Dreamer: we are all Dreamer.’”<sup>10</sup> Here Dick’s view is openly mandalic: “reality” is the group’s construct. Elsewhere Dick views his work, from a more linear Western standpoint, as a form of activism. He speaks of the science-fiction writer’s work as a “protest . . . against concrete reality,” and of the science-fiction writer as “an introverted activist” who “would rather write than act in any other way” because “somewhere along the line he got the idea that words are things, that they can exert force and accomplish desired ends.”<sup>11</sup>

It is this combination of the mandalic and the revolutionary that evokes Dick’s themes, structures, and tone, and stamps them as uniquely his own. What Dick creates with this mandalic activism is a call to peace which is by

its very nature also a call to action. The importance of mandalic thought in Dick's fictions is that it is not merely existential and individual: it is these things, but it goes beyond them. It cannot be mistaken for solipsism; it arises from affirmation rather than despair, and it suggests the means whereby activist ideals can be realized in that "metafictional" sphere we call reality. This peculiar form of awareness could be treated in almost any of Dick's works, but sheds the most light on works which, in their mingling of past and present, prime and parallel, inner and outer worlds, are overtly mandalic in structure as well as in theme and tone. The major works published during what can now be called Dick's middle period, *Now Wait for Last Year* (1966), *Ubik* (1969), *A Maze of Death* (1970), and *Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said* (1974), provide an ample basis for discussion.

Each of these works presents its reality as a series of forms projected into time and space through the combined awareness of a group of characters. No one character is ever solely responsible for the forms that this provisional reality takes. The way in which the "polyencephalic" dream worlds of *A Maze of Death* are generated is an example: "To make it function it had to be a joint projection from all of them; otherwise . . . it would rapidly disintegrate."<sup>12</sup> In *Ubik* reality is the joint projection of linked minds whose bodies are stored in an after-death half-life. Reality in both novels is explicitly subjective. The landscapes of *Now Wait for Last Year* and *Flow My Tears* are only one step away from such overt subjectivity. *Now Wait for Last Year's* fictional reality depends upon a psychoactive drug which produces the physical manifestation of travel in time or parallel worlds; the world of *Flow My Tears* is initially altered by another dimension-altering drug operating from the power of a character's desire—again an act of the psyche. In both cases the metaphor is clear: reality is an artifact of consciousness. This mandalic structuring accounts for Dick's use of the "floating" point of view, a narrative device quite effective for showing a creation which has its origins not in any one mind but in mind itself.

The important difference between Dick's mandalic handling of the shifting point of view and its more conventional use is that while the conventional use provides for a variety of *perceptions* of reality, Dick's technique provides *projections* of reality; for his characters, perception is action. How a Dickian character perceives becomes what actually is, or at least a part of what is. Susie Smart, in *A Maze of Death*, believes that the little building she has caught is alive and trainable; the next character to hold it feels "the animate quality of it; it . . . pushed against his fingers, trying to get out."<sup>13</sup> Susie's thought has become part of the mutually experienced reality; so with all characters' thoughts and desires in a Dickian landscape. Such mutations are characteristic of the Eastern view that reality is mind.

Another Eastern concept that illuminates Dick's mandalic structures is the idea that reality is most responsive in its mutations to the thoughts of individuals whose awarenesses are most developed and/or whose desires are most clear. In all four novels moments of intense awareness or desire are followed by pronounced changes in the mutually projected group reality. Tony Dunkelwelt in *A Maze of Death* has a vision of the unity of creation and draws from this heightened awareness the ability to change a loaf of bread into a rock, to draw a sword from midair. His desire, combined with his heightened perception, is strong enough to reach into the mutually built fabric of reality and to create new forms visibly and abruptly. Joe Chip in *Ubik* is able to work the same kind of change when he reaches forward into the future for a revitalizing can of Ubik after having expanded his awareness through contact with the highly developed consciousness of Ella Runciter.

Characters who become Dick's primary point-of-view characters, like Seth Morley, Joe Chip, Eric Sweetscent, and Jason Taverner, are characters whose awarenesses somehow evolve to new levels during the portions of their lives related in the novels. Though reality remains a group product, the characters most often awarded the point of view are also the characters whose thoughts and desires are powerful enough to have notable effects on their environments. The polyencephalic dream of *A Maze of Death* simply collapses when Seth Morley adds his own doubts, confusion, and certainty that things are not what they seem to everyone else's. In *Now Wait for Last Year* Eric Sweetscent chooses to stay with his brain-damaged wife and in so doing fixes, as much as it *can* be fixed, the social and political future of his home continuum. Even Taverner, though his world has been most altered by Alys's desire, shapes the future in which Buckman writes a book exposing police power by choosing to turn himself in for trial in *Flow My Tears*. In Eastern thought individuals whose awareness has pierced various layers of the veil, or maya, who have moved closer to the mandala's center of pure creative potential, are, like the mandala itself, gateways to that center for other people. Their thoughts have such creative force that they literally begin the process of shaping the world anew—sometimes by first tearing it down—in accordance with a higher level of awareness. At the end of each novel, Dick leaves his readers with at least the seeds of such a new creation.

As with the visual mandala, the world of each novel consists largely of a symmetrical arrangement of repeated designs flowing outward from a center. The most obvious of such repetitions in *Now Wait for Last Year* is the proliferation of the main characters themselves. Eric Sweetscent and Gino Molinari depend upon their own multiple existences for survival and for maintenance of their home time sequence. In *Flow My Tears* Taverner's repetition of a pattern in relationships with women leads him to the source

of his dilemma, Alys. *Ubik*'s very title is the key to its pivotal repetition. The miracle substance *Ubik* is indeed ubiquitous, both all-pervasive and central to existence in its regenerative power. The pattern of repetition and symmetry is most striking, however, in the artifacts that populate *A Maze of Death*. All are duplicated by or are replicas of the group's prime projections, the Trench and the Building, and these prime projections are themselves products of the group's unconscious awareness of yet another level of reality, that of the ship's computer T.E.N.C.H. 889B and of the polyencephalic construction (building) of the dream world. This "final" reality is not final at all, for Seth Morley leaves it with the Intercessor. This structuring of images in concentric layers of reality is exactly parallel to the structuring of a visual mandala. Even the novel's main abstract image, the religion, is mandalic in structure. It springs from a conception, becomes real in the dream world, operates by the power of thought made concrete (the god worlds, the manifestations), and finally becomes real on all levels of awareness. It too is an image whose reality depends upon concentric projection from a source.

The key to mandalic structure is that it radiates from a center and must suggest that center in all its patterns and images. In point of view and details of landscape and character, Dick's novels manage just that. Dick explains his structuring principle indirectly when he discusses what he intended with the regression of objects and events toward their original forms in *Ubik*. His concept of "orthogonal time" as rotary—projecting outward from an original idea or archetype, built up in outward layers by the accretions of linear time, stripped backward to its essence by the removal of linear time (the deaths of the characters in *Ubik*)<sup>14</sup>—is clearly mandalic: "If lineal time seems to add layers, then perhaps orthogonal time peels these off, exposing layers of progressively greater Being. One is reminded here of Plotinus's view of the universe as consisting of concentric rings of emanation, each one possessing more Being—or reality—than the next."<sup>15</sup> Dick's mandalic structures seem to be designed for the same purpose as that for which visual mandalas are designed—to point the reader toward reality.

In this careful structuring, Dick also plays the role of writer as activist, working to influence his readers' thoughts and actions. Dick's characters may shift, shape, and change their worlds, but they can never move outside of those worlds, for they *are* those worlds. The mandala is a microcosm; internal and external are a continuum of the same fabric. Thus the ambiguity left with the reader by a Dick novel is deliberate. The invented religion of *A Maze of Death* is an imaginary one which dissolves when the group's fantasy dissolves, or is it? In *Ubik* Joe Chip discovers that he is dead and in cold storage while Runciter is alive and trying to help, but is Runciter alive? In *Now Wait for Last Year* Eric Sweetscent chooses a time

line and fixes it, or does he? And so on. These ironies and ambiguities are necessary. The reader must not be let out of the mutable, subjective landscape into a definite, objective reality. In mandalic thought there is no external principle of order which can be called on; there is order, but it springs from the eternal center, and it can be discovered only through that which is its own nature, through awareness, as Seth Morley and Ella Runciter begin to do. Dick's books do not allow the reader to fall back into any form of "psychological or spiritual materialism,"<sup>16</sup> or to define objective and subjective as two different principles. The works are structured mandalically and they function mandalically, as focusing devices which point the attention toward a center and serve as gateways to various levels of awareness along the path to that center. Dick's fictional structures may seem contradictory or incomplete, but they perform the most vital of mandalic functions: they do not allow the reader to mistake the material for the real.

No clear border exists between structure and theme in Dick's fiction, or in any fiction, for that matter. Nor are Dick's themes unique. His characters follow standard mythic patterns of initiation, death, and rebirth. Dick's main characters enact fairly closely the stages of the monomythic quest worked out in Joseph Campbell's *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. They answer some sort of a "call," they go on some sort of a journey, they are initiated and "die" or "die" and are initiated, and they are reborn, usually to the benefit of their social orders. Eric Sweetscent in *Now Wait for Last Year*, for instance, is summoned to a relationship with his government's leader which eventually sends him on a journey through time and parallel worlds. The search becomes for him an initiation into the nature of reality and into his own degree of responsibility for that reality. He undergoes little deaths and rebirths whenever he moves in time and space, and finally undergoes a death of the spirit and resolves upon suicide in the alleyways of Tijuana. Himmel's Lazy Brown Dog carts remind him of the will to live, to "take my place in the world . . . fight . . . whenever it's necessary and then some. . . ."<sup>17</sup> He is reborn with the capacity to choose a time line in which enemies are revealed as enemies and friends revealed as friends, thus in the long run benefiting his whole society. Main characters in the other novels follow essentially the same pattern. What is unique about Dick's rendition of mythic themes is that they occur in structures where thoughts become concrete realities.

This mandalic treatment of mythic themes as literal experience differs from traditional treatments in some important ways. The individual who is reborn does not, as in Campbell, return merely as a source of wisdom for his society to consult, or with a gift for his society to use: his return directly alters his group's reality. He is not a guide but a gateway, and not a gateway only to material and social realities, but to the center of the mandala, pure



consciousness or Being. At the same time, he is not the sole arbiter of transformation; he remains just one participant in the group's shaping of reality—a powerful influence, certainly, but part of a larger whole. Mandalic reality is a reality of interrelationship. Thus the possibilities for transformation are infinite. This “double” thematic function of characters accounts for the affirmations of regenerative possibility typical of Dick's endings. No matter how dreadful the situation, it springs from the characters—literally—and contains in them the potential for renewal not just for one, but for all.

Joe Chip, for instance, ends up being on one hand a pivot in the endless battle between the forces of dark and the forces of light, of entropy and vitality, but on the other hand he is set on the road to transcendence to a higher level of awareness by Ella Runciter who, like the *bodhisattva* of Eastern tradition, will not leave her group's level of reality until she has passed on the means to transcend it. The affirmation of *Ubik*'s ending is that it contains several concentric layers of mutable reality, from Runciter's through Joe Chip's through Ella's, and all point toward the eternal center into which she is absorbed. *A Maze of Death* also ends in both repetition and transcendence. Seth Morley passes on to a new level of consciousness, and his wife takes up the group dream exactly where he began it earlier: she has been set on the path to realization herself. The group dream and the individual's transcendence are simultaneous phenomena. They are different levels of the same reality; one interpenetrates the other just as the layers of designs in a visual mandala. Even Buckman, the archetypal antihero, is at once the key to a non-police state and a nobody in the social reality which orbits around Jason Taverner. Eric Sweetscent is both a path to a future free of domination by the 'Starmen and a satellite of Molinari. Dick's affirmations arise from the doubleness of meaning inherent in the mandalic principle: characters and events are both particular to time and place, like the images in a visual mandala, and the eternal, unchanging Being from which the images emanate.

The “both/andness” of Dick's treatment of theme resolves the central paradox of freedom and fatalism in his works. This seeming contradiction is the stance that has led some critics to view Dick's novels as existential, even solipsistic,<sup>18</sup> and others to view them as tragedies of destiny working itself out among relatively helpless individuals.<sup>19</sup> Even those who accept the “mystification” in Dick's fictions see them as powerful but flawed partial victories.<sup>20</sup> Nor is it difficult to see why, when main characters embody both extremes at the same time. Eric Sweetscent realizes he was meant to stay alive and fight, “as was intended from the start anterior to any time or condition I could comprehend or call my own or enter into,”<sup>21</sup> but has to choose whether or not to remain with his wife, whether to proceed along a given time track. His position contains both fatalism and individual

assertion. These are the two poles that Western thought has traditionally viewed as separate, irreconcilable. In *Ubik* an endless and inescapable war wages between the forces of darkness and light; the battle is fated, yet Ella is at once in it and beyond it, as is Joe Chip. Again, distinctions between freedom and destiny fade. The “either/or-ness” of Western thought simply does not apply. In seeing either one or the other, we see the parts and miss the whole.<sup>22</sup> Here the Eastern principles of unity in diversity and interconnectedness bear: the mandala is a paradigm of both. It is the nature of Being to manifest in opposites; no diversity would be no manifestation. Individual minds in various levels of awareness perpetuate those opposites, and in that sense choices do create realities. Manifestation is time and space, and individual minds do shape time and space. However, a basic order, a mandalic symmetry, can be seen in the patterns thus created. Jory’s dissolving power is matched by Ella’s revitalizing one; the polyencephalic nightmare of *A Maze of Death* is balanced by the possibility of transcendence. The One Mind is seen in this orderliness of realities generated by the many. Fate and freedom do not have to be reconciled: they are not opposites.

The individual’s reality is both existential and essential. His mind has the power to shape, but he also *is* that shape. Every action or thought of every part of creation thus affects every other part: in such a system nothing can be accidental. Dick loads his novels with reminders of this interconnectedness of the many-in-the-one. The many Eric Sweetscents and the many Gino Molinaris work together to maintain a temporal and political framework. Eric Sweetscent finds reason to live from a Lazy Brown Dog like that which Himmel once had to stop him from destroying. In *Flow My Tears* Buckman’s reality is part of Taverner’s, and Taverner’s is part of Alys’s. Taverner must function in connection with women; his important decisions all come during moments of relationship. His most important decision, to turn himself in, comes only after he has returned to Heather. Tippy Jackson’s nightmare vision of Bill and Matt in *Ubik* presages Joe Chip’s battle with Jory. Ella’s victories become Joe Chip’s victories, and Joe Chip’s victories will doubtless become Runciter’s victories as he proceeds inward on the path of awareness. The motif of interconnectedness in *A Maze of Death* has already been noted: polyencephalic reality literally will not function without the contribution of every member of the group. Even waking reality takes on characteristics of the shared “dream” experience. This “mutual interpenetration” is indeed the mandalic “synthesis of the various polarizing tendencies”<sup>23</sup> implicit in Western thought. Dick’s novels militate both acceptance and choice; are profoundly affirmative in their postulation of a unified center of Being toward which all consciousness evolves, and are profoundly concerned over the power of choice-making to render *any* possibility, good or bad, concrete.

The Eastern assumption that thoughts are things—in the novels, the mandalic rendering of thoughts as concrete—removes a level of abstraction from their relationship to the reader, for the display of thoughts as literal realities divests the interpretive process of the stage in which possibilities are suggested. Here possibilities are made actual and infinitely transformable. Both less and more are demanded of readers than is demanded in conventional treatments. They do not have to decide what is real. The books, like mandalas, point them toward the central truth. But with a decision-making process comes distance; without it the readers are less removed from the work. As they read, awareness and self-transformation become their immediate responsibility. Aesthetic distance is deliberately minimized. Here Dick the activist makes demands on his readers and breaks with the purely mandalic mode typical of literature arising from Eastern thought, such as Hermann Hesse's *Siddhartha*.

Even classical Eastern literature, operating out of the same assumptions that lie behind Dick's fiction, maintains a good deal of distance between reader and work. Whether the distancing factor is the level of philosophical commentary in the *Bhagavad-Gita*, the careful ordering of aesthetic details in Kálidása's *Shakuntala*, or the precise selection of image in a haiku, distance is always there. Such works are intended to be enjoyed as displays of creativity, of Being, with the same unimpassioned pleasure considered in much Eastern thought to be the ideal attitude to hold toward life itself. This passive acceptance and openness to whatever is offered up is the truly mandalic attitude:

The mandalic attitude is neither egocentric nor necessarily anthropomorphic. Nothing is excluded; everything finds its place and is understood as an integral aspect of a whole process. And because everything is interrelated and derives meaning only through relationship, things in themselves are seen to be void of any self-nature. This openness is the basis of all things and is at the very center of the Mandala. It is what makes the mandalic attitude a perpetually transformative vision, for it is rooted in no-thing, and can adopt itself to whatever configurations the life-flow presents.<sup>24</sup>

This attitude is typified in two of Kurt Vonnegut's works, *Slaughterhouse-Five* and *The Sirens of Titan*. The refrains of *Slaughterhouse-Five*—"and so it goes" and "'Poo-tee-weet?'" emphasize at the same time egolessness and acceptance of the flow of life; Billy Pilgrim's being unstuck in time roots the novel in an essential openness. Malachi Constant's realization in *The Sirens of Titan* that "a purpose of human life, no matter who is controlling it, is to love whoever is around to be loved"<sup>25</sup> conveys this same combination of openness and acceptance. To turn to a writer of a quite different sort, Samuel R. Delany, in the labile non-identity of *Dahlgren*'s central character and in that novel's perpetual transformations of reality within an inescapable whole, offers another kind

of flexible acceptance of the interrelated field of mind and event that makes up our not-always-penetrable human experience. The mandalic openness that characterizes the tones of these and other works is by nature an attitude that contains within its passivity a certain distance from the characters, events, and structures which are its vehicles. Dick, too, frequently achieves this sort of distance. The epilogue to *Flow My Tears* is a case in point: the narrator steps back and dispassionately observes the fates of the novel's major characters. Less obviously, this openness to all possibilities is present in the endings of *A Maze of Death*, *Ubik*, and *Now Wait for Last Year*. In each case events are about to be enacted which have already been, in some form, completed. Characters acquiesce to the pattern, the flow of life goes on.

Yet this mandalic stance does not fully account for the tone of Dick's novels, for he has deliberately removed much of the distance between reader and work not only by rendering his characters' thoughts concrete but also by using the painful exaggerations, the extremes of characterization, setting, and action typical of contemporary satire. Scenes like the mummification of Wendy Wright, the petrification of Alys Buckman, or any of the several murders in *A Maze of Death* would be equally at home among the vivid horrors of *Catch-22*. Scenes like these in contemporary writing are not intended to distance the reader, as were, for instance, Swift's exaggerations. It is not so much through removal that today's satirist attempts to mend the "vice and folly" of his or her readers, as it is through frontal attack. Here Dick's voice becomes the angry voice so characteristic of much American writing during the troubled but regenerative 1960s. This voice of the 1960s is a voice that takes very seriously the idea that Dick expresses when he says that words are things that can exert force and accomplish goals;<sup>26</sup> the voice of the 1960s is very much a Western voice—one that arises from the linear idea of accomplishing changes in an external, objective reality. Perhaps of all recent science fiction, Harlan Ellison's works most typify this voice. So anxious are many of Ellison's works to lambast the reader for his materialism, hypocrisy, insensitivity, and conformity that, like " 'Repent, Harlequin!' Said the Ticktockman," they nearly become tracts. Dick's anxiety over the state of modern humanity, his active desire for change, are no less evident in the exaggerations, ironies, incongruities, and absurdities that flesh out his novels. From the canned Absolute<sup>27</sup> of *Ubik* to the reconstruction of Washington, D.C., on Mars in *Now Wait for Last Year*, the reader is confronted with a direct assault on his own potential for folly. Most Dick characters are extremes in the same way that the Harlequin and the Ticktockman are extremes: as well as being individualized, each is a type designed to comment on human strengths and shortcomings. Hence bitch-goddesses, earth mothers, boy-men, and other stock figures pervade Dick's writing. In all of these respects his works are activist in nature. This

Western intention in Dick's fictions does not define his tone either, however.

Once again, to really get at what Dick is doing, one must take the perspective of reconciliation rather than that of polarization. Tone in Dick's works is a blend of mandalic and linear awarenesses. The American author whose fiction most resembles Dick's in this respect is Tom Robbins. Although *Another Roadside Attraction* and *Even Cowgirls Get the Blues* are not labeled science fiction, their mixture of outrageous imagery (such as the discovery of the mummified body of Jesus, fondly referred to as "the Corpse"<sup>28</sup>) with the main characters' philosophical openness to events produces tonally a combination of acceptance and militancy very similar to Dick's. This parallel is not insignificant, for like Dick's, Robbins' novels seem grounded in Eastern metaphysics, and like Dick's, Robbins' novels convey alarm at certain tendencies of contemporary life. Apparently the way in which the contemporary Western mind adapts Eastern thought to its own fictional uses produces the peculiar tone of mandalic activism. Dick's works, with their use of science-fiction landscapes which, free from conventional restraints, are especially appropriate to the mingling of thought and thing, can be viewed as prototypes of this mode.

The mandalic principle most amenable to combination with Western activism is that of microcosm and macrocosm: the small is also the large; the individual is also at his center all of creation. In Eastern thought one's most vital task is to re-form his own consciousness, to bring his own awareness to a higher level, for in so doing he also re-forms creation itself. It is through this principle that Dick's works can be viewed as simultaneous calls to peace and calls to action. The two are not separate phenomena. What is uniquely Western about Dick's tone in this framework is its sense of urgency. Readers are not meant to sit back and enjoy the play and display of Being as they would in a truly Eastern work; they are meant to be directly affected by the words, scenes, events, and themes Dick chooses. Western readers do not already bring with them to the work an awareness that mind is ultimate reality; the work must teach them that, must literally re-form the readers. As the readers' level of awareness is raised, so is that of their society, for the one is the microcosm of the other, and the two are completely interrelated. Dick's works play the role for his readers that he claims is Runciter's role in *Ubik*: "The voice of Mr. Runciter is none other than that same voice which each bulb and seed and root in the ground, our ground, in our wintertime, hears. It hears: 'Wake up! Sleepers awake!'"<sup>29</sup> The most effective form of action is discovery of what is real.

Dick's works are thus political and revolutionary at the same time that they are passive and open to whatever events overtake their main characters. This double function, rather than being a sign of flawed design, can be viewed as the fulfillment of Dick's novelistic intention. It is Dick's great strength as a writer that he can bring together two such separate

modes of perception and experience and subsume them in the mandalic whole of an intention which functions for both Eastern and Western ends.

## Notes

1. Angus Taylor, *Philip K. Dick and the Umbrella of Light*, Science Fiction Author Studies 1 (Baltimore: T-K Graphics, 1975), n. pag.
2. Carlo Pagetti, "Dick and Meta-Science Fiction," trans. Angela Minchella and D. Suvin, *Science Fiction Studies*, 2 (March 1975), 24.
3. I am indebted to J. J. Johnson, former Assistant Professor of English at Texas Tech. University, who first suggested the literary applications of this concept from José and Miriam Argüelles, *Mandala* (Boulder and London: Shambhala, 1972).
4. Argüelles, p. 13.
5. Argüelles, p. 12.
6. Argüelles, p. 12.
7. Carl G. Jung, "Concerning Mandala Symbolism," in *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, Vol. IX of *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, trans. R. F. C. Hull, Bollingen Series, 20 (New York: Pantheon Books, 1959), p. 357. See also Jung's essay "Mandalas," pp. 387-90 of the same volume.
8. Argüelles, p. 12.
9. Chögyam Trungpa, "Foreward" to Argüelles, p. 8.
10. Philip K. Dick, "Man, Android and Machine," in *Science Fiction at Large*, ed. Peter Nicholls (New York: Harper and Row, 1976), p. 210.
11. Philip K. Dick, "Who Is an SF Writer," in *Science Fiction: The Academic Awakening*, ed. Willis E. McNelly, CEA Chap Book (Shreveport, La.: College English Association, 1974), pp. 47-48.
12. Philip K. Dick, *A Maze of Death* (New York: Paperback Library, 1971), p. 185.
13. Dick, *Maze*, p. 71.
14. Dick, "Man, Android and Machine," pp. 206-09.
15. Dick, "Man, Android and Machine," p. 209.
16. Trungpa, p. 8.
17. Philip K. Dick, *Now Wait for Last Year* (New York: Manor Books, 1968), p. 223.
18. Taylor, in *Umbrella of Light*, views Dick's works as basically existential; the jacket copy on Philip K. Dick, *Flow My Tears, The Policeman Said* (New York: Daw Books, 1975) views the novel as a "walking tour of solipsism's scariest margin."
19. Pagetti, p. 24.
20. Stanislaw Lem, "Philip K. Dick: A Visionary Among Charlatans," trans. Robert Abernathy, *Science Fiction Studies*, 2 (March 1975), 54-67.
21. Dick, *Now Wait*, p. 223.
22. See Carl G. Jung, "Psychological Commentary on 'The Tibetan Book of the Dead'," in *Psychology and Religion: West and East*, Vol. XI of *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, trans. R. F. C. Hull, Bollingen Series, 20 (New York: Pantheon Books, 1958), p. 511. Jung notes the inadequacy of traditional Western categories of perception when confronted with Eastern concepts.
23. Argüelles, p. 12.
24. Argüelles, p. 127.
25. Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., *The Sirens of Titan* (New York: Dell Books, 1970), p. 313.
26. Dick, "Who Is an SF Writer," p. 48.
27. Lem, "A Visionary Among Charlatans," p. 66.
28. Tom Robbins, *Another Roadside Attraction* (New York: Ballantine, 1972), p. 13 ff.
29. Dick, "Man, Android and Machine," p. 208.

# Frankenstein: Unbound and Otherwise

PATRICK G. McLEOD

■ The blind Milton envisioned in *Paradise Lost* an embittered Adam rebuking God for having created him. “Did I request thee, Maker,” he cries out, “from my clay / To mould me man? Did I solicit thee / From darkness to promote me?” (X.743–45). For Adam, consciousness has become a nightmare of inescapable reality, the horror of which is engendered in the terms of his own creation. A similar elemental terror is at the heart of *Frankenstein*, just as it is Adam’s cry of anguish that Mary Shelley chose as the epigraph to her first novel. Like Adam before him, Victor Frankenstein yearns for more than his nature will allow, and the subsequent curse for such ambition and pride takes form in the towering monster that is the work of his own hands. From a curious dream about the creation of life, Mary Shelley shaped a tale of horror that continues to endure as a prominent myth in our own age.

From films alone, as Brian Aldiss remarks in *Billion Year Spree: The True History of Science Fiction*, we get some idea of the fascination accorded the Frankenstein myth as well as too many examples of the celluloid abominations visited upon it:

There were short silent versions, but the monster began his true movie career in 1931, with James Whale’s Universal picture *Frankenstein*, in which Boris Karloff played the monster. The dials in the castle laboratory have hardly stopped flickering since. The monster has spawned Sons, Daughters, Ghosts and Houses; has taken on Brides and created Woman; has perforce shackled up with Dracula and Wolf Man; has enjoyed Evil, Horror, and Revenge, and has even had the Curse; on one occasion, it met Abbott and Costello.<sup>1</sup>

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If the cinema has generally distorted the terror of Mary Shelley's novel into febrile fantasies of shocks and giggles, Aldiss makes clear in his novel *Frankenstein Unbound* that Mary Shelley's nightmare is more than appropriate for the modern world and the future it is breeding through the monstrosities of science. Frankenstein's monster is with us again; indeed, the monster *is* the twentieth century.

But for Frankenstein to be unbound, as he is in Aldiss' novel, he must first be born, and the origin of the species is Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. The book springs from the famous dream which Mary records in her "Introduction" to the 1831 edition: "I saw the pale student of unhallowed arts kneeling beside the thing he had put together. I saw the hideous phantasm of a man stretched out, and then, on the working of some powerful engine, show signs of life, and stir with an uneasy, half vital motion."<sup>2</sup> In the nightmare, Victor Frankenstein kneels beside the creature he will later call demon, the creator before his created, in a grotesque, parodic reversal of the relationship between master and slave, God and man. In the novel, the relationship between man and monster runs true to its initial conception in dream. Man becomes a slave to that which he creates, birth brings death, light evokes darkness, and truth reveals monstrosity. The novel's origin reveals much of its inherent terror. *Frankenstein* is, after all, the tale of man awakening to his dreams and to himself, and opening his eyes to horror.

The monstrous operates on many levels in the novel. The first is the most obvious as well as the most deceptive. Victor Frankenstein is the epitome of the unbridled intellect, soaring to dangerous heights like Icarus and with the same result, defying the law of God and nature like Prometheus and reaping a similar doom. "It was the secrets of heaven and earth that I desired to learn," Frankenstein tells Robert Walton, his fellow in ambition and intellectual curiosity, "and whether it was the outward substance of things, or the inner spirit of nature and the mysterious soul of man that occupied me, still my inquiries were directed to the metaphysical, or, in its highest sense, the physical secrets of the world" (p. 32). He finds out more about nature and the mysterious soul of man than he can deal with. Like Walton, who elevates the "intellectual eye" to "the acquirement of knowledge . . . for the dominion I should acquire and transmit over the elemental foes of our race," Frankenstein seeks the good of man by eliminating from the human frame what he calls "that most irreparable evil"—death. His ambition is Promethean indeed when he attempts to break through the "ideal bounds" of life and death, to circumvent and even reverse the limiting laws of nature and, in his own words, "pour a torrent of light into our dark world" (p. 46). The results of such messianic foolhardiness are by now too familiar, and Frankenstein seals his doom with his dream. After him countless other mad scientists and doctors, like



H. G. Wells's Dr. Moreau and Robert Louis Stevenson's Dr. Jekyll, follow suit and suffer. Frankenstein's self-denunciation to Walton, which he reinforces with the story of his disastrous researches, seems on the surface clear and unequivocal, if not too attractive. "Learn from me," he pleads, "if not by my precepts, at least by my example, how dangerous is the acquirement of knowledge, and how much happier that man is who believes his native town to be the world, than he who aspires to become greater than his nature will allow" (p. 45).

If Frankenstein's creature primarily embodies the monstrosity of an unrestrained intellect, cold and forbidding as the glaciers he inhabits, the horror he reflects is not restricted to the cerebral. There is a curious connection in the novel between the terror and ugliness of the monster and the physical realities of sex. After retreating in disgust from the being he has just brought to life, Victor rushes to his bed and into the most grotesque of dreams, not about the monster but his fiancée:

I thought I saw Elizabeth, in the bloom of health, walking in the streets of Ingolstadt. Delighted and surprised, I embraced her; but as I imprinted the first kiss on her lips, they became livid with the hue of death; her features appeared to change, and I thought that I held the corpse of my dead mother in my arms; a shroud enveloped her form, and I saw the grave-worms crawling in the folds of the flannel. (p. 49)

He rouses himself from this dream only to discover the monster standing erect before him. Later, Victor postpones any thought of marriage to Elizabeth until he can rid himself of the demon he has created but which nonetheless possesses him. Though his father makes anxious inquiries about the marriage plans, Victor, who has agreed to placate the creature by creating a mate for him, shudders at the elder Frankenstein's remarks: "Alas! to me the idea of an immediate union with my Elizabeth was one of horror and dismay. . . . I must perform my engagement, and let the monster depart with his mate, before I allowed myself to enjoy the delight of a union from which I expected peace" (p. 129). So Victor moves back to the drawing board and away from the marriage bed until the thought of the monsters copulating and begetting progeny causes him to destroy the half-finished bride in a fury. Understandably annoyed, the creature, who has been watching the destruction of his expectations through a window, utters his fateful promise: "I shall be with you on your wedding night!" (p. 143). As the creature departs, Victor refrains from pursuit, though he himself does not understand why: "Why had I not followed him, and closed with him in mortal strife? But I had suffered him to depart, and he had directed his course towards the main land. I shuddered to think who might be the next victim sacrificed to his insatiate revenge. And then I thought again of his words—'*I will be with you on your wedding night*' " (p. 143).

One possible reason Victor does not pursue his nemesis is that he unconsciously wills the destruction of one kind of ugliness, sex, by another, his monster. Regardless, his wedding day comes and goes, and he paces the floor of the nuptial bedroom with anything but the eagerness of an expectant bridegroom. The description of his fears and what turns out to be the most unusual preparations for a wedding night is almost embarrassing in its possible implications:

I had been calm during the day; but so soon as night obscured the shapes of objects, a thousand fears arose in my mind. I was anxious and watchful, while my right hand grasped a pistol which was hidden in my bosom; every sound terrified me; but I resolved that I would sell my life dearly, and not shrink from the conflict until my own life, or that of my adversary, was extinguished.

Elizabeth observed my agitation for some time in timid and fearful silence; but there was something in my glance which communicated terror to her, and trembling she asked, "What is it that agitates you, my dear Victor? What is it you fear?"

"Oh! peace, peace, my love," replied I; "this night and all will be safe: but this night is dreadful, very dreadful." (p. 165)

The creature quickly relieves some of that dreadfulness for Frankenstein by killing his bride, and Victor becomes a premature widower like his own poor creation. But freedom is again a horror, for the throttling of passion brings with it only loneliness and frustration. Victor must still grapple with himself, and his pursuit of the monster becomes his own final journey toward self-destruction. Death appears to be the only ultimate consolation for Frankenstein as well as the creature, and the mad chase into the polar North is as suicidal as it is vengeful. The creature has the final word as he stands over his maker's dead body, but in his profession of the relief he seeks in his own destruction, he voices the inner agonies which drove his creator to death as well: "But soon . . . I shall die, and what I now feel be no longer felt. Soon these burning miseries will be extinct. . . . My spirit will sleep in peace; or if it thinks, it will not surely think thus" (pp. 189–90/C).

The monstrosities of passion and intellect are thus two of the by-products of Victor's research into what he had called the "mysterious soul of man," revelations that seem to yield a grotesque, almost perverse portrait of human nature. But much of the puzzlement and complexity of the novel lies in the fact that what renders man such a malformed creature is the absurd order of creation itself, shaped in turn by inscrutable laws more horrendous in their indifference to man's plight than Victor Frankenstein's disastrous but well-intentioned efforts to reduce their oppression. We are back to Adam's angry rejection of the role imposed on him by God with which Mary Shelley prefaced her novel, and Frankenstein stands every bit in relation to God, or the impersonal order of creation, as the creature to

him—a misunderstood outcast. It is true that Mary Shelley had written that her dream was so unusually horrible because “supremely frightful would be the effect of any human endeavor to mock the stupendous mechanism of the Creator of the world” (p. 10/1). Yet everything else in the novel, including the subtitle *The Modern Prometheus*, seems to indicate a sympathy with the ironically named Victor. Both Robert Walton and the creature proclaim his greatness and goodness. He has succeeded in ripping from the heavens the spark of life with which he meant to banish from mankind all illness and ultimately death. Why then must he suffer so much? The answer lies in the crowning monstrosity of the novel—that stupendous mechanism of the Creator of the world.

Frankenstein does discover the truth of life; however, it does anything but make him free. Intelligence is a curse, for it only reveals to man his own inadequacies and serfdom to the indifferent and sometimes hostile forces about him. The creature becomes aware of this when he proclaims that “sorrow only increased with knowledge. Oh, that I had for ever remained in my native wood, nor known nor felt beyond the sensations of hunger, thirst, and heat” (p. 102). Victor too bewails the tragedy of human consciousness: “Alas! why does man boast of sensibilities superior to those apparent in the brute; it only renders them more necessary beings. If our impulses were confined to hunger, thirst, and desire, we might be nearly free; but now we are moved by every wind that blows . . .” (p. 83). The condemnation and execution of Justine Moritz—whose name, a derivative of Justice, is as bitterly appropriate as Victor’s—reinforce the cruelty and deception of the natural order, the moral darkness of which renders indistinguishable right and wrong, good and evil, innocence and guilt. Even the incredibly patient and long-suffering Elizabeth senses the presence of the monstrous when she reflects on the death of Justine. She intones: “Alas! Victor, when falsehood can look so like the truth, who can assure themselves of certain happiness? I feel as if I were walking on the edge of a precipice, towards which thousands are crowding, and endeavoring to plunge me into the abyss” (p. 79).

Thus the novel *Frankenstein* explores terror on many levels, but the myth of Frankenstein which has accumulated about Mary Shelley’s characters has tended to accrue to the notion of science run amok and the intellect gone insane. In *Frankenstein Unbound*, however, Aldiss restores complexity to the myth even as he brings the monster to age. It is a curious book, not unlike its original model in its ambiguous expression of the monstrous. More than anything, however, it is a tribute by an unabashed admirer to Mary Shelley, author of what Aldiss hails as “the first novel of the Scientific Revolution and, incidentally, . . . the first novel of science fiction.”<sup>3</sup> When Joe Bodenland, the narrator of the novel, makes love to Mary Shelley, we sense a vicarious wish-fulfillment for Aldiss, particularly

evident when, in the flush of postcoital bliss, our middle-aged hero turns to young Mary and utters with her “the name that had united us: Frankenstein” (p. 108).

The novel opens in the second decade of the twenty-first century when, because of the proliferation of nuclear experimentation and warfare, the fabric of space and time has become so disjointed that past, present, and future tumble without chronology or order into one another. In one such timeslip, Joe Bodenland, a retired diplomat from New Houston in southwest America, suddenly finds himself in Geneva, Switzerland, in 1816. Mounted in his trusty Felder, a nuclear-powered automobile topped with a swivel submachine gun, this twenty-first-century knight soon discovers that not only space and time but also myth and reality are affected by the timeslip. He becomes acquainted with Percy Shelley and Lord Byron—even sleeps with the former’s wife—but he also meets the agonized Victor Frankenstein on the eve of Justine Moritz’s trial for the murder of his younger brother. Bodenland knows his science fiction, however, and he accosts Frankenstein with the knowledge of his monster and entreats him to save Justine by confessing the identity of the true murderer, his own creation. Various obstacles block his endeavors, including another timeslip, and when Bodenland next finds Frankenstein, he is preparing a mate for the creature. But now his attempts to circumvent Frankenstein’s actions by his own knowledge of the book in which Frankenstein is a character come to naught due to the flexibility of myth and reality generated by the timeslip. The mate, whose face has been shaped from the severed head of Justine Moritz, stumbles out of Frankenstein’s laboratory on the arm of her monstrous lover, and Bodenland watches in disgust and fascination the ritual of their mating. Though he fails to destroy the monsters, he does shoot Victor Frankenstein as Victor elaborates on his plans to construct yet another creature. Then, determined to rid mankind of Frankenstein’s curse, Bodenland is off on the chase after the lovers across a frozen wasteland, apparently transplanted from the future in another timeslip. Just as they are about to enter the gates of a strange city in the icy wilderness, which Bodenland speculates might be “the last refuge of humanity” (p. 217), he opens fire with the machine gun. His aim is true, but the dying creature warns him that “though you seek to bury me, yet will you continuously resurrect me! Once I am unbound, I am unbounded!” (p. 222). The novel ends with an ominous echo from Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, at the conclusion of which the creature was “lost in darkness and distance” (p. 190/C). Now, however, Bodenland waits complacently for “someone or something” to come for him from the unknown city while he rests from his maniacal quest and bloody killings, “biding my time in darkness and distance” (p. 223).

Aldiss gives many new twists to a familiar story, but his evocation of the

monstrous elements in the tale is still consistent with Mary Shelley's. Even before the timeslip that catapults him into the past occurs, Joe Bodenland reads in the newspaper that his own century is "suffering from the curse that was Baron Frankenstein's in Mary Shelley's novel: by seeking to control too much, we have lost control of ourselves." The infrastructure of space and time has been damaged by man's tampering with the elements. "The Intellect," concludes the news account, "has made our planet unsafe for intellect" (p. 19). The same train of thought is later pursued in a discussion with the Shelleys and Lord Byron about the shape of the future, which Bodenland alone, of course, has already seen. He counters Percy Shelley's enthusiastic acceptance of the mechanical age as a means of freedom for man with his description of the twentieth century in which the relationship between man and machine is reversed and man becomes the servant of that which he has created. Later, Frankenstein's monster, whose face Bodenland describes as looking "like a machine, lathe-turned," becomes for him the ultimate reflection of his own age and ours, a world in which the "head had triumphed over the heart." The monster, he continues, is a "metaphor—I saw the technological society into which I had been born as a Frankenstein body for which the spirit was missing" (pp. 172–73).

Given this view of the monster, it is certainly clear why Bodenland, like Victor in Mary Shelley's novel, takes upon himself the task of the monster's annihilation, for if he can eliminate the foreshadowing metaphor of destructive technocracy, perhaps he might prevent its appearance in reality. But there is another side to Aldiss' creature, like Mary Shelley's, that Bodenland, like Frankenstein, fails to appreciate simply because he will not accept its resemblance to himself.

The novel opens with Bodenland commenting upon a curious game he has been watching his grandchildren play. The youngsters bury one of their mechanical scooters and make of the event a formal ceremony which they call a "Feast." The burial ends with a prayer and a kind of dance, and then on impulse the little boy pulls his penis out of his trunks to show the girl. Bodenland remarks that the children "live in myth" and that their dance is "an instinctual celebration of their own physical health." "It seems to me," he asserts, "that in this world of madness, theirs is the only significant activity" (pp. 14–17). Later, however, the ritual dance is duplicated by the monsters outside Frankenstein's laboratory, but this time the sexual gesture is completed by their copulation. Bodenland is again the voyeur, but this time his observations leave him "dry of mouth, sick at heart" (p. 192). He soon tells us why he can chuckle complacently at the mythic gestures of children but shudder at the realities of sexual expression. For among "a mixture of emotions," he says, ". . . I have to confess, was lust, reluctantly aroused by that unparalleled mating. A natural if unfortunate association of ideas made me think of Mary and wonder where she was, in

this increasingly confused universe. Sanctity and obscenity lie close in the mind" (p. 193).

In this mood of angry "self-disgust," he goes to murder Frankenstein and thus destroy—symbolically at least—what he detests in himself. Frankenstein's only defense, as he raves to Bodenland, is that his researches must continue in order that there might be found a tenable purpose to the human struggle:

. . . no purpose in life on this globe—only the endless begetting and dying, too monstrous to be called Purpose—just a phantasmagoria of flesh and flesh remade, of vegetation intervening. . . . Did you ever think it might be life that was the pestilence, the accident of consciousness between the eternal chemistry working in the veins of earth and air? So you can't—you mustn't kill me, for a purpose must be found, invented if necessary, a human purpose, *human*, putting *us* in control, fighting the *itiness* of the great wheeling world, Bodenland. You see, Bodenland? You're—you're an intellectual like me, I know it . . . we have to be above the old considerations, be ruthless, as ruthless as the natural processes governing us. It stands to reason. (p. 196)

An hour or so earlier, Bodenland felt similar sentiments as he gazed at the form of the female creature Frankenstein was constructing. He tells us that "confronted with this unbreathing creature surmounted by that frozen but guiltless female face, I felt only pity. It was pity mainly for the weakness of human flesh, for the sad imperfection of us as a species, for our nakedness, our frail hold on life. To be, to remain human was always a struggle, and the struggle always ultimately rewarded by death" (p. 170). The confrontation occasions in Bodenland an instinctive religious reaction as a counter to the nullity of human existence which he has glimpsed. He bemoans a world deprived of organized religion by organized science and cries out, "Oh, God," for what he terms "the mess of the world." But his prayer is answered instead by the monster, "Frankenstein's Adam," who leaps from the skylight as from the heavens "to stand before me in his wrath" (p. 172). The creature is only protecting his mate, and Bodenland is able to escape his fury. His will nevertheless seems numbed by the encounter, and he does nothing to prevent the mating of the new Adam and Eve which takes place before his eyes. After that experience, religion can no longer quench Bodenland's horror—only murder. The truth is too black for him, as it nearly was for Elizabeth; but whereas she was its victim, Bodenland becomes its agent. He kills Frankenstein only to be haunted thereafter by his dying image and the realization that he has "taken over Victor's role" (p. 203) and in his dogged pursuit of the fleeing pair "become machine-like" (p. 206).

Bodenland becomes what he seeks to destroy, even as he tries to destroy what he has become. His machine gun can silence the dying creature before him only after the creature within himself has been uncovered. Though

riddled with bullets, Frankenstein's creature still forces the issue: "In trying to destroy what you cannot understand, you destroy yourself! Only that lack of understanding makes you see a great divide between our natures. When you hate and fear me, you believe it is because of our differences. Oh, no, Bodenland!—it is because of our similarities that you bring such detestation to bear upon me." Bodenland cries out, "We are of different universes!"; the creature duly corrects him: "Our universe is the same universe, where pain and retribution rule" (p. 221).

In *Frankenstein Unbound*, the monster has come of age—from past to present to future, from creature to man, from myth to reality. He is again, as he was in *Frankenstein*, the reflection of his maker in both nobility and ugliness, but most especially in suffering. He is the worthy offspring of man and woman, Brian Aldiss and Mary Shelley.

## Notes

1. Brian W. Aldiss, *Billion Year Spree: The True History of Science Fiction* (New York: Doubleday, 1973), p. 23.
2. Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* (New York: Collier Books, 1961), p. 10/I. For convenience, "Walton's Continuation" is marked with a "C," and the 1831 "Introduction" with an "I."
3. Brian W. Aldiss, *Frankenstein Unbound* (Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Crest, 1975), p. 71.

# The Gulag Gateway: Critical Approaches to Science Fiction

MERRELL A. KNIGHTEN

Home is the place where, when you have to go there,  
They have to take you in.

I should have called it  
Something you somehow haven't to deserve.

Robert Frost, *The Death of the Hired Man*

■ There is, after all, *this* about a ghetto: no matter how tawdry, it is home.

Science fiction is a ghetto. It must be, for “everyone” says so, none more often and more vociferously than science-fiction writers themselves.<sup>1</sup> This self-demonstrating verity aside, the hard evidence is everywhere abundant in payment practices, in advertising and publishing policies, and even within the practicing terminology of the students of the field; note, for instance, Joe DeBolt’s designation of “ghetto” writers in *Extrapolation*.<sup>2</sup>

What is not so often mentioned—and should be—is that the prison is equally a fortress; ghetto writers, critics, and editors do much to perpetuate the ghetto as a defensive mechanism,<sup>3</sup> and the denizens of the ghetto, with a very few notable exceptions, regard the mainstream, and particularly mainstream criticism, and most particularly academic criticism, with fear and loathing. The evidence of this scorn is likewise abundant, but perhaps an objective correlative will serve. Those familiar with Robert Heinlein’s early short story “Coventry” will remember the tale’s idealistic, pompous, and thoroughly unlikable protagonist who, exiled from society for his

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antisocial behavior and battered by his fellow outcasts into a new perception of self, is literally baptized in fire in his desperate attempt to return to society. Achieving rebirth (logically, for Heinlein, in a military hospital), the protagonist emphatically rejects his former occupation, with all its parasitic silliness, in favor of a career in military intelligence. That former occupation, some will remember, was literary criticism.<sup>4</sup>

Heinlein's critical counterpart—within the ghetto—is Richard Geis, creator of *The Alien Critic* and columnist for *Galaxy* magazine. In a column written in 1974, Geis complained that more and more science fiction is being aimed at the “affected,” “arty-farty,” “intellectual” academic crowd.<sup>5</sup> In 1975, Geis again objected to the academic study of science fiction: “Science fiction has become a property now, a territory, in academia, and as more teachers and professors stake out their acres and build their fences, science fiction will become another cemetery. . . .”<sup>6</sup>

The vehemence of such objection seems likely to arise in large part from cruel experience. Kingsley Amis noted some years ago that science-fiction writers have good reason to resent mainstream criticism: “A new volume by Pohl or Sheekley or Arthur Clarke ought . . . to be reviewed as general fiction, not tucked away, as one writer put it, in something called ‘Spaceman’s Realm’ between the kiddy section and the dog stories.”<sup>7</sup> Instead, as Jack Williamson observed more recently, “The mainstream critics have seldom made much sense about science fiction when they happened to notice it at all. . . .”<sup>8</sup>

Such treatment both perpetuates the ghetto and creates within that ghetto a protective clannishness, the dangers of which were noted some time ago by Barry Malzberg:

The field is small and most of the same people wind up wearing various hats: critic, editor, writer, anthologist, and so on. . . .

This [closeness] makes it difficult to achieve objective book reviews. . . . The man whom I review today may be in a position to buy my manuscript tomorrow, and so on.<sup>9</sup>

Given this incestuous reciprocity, it seems inevitable that the science-fiction community should face a certain difficulty in self-evaluation, and such has indeed been the case. The ghetto popularity of Joe Haldeman's *The Forever War* offers a convincing demonstration of this failure of judgment. Leonard Isaacs, reviewing the work in *Fantasy and Science Fiction*, finds quite a lot to praise and very little to deplore. Among other things, Isaacs admires the introductory technique, the “gritty realism,” the “talent for verisimilitude,” and the “near light-speed pace.”<sup>10</sup> Isaacs' only complaint is in the upbeat quality of the resolution (?), which even to Mandella, the protagonist, “sounded a little fishy.”<sup>11</sup>

A mainstream critic, however, might find more than a few fish in

Haldeman's pond. The work has, of course, notable virtues—for instance, the sense of the ridiculous inherent in Mandella's discovery that he and a fellow male are the only heterosexuals on an otherwise gay planet, compounded by the discovery that the other hetero is in actuality an asexual cyborg, who is entirely plastic from the waist down.

Such virtues, however, are more often than not shadowed by the work's faults. The shock introduction Mr. Isaacs so much admires, for instance, is in fact more schlock than shock. "Tonight," says one of Mandella's instructors, "we're going to show you eight silent ways to kill a man." Mandella promptly falls asleep, noting only—in a bored cynicism incongruous with his later repugnance at killing aliens—that some of the techniques are demonstrated on (temporarily) live subjects. More to the point, the triteness of such collar-grabbing demands objection, which Isaacs fails to provide.

In spite of (or perhaps because of) the "light-speed pace," *The Forever War* consistently displays gaps in reasoning, implausible arguments, and papier-mâché motivations. The beginning of the 1,100-year war is blamed, wearily, on no fresher a villain than the military-industrial complex: "You couldn't blame it all on the military. . . . The fact was, Earth's economy needed a war and this one was ideal." Needless to say, this quaint cliché deserves a rest, particularly in a genre that prizes its originality.

Similarly, Mandella's promotion to command of a combat unit on the basis of his real-time years of service and the public relations value thereof, ignoring his recognized pacifism and his incompetence as a leader, deserves question. Admittedly, Mandella's public relations value as the oldest warrior is conceivable; it appears less than logical, then, to place him in command of a combat unit light-years away from the public he is expected to impress.

The ending of the war is even less convincing than its beginning. Returning to base with the battered remnants of his incredibly botched command, Mandella discovers that humanity has "progressed" beyond individuality into the infinitely replicated clone of a descendant of one of Mandella's casualties. Since, as it happily occurs, the enemy was already such a group organism, communications rapidly progressed from the "Me Tarzan, you Jane" stage to universally cloned brotherhood. There is no explanation as to why this communication became possible only after the cloning of mankind. "There were no words for it," Mandella *and the reader* are told, and "my brain wouldn't be able to accommodate the concepts even if there were words." Even Haldeman, perhaps embarrassed by this airy evasion, is moved to say, via Mandella, "It sounded a little fishy. . . ."

And the resolution? There is none, only an ending. The work fails decidedly, then, in its major premise, the pacifistic statement. Given Mandella's firm pacifism, the reader waits endlessly and fruitlessly for the

act of rebellion—any act of rebellion—which will remove Mandella from the army's grip or at least deny its power over him. At a midpoint crisis, Mandella is tempted to suicide; instead, even knowing his incompetence, he accepts command of a combat unit and proceeds to make a series of non-decisions and wrong decisions which destroy his troops' faith in him and which cause, as a result of this distrust, a tremendous casualty rate: "Losing," Mandella says, "88 percent of my company, many of them because they didn't have enough confidence in me. . . ."

Here then is neither growth nor decisive denial, but rather an undecided paralysis of will, a glorification through Mandella's eventual achievement of happiness not of pacifism but of passivity. The ghetto popularity of this work, in particular the fact that the Science Fiction Writers Association awarded it the 1975 Nebula Award for best novel, should be adequate demonstration of the gulf between science-fiction interests and mainstream standards. As Amis puts it, "Science fiction interests do not coincide with those of ordinary fiction, though on occasion the two sets will overlap very considerably."<sup>12</sup> Amis's theory of *idea as hero* pinpoints the difference nicely; put quite simply, content has for so long dominated science fiction's evaluative criteria that its readers have in years past been willing to overlook defects in style.

Every subgenre, of course, maintains with jealous rigidity its own particular conventions; the Western invariably offers one or both of two Indians, the noble savage or the savage savage, neither much changed from those of James Fenimore Cooper; the modern romance offers a heroine inevitably equipped with equal parts of naïveté, sophistication, temper, and forgiveness, and intriguing essays have been written on the cover conventions of such; the mystery story, the spy novel—each and all are set into their conventions, conventions that relegate each to a ghetto precisely like that occupied by science fiction (though usually less self-celebratory), and when the individual work rises above the conventions of its subgenre (*The Ox-Bow Incident*, *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold*), it is, willy-nilly, "mainstreamed."

There, of course, waits the gulag gateway—and a problem. If science fiction would presume mainstream respectability (and the more bankable rewards of the mainstream), it must in its creation and in its critical modes submit to mainstream analytic criteria, a contortion that seems neither probable nor even desirable, for if it is to remain science fiction, it must also maintain its own unique features: "Both science fiction and the mainstream," says James Gunn, "will be stronger if science fiction retains its unique concepts. . . ."<sup>13</sup>

A beginning, therefore, might be to recognize that the subgenre status of science fiction requires not a curtailing of critical judgment, but a redirecting of evaluative criteria; if science-fiction criticism is to have any

real function beyond the mild self-entertainment of the critic, one part of that function must be the provision of appropriate evaluative tools.

The first of these tools might be an identification of those features—including, but perhaps not limited to, idea, setting, and scientific accuracy—where the demands of science fiction *exceed* those of the mainstream. These criteria are perhaps so obvious, once cited, as to require little comment; suffice it to note that the most successful science fiction has always been that concerned with an imaginative treatment of the “What if . . .” question, that depth and plausibility of detail in setting are prerequisite to a form that deals with future or alternate realities, and that scientific accuracy consistent with current knowledge (note, for instance, the recent plethora of “black hole” stories) is expected by an informed readership. Beyond the specific (and certainly demanding) requirements of the genre, however, exists further a body of aesthetic considerations appropriate to any work that pretends to the status of literature, no matter its genre, its intent, nor, ultimately, its own self-imposed and perhaps excusatory criteria. To such aesthetic imperatives—to depth and credibility of characterization, to plausibility of motivation, to logic of development and consistency of resolution, for instance—science fiction must also adhere, if it would in fact escape the ghetto.

## Notes

1. See Harlan Ellison, “You Don’t Know Me, I Don’t Know You,” *Fantasy and Science Fiction*, 53 (July, 1977), 49–62.
2. Joe DeBolt, “Patterns of Science Fiction Readership Among Academics,” *Extrapolation*, 19 (1978), 116.
3. Note James Gunn’s comment on science-fiction writers, that “They were largely ignored by the world outside, but greatly admired within the ghetto itself.” “Science Fiction and the Mainstream,” in *Science Fiction Today and Tomorrow*, ed. Reginald Bretnor (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), p. 189.
4. Robert A. Heinlein, “Coventry,” in *Revolt in 2100* (New York: New American Library, 1953), p. 170.
5. Richard Geis, “The Alien Viewpoint,” *Worlds of If*, 22 (Nov-Dec. 1974), 144–45.
6. Richard Geis, “The Alien Viewpoint,” *Galaxy*, 36 (October, 1975), 124.
7. Kingsley Amis, *New Maps of Hell* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1960), p. 149.
8. Jack Williamson, “Science Fiction, Teaching, and Criticism,” in *Science Fiction Today and Tomorrow*, p. 311.
9. Barry Malzberg, review in *Fantasy and Science Fiction*, 38 (May, 1970), 24.
10. Leonard Isaacs, review in *Fantasy and Science Fiction*, 49 (December, 1975), 38–40.
11. Joe Haldeman, *The Forever War* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1976), p. 215. All further references are to this edition.
12. Amis, p. 147.
13. Gunn, p. 214.

# H. Beam Piper: An Annotated Bibliography

JOHN L. ESPLEY

■ H. Beam Piper, an engineer for the Pennsylvania Railroad, wrote science fiction during the 1950s and early 1960s. He was born in Altoona, Pennsylvania, in 1904 and lived in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, until his suicide on November 11, 1964.<sup>1</sup>

The majority of Piper's stories are represented in the Paratime Police series and one Future History series. The Paratime Police stories have the theme of parallel worlds. Piper used this theme to answer some of the unexplained phenomena described by Charles Fort. The Future History stories are the description of the rise, fall, and rise again of galactic civilization. Using this background, Piper wrote some of his most memorable stories and books.<sup>2</sup>

Piper had strong feelings about economics and politics, and it is within the two series that he makes the strongest statements concerning his personal philosophy. But Piper's stories are not "message" oriented. They are highly entertaining, and his political messages enhance the overall experience of the story. It is a shame that we do not have more of his stories. As Lester del Rey wrote, "one of the great tragedies of science fiction was the fact that Piper not only talked a strong personal philosophy of dignity and self-reliance but also lived by the code. He also died by it, of his own hand, just at the time he was reaching his peak as a writer. There were brilliant novels in his head which will now never be written."<sup>3</sup>

This bibliography is arranged in the following manner. There is an annotated alphabetical listing of Piper's stories. This listing is arranged first by books, then by magazine appearance. Unfortunately, the information

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on the German and Italian books is incomplete.<sup>4</sup> Next comes the appearances of Piper's stories in anthologies and the book reviews of his novels. Following the book reviews is a chronological listing of all works arranged by title and the first publication date. Next is a chronological listing of stories arranged by magazine title. The last entry is a suggested reading sequence for the two series. The writer of this bibliography would greatly appreciate any corrections or additions to any of the listings; please send them to John L. Espley, 618 Dehart St., Blacksburg, Va. 24060.

## I. BOOKS

- B01 *A Catalogue of Early Pennsylvania and Other Firearms and Edged Weapons at "Restless Oaks," McElhattan, Pa.* Collected by Henry W. Shoemaker. Compiled by H. Beam Piper. Altoona, Pa.: The Times Tribune Co., 1927. 50 p.

An illustrated catalog of a collection of firearms and edged weapons. This is the earliest publication of any work by Piper.

*The Cosmic Computer* (see *Junkyard Planet*, B05)

- B02 *Crisis in 2140.* New York: Ace Books, 1957, 120 p.

Issued with Cyril Judd's *Gunner Cade*.

- B02a *Krisenjahr 2140* [German]. Abenteuer im Weltraum: 3, 1958, n.p.

- B02b [*Crisis in 2140.* New York: Ace Books. Projected]<sup>5</sup> Coauthor: John J. McGuire.

Society is divided into two classes: literates and illiterates. The story is concerned with a political campaign and the conflict within the factions of the two classes.

The magazine version appeared as "Null-ABC" in *Astounding* (M19).

- B03 *Four-day Planet.* New York: Putnam, 1961, 221 p.

- B03a *Four-day Planet.* Toronto: Longmans, 1961, 221 p.

- B03b *Four-day Planet.* New York: Ace Books, 1979, pp. 1-216. Issued with *Lone Star Planet* (B10a).

The weakest of Piper's stories, this book is about labor problems on the planet Fenris. Originally published as a "juvenile," the action and characters are very predictable, but the economics and politics are typical of Piper.

- B04 *The Fuzzy Papers.* Garden City, N.Y.: Nelson Doubleday, 1976, 309 p.

A special edition from the Science Fiction Book Club containing *Little Fuzzy* (B06) and *The Other Human Race* (B09).

*Fuzzy Sapiens* (see *The Other Human Race*, B09)

- B05 *Junkyard Planet.* New York: Putnam, 1963, 224 p.

- B05a *Junkyard Planet.* Don Mills, Ontario: Longmans, 1963, 224 p.

- B05b *The Cosmic Computer.* New York: Ace Books, 1964, 190 p.

- B05c *The Cosmic Computer.* New York: Ace Books, 1977, 249 p.

The story of a search for an immensely powerful computer on a planet of abandoned equipment and installations that were left after the war between the Terran Federation and the Systems Alliance. An earlier version of the first three chapters appeared in *Galaxy* as "Graveyard of Dreams" (M09).

- B06 *Little Fuzzy.* New York: Avon Books, 1962, 160 p.

- B06a *El piccolo popolo* [Italian]. Urania: 298, 1962, n.p.

- B06b *Der Kleine Fuzzy* [German]. Terra Sonderband: 87, 1964, n.p.

- B06c *Little Fuzzy*. New York: Ace Books, 1976, 174 p.  
This is probably Piper's best work and is certainly the best known. The book deals with the question of sapience. Fuzzies are animals discovered on the planet Zarathustra, which has an uninhabited status. If the Fuzzies are sapient, the planet is inhabited, and the Zarathustra Company would lose its franchise. A critique of *Little Fuzzy* by Judith Clark appears in *Survey of Science Fiction Literature*.<sup>6</sup>
- B07 *Lord Kalvan of Otherwhen*. New York: Ace Books, 1965, 192 p.  
B07a *Der Mann, der die Zeit* [German]. Winther, 1967, n.p.  
B07b *Lord Kalvan di Altroquando* [Italian]. Glassia: 87, 1968, n.p.  
B07c *Lord Kalvan of Otherwhen*. New York: Garland Publishing Company, 1975, 192 p.  
B07d *Lord Kalvan of Otherwhen*. New York: Ace Books, 1977, 249 p.  
Trooper Calvin Morrison of the Pennsylvania State Police is accidentally transported to a different time-line, where gunpowder and firearms are controlled by one of the local religions. The novelettes "Gunpowder God" (M10) and "Down Styphon" (M05) cover the same events as approximately the first fifteen chapters of *Lord Kalvan of Otherwhen*. The chapters in the book are expanded, and some of the scenes are set in a different order.
- Lone Star Planet* (see *A Planet for Texans*, B10)
- B08 *Murder in the Gunroom*. New York: Knopf, 1953, 243 p.  
B08a *Murder in the Gunroom*. Toronto: McClelland, 1953, 243 p.  
A murder mystery featuring the private investigator Jefferson Davis Rand. The background of the story features Piper's hobby of collecting antique firearms. Jacques Barzun in *A Catalogue of Crime* states that *Murder in the Gunroom* was Piper's only attempt at a crime story.<sup>7</sup> One of the minor characters is a science-fiction writer.
- B09 *The Other Human Race*. New York: Avon Books, 1964, 190 p.  
B09a *Fuzzy Sapiens*. New York: Ace Books, 1976, 235 p.  
This story does not have the impact of its predecessor, *Little Fuzzy* (B06). The plot is concerned with the problems that beset the planetary government because of the sapience of the Fuzzies.
- B10 *A Planet for Texans*. New York: Ace Books, 1958, 101 p.  
Issued with Andre Norton's *Star Born*.
- B10a *Lone Star Planet*. New York: Ace Books, 1979, pp. 217–340. Issued with *Four-day Planet* (B03b). Coauthor: John J. McGuire.  
A parody of the Old West set within a science-fiction background. The Terran ambassador to the planet of New Texas has been killed, and the Earth sends another ambassador who is "quicker on the draw." Published as "Lone Star Planet" (M15) in *Fantastic Universe*.
- B11 *Space Viking*. New York: Ace Books, 1963, 191 p.  
B11a *Space Viking*. New York: Garland Publishing Company, 1975, 191 p.  
B11b *Space Viking*. New York: Ace Books, 1977, 243 p.  
The space vikings are the descendants of refugees from the Systems Alliance who settled the Sword Worlds. After the Terran Federation break-up, the vikings raided the planets of the former Federation. The plot is concerned with Lucas Trask hunting for his wife's killer. This book is Piper's most ambitious work in that it contains a large amount of economic and political philosophy.

## II. MAGAZINE APPEARANCES

- M01 "The Answer." *Fantastic Universe*, December 1959, pp. 4-12.  
The title refers to the discovery of what actually started the atomic war that took place fifteen years before the story begins.
- M02 "Crossroads of Destiny." *Fantastic Universe*, July 1959, pp. 4-13.  
A group of men discuss the possibility of alternate time-lines, with one of them from an alternate time-line.
- M03 "Day of the Moron." *Astounding*, September 1951, pp. 7-34.  
The management of an atomic reactor plant tries to fire some union workers for incompetency.
- M04 "Dearest." *Weird Tales*, March 1951, pp. 68-78.  
A son and daughter-in-law try to have their father committed to an asylum because he has a companion nobody else can see or hear.
- M05 "Down Styphon." *Analog*, November 1965, pp. 10-46.  
A novelette that covers the events of Chapter nine through Section one of Chapter fifteen of *Lord Kalvan of Otherwhen* (B07).
- M06 "The Edge of the Knife." *Amazing*, May 1957, pp. 6-50.  
A history professor clashes with the university administration because of his detailed extrapolations of future events.
- M07 "Flight from Tomorrow." *Future (combined with Science Fiction Stories)*, September-October 1950, pp. 36-49.  
A dictator from the far future is forced back to the first-century Atomic Era (ca. A.D. 1952).
- M08 "Genesis." *Future (combined with Science Fiction Stories)*, September 1951, pp. 8-21, 37.  
A spaceship full of colonists heading for the Earth explodes, leaving only a few survivors to reach the Earth.
- M09 "Graveyard of Dreams." *Galaxy*, February 1958, pp. 122-44.  
The story is a different version of the first three chapters of *Junkyard Planet* (B05).
- M10 "Gunpowder God." *Analog*, November 1964, pp. 17-36.  
A novelette that covers the events of the first eight chapters of *Lord Kalvan of Otherwhen* (B07).
- M11 "He Walked Around Horses." *Astounding*, April 1948, pp. 53-70.  
Written in the form of letters and memorandums, this is the story of an early-nineteenth-century British diplomat who is transported to a parallel world where there is no French Revolution or a Napoleon who became the Emperor of the French.
- M12 "Hunter Patrol." *Amazing*, May 1959, pp. 20-45.
- M12a "Hunter Patrol." *Most Thrilling Science Fiction Ever Told*, June 1973, pp. 80-105. Coauthor: John J. McGuire.  
A soldier, brought into the future to kill the ruler of the Earth, returns to his own time without his memory, but with a scientific formula enabling him to become the ruler of the Earth.
- M13 "The Keeper." *Venture Science Fiction*, July 1957, pp. 80-100.  
The Earth is in the throes of another ice age. The Keeper is a man who protects an ancient relic of the Earth's past. The relic is stolen, and the Keeper must retrieve it.
- M14 "Last Enemy." *Astounding*, August 1950, pp. 5-60.  
The last enemy is death. A Paratime Police story in which Verkan Vall has to



- rescue a scientist investigating reincarnation. Since reincarnation is a proven fact, death holds no fears and assassination is an honorary profession.
- M15 "Lone Star Planet." *Fantastic Universe*, March 1957, pp. 4–66. Coauthor: John J. McGuire.  
Magazine version of *A Planet for Texans* (B10).
- M16 "The Mercenaries." *Astounding*, March 1950, pp. 57–77.  
The mercenaries are not soldiers for hire, but scientists for hire. The story is concerned with how a highly regarded team of scientists deals with a traitor and preserves their independence from national governments.
- M17 "Ministry of Disturbance." *Astounding*, December 1958, pp. 8–45.  
The empire is stagnant, and the Emperor is trying to put some life into it. A disturbance at the local university provides the opportunity for the Emperor.
- M18 "Naudsonce." *Analog*, January 1962, pp. 6–44.  
A first-contact story concerned with the efforts of the Terrans to communicate with the native inhabitants of a Terra-like planet.
- M19 "Null-ABC." *Astounding*, February and March 1953, pp. 12–54, 112–53. Coauthor: John J. McGuire.  
Magazine version of *Crisis in 2140* (B02).
- M20 "Omnilingual." *Astounding*, February 1957, pp. 8–46.  
This story is about the problem of how to translate the Martian language when there is no basis of comparison between Martian and any Earth language.
- M21 "Oomphel in the Sky." *Analog*, November 1960, pp. 120–58.  
This is a religious story about how the Terrans dealt with the native disturbances which started because of the natives' belief that the end of their world was coming.
- M22 "Operation R.S.V.P." *Amazing*, January 1951, pp. 52–61.
- M22a "Operation R.S.V.P." *Amazing*, April 1966, pp. 88–97.  
Written in the form of letters and memorandums ostensibly extolling the scientific achievements of Russia and China, this is the story of the conflict between the two countries in 1984.
- M23 "Police Operation." *Astounding*, July 1948, pp. 8–35.  
The first of the Paratime Police stories. There is a large amount of explanation about the Paratime theory with a minor plot concerning Verkan Vall hunting for an extraterrestrial animal in an alternate world where it is unknown.
- M24 "The Return." *Astounding*, January 1954, pp. 70–95. Coauthor: John J. McGuire.  
Two hundred years after an atomic war, the survivors of a scientific establishment are trying to make contact with other groups. One such group has based its society on the stories of Sherlock Holmes.
- M25 "A Slave is a Slave." *Analog*, April 1962, pp. 62–82, 113–42.  
The galactic empire is expanding by annexing the planets of the space vikings and the former Terran Federation. The story is about the annexation of a planet whose society is completely based on slavery.
- M26 "Space Viking." *Analog*, November and December, 1962; January and February, 1963, pp. 6–52, 104–46, 111–55, 120–62.  
The magazine version of the book with the same title (B11).
- M27 "Temple Trouble." *Astounding*, April 1951, pp. 6–34.  
A Paratime Police story in which the exploitation of the alternate world is controlled through the organized religions. The plot is concerned with conflicts created by the decline of the Paratime-supported religion.

- M28 "Time and Time Again." *Astounding*, April 1947, pp. 27-43.  
Allen Hartley, thinking of his childhood as he lies dying from a bomb explosion, eventually realizes that he is in possession of his thirteen-year-old body, but with all the knowledge and memories of his full forty-three years. This was Piper's first published science-fiction story.
- M29 "Time Crime." *Astounding*, February and March 1955, pp. 8-49, 85-131.  
A serial concerning the Paratime Police discovering the existence of a large criminal organization of their own First Probability Level people.
- M30 "Uller Uprising." *Space Science Fiction*, February and March 1953, pp. 4-75, 120-56.  
This story is a science-fiction version of the Indian Sepoy Mutiny of 1857. The action takes place on the planet Uller, but the plot has all the elements of a standard Sepoy Mutiny story. This version of "Uller Uprising" is slightly abridged from the original, which appeared in the anthology *The Petrified Planet*.

### III. ANTHOLOGY APPEARANCES

#### "Genesis" (M08)

*Shadow of Tomorrow*, ed. Frederik Pohl. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1953, 379 p.

#### "He Walked Around Horses" (M11)

*World of Wonder*, ed. Fletcher Pratt. New York: Twayne, 1951, 445 p.

*Best SF Three*, ed. Edmund Crispin. London: Faber, 1958, 224 p.

*Aspects of Science Fiction*, ed. G. D. Doherty. London: Murray, 1959, 218 p.

*Science Fiction Through the Ages*. Vol. 2. Ed. by I. O. Evans. London: Panther Books, 1966, 173 p.

*A Science Fiction Argosy*, ed. Damon Knight. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1972, 828 p.

#### "Last Enemy" (M14)

*Astounding Science Fiction Anthology*, selected and with an introduction by John W. Campbell, Jr. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1951, 585 p.

#### "Ministry of Disturbance" (M17)

*Seven Trips Through Time and Space*, ed. Geoff Conklin. Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Publications, 1968, 256 p.

#### "Omnilingual" (M20)

*Prologue to Analog*, ed. John W. Campbell. Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1962, 308 p.

*Great Science Fiction Stories About Mars*, ed. T. E. Dikty. New York: Frederick Fell, 1966, 187 p.

*Apeman, Spaceman: Anthropological Science Fiction*, ed. Leon E. Stover and Harry Harrison. Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1968, 355 p.

*The Days After Tomorrow*, ed. Hans Stefan Santesson. Boston: Little, Brown, 1971, 261 p.

*Mars, We Love You*, ed. Jane Hipolito and Willis E. McNelly. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1971, 332 p.

*Where Do We Go From Here?* ed. Isaac Asimov. Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1971, 441 p.

*Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow* . . . [Comp.] Bonnie L. Heintz [et al.] New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1974, 619 p.

*Science Fiction Novellas*, ed. Harry Harrison and Willis E. McNelly. New York: Scribner, 1975, 255 p.

"Operation R.S.V.P." (M22)

*World of Wonder*, ed. Fletcher Pratt. New York: Twayne, 1951, 445 p.

"Police Operation" (M23)

*Space Police*, ed. with an introduction and notes by Andre Norton. New York: World, 1956, 255 p.

*The Best of Astounding*, ed. Tony Lewis. New York: Ace Books, 1978, 244 p.

"The Return" (M24)

*The Science Fictional Sherlock Holmes*. Denver, Colo.: The Council of Four, 1960, 137 p.

"Time and Time Again" (M28)

*Treasury of Science Fiction*, ed. Geoff Conklin. New York: Crown, 1948, 517 p.

*Überwindung von Raum und Zeit*. Hrsg. Gottard Gunther. Düsseldorf, Germany: Karl Rauch, 1952, 237 p.

"Uller Uprising" (M30)

*The Petrified Planet*, with an introduction by John D. Clark. New York: Twayne, 1952, 263 p.

#### IV. BOOK REVIEWS

*Crisis in 2140* (B02)

*Astounding*, March 1958, pp. 142.

*Fantastic Stories*, November 1957, pp. 123-24.

*Fantasy and Science Fiction*, September 1957, pp. 86.

*Four-day Planet* (B03)

*Analog*, January 1962, pp. 159.

*Junkyard Planet* (B05)

*Analog*, September 1963, pp. 95.

*Little Fuzzy* (B06)

*Analog*, July 1962, pp. 164-65.

*Lord Kalvan of Otherwhen* (B07)

*Analog*, July 1978, pp. 174.

*Science-Fiction Studies*, 2:286-87.

*The Other Human Race* (B09)

*Analog*, September 1965, pp. 148-49.

*A Planet for Texans* (B10)

*Astounding*, March 1959, pp. 145-46.

*Space Viking* (B11)

*Analog*, January 1964, pp. 87-88.

*Analog*, May 1977, pp. 167-68.

*Science-Fiction Studies*, 2:286-87.

#### V. TITLES BY DATE OF FIRST PUBLICATION<sup>8</sup>

*A Catalogue of Early Pennsylvania and Other*

*Firearms* . . . (B01)

1927

"Time and Time Again" (M28)

April, 1947

"He Walked Around Horses" (M11)

April, 1948

"Police Operation" (M23)

July, 1948

"The Mercenaries" (M16)

March, 1950

"Last Enemy" (M14)

August, 1950

"Flight from Tomorrow" (M07)

September-October, 1950

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"Operation R.S.V.P." (M22)	January, 1951
"Dearest" (M04)	March, 1951
"Temple Trouble" (M27)	April, 1951
"Day of the Moron" (M03)	September, 1951
"Genesis" (M08)	September, 1951
"Uller Uprising" ( <i>The Petrified Planet</i> ) (M30)	December 2, 1952
<i>Murder in the Gunroom</i> (B08)	February 16, 1953
"Null-ABC" ( <i>Crisis in 2140</i> ) (M19, B02)	February, March, 1953
"The Return" (M24)	January, 1954
"Time Crime" (M28)	February, March, 1955
"Omnilingual" (M20)	February, 1957
"Lone Star Planet" ( <i>A Planet for Texans</i> ) (M15, B10)	March, 1957
"The Edge of the Knife" (M06)	May, 1957
"The Keeper" (M13)	July, 1957
"Graveyard of Dreams" (M09)	February, 1958
"Ministry of Disturbance" (M17)	December, 1958
"Hunter Patrol" (M12)	May, 1959
"Crossroads of Destiny" (M02)	July, 1959
"The Answer" (M01)	December, 1959
"Oomphel in the Sky" (M21)	November, 1960
<i>Four-day Planet</i> (B03)	March 27, 1961
<i>Little Fuzzy</i> (B06)	January 17, 1962
"Naudsonce" (M18)	January, 1962
"A Slave Is a Slave" (M25)	April, 1962
"Space Viking" ( <i>Space Viking</i> ) (M26, B11)	November, December, 1962
<i>Junkyard Planet</i> (B05)	January, February, 1963
<i>The Other Human Race</i> (B09)	January 15, 1963
"Gunpowder God" ( <i>Lord Kalvan of Otherwhen</i> ) (M10, B07)	June 11, 1964
<i>Lord Kalvan of Otherwhen</i> (B07)	November, 1964
"Down Styphon" ( <i>Lord Kalvan of Otherwhen</i> ) (M05, B07)	July 8, 1965
	November, 1965

## VI. STORIES BY MAGAZINES IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

### *Amazing*

"Operation R.S.V.P." (M22)	January, 1951
"The Edge of the Knife" (M06)	May, 1957
"Hunter Patrol" (M12)	May, 1959
"Operation R.S.V.P." (M22)	April, 1966

### *Astounding-Analog*

"Time and Time Again" (M28)	April, 1947
"He Walked Around Horses" (M11)	April, 1948
"Police Operation" (M23)	July, 1948
"The Mercenaries" (M16)	March, 1950
"Last Enemy" (M14)	August, 1950
"Temple Trouble" (M27)	April, 1951

John L. Espley

"Day of the Moron" (M03)	September, 1951
"Null-ABC" (M19, B02)	February, March, 1953
"The Return" (M24)	January, 1954
"Time Crime" (M28)	February, March, 1955
"Omnilingual" (M20)	February, 1957
"Ministry of Disturbance" (M19)	December, 1958
"Oomphel in the Sky" (M21)	November, 1960
"Naudsonce" (M18)	January, 1962
"A Slave Is a Slave" (M25)	April, 1962
"Space Viking" (M26, B11)	November, December, 1962
	January, February, 1963
"Gunpowder God" (M10, B07)	November, 1964
"Down Styphon" (M05, B07)	November, 1965
<i>Fantastic Universe</i>	
"Lone Star Planet" (M15, B10)	March, 1957
"Crossroads of Destiny" (M02)	July, 1959
"The Answer" (M01)	December, 1959
<i>Future (combined with Science Fiction Stories)</i>	
"Flight from Tomorrow" (M07)	September-October, 1950
"Genesis" (M08)	September, 1951
<i>Galaxy</i>	
"Graveyard of Dreams" (M09)	February, 1958
<i>Most Thrilling Science Fiction Ever Told</i>	
"Hunter Patrol" (M12)	June, 1973
<i>Space Science Fiction</i>	
"Uller Uprising" (M30)	February, March, 1953
<i>Venture Science Fiction</i>	
"The Keeper" (M13)	July, 1957
<i>Weird Tales</i>	
"Dearest" (M04)	March, 1951

**VII. SERIES (Suggested reading sequence)**

Paratime Police series

- "Police Operation" (M23)
- "Last Enemy" (M14)
- "Temple Trouble" (M27)
- "Time Crime" (M28)

*Lord Kalvan of Otherwhen* (B07)

- "Gunpowder God" (M10)
- "Down Styphon" (M05)

Future History series

- "The Edge of the Knife" (M06)
- "Omnilingual" (M20)
- "Uller Uprising" (M30)
- Four-day Planet* (B03)
- Little Fuzzy* (B06)
- "Naudsonce" (M18)
- The Other Human Race* (B09)
- "Oomphel in the Sky" (M21)
- Junkyard Planet* (B05)
- "Graveyard of Dreams" (M09)

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*Space Viking* (B11)  
"A Slave is a Slave" (M25)  
"Ministry of Disturbance" (M17)  
"The Keeper" (M13)

### Notes

1. Donald H. Tuck, *Encyclopedia of Science Fiction and Fantasy* (Chicago: Advent, 1974), II, 346. Fletcher Pratt in *World of Wonder* (New York: Twayne, 1951) gives Piper's birth as occurring in 1903.
2. For instance, *Little Fuzzy*, *Space Viking*, and "Omnilingual."
3. Lester del Rey, *Analog* (May, 1977), pp. 167-68.
4. The data on the German and Italian editions were taken from Tuck's *Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*.
5. Letter received from William Tuning, September 7, 1978. Mr. Tuning is "doing some extensions of Piper's work, i.e., sequels to the Fuzzy novels and some edited collections of the shorter material, gathered together with annotative information."
6. Judith Clark, "Little Fuzzy," in *Survey of Science Fiction Literature*, ed. Frank N. Magill (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Salem Press, 1979), pp. 1230-34.
7. Jacques Barzun and Wendell Hertig Taylor, *A Catalogue of Crime* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), p. 344. The full entry is: "Piper, H. Beam (1904-67?). Originally a railroad policeman and a self-made expert on guns, he became a miscellaneous writer specializing with success in science fiction. In his one attempt at the crime genre, the implausible Colonel Jefferson Davis Rand, a gun fancier, solves the *Murder in the Gun Room* (1953) after much delving in technicalities."
8. The dates for the stories that originally appeared in a magazine are the cover date of the issue of the magazine. The dates for the stories that appeared originally as a book are the copyright date of the book.

# BOOKS

## Dynamics of the Genre

**The Known and the Unknown: The Iconography of Science Fiction**, by Gary K. Wolfe. Kent State University Press, 1979. \$12.50.

One must feel a certain heightened sense of responsibility in reviewing this earnest book by a young scholar who is devoted to the academic study of science fiction because criticism of the genre is maturing, along with the genre itself; and it is nice to share in new growth. Gary K. Wolfe is neither an experienced virtuoso of theory like Darko Suvin nor a theorist on mainstream, classical art like Frye or Bloom nor a fan critic; and it is out of Wolfe's group of independent academics working for genuine intellectual reasons in this field that the creative perceptions and categories will grow finally to systematize the genre. These critical works will not only feed upon but also will nourish the literary works themselves. The history of literature has often seen such a symbiosis in the past: the epic and georgic in the Renaissance, national literatures in the vernacular in the eighteenth century, romanticism in the nineteenth century. The new genre in our time may be science fiction, and with work such as this by Wolfe we are watching the analysis of its taxonomy and its growing self-consciousness.

But no genre is totally one organism, and the criticisms within a developing genre must be separated out and analyzed. A book of criticism, like any book, must be able to live on its own. In fact, if there is one major characteristic of Wolfe's study that is both a strength and a weakness, it is the leaning toward the organic fallacy that would link too tightly individual works of art into one genre. Here is his statement of the main thesis of the book: "The unknown is an overwhelming presence in science fiction, and it

is the transformation of the unknown into the known, usually by breaching a symbolic barrier . . . that I believe characterizes much of [its] narrative action . . . and accounts for its conventions and formulae." In the tradition, then, of the great taxonomists of genre going back to Aristotle himself on tragedy Wolfe infers from individual works what he calls traditionally "action" as well as what he calls idiosyncratically "icons." His purpose is to isolate important actions (icons will be discussed below) that are common to the genre. A related purpose is to discuss these actions in the context of the general history of ideas in order to argue that the genre has both grown out of its context and speaks importantly to the context of modern life. On the movement from the unknown to the known, for example, Wolfe invokes Thomas Kuhn's theories about successive new scientific paradigms challenging normal science. But Wolfe's own emphasis upon thematic consensus among the writers of science fiction suggests the opposite of Kuhn's theories about a dynamic and essential tension. Perhaps a strong normalcy of consensus in a literary genre forces new jumps out of individual artists; if that correspondence to Kuhn holds, then, Wolfe's genre study will share in the process that he somewhat inadequately describes. The best individual artists, just as the best scientists, may be continually seeking new paradigms at the same time that a solid consciousness of genre or normal science is necessary as the base for innovation.

Wolfe's own leap beyond the normal science of literary discourse is in his use of the term "icon," which provides the organizational scheme for the book. The general image of the barrier that must be breached, which was mentioned above in his thesis statement about a key action running throughout science fiction, is developed through a series of chapters about specific icons: the Spaceship, the City, the Wasteland, the Robot, and the Monster. In each case, Wolfe shows how the icon can be seen as a barrier image, and its iconic (or symbolic) power derives from this movement toward the unknown/known. His systematic and elaborate discussion of imagery paves the way for a discussion of tone and, ultimately, of value; but Wolfe stops short of those analyses. For example, the Platonic veil (or barrier) that must be pierced in Shelley's poem, "Adonais," carries a far more serious tonal quality and "value" than the piercing of a materialistic barrier that leads from one level of normal science to the next. Wolfe alludes to these complexities of tone, especially as he discusses Stanislaw Lem, but he does not incorporate a theory of tone adequately into his work.

This review has been rather abstract because Wolfe's argument is highly conceptual and abstract, but the development of the book is concrete, even encyclopedic. Despite the relatively modest number of pages (266, including front matter, notes, and index), the book is long because many pieces of fiction are discussed. Wolfe's specific analyses seem richest when



## Books

he is discussing Theodore Sturgeon, Walter M. Miller, Jr., and Arthur C. Clarke; but the range in the book is vast and accurately indexed so that the reader may pick and choose among favorites. Finally the book is valuable as a conceptual study and as a study of genre that should add to a continuing debate about the dynamics within the literary genre of science fiction and the relation of the individual artist to the genre.

Donald M. Hassler  
Honors and Experimental College  
Kent State University

## **A Sound Appraisal of the American Science-Fiction Magazines**

**The World of Science Fiction, 1926–1976: The History of A Subculture**, by Lester del Rey. Garland Publishing Company, Inc., 1980. \$15.00.

Lester del Rey's career encompasses almost the entire history of American science-fiction magazines. In this book, he has drawn upon his thorough knowledge to give his readers—whether neophyte, experienced scholar, teacher, or enthusiast—a sound evaluation of the literature and the subculture which it has created. Like other critics before him, he emphasizes that “the most important element in distinguishing science fiction from other literature is that it should deal with something alternate to our reality,” and that “Science fiction accepts change as the major basis for stories.” The bulk of the work focuses upon The Age of Wonder (1926–1949), The Golden Age (1938–1949), The Age of Acceptance (1950–1961), and the Age of Rebellion (1962–1973).

One of his important conclusions comes when he asserts that science fiction is “the last bastion of real adventure, one of the few challenges to the dreams of younger readers, and a source of food for imagination. . . .” Those who have heard him speak at various meetings or have read other pieces of his criticism will not be surprised to find that he questions whether utopia or dystopia directly belong within the field of science fiction proper. Certainly, however, they will recognize his repeated assertion that science fiction is in part an affirmation both of man's place in the universe and of the future itself. He insists, too, that science fiction must be considered “as entertainment,” and this view emphasizes why he questions didacticism as the important core of the genre. Del Rey's views must be kept in mind by any academic critic of the field, because he has long been one of the most articulate professional contributors to the evaluation of American science fiction.

Two appendixes are included in the book. The first is a highly selective listing of “Research and Study Material,” while the second is “A

Recommended Reading List” of what he regards as significant details from each of the periods covered. He includes in the latter list nine titles published before 1926 and only eight titles published in 1971. He does, however, include a selection of single-author collections as well as anthologies, and concludes the book with a list of “The Garland Library of Science Fiction” (forty-six titles) which he has chosen and edited.

No one would argue that this is a comprehensive view of the twentieth-century science fiction, but within its focus, including novels which appeared as serials, there is as yet no better study of science fiction as it evolved in the American magazines. Del Rey’s almost subjectively eclectic views must be listened to.

T.D.C.

## For Once, Then, Affirmation

**The Cybernetic Imagination in Science Fiction**, by Patricia S. Warrick. The MIT Press, 1980. \$15.00.

This work succeeds far better than any previous work of science-fiction criticism—to my mind, without exception—in bringing into focus a vast amount of material, both literary and scientific. And in saying this, one perhaps pays Warrick the highest possible compliment, for unlike so many others who have written on science fiction recently, she knows both her science and her fiction. She sets for herself the problem of discovering why so much science fiction that portrays “fictional worlds of computers and robots” is dystopian while “no such negative attitude prevails in the field of computer science.”

To accomplish this aim she has based the study on 225 stories and books written between 1930 and 1977, although acknowledging the earlier beginnings in Chapter Two: “Germinal Literary Images and Early Technologies.” The heart of the work lies in her establishment of “An Aesthetic and an Approach” (Chapter Four). While acknowledging the importance of the work of Darko Suvin and Joanna Russ, she builds upon their criteria—to some degree, one may say that she reemphasizes or restates at least part of those criteria, particularly those of Russ—by insisting upon four points: the finest science fiction must be “*grounded in scientific knowledge*”; it must “*incorporate a sense of novelty*”; it must achieve “*some dislocation in space or time from present reality*”; and it “*moves the reader toward an awareness of unity in the world and toward a higher abstraction.*” Her analysis of the work of Stanislaw Lem is sound but brief; her most extended and successful study of a single writer is of the achievement of Philip K. Dick.

What sets Professor Warrick’s *The Cybernetic Imagination* apart from

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so much recent science-fiction criticism, however, is not only her thoroughness but her separation from those who belittle the *science* of science fiction and, as Lester del Rey has said, seem to disavow the future. She concludes that science fiction “must grow with science; it cannot react against science and still be *science* fiction.” She continues, “Our present culture is shaped by science; the future will be even more deeply grounded in and formed by science. SF that is antiscientific in its attitude or ignores science as it models the future will be, except by the mere chance or lucky speculation, nothing more than entertainment and escapist reading.” Certainly such a view comes as a welcome relief after the dirges of the dystopian forecasts. While her study may raise questions regarding the history and the scope of the entire field of science fiction, Professor Warrick has given us a model study comparable to that of I. F. Clarke in *Voices Prophesying War*. She has very probably produced the finest specialist study of the field in 1980. It is an essential in any collection of critical works pertaining to the field—and provides excellent “Nonfiction” and “Fiction” bibliographies.

T.D.C.

# REACTION TIME

## **The Left Hand of Sexism? Women as the Alien Species on Gethen**

Carolyn Wendell's study of sex roles in the 1965–73 Nebula Award winners (*Extrapolation*, Vol. 20, Winter 1979) is provocative, and certainly makes its point: "Science fiction is a male-dominated genre. . . ." Nonetheless, I wish to complain about two aspects of her analysis.

The first complaint is not major. Wendell's idea of a female stereotype exhibits "passivity, emotion and intuition, dependency, or . . . the need to be protected because she is incompetent." On the other hand, "the active, the intellectual, the abstractly rational, and the technical are 'male' qualities." However, in one case, what really bothers Wendell appears to be her perception of the author's feelings toward the female character, rather than whether or not the character is stereotyped. It would be difficult to read " 'Repent, Harlequin!' Said the Ticktockman" without concluding that Harlan Ellison has portrayed the Harlequin as a hero, and pretty Alice as less than a heroine, and Wendell is justified in using the story as an example of a story with a peripheral woman character. However, it is the Harlequin, not pretty Alice, who exhibits emotion and intuition. Although he is active, he appears anything but abstractly rational, and when pretty Alice betrays him, she is being neither passive nor dependent, nor is she exhibiting a need to be protected. The story does not seem to be an example of sexual stereotyping so much as of an unsympathetic portrayal of a female character. The two need not be the same, and in the case of "Harlequin," Wendell has confused them.

Secondly, I wish to quarrel over Wendell's reading of a substantial work, Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Left Hand of Darkness* (Ace, 1969). Although she does not accuse Le Guin of sexism outright, the implication is there. Wendell objects to the use of "he" throughout *Left Hand*; states that "the few instances of 'kemmer' described are to the female sex, subtly suggesting that masculinity is the norm for Gethenians"; claims that "only one woman appears briefly in the whole story," and says that "the Gethenians we meet hold traditionally male positions." My first reaction to this categorization was that it was as perverse as if the Martian novels of Burroughs were attacked because of their antiheroism, or as if Zenna Henderson had been accused of atheism. However, second thought (and a rereading of *Left Hand*) substantiates the first charge, and if that is sexism, Le Guin is sexist.

The use of "he" is explained in *Left Hand*: "you cannot think of a Gethenian as 'it.' They are not neuters. . . . Lacking the Karhidish 'human pronoun' . . . I must say 'he,' for the same reasons as we used the masculine pronoun in referring to a transcendent god: it is less defined, less specific, than the neuter or the feminine" (p. 94). The evidence against the second charge is so strong that it is difficult to see how Wendell could have made it seriously. The whole tenor of *Left Hand*, both in Chapter 7 (on "the question of sex") and throughout, is that "Normal individuals have no predisposition to either sexual role in kemmer; they do not know whether they will be the male or the female, and have no choice in the matter" (pp. 90-91).

There are physical and physiological changes involved in either transformation. In most normal cases, the book does not indicate which partner in kemmer is male-like or which is female-like. Occasionally a Gethenian (apparently a throwback to ancestral stock) remains in kemmer for a longer period (p. 65) than the normal five to seven days out of twenty-six to twenty-eight (pp. 90-91), and may be permanently hormonally predisposed toward one or the other sex. Both types are called "perverts." Perhaps I am not subtle enough, but I find no indication that "masculinity is the norm for Gethenians."

The third charge is also false. True, one of the two main characters is male—the other is a Gethenian—but there is more than one woman who makes an appearance. First, Chapter 7 was written by a woman (p. 96). Second, the representatives of the Ekumen (who are not Gethenians) are apparently led by a woman (p. 278). Third, there are many instances where Gethenians are seen as women, most prominently: "Fax: the Weaver: a woman, a woman dressed in light" (p. 67); and Therem Harth rem ir Estraven, who is at times (and not only when in kemmer) described as womanly (pp. 17-18; 201; 234).

The last charge, that "Gethenians hold traditionally male positions," has some merit, I suppose, if we have been conditioned to think of guards,

government leaders, and scientists as males. If that is anyone's fault, it is not Le Guin's. As Wendell herself puts it, "probably the greatest stumbling block for the reader in his/ her attempt to view people as androgynous beings is the simple fact that we are *sexual beings*, both born and *bred* . . . . Our impulse to attribute gender is an automatic response, both innate and learned" (emphasis in original).

But Le Guin has gone further in answering the "male positions" charge. Shusgis, a political leader, has given birth (p. 115). The followers of one of the leading religions swear by their founder's mammaries (p. 141). According to a creation myth, the named founder of the race was the one who gave birth, not the father (p. 226). A physician is described as "maternal" (p. 269).

Le Guin has written a novel which attempts to eliminate even the question of equality of the sexes. "The society of Gethen, in its daily functioning and its continuity, is without sex" (p. 93). This aspect of the structure of her subcreation is reinforced throughout by statements like "My landlady, a voluble man" (p. 49); "The king was pregnant" (p. 99); and descriptions of people who combine traits of maleness and femaleness: Estraven (pp. 17–18), Gaum (p. 134), Argaven (p. 274), and Sorve (p. 281). It is a pity to see charges of sexism, of any type, lodged against *Left Hand*. True, *Left Hand* was written in the language of a society which has sexual stereotyping, and is read by the inhabitants of that society. But it portrays "A World Without Sex Roles" much more successfully than Wendell allows. I submit that her charges lack substantial merit.

Martin LaBar  
Central Wesleyan College

## Announcements

### **The Launching Pad**

(continued from page 100)

The *Selected Proceedings of the 1978 Science Fiction Research Association National Conference*, edited by Thomas J. Remington and published by the University of Northern Iowa, are now available at \$12.50 per copy. Microfiche copies are available for \$5.00. Orders should be sent to: SFRA SELECTED PROCEEDINGS, Dean Ray Schlichter, Office of Extension and Continuing Education, University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, Iowa 50613. Payment should accompany orders.

Also available now is *Fantasfeer*, a bibliography of all science fiction and fantasy published in the Netherlands and Belgium up to 1978. This 300-page book lists 5,600 titles, including translations and their original titles. It also includes a complete authors' register and title checklist with cross-references for stories in anthologies and non-science-fiction magazines. Compiled by Arnold Spaink, Rinus Gaasbeek, and George Gorremans, the book is available through customary book importation channels, the publisher (Meulenhoff Nederland B.V., P.O. Box 100, Amsterdam, the Netherlands), or Leo Kindt, Spotvogellaan 45 A, P.O. Box 87933, 2508 DH DEN HAAG, the Netherlands. Cost of the book is 19.50 Dfl (Dutch florins), which is approximately \$9.75. *Kindt will accept only Dutch currency.* Pay-

ment should accompany orders. The book will not be sold abroad.

The Science Fiction Foundation recently announced that it is compiling *The Letters of John W. Campbell*. The multi-volume work will be published by Authors' Co-op Publishing, Incorporated, and the letters will be edited by George Hay in consultation with Malcolm Edwards, Administrator of the Science Fiction Foundation in London. Hay requests anyone holding letters from Campbell from before 1951, or later personal correspondence, to please forward copies to the publisher (Rt. 4, Box 137, Franklin, Tennessee 37064). All letters will be copied and the originals promptly returned. Though the book will publish only Campbell's letters, Hay is also requesting both sides of a correspondence for the purposes of annotation. Nothing from letters not written by Campbell will be quoted without specific permission. It is intended that two depositories be established: one will be the Science Fiction Foundation, the other will be a suitable American institution. Access to letters at both depositories will be strictly controlled. Anyone not wishing their letters to be deposited should say so. All general correspondence concerning the project should be addressed to: George Hay, c/o Reception, London House, Mecklenburgh Square, London WC1.

CBY



***Gothic* is a semi-annual periodical devoted to macabre fiction in the tradition of the eighteenth-century Gothic novel. The review publishes critical articles of scholarly interest on all aspects of Gothicism in literature, and since its inception in 1979, *Gothic* has featured articles on German and American Gothicists, H. P. Lovecraft, R. L. Stevenson, and Horace Walpole, as well as reviews of significant books in the field. An annual feature is a bibliography of Gothic studies for the preceding year. An eleven-member editorial board of noted scholars of the Gothic bring their wide experience to the review as it explores a genre with a rich and varied tradition. Not only does *Gothic* feature criticism, but new fiction by emerging authors in the genre is a significant part of its contribution to this continuing tradition.**

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