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Appreciations and Letters to Robert A. Heinlein

ROBERTA. HEINLEIN
by Connie Willis

You see, he had this spaceship. And these rockets and stargates and planets and star beasts and cats and Martians and second-rate actors and ten-year-old genius girls and identical twins and tough-ol'd spacehands and naïve teenagers. And rebellions and kidnappings and epidemics and trips to Pluto and the moons of Jupiter and Proxima Centauri. Heinlein had everything, including at least three Marses and two Venuses, and some of the cutest, smartest, teenage guys I'd ever seen. It was no wonder I fell for him, and fell hard.

Just like everybody else my age.

To say Robert A. Heinlein's books - Rocket Ship Galileo, Time for the Stars, Citizen of the Galaxy, Tunnel in the Sky - were the most important influence on my entire generation of science fiction writers is putting it mildly. Heinlein was science fiction for all of us, and it shows in everything we've ever written. The only bones of contention are which of his books had the greatest influence on each of us and which book is the best. The answer to both questions is usually the first one we read, and the arguments for Citizen of the Galaxy versus The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress can get heated. (I was once on a Heinlein panel so passionate I thought I was going to end up in an outright brawl.)

In my opinion, Have Space Suit, Will Travel (the first Heinlein, and the first science fiction, I read) is the best, with The Door into Summer a close second, followed by Double Star, Time for the Stars, and Tunnel in the Sky. I was very lucky to have stumbled on Have Space Suit first. It has everything I love about science fiction in it: humor, adventure, science (I can still name the distances of the planets from the sun in astronomical units, thanks to Kip's mnemonic), literary allusions (who else would put The Tempest and Three Men in a Boat in the same book?), great characters, and a dazzling sense of wonder.

A few years ago, when I visited Australia, I went dumbstruck at the sight of Aldebaran and the Southern Cross, two things I first encountered in Heinlein novels, just like Kip had when he saw our galaxy from the Lesser Magellanic Cloud.

The future, Heinlein wrote about, was wonderful, full of technological marvels like credit cards and cell phones and interplanetary liners, but they also had a hanged-up, real-life feel to them that made even the most amazing story and bizarre aliens believable. Kip finds out about winning a trip to the moon from an old National Geographic in the dentist's office; Peewee Jimmies the airlock with a used piece of chewing gum; they both recount how they singlehandedly saved the earth, while eating cereal at a kitchen table. Heinlein's worlds are at once fantastic and everyday, exotic and down-to-earth (literally), and they were utterly different from what had come before. You actually lived in those futures - you had homework and broke your leg skiing and fought with your parents and got in trouble with the local authorities and had to deal with jerks and teachers and other menaces. Heinlein made the future real.

That was probably his greatest gift to SF, and one that everyone, from Joe Haldeman to George Lucas, has incorporated into their work. But I also think Heinlein's characters were revolutionary. He rarely gets credit for them. People complain about Podkayne and his later portrayals of women (as well they should) and talk about Stage One Heinlein heroes as if they were all alike, but he created some truly memorable characters, Lazarus Long, of course, but also Johnnie Stuart, the hero of Star Beast, who's not only dumber than his pet but also everyone else in the book; his girlfriend, who's divorced her parents and is clearly capable of anything; the competitive twins in Time for the Stars; the self-invented hero of "All You Zombies...", the washed-up ham in Double Star who considers himself "a great actor" and proves that he is in every sense of the word; and the ten-year-old genius Peewee, who solves quadratic equations in her head, clings to a rag doll, and plans to be "quite a dish" in a few years. Even Podkayne has her moments. There are also dozens of terrific supporting characters: the fairies in Podkayne of Mars, Lummo, the Mother Thing, the computer in The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress, the horrible roommate at the Space Academy, and Petronius the Arbiter and all Heinlein's other wonderful cats.

Everyone's been influenced by Heinlein, from John Varley to Lois McMasters Bujold to James Patrick Kelly to Firefly, Star Trek's multiethnic crew is pure Heinlein, and so is Luke Skywalker (a Stage One Heinlein hero if there ever was one) with his banged-up speeder. I was beyond influenced. When I was 15, it was my ambition to write a sequel to Have Space Suit, in which Peewee and Kip would team up again eight years later (when Peewee had become that dish she talked about) and save the world. I didn't exactly do that, but it's very obvious to me that Heinlein's influence is everywhere in To Say Nothing of the Dog, right down to the title, which is taken straight from Three Men in a Boat, and in everything else I've ever written.

But none of us has been able to do him justice, no matter how hard we try. He was one of a kind. When Marilyn was recovering from back surgery, Ginny came to stay with us, to help. You were there to receive the first Grand Master Award. I was trying to get up the courage to go introduce myself when you crossed the room yourself and shook my hand, telling me how much you liked The Forever War. I was so busy managing to get to a phone and call Gay and tell her, but otherwise I don't think my feet touched the ground all night.

With greatest respect,

-Joe Haldeman

Dear Robert,

Happy 100th birthday. When I was a kid, your generation had me persuaded that we'd all get there alive and hale. We might be in retirement on the Moon; we might have lost our flying car licenses, but if we'd been born to the right families, we'd get there. Sorry about that.

My first Heinlein story was Rocket Ship Galileo - Nazis on the Moon, yes, but also lectures on mathematics. I should reread that one. Red Planet I read at 12 and 60. They read like two very different books. So does Farmer in the Sky. Funny what sticks in your head.

At my house in Tarzana, you participated in the Citizens Advisory Council for a National Space Policy: one of several SF writers who served as translators and recorders and off-center viewpoints for the varied disciplines represented. Without us it would have been Babel. Together we 50 or so gave Ronald Reagan the weapon that drove the Soviet Union bankrupt.

When Marilyn was recovering from back surgery, Ginny came to stay with us, to help. Marilyn recovered very nicely, thank God, and Ginny quickly decided she wasn't needed, but we owe her much thanks.

You and Ginny stayed with us while Jet Propulsion Laboratories watched Voyager passing through Jupiter system. I remember you telling me how to redesign my guest shower. I was lazier than you thought.

Regarding your influence on the science fiction field, I'm on record. You have been the most thoroughly imitated man. Ideas you threw away in a paragraph or two sparked whole novels in other writers. Without you the field would have been very different.
John Scalzi was born May 10, 1969, and grew up in Southern California, going to school in Claremont. He graduated from the Webb School in 1987 and attended the University of Chicago, where he became editor-in-chief of the Chicago Maroon and graduated with a philosophy degree in 1991. He moved back to California, where he was the film critic and later a columnist for the Fresno Bee. In 1996 he relocated to Washington DC to work for AOL as an in-house editor. In 1998 he became a full-time freelance writer, doing work for a variety of corporate clients in addition to reviewing and fiction writing. Scalzi is also a prominent blogger, with a popular personal site, "The Whatever", and professional blogs for AOL.

Scalzi took an unusual path to fiction publication. He put up first SF novel Agent to the Stars on his website as “shareware” in 1999 and made around $4,000 in donations from 1999 to 2004, when he told people to stop sending money. (Agent to the Stars was published by Subterranean Press in 2005.) He posted second novel Old Man’s War on his website in 2002, where Tor editor Patrick Nielsen Hayden read it and offered to publish it in more traditional form. The novel appeared in 2005 and subsequently became a Hugo finalist. Two more novels set in the world of Old Man’s War followed: The Ghost Brigades (2006) and The Lost Colony (2007), along with standalone The Android’s Dream (2006). The High Castle is forthcoming.


Scalzi won the Campbell Award for Best New Writer in 2006 and is currently a Hugo finalist in the Best Fan Writer category. He lives in Bradford OH with his wife, Kristine Blausen Scalzi (married 1995), and their daughter, Athena.
"Old Man's War" was meant to be Heinlein-esque both because structurally that was the right thing to do and because I figured it would sell. I went into a bookstore and looked to see which science fiction was selling, and there was a hell of a lot of military science fiction out there. When I thought about what military SF I liked, a lot of it came back to Heinlein. So I very consciously set out to write that sort of thing. It's cynical in the sense that I figured if I could replicate enough of Heinlein's...
Milestones

GARDNER DOZOIS had quintuple bypass surgery July 6, 2007. A week later, after suffering severe complications – his heart stopped, and he claims he died, but was resuscitated – he had a second operation to implant a defibrillator. He is recovering well, and is expected to go home in late July. Cards and e-mails may be sent to Gardner.

CORY DOCTOROW's Down and Out in the Magic Kingdom has been chosen as the reading selection for the McMaster University Daily News Summer Book Club.

GREGORY BENFORD, ANDRE BORMANIS, JACK McDEVITT, and ROBERT J. SAWYER took part in a workshop, “The Future of Intelligence in the Cosmos”, co-sponsored by the NASA Ames Research Center and the SETI Institute, June 30 - July 31. Other participants included Marvin Minsky, Alvin Toffler, James Benford, Paul Davies, Frank Drake, Seth Shostak, and Jill Tarter.

STEPHAN MARTINIERE has been named a judge for the Illustrators of the Future Contest.

Awards

DANIEL F. GALOUYE (1920-1976) received the 2007 Cordwainer Smith Rediscovery Award, announced at Readercon in Burlington MA, July 2007. Judges were Martin H. Greenberg, Barry Malzberg, Mike Resnick, and Gordon Van Gelder.

Books Sold

JOHN SCALZI sold a sequel to The Android's Dream to Patrick Nielsen Hayden at Tor via Ethan Ellenberg.

HARRY TURTLEDOVE's alternate history The Man with the Iron Heart went to Fleetwood Robbins at Del Rey via Russell Galen.

SHARON SHINN sold books five and six in her Twelve Houses series, as well as a collection, to Ginjer Buchanan at Ace via Ethan Ellenberg.

JOE ABERCROMBIE sold Best Served Cold and a second book to Gillian Redfearn at Gollancz.

GARY GIBSON sold Stealing Light, Stealing Fire, and Stealing Time to Peter Lavery at Pan Macmillan.

BRIAN FRANCIS SLATTERY's Liberation - "pitched as The Road, but happier" - went to Liz Gorinsky at Tor via Cameron McClure of the Donald Maass Literary Agency.

Award-winning mainstream author JUSTIN CRONIN, writing as JORDANAINSLEY, sold a post-apocalyptic vampire trilogy to Mark Tavani at Ballantine for a reported $3.75 million via Ellen Levine of Trident Media Group.

GAIL MARTIN sold The Blood King, sequel to The Summoner, to George Mann at Solaris via Ethan Ellenberg.

JILL MYLES sold humorous fantasies Sex Starved and Sex Drive to Micki Nuding at Pocket via Carolyn Grayson of the Ashley Grayson Literary Agency.

BARBARA HAMBLY, writing as ELIZABETH EVANS, sold three Abigail Adams mysteries to Ginjer Buchanan at Berkley via Fran Collin.

JULIE KENNER sold Tainted and two sequels to Ginjer Buchanan at Ace via Kim Whalen of Trident Media Group.

CHRIS MARIE GREEN sold three Vampire Babylon novels to Ginjer Buchanan at Ace.

AMANDA ASHBY's YA fantasy The Zombie Queen of Newbury & his daughter, novelist LUCY HAWKING, will write children's SF book George's Secret Key to the Universe for Simon & Schuster Children's via Tif Loehnis and Eric Simonoff of Janklow & Nesbit.

JULIANNE LEE sold Night Child and a sequel to Ginjer Buchanan at Ace via Lauren Abra- mo of the Jane Dystel Agency.

New writer JASPER KENT sold world rights to epic historical fantasy Twelve to Simon Taylor at Transworld for “a good five-figure sum” via John Jarroll.

JONATHAN STRAHAN will edit two more volumes of The Best Science Fiction and Fantasy of the Year for Jason Williams at Night Shade Books via Howard Morhaim.

ZORAN ZIVKOVIC sold world English rights to novel The Last Book to Peter Crowther at PS Publishing via John Jarroll.

JOHN LANGAN sold collection Mr. Gaunt and Other Uneasy Encounters to Sean Wallace at Prime via Ginjer Clark of Curtis Brown.

EILEEN KERNAGHAN's historical fantasy Wild Talent went to Thistledown Press.

MARK CHARAN sold first fantasy novel The Reef to Chris Teague at Pendragon Press via John Jarroll.

BETH BERNOBICH's novella Ars Memoriae went to PS Publishing.


MIKE ALLEN will edit a new annual anthology series, Clockwork Phoenix, for Vera Nazarian at Norilana Books.
Books Resold

ROBERT A. HEINLEIN’s Between Planets resold to Toni Weiskopf at Baen via Eleanor Wood.

ALASTAIR REYNOLDS resold The Prefect and two more SF novels to Ginjer Buchanan at Ace via Gollancz.

MICHAEL CHABON sold UK/Australia/New Zealand rights to Gentlemen of the Road to Hodder & Stoughton via Del Rey.

STEPHEN R. DONALDSON resold his five Gap novels to Jo Fletcher at Gollanz via Abner Stein and Howard Morhaim.

KAREN MILLER’s Innocent Mage, sequel The Awakened Mage, went to Orbit via Ethan Elenberg. HarperCollins published Mage, the Silver Bullet in Australia.

JACK CAMPBELL delivered Galaxy Blues to Charles Pelto of Home-world Press via Phil Harbottle.

Books Delivered

ALLEN STEELE delivered Galaxy Blues to Ginjer Buchanan at Ace.

TERRY BROOKS turned in The Elves of Cintra, sequel to Armageddon’s Children, to Betsy Mitchell at Del Rey.

KAREN TRAVIS handed in Judge to Diana Gill at Eos.

KAY KENYON delivered A World Too Near, second in her The Entire and the Rose quartet, to Lou Anders at Pyr.

JOHN G. HENRY, writing as JACK CAMPBELL, handed in The Lost Fleet: Valiant to Anne Sowards at Ace.

SARAH HOYT, writing as SARAH D’ALMEIDA, delivered The Musketee’er’s Inheritance to Ginjer Buchanan for Berkley Prime Crime.

KAREN CHANCE turned in Embrace the Night to Anne Sowards for Roc.

JONATHAN BARNES turned in The Domino Men, sequel to The Somnambulist, to Simon Spanton at Gollancz.

ELIZABETH VAUGHAN delivered Dagger-Star to Anne Sowards for Roc.

JOHN CURLOVICH, writing as J.M.C. BLAIR, turned in an Arthurian mystery to Ginjer Buchanan at Berkley Prime Crime.

TALIA GRYPHON handed in the third Gillian Key novel to Ginjer Buchanan at Ace.

KRISTIN LANDON turned in The Cold Minds to Anne Sowards at Ace.

VICTORIA THOMPSON delivered Murder on Bank Street to Ginjer Buchanan at Berkley.

AL SARRANTONIO handed in collection Halloween and Other Seasons to Richard Chizmar at Cemetery Dance.


STACY HAGUE-HILL has been hired as assistant editor at Tor.

BRIAN MURRAY, HarperCollins group president, has been promoted to president of HarperCollins Worldwide.

SUSAN REICH is the new president of Publishers Group West. She was previously v-p of marketing at PGW before becoming president and COO of the Avalon Publishing Group.

MARY SUE RUSCI has been promoted to v-p and executive editor at the adult trade division of Simon & Schuster.

ALAN RUBSAM is James Frenkel’s new assistant, working in Madison WI.

MARK SEHESTEDT has resigned as editor at Wizards of the Coast to become a freelancer, moving from Washington State to Maine.

ANGIE SAGE sold film rights to her seven-book Septimus Heap series to Warner Bros. Karen Rosenfelt is producing, with Sage as executive producer, and Courtenay Valenti overseeing for Warner Bros. The studio hopes to make it a film franchise like the Harry Potter movies.

Film rights to JAMES SAL- LIS’s Lew Griffin novels went to J.P. Williams in a six-figure deal via Steven Fisher of the APA on behalf of Vicky Bijur.

Film rights to JONATHAN LETHEM’s You Don’t Love Me Yet went to Greg Mallick in a free deal, with an agreement to release any film and all ancillary rights into the public domain after a set number of years.

Film rights to SIMON GREEN’s Nightside series went to Celtic Rose Entertainment via Joshua Bilmes.

V.C. ANDREWS’s The Landry novels will be adapted as a television miniseries for the Lifetime network by The Hatchery and Jaffe/Braunstein. Ghostwriter ANDREW NEIDERMAN is a consultant on the project.

ALAN DEAN FOSTER resold Transformers and Transformers: Ghosts of Yesterday to Titan Books in the UK via Del Rey.

STEVEN SAVILE sold Televisionaries, A History of Cult TV from The Twilight Zone to Torchwood to Sandra Wake at Plexus, and Warhammer novel Curse of the Necrarch to Lindsey Priestly at Games Workshop/Black Library, both via John Jarrold.
Win Heinlein Awards

Anne McCaffrey and Elizabeth Moon are the recipients of the annual Robert A. Heinlein Award, sponsored by the Heinlein Society and given “for outstanding published work in hard science fiction or technical writings inspiring the human exploration of space.” Yoji Kondo presented Moon’s award July 7, 2007 during the Heinlein Centennial convention in Kansas City MO, and Eleanor Wood accepted on Moon’s behalf. McCaffrey’s award will be presented to her in person in August 2007 during the Writers of the Future event in Los Angeles. A report on the Heinlein Centennial, with photos will appear next issue.

Campbell, Sturgeon, and Pilgrim Awards

Ben Bova’s Titan (Tor) won the 2007 John W. Campbell Memorial Award, and Robert Charles Wilson’s “The Cartesian Theater” (Futureshocks) won the 2007 Theodore Sturgeon Memorial Award. The awards were presented by James Gunn, and both authors were present to accept their awards.

Algis Budrys won the Pilgrim award for his lifetime contributions to SF and fantasy, given by the Science Fiction Research Association. Adam Frisch presented the award and read a speech on Budry’s behalf. (For other SFRA award winners, see the Data File.)

The awards were presented at a ceremony July 7, 2007, in Kansas City MO. The annual Campbell Conference and the Science Fiction Research Association conference were both held in conjunction with the Heinlein Centennial convention.

Runners-up for the Campbell Award were: Second Place: “A Billion Eves”, Robert Reed (Asimov’s 10-11/06). Third Place: ‘‘Lord Weary’s Empire”, Michael Swanwick (Asimov’s 12-06).

Philip K. Dick Ascendant

The opinions and passions of literary critics and the Hollywood establishment rarely sync up, but both groups appear to have a new favorite: Philip K. Dick. Twenty-five years after his death in March 1982, Dick is finally getting the wider respect he always craved, and a flurry of articles and essays about his legacy have appeared around the anniversary of his death.

In the past several years Dick has become something of a cottage industry within the movie business, with several films based on his work produced, and more in the pipeline. At the same time – perhaps because of the publicity brought on by all the movies – literary critics are beginning to examine Dick’s work more seriously. The high point came when the Library of America published an omnibus of Dick’s work, Four Novels of the 1960s, edited by Dick devotee Jonathan Lethem (a current mainstream literary darling in his own right). With that publication, Dick is pretty much assured a spot in the canon of American literature. While the novels collected aren’t necessarily his best books – Do Androids Dream of Electric Sleep?, The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch, Ubik, and The Man in the High Castle – they do display Dick’s range and his signature obsessions with the nature of reality, the difficulty of telling the artificial from the genuine, and the question of what it means to be human.

In May The New York Times Book Review ran a long article on Dick’s work and his influence, making much of his drug use (which tends to be exaggerated) and possible mental illness, as well as the way he alternately embodies and transcends his pulpish roots. It’s the kind of attention Dick would have loved to receive before he died, since by many accounts he desperately wanted mainstream recognition. Publishers are rushing to bring his older books into print, including previously unpublished mainstream works like Voices from the Street.

Respectability is nice, but you can’t eat literary acclaim. Dick, who lived in poverty for much of his life, would have doubtless appreciated the heaps of money Hollywood has been throwing at his estate in recent years, though he might have been troubled by some of the cinematic results. Films based (however loosely) on his work began with Blade Runner (1982), though Dick didn’t live to see the finished film, dying during production. Other movies based on his stories and novels include Total Recall (1990), Screamers (1995), Impostor (1998), and The Fifth Element (1997).

For more information about the Campbell conference and the awards, visit <www.ku.edu/~sfcenter/> or write to James Gunn, Department of English, University of Kansas, 3114 Wescoe Hall, Lawrence KS 66045-2115, or e-mail <jgunn@ku.edu>.
THE DATA FILE

Riverdeep Buys Harcourt • Riverdeep, parent company of Houghton Mifflin, has agreed to buy Harcourt from parent company Reed Elsevier for $4 billion ($3.7 billion in cash and $300 million in stock), with Reed Elsevier retaining a stake of about 12% in the new company. Riverdeep, a Dublin-based educational software company, purchased Houghton Mifflin last year for $1.75 billion. Though it's clear Riverdeep's goal is to become an educational publishing powerhouse, combining Houghton Mifflin's textbook business with the profitable Harcourt Education division, the deal also includes Harcourt Trade, publisher of new and backlist fiction by Umberto Eco, Edward Gorey, William H. Gollancz, will be headed by Managing Director of Houghton Mifflin and formerly CEO of Harcourt Education. No one seems sure yet whether Houghton Mifflin and Harcourt's trade divisions will be merged or remain separate, or whether various editorial and management positions will be eliminated or combined. Harcourt brings in about $1.1 billion annually. The combined trade divisions are expected to make about $200 million per year.

Orion Reorganizes Trade Division • The Orion Group announced a new hardcover Trade Division designed to "streamline" their operations. The new division, which includes Gollancz, will be headed by Managing Director Lisa Milton, who will report directly to Deputy CEO and Group Publisher Malcolm Edwards, who will continue to direct publishing and acquisition strategy. Jon Wood will be in charge of both Gollancz and Orion fiction as the new publishing director of the new division, which also includes Orion non-fiction, Orion Children's Books, and Weidenfeld fiction, non-fiction, and illustrated books. The hardcover division will operate alongside the existing Paperback Division headed by Susan Lamb.

Pottermania: Peaks and Leaks – Harry Beats Beatles! • Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows was officially launched Saturday, July 21, 2007, going on sale around much of the world at one minute past midnight, Greenwich Mean Time, with North American launches following at 12:01 a.m. local time. Libraries and bookstores around the world planned special events. Huge discounts meant that many chains and online sellers would see little profit from sales, while many independent booksellers felt unable to compete, but the celebrations continued regardless.

Barnes & Noble had over 1.2 million pre-orders for Deathly Hallows as of July 12, a new record. Over 700 stores hosted Midnight Magic Costume Parties on Friday, July 20; festivities at their store at Union Square in New York City were webcast live on Barnes&Noble.com.

Amazon reported over 1.4 million pre-orders in the US (as of July 19), and almost 2 million worldwide, surpassing the record of 1.5 million set by the previous book in the series; with their price discount at 49%, Amazon estimates they have saved customers $23 million. In the

The Taos Toolbox master class in writing was held at the Snow Bear Lodge in Taos Ski Valley NM, July 8-21. Instructors were Walter Jon Williams, Connie Willis, and George R.R. Martin.


Clarion and Clarion West

The 2007 Clarion workshop, the first held since the program's relocation to San Diego CA, took place June 25 - August 3, 2007 at the University of California, San Diego. This year's instructors were Gregory Frost, Jeff VanderMeer, Karen Joy Fowler, Cory Doctorow, Ellen Kushner, and Delia Sherman.

Front row (l to r): Peter Atwood, Cory Doctorow (instructor), Keyan Bowes; second row: Ramsey Shehadeh, J.E. (Betsy) Hasman, Julie Andrews, Kari O'Connor, Dr. Sneag (fuzzy purple mascot), Katheryn (Katie) McLaughlin, Caleb Wilson; third row: Matthew Cody, January Sears, Shweta Narayan, Desirina Boskovich, Catherine (Kater) Cheek, Jerome Stuart, David Wesley; back row: Andrew Emmott, Nicholas (Nick) Wolven, Justin Whitney, Andrew (Drew) Steiger White

The 2007 Clarion West workshop was held June 17 - July 27, 2007 in Seattle WA. This year's instructors were Nancy Kress, Larissa Lai, Graham Joyce, Kelley Eskridge, Patrick Nielsen Hayden, and Samuel R. Delany.

Front row (l to r): Melinda Thielbar, Carrie J. Devall, Benjamin Crowell, Michael Underwood, David J. Williams, Roz Clarke; middle row: seated: Amy Lau, Sharon K. Richards, Graham Joyce (instructor) Lillah Wild, Stacy Sinclair; back row: Jocelyn Paige Kelly, Gary Dauphin, Erin Cashier, Derek Zumsteg, David Zasloff, Jon Christian Allison, Dominica Phetteplace, Christopher Caldwell
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His monastic existence is also turned upside-down when he falls passionately in love with the beautiful Princess Eva, an exotic visitor from a far-off kingdom. Alas, the princess is destined to marry the next Sultan—and Amir has dozens of more ambitious brothers vying for the throne . . . assuming they survive the unnatural menace preying on their royal blood.

To clear his name, Amir must track down the true source of the darkness stalking the palace. But even if he can somehow save his rival brothers, must he then watch one of them wed the woman he loves? Or will he die without ever setting foot outside his opulent cage?

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SHERLOCK HOLMES MEETS JACK VANCE’S DYING EARTH IN MAJESTRUM.

The scientific method and a well-calibrated mind have long served freelance discriminator Henghis Hapthorn, allowing him to investigate and solve the problems of the wealthy and powerful aristocracy of Old Earth, and securing him a reputation for brilliance across The Spray and throughout the Ten Thousand Worlds. But the universe is shifting, cycling away from logic and reason and ushering in a new age of sympathetic association, better known as magic.

A Cruel Wind

GLEN COOK

TP / $14.95 / 978-1-59780-104-1

BEFORE THERE WAS BLACK COMPANY, THERE WAS THE DREAD EMPIRE.

A Cruel Wind is an omnibus collection of the first three Dread Empire novels: A Shadow of All Night’s Falling, October’s Baby and All Darkness Met. It features an introduction by Jeff VanderMeer.

"The thing about Glen Cook is that . . . he single-handedly changed the field of fantasy—something a lot of people didn’t notice, and maybe still don’t. He brought the story down to a human level. . . . Reading his stuff was like reading Vietnam War fiction on peyote.”—Steven Erikson, author of Gardens of the Moon, and Deadhouse Gates

Butcher Bird

RICHARD KADREY

TP / $14.95 / 978-1-59780-086-0

SPYDER LEE IS A HAPPY MAN. He lives in San Francisco and owns a tattoo shop. He has his favorite drinking buddy, Lulu Grouse, and friends all over town. One night a pissed-off demon tries to bite his head off and he’s saved by a stranger—a small, blind woman with a sword as wicked as her smile.

Suddenly, Spyder’s life is turned upside down. The demon infected Spyder with something awful—the truth. He can suddenly see the world as it really is: full of angels and demons and monsters and monster-hunters; a world full of black magic and mysteries.

Dropped into the middle of a conflict between forces he doesn’t fully understand, Spyder searches for a magic book with the blind swordswoman who saved him. Their journey will take them from deserts to lush palaces, to underground caverns, to the heart of Hell itself.
There are plenty of good new stories this month; best is undoubtedly Ted Chiang’s first piece of fiction in a while, “The Merchant and the Alchemist’s Gate,” a novelette published in the September F&SF. Chiang is a master of the outré scientific angle on human existence, his logic always impeccable but at the same time existentially subversive; here, he employs the traditional form of the Arabian Nights tale to illustrate the wonders and pitfalls of utopian society’s tendency to succumb to moral hysteria. In the near future, it occasionally happens that children’s DNA is stolen in order to clone sex slaves for pedophiles, but the emphasis is on occasionally, and the real danger to human rights lies in extreme measures taken against the perceived threat. A (putatively) innocent man suffers persecution. In contrast to this gloomy reasoning, Albert E. Cowdrey has great fun lampooning cynical diplomatic Realpolitik in his short story “Envoy Extraordinary,” in which an ambassador is dispatched to a dingy totalitarian planet to dissuade its ruler from taking up piracy and ends up fulfilling this mission by unexpectedly radical means. Given that Cowdrey used to be a diplomat, he is easily capable of the sort of earnestness visible in those three stories, but his novelette “The Caldera of Good Fortune,” is for all its often brooding tone, wry enough in the end. In Reed’s continuing venue of the Great Ship, a planet-sized vessel touring the Galaxy, one of the resident alien cultures, a hive mind of sorts known as the “Luckies,” inhabits a volcanic cone that periodically erupts because in a few years of performing nightly in its inscrutable prison, the children have only twice received any evidence of approbation from an unseen audience. One of the girls is a musical genius, and possibly her efforts can end her classmates’ torment, but a price will surely be exacted. A further, perhaps deeper, adolescent dilemma is delineated by Kit Reed in her excellent tale “What Wolves Know,” which concerns a child raised by wolves finally being returned to civilization; his human family is dysfunctional, greedy for the proceeds of malign destiny, giving a generally happy outcome. However, a few years of performing nightly in its inscrutable prison, the children have only twice received any evidence of approbation from an unseen audience. One of the girls is a musical genius, and possibly her efforts can end her classmates’ torment, but a price will surely be exacted. A further, perhaps deeper, adolescent dilemma is delineated by Kit Reed in her excellent tale “What Wolves Know,” which concerns a child raised by wolves finally being returned to civilization; his human family is dysfunctional, greedy for the proceeds of publicity, and the boy, culturally lupine, must interpret their behavior in accordance with a primeval, but subtle, code. Kipling, Burroughs, and many others have explored such scenarios, but never with this keen, highly contemporary, intelligence.

Robert Reed is easily capable of the sort of earnestness visible in those three stories, but his novelette “The Caldera of Good Fortune” is, for all its often brooding tone, wry enough in the end. In Reed’s continuing venue of the Great Ship, a planet-sized vessel touring the Galaxy, one of the resident alien cultures, a hive mind of sorts known as the “Luckies,” inhabits a volcanic cone that periodically erupts or threatens to erupt; the Luckies perceive the world outside in unusual detail and project a false reality upon their “sky,” which is more faithful than any other virtual creation. Questions of authenticity naturally arise in this.
M is for MAGIC
NEIL GAIMAN

Table of Contents:
- The Case of the Four and Twenty Blackbirds
- Troll Bridge
- Don't Ask Jack
- How to Sell the Ponti Bridge
- October in the Chair
- Chivalry
- The Price
- How to Talk to Girls at Parties
- Sembird
- The Witch's Headstone
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Best-selling writer Neil Gaiman's M is for Magic is his first collection for readers of all ages, in the tradition of such Ray Bradbury classics as R is for Rocket and S is for Space.

In M is for Magic, readers will be enchanted by a neighborhood cat that fights a nightly battle to save his family from evil, a hardboiled nursery rhyme story, and many other delights as only Neil Gaiman can provide.

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FREE US shipping on preorders
Analog All Hallows - the small-press 'zines increasingly feature Lady Churchill's Rosebud Wristlet. It's hard to find mother, a father ever mirrored in his Margais, built on a deep, empty chasm. The vacation in Europe, in an odd place called San Lone Star Stories Fly trap is an absorbing story of a curious child in a curious house, with a sometimes somewhat alchemical laboratory, a story telling gardener of Hell”. It is of course the stark details of this deprived future, quietly slipped in, that make the story powerful.

I finally caught up with Subterranean's Spring issue. I really enjoyed John Scalzi's "Pluto Tells All", about the former planet's reaction to its demotion. Bruce Sterling's "A Plain Tale from Our Hills" is a subtle sketch of a postcatastrophe future, told in Kiplingesque fashion about a wife's brave effort to keep her husband in the face of an exotic woman's affair with him. It is of course the stark details of this deprived future, quietly slipped in, that make the story powerful.

The June Ideomancer features a couple of nice SF stories - Ruth Nestvold's "Far Side of the Moon" is a dark piece about women sold into prostitution on space stations, and Yoon Ha Lee's "Screamers" is evocative work about the strange and dangerous jobs needed to navigate space - almost Cordwainer Smithian in affect. And Lone Star Stories for June also has some good straight SF, particularly Jay Lake's "Eating Their Sins and Ours"; a fine variation on the idea of a war with aliens that is basically a mistake, and the stumbling intercultural ef-...
The next breath you take will kill you.

"Part Michael Crichton, part George Romero... full of high-altitude chills."
—E. E. Knight

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The nanotechnology was designed to fight cancer. Instead, it evolved into the Machine Plague, killing nearly five billion people and changing life on Earth forever.

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The Winds of Marble Arch and Other Stories. Connie Willis (Subterranean 978-1-59606-110-1, $40.00, 702pp, hc) August 2007. [Order from Subterranean Press, PO Box 190106, Burton MI 48519; <www.subterraneanpress.com>]


The Country You Have Never Seen: Essays and Reviews, Joanna Russ (Liverpool University Press 978-0-85323-859-1, £50.00/$85.00, 298pp, hc; -869-0, £20.00/$35.00, tp) June 2007. 

One of the interesting things about Gardner Dozois's 24th annual outing - he's by now the Cal Ripken, Jr. of year's best editors, with a consecutive string that's likely to remain unmatched - is the proportion of authors who are primarily known for their short fiction rather than for novels. Of the 30 authors represented (in 28 stories; two are collaborations), I count 11 who fall clearly into this category, with another three or four with only a couple of novels to their credit. Some of this is due to Dozois's useful known for short forms - Ellison was the universal tendency to write short - and I suspect available venues the proportion of authors who are matched - is the proportion of authors who are primarily known for their short fiction rather than for novels. Of the 30 authors represented (in 28 stories; two are collaborations), I count 11 who fall clearly into this category, with another three or four with only a couple of novels to their credit. Some of this is due to Dozois's useful known for short forms - Ellison was the universal tendency to write short - and I suspect available venues have something to do with what's happening these days as well. Another interesting aspect of this Dozois annual is that more selections are taken from online sources, small presses, and original anthologies than from all the SF print magazines combined, which represent only nine of the 28 selections - and six of those are Asimov's. (By contrast, Dozois's fourth annual 20 years ago drew 22 of its 27 stories from print SF magazines.) A quarter of the stories are from online sources alone - and online venues, like the old pulp magazines, are much friendlier to short forms than to novels, just as small presses are friendlier to collections and chapbooks that are major publishers. Unlike the pulps, however, this array of modern venues is much more amenable to diversity of story types, and this is reflected in this year's selection as well, though there are some discernible trends. There's a fair amount of apocalyptic thinking out there, for example, evident in stories like Robert Charles Wilson's "Julian: A Christmas Story", set in a 22nd-century scavenger society, which would easily be the book's strongest novella if it didn't read so thoroughly like the beginning of a novel. In contrast to Wilson's elegiac tone is Ken MacLeod's "The Highway Men", set in an evenly ruined postnuclear Scotland, but with something of the insouciance of an outlaw romance. The ruined world of Greg Van Eekhout's "Far as You Can Go" is a bit more bizarre and treacherous than either of these, but mostly serves as backdrop for what amounts to a boy-and-his-faithful-robot story, just as the visit to a time-preserved Seattle from the "blasted lands" of Jack Skillingstead's "Life on the Preservation" turns into a romance of valuing what you have. Some of the apocalypses aren't even set on Earth, or at least not a recognizable one: A.M. Dellamonica's "The Town on a Blighted Sea" takes place on a planet where an alien species has created a refuge for survivors of a catastrophic nanotech war on Earth, and Robert Reed's "Good Mountain" - one of his strongest novellas and another good candidate for outstanding novella in the book - is set in a far-distant world of floating islands and continents of rotting vegetation, threatened by both fire and poisonous gases. Much closer to home is Paolo Bacigalupi's "The Yellow Card Man", one of the best stories here (as it was in Jonathan Strahan's annual earlier this year), set among despised refugees in a harrowing future Bangkok, part of Bacigalupi's post-energy spring-loaded world, which gains much of its power from the suspicion that the apocalypse it describes may be already underway.

In a way, Cory Doctorow's "I, Row-Boat" might belong in that group of stories - it's set in a posthuman world among robots, but the humans are gone more because of geek rapture than from catastrophe - but its more important function, and I suspect the reason it was given the position of lead story, is that it pointedly alludes to earlier traditions of SF (in this case the Asimov robot stories) while at the same time demonstrating a breezy postcyberpunk sensibility. And this may be another trend, of sorts - returning to classic SF story forms, but with updated sensibilities. There seem to be more planetary and outer-space adventures here than in recent Dozois anthologies, and some of them, like Michael Swanwick's terrifically efficient "Tin Marsh", about a deadly pursuit on the surface of Venus; or Paul J. McAuley's "Dead Men Walking", concerning a showdown between assassins on a Uranian moon; or Alastair Reynolds's "Nightingale", about a kind of SWAT team trying to catch a war criminal on a long-abandoned hospital ship, achieve something of the feel of the best pulp fiction combined with a darker noir attitude. Even the more traditional coming-of-age stories, like Kage Baker's "Where the Golden Apples Grow" (two boys in a colonized Mars enzy each others' very different lives) or Walter Jon Williams's "Incarnation Day" (a rebellious teen in a space colony in which kids are raised in virtuality until the day of the title) or John Barnes's "Every Hole Is Outsised" (a child joins a starship crew as a slave and earns her identity and freedom) are acutely aware of their settings.

THIS MONTH IN HISTORY
August 23, 2033. SF museum opens. Science fiction goes casual as tens turn out in jeans and tees for the humdrum opening of Seattle's new MUNDANE SF MUSEUM "Munds" (as they call themselves) nod in approval as the main exhibit is unveiled - the actual dial telephone seen in several classic SF films.
The author of *Idolon* returns to the field with an ambitious novel of love, memory, and rebirth. Three people living in three different times are drawn together in this powerful exploration of identity and reality.

The author of the Devlin books takes a giant leap forward with her second book in the series that began with *The First Betrayal*. With his soul trapped in the body of a condemned Prince and vying for control, humble monk Josan must clear himself of the murder of the royal family before he can save his homeland.

An edgy new novel from the acclaimed author of the "fascinating" *Publishers Weekly* Carnival.

A hired assassin has found a teacher to forgive him of his sins and instruct him in the art of conjuring—but he’s about to discover that the next hit on his list could destroy all that he has sought.

"Every fascinating, unique character leaps off the page and lingers long after it’s turned."

—Kelley Armstrong, author of *No Humans Involved*

When a woman is discovered with a rogue gene enabling her to control her own fertility, she and the documentary filmmaker covering her story find themselves in the cross-hairs of a hired killer.

Visit www.bantamdell.com to sign up for Spectra Pulse, our free monthly eNewsletter.
and are fully worked out in hard-SF terms (long
gone are the days when we could give Bradbury or
Brackett a pass on the details simply because
they wrote well).

Other familiar icons of the genre abound, often
treated in familiar ways. Aliens are still all-power-
ful conquerors, as in Carolyn Ives Gilman’s
"Okanagan Falls" (where one of them is merely
talked down by a Wisconsin housewife), or ruth-
less assassins, as in Bruce McAllister’s "Kill"
(where one befriends and later defends a young
boy), but in both cases communication trumps fear.
In some cases, reflecting the old pantropy
about working scientists as effectively as anyone.

for tenure, reminds us that Benford can write
from an astronomical anomaly, as in Gregory
Benford’s "Bow Shock", which, in its portrait
of the Crocodile", in which a near-immortal couple
tragically killed, and, more conventionally, in
Stephen Baxter’s "The Pacific Mystery", set in a
world in which the Nazis have won (again?) in
which the Pacific Ocean is mysteriously im-
passable. The irresolute Baxter story is a bit of
a disappointment, but it’s not the only one coming
from established names. Greg Egan’s "Riding
the Crocodile", in which a near-immortal couple
married for ten thousand years decide to cap their
careers by investigating a mysteriously reclus-
ive alien race that has isolated itself from the
universe, is terrific in its conception but almost
desultory in execution, and Elizabeth Bear and
Sarah Monette, in "The Ile of Dogsge", seem
more interested reconstructing the world of Ben
Joneson and scoring points about censorship than
in plotting their tale, which ends with a lamely
predictable time travel twist. David D. Levine’s
"I Hold My Father’s Paws" tries to reconcile a
troubled father-son relationship by turning the
father into a pook. Troubled family relationships
are also at the center of Mary Rosenblum’s
"Home Movies", whose protagonist rents her-
sel out as a “chameleon”, experiencing events
— in this case a family wedding — and later downloading the experience for the client. It’s a
perfectly competent story, but uses its intriguing
premise mostly to set up a romance.

The three remaining stories, though, are ter-
ific in ways that aren’t much like anything else
in the book. Benjamin Rosenbaum’s "The House
Beyond Your Sky" is clearly one of the year’s best stories, grounding its radically alienated far
future end-of-time setting with a subordinate tale
of a little girl in a dysfunctional family, living in
the “library” of universes manipulated by these
godlike beings. (Except for the Walter Jon
Williams story, it’s the only story to show up in
both the Horton and Strahan annuals as well as
here.) Ian McDonald’s "The Djinn’s Wife" is
another romance of sorts, this time between a
young girl in Delhi and an artificial intelligence,
but in returning us to the richly textured future
India of his River of Gods, it contextualizes its
drama in an acutely sensory world. And Daryl Gregory’s "Damasquus", while quite not as
strong as his last year’s “Second Person Present
Tense", suggests that that story wasn’t a fluke in
its insightful exploration of how we inhabit our
bodies. In this case, it’s a recent divorcee suffer-
seizures, whose medical treatments are ut-
terly convincing — more so than the viral religion
conspiracy that passes as the story’s big idea.
Gregory is one of those new short story writers
I mentioned way back at the beginning and one
of the most promising. His story is one of four
here that also show up in the Hartwell/Cramer
annual, but all told there are only 11 of Dozois’s
28 selections that overlap with earlier annuals. So
would it kill you to buy more than one?

Connie Willis is, of course, the premier humor-
list working in SF today, possibly the premier humor-
list the field has ever produced. She can write
snappy dialogue that Preston Sturges would have
been proud to direct, concoct screwball romantic
comedies with a deftness that seems effortless
(though it isn’t), effectively and hilariously
skewer everything from political correctness
and educational consultants to family Christmas
letters and Hollywood egos, and even figure
out how to rewrite H.G. Wells from the point
of view of Emily Dickinson or to recreate the
world of Jerome K. Jerome with a pitch-perfect
imitation of English twit humor. She knows her
way around Wodehouse and Shakespeare as well
as around Heinlein, and she has enough
Hugos to use them for bowling pins or cluster
bombs. She is the most popular con master of
ceremonies since Robert Bloch filled a similar
role a half-century ago (but without his Catskills
shift), and what she does onstage is as tonally
precise and cleverly calculated as her nearly
plotted fiction. Everyone knows this. Everyone
knows that Connie Willis is delightful, romantic,
and educational consult ants to family Christmas
stories! You can take her home to Mom!

And her favorite subject is death.

See, there’s this other Connie Willis as well,
the Connie Willis who can write what may be
the most mournful time-travel epic ever in
Doomsday Book or what amounts to an 800-
page death scene in Passage, who can explore
the poignant dynamics of a family facing certain
doom as the sun goes nova in “Daisy, in the Sun”
or of another family in a postnuclear wasteland
receiving a long-delayed letter from old friends
almost certainly long dead in “A Letter from
the Clearys”, who can even find memento mori
in the wind from a London underground train
in the title story of her retrospective collection
The Winds of Marble Arch and Other Stories.

But, as the collection makes clear, the two
Wil­lises aren’t really that far apart; as with Sturgeon’s
movies, even the screwiest tales are tinged with
an awareness of mortality, and even the more
sober may be leavened with comic touches;
"The Winds of Marble Arch" may be literally
wash in the smell of death, but is structured like
a comedy of navigating the London tube and
trying to get theater tickets for a flinching group
of friends. It’s one of three stories included here
— the others are the now-classic time-travel tale
"Fire Watch" and the Bram Stoker-influenced
mythology “Jack” — that touch upon the London
Blues, which seems to be an iconic event for
Willis, a kind of emblem of human resilience in
the face of repeated devastation and an infinitely
storyable one at that.

The Winds of Marble Arch and Other
Stories is a huge career retrospective, which
means that it’s neither a collected stories (which
would easily require another volume or two of
this size, depending on how many novellas you
wanted to include) nor a "best of" selection.
Retrospectives are generally characterized by a
bit of stock-taking, a bit of portraiture, and a fair
number of costume changes, and all are clearly
in evidence here. Of the 23 stories, seven appeared
in her 1985 collection Fire Watch, seven in the
1994 Impossible Things, and three in the 2000
Miracle and Other Christmas Stories. Six
are previously uncollected, including the Hugo-
winning title story and "The Soul Selects Her
Own Society", another Hugo winner cast as a
parody of a clueless academic paper on Emily
Dickinson, written for Kevin Anderson’s 1996
anthology revisiting Wells’s The War of the
Worlds from various celebrity perspectives.

While there are some notable omissions, such as
“Schwarzchild Radius”, the Hugo-winning
"Death on the Nile,” and the two recent novellas
"Inside Job" and "D.A." (which, interestingly,
are both currently in print as collectors’ edi­
tions from this same publisher), the collection
provides a reasonably balanced overview of
Willis’s work; only about a third of the stories are
mainly comedic, some seriously explore
religious themes from a Christian perspective
("Inn", "Samaritan", "Epiphany"), and some
are surprisingly bleak ("Chance", "A Letter
from the Clearys", "The Last of the Winnaba-
gos"). Relatively few, interestingly enough, are
dee ply scientific in any conceptual sense; Willis
tends to grab what she needs from the cup-
pull of contemporary pop culture, from romantic
comedy "Daisy, in the Sun", to the Clearys”", a time machine in “Fire Watch”, an
unstable sun in “Daisy, in the Sun”, a procedure
to eliminate menstruation in "Even the Queen"
and use it as backdrop for what are essentially
family and relationship dramas.

In some cases, the SF element is little more
than a comic premise. "Blued Moon" begins
with the notion of a scheme to blast waste
materials into the upper atmosphere (described
in a parody of incomprehensible corporate press
releases), but when this results in refraction
causing the moon to appear blue, it’s quickly
apparent that it’s merely a premise for a rash of
unlikely "once-in-a-blue-moon" coincidences
that pushes Willis’s skill for screwball comedy
all the way into slapstick. Similarly, "Even the
Queen", despite its Hugo and Nebula wins, still
reads largely like a tale written on a bet that
no one could do a comic take on menstruation.

In the case of "At the Rialto", still one of the
funniest stories written by scientists, the
notion of quantum indeterminacy simply serves

p. 68
A suspenseful thriller of betrayal and Machiavellian politics, Otah returns from his exile to clear his name as the primary suspect in his brother's assassination, and to claim the title of Khai, the ruler of Machi.

"A Shadow in Summer is one of the most elegant and engaging fantasies I've read in years, based on an intriguing, original premise."

—Jacqueline Carey, bestselling author of Kushiel's Dart

ISBN 10: 0-7653-1341-3
Hardcover

The city-state of Saraykeht is a bastion of progress, but the far-away armies of Galt are plotting its destruction. Only four people stand a chance to counter the threat—and even they might not be able to prevent Saraykeht's fall.

"A distinguished fantasy debut."

—Booklist

ISBN 10: 0-7653-1187-0
Paperback

In the continuing adventures of the Wolfblade family, Mari Wolfblade's power and fortune are great, but possibly not enough, with the High Arrion of the Sorcerer's Collective plotting to destroy her and her only ally toying with the idea of betrayal.

"Fallon structures her novels to capture the reader from the opening paragraph and you can only break from her grasp when you reach the final page."

—Altair

Paperback

Lucifer and God have entered into a wager they've made before, and this time the existence of creation is balanced in the outcome. With his love of life almost lost, Joby must overcome crippling self-doubt and prove that love is stronger than rage.

"Beautifully written, both entertaining and thought-provoking."

—Kevin J. Anderson, co-author of Hunters of Dune

Trade Paperback

When hope doesn't even exist as a memory, a heart-broken half-Skaa named Kelsier rediscovers it in the depths of the Lord Ruler's most hellish prison. Kelsier focuses his talents as a brilliant thief and natural leader, with the Lord Ruler as the mark.

"This mystico-metallurgical fantasy combines Vin's coming-of-age-in-magic and its well-worn theme of revolt against oppression, with copious mutilations, a large-scale cast of thieves, cutthroats, conniving nobles and exotic mutants."

—Publishers Weekly

ISBN 10: 0-7653-5038-6
Paperback

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LOCUS LOOKS AT BOOKS: FAREN MILLER


A Betrayal in Winter, second in the Long Price Quartet, is even better than A Shadow in Summer (reviewed in #542), an impressive debut. Summer subverted the young-hero-gets-magical-training cliché by having the protagonist (a secondary princeling shoved off into something like a monastery for magic-users) reject his training and disappear from the action for a long stretch, replaced by a middle-aged poet with an inhuman sidekick and a lot of self-doubt. That risky plot twist ultimately worked, but Winter takes a tighter focus on young prince Otah's conflict with family, tradition and his own emotions, while larger political and magical consequences loom in the background.

As the slimmest of the five works I'll be discussing, at times it has the feel of drama - a Greek or Shakespearean tragedy where the bonds of love and family can only lead to disaster - and Abraham has the literary chops to pull this off without seeming pretentious, thanks to a gift for the telling phrase. A Prolog dealing with the murder of an elder prince, which will set off a flurry of assassinations (in a court whose modes of gaining power seem like a cross between the Medici and Tartars) and pull Otah into the whole mess, takes the viewpoint of the widow, fated to return to her family after long decades at court:

She set her teeth against her tears and tried to love the world. In the morning, she would take a flatboat down the Tidat, slaves and servants to carry her things, and leave behind forever the bed of Second Palace where people did everything but die gently and old in their sleep.

The first book had a detective-story thread, and elements of dark mystery are even more prevalent this time. Some of the royals are getting truly devisive, sophisticated and conflicted, so neither the deaths nor other betrayals may be the work of the most obvious suspects, and the villains may not be stone-cold killers. Maati the poet reappears on a mission to their city, ostensibly to find an old book in its library but actually to find out why Otah (the prime suspect, according to the head of his own priesthood) would target his older brother. And just who is scheming for a secret political alliance with those foreigners the Gaits? Who wants to rediscover a dangerous form of lost magic?

That last business of deadly magic and unearthly forces which, if unleashed, could bring on utter catastrophe is nearly as much a staple in fantasy as it is in horror, while SF translates it into planet-killing asteroids, ruthless aliens wielding ultimate weapons, etc. The poet's old boss calls it by its rightful name (chaos) and asks Maati what he thinks the priests mean by saying that something touched by it "is never made whole," before butting in to answer the question himself:

It means that something unthinkable can only happen once. Because after that, it's unthinkable any longer. We've seen what happens when a city is touched by chaos. And now it's in the back of every head in every court in all the cities of the Khaiem.

He's referring to an embodied word of binding whose escape or nullification brought on utter disaster. For our own past century, the equivalent would be the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki; now it's New York on 9/11. Though the parallels may seem obvious (and earlier writers had their own wars and holocausts in mind), a lot of the fictional baggage of Dark Lords and Ancient Evil get set aside here in favor of what really counts: the appalling made suddenly "thinkable." That's the idea that cuts to the bone.

On a more intimate scale, prince Otah and Maati both brood about the woman they loved and lost (the same woman, as it happens), while a princess's drastic actions derive from a rage no feminist could deny even if the results seem close to madness. Family political infighting also delves into the individual psyche when it addresses a question that's increasingly common in fantasy and crucial to several of the books here: Who is fit to rule? The original princely murder victim wasn't, because "he loved the..."
SARAH MONETTE welcomes you back to Mélusine.

With a voice “blessed with originality, sophistication, and artistry” (Booklist), Sarah Monette continues her brilliant fantasy series set in the wondrous city of Mélusine, where two disparate brothers are pulled into a labyrinthine plot to destroy the very heart of the city.

PRAISE FOR THE MÉLUSINE SERIES:

“Escalating adventures that will leave your knuckles white and your mind ablaze.”
—Locus

“A highly original writer with her own unique voice.”
—Publishers Weekly

“A humdinger of a fantasy, full of action, romance, intrigue...and, of course, wizardry.”
—BookPage

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Faren Miller

world too much.” But in the course of this tale the characters will come to doubt the truth of the corollary, “[I]n order to become one of the Khaeim, you have to stop being able to love.”

While harsh experience has taught us that love is certainly not “all you need” to save the world, maybe the alternative can be something other than destroying one’s own heart. In A Betrayal in Winter, Imriel puts his characters through the wringer as they desperately search for some way to reconcile the ways of power with the human soul.

Kushiel’s Scion (reviewed in #545) began Jacqueline Carey’s second Kushiel trilogy, moving forward a generation to feature the adoptive son of previous heroine Phèdre when he’s still a relatively young youth. Over the long course of sequel Kushiel’s Justice, we see Imriel grow up through a combination of illicit passion, dutiful marriage, adaptation to a new life in a new land, self-questioning, coping with difficult knowledge, and a harrowing quest for “justice” even further from his old home in the D’Angeline Court.

While the world of these books is exotic, with its freewheeling combination of the sacred and sexuality in the Terre D’Ange (where gorgeous people like Imriel and his adoptive mother are the norm) as well as its gods and touches of magic, Carey emphasizes her characters’ humanity. Even the episodes of X-rated romance that mark all the Kushiel books are far more complicated than one-night stands, and that’s particularly true of this volume. When he met her in Scion, Imriel thought his cousin Sidonie was arrogant, cold, and condescending—qualities not surprising in the heir to the throne, but still not conducive to friendship, let alone grand partnerships. For some way to reconcile the ways of power with the ways of love, Imriel does recognize what’s happening out there; he just doesn’t have any idea how it can all work out, short of disaster.

That uncertainty adds to the fascination of a book that manages to absorb the reader without the standard plot drivers of archvillainy, threats of large-scale doom (beyond those occasioned by politics and other social forces), or a heavy reliance on magic. For all the glamor of the D’Angelies, this is ultimately a very human story—and that’s just as it should be.

Last year my discussion of Scion followed a review featuring Sarah Monette’s The Virtu, her second tale of Felix the gay gentleman wizard and his half-brother Mildmay, the straight (and foulmouthed) thief. Virtu pulled the intriguingly odd couple against a magical threat of chaos for a combination of adventure with private grief and self-doubts, a page turner with both attitude and heart. While the publicity material for The Mirador, next in the series, suggests that it will deal with another threat to their city—this time to its political/magical heart, the Mirador—that aspect of the book is slow to develop.

True, it’s not long before Mildmay gets into a slanging discussion of politics with Mehitabel Parr (an actress and unwilling spy who serves as the third viewpoint character), but their mix of gossip, put downs, and speculation doesn’t uncover any real threats, and Mehitabel’s handlers don’t tell her much about their plans. The book’s structure, with long sequences of interior monologue, casts more light on private dilemmas, and everyone is haunted by some association from the past—love, hate, or a mixture of the two. In a scene where Mehitabel dances with Felix, her last line conveys the general spirit: “We finished the waltz in silence, each alone with our own dragons.”

While The Mirador is about the same length as The Virtu, it moves more slowly because of this determined emphasis on interior lives and personal demons, with the larger scenario only coming into focus very late in the game. That turn to the big picture does make for a thrilling, sometimes heart-wrenching series of crises, leading to a conclusion that seems the logical next step. Nonetheless it left me feeling that in their third adventure, Felix and Mildmay didn’t learn Imriel’s lesson—they spend a little too much time navel-gazing before the real action can begin.

There’s no lack of action scenes in Red Seas Under Red Skies, direct sequel to Scott Lynch’s first novel The Lies of Locke Lamora (reviewed in #548). Locke is a thief, like a Mildmay with more leadership skills, who will feature in a seven-book sequence named for the Gentleman Bastards—a group of specialists in crime assembled in the first volume.

When Red Seas begins, the gang has been reduced to just Locke and his sidekick, Jean, but they’re still busy with intricate schemes that require pseudonyms, study, and a lot of prep work for a presumably immense payoff. Money isn’t everything, though. Locke tells his more bookish and dubiously good, “Gods, we need a target. Jean. We need a game. We need someone to go to work on, as a team.... I want it to be us against the world and dangerous, just like it used to be.”

As they make their way up the levels of an immense casino (something like the growing challenges in a complex videogame), the story starts to resemble a truncated version of the plotters and plot in Oceans 13, displaced to an antique Otherworld without losing its sense of fun. But here as in the first book, Lynch seems dead set against telling a story straight; this one jumps between times, places, and subgenres until finally doubling back to the scene of its odd prologue, where the two partners seem poised to attack each other in a duel to the death.

The plot shift following the casino episodes is substantial, as the duo gets blackmailed into an entirely different scheme that forces them to take on the ill-fitting roles of a rogue gentleman pirate and his lowly mate—thus the book’s title, cover, and a substantial portion of the page count. Unlike the campy, monster-ridden Pirates of the Caribbean franchise, this will be closer to gritty swashbucklers with historical roots.

Locke and Jean don’t belong here, as they’re well aware. Their highly placed handlers allow them to make off with a select band of convicts (Prison Break meets The Dirty Dozen) and just enough guidance to supposedly prepare them to take over a genuine pirate ship for their own undercover assignment. They know it’s a mad scheme, and it is, falling apart all too soon; but the survivors—real and fake pirates alike—are rescued by what may be the greatest of all ships of thieves, run by a woman who sails in search of maritime prey with her own small kids aboard.

This long interruption to the initial plot offers some of the same gradual, ultimately effective development of character and setting as Imriel’s time in Alba, going beneath the slick surface of a swashbuckler to see what the chief protagonist is really made of. The process is less evident, for “slow” is a relative term in a page turner where there’s never a dull moment and always some new peril on the horizon. Still, Locke does undergo his own version of clumsy adjustment, assimilation, and genuine personal change in the face of danger, until it seems he might have some chance of advancing beyond the world of crime.

A return to the casino scheme, its denouement, and the full version of the scene first encountered in the prologue will put this in doubt, and the book ends with a substantial cliffhanger. All we can do is take a deep breath and wait for the next installment.

What happens after you bring down the Dark Lord of the Evil Empire? That’s the question Brandon Sanderson tackle in The Well of Ascension, sequel to Mistborn (reviewed in #547) and middle book in what will be the Mistborn trilogy. The opening volume linked the more familiar epic theme of defeating the magic-wielding tyrant to the Eliza Doolittle transformation of an archin/street thief into a
A gripping new novel from the Hugo and Nebula Award-winning author of Old Twentieth and Camouflage

JOE HALDEMAN

Grad-school dropout Matt Fuller stumbles upon the discovery of a lifetime—or many lifetimes.

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Elsewhere in this issue we celebrate Robert A. Heinlein's centennial, so it seems especially appropriate to review new books by two writers who have been strongly influenced by the Old Man. Joe Haldeman, like other Sons and Daughters of Heinlein, has had a complicated, not to say strained, relationship to his virtual mentor. Starting with The Forever War, he has displayed a Heinlein-esque grasp of the craft while diverging from many of the social and political attitudes of many hard-core Heinleinists (if not always Heinlein himself). The decoupling of conventional military social protocols from military fighting skills depicted in that book's opening pages ("Fuck you, sir!") couldn't be a more emphatic declaration of independence. But I would say that Heinlein's influence on SF in general has been as much a matter of his command of the art and craft of writing SF as of his political or even his science fictional Ideas — and that even in a relatively light piece such as Spindrift, Allen Steele may be even more Heinlein-inspired than Haldeman is, especially in the Near Space stories that tackle the motifs and tropes of early-to-middle Heinlein: the passionate advocacy of space exploration, industrialization, and colonization; the vision of the solar system as a working and living environment; and the depiction of the divide between Those Who Can and Those Who Just Fiddle the Accounts. The Coyote cycle (Coyote, Coyote Rising, and Coyote Frontier, reviewed December 2002, January 2005, and February 2006, respectively) has been Steele's most extended treatment of the space-frontier and liberation-struggles aspects of that motif family, and now in Spindrift he takes us to places and events just off the main sequence of the earlier books, to focus not on planetary pioneering or revolution but on a deep-space exploration that will climax in First Contact. We know this because the main line of the story is framed by its own outcome: a Coyote Federation starship comes to Earth carrying the survivors of an expedition that vanished about 50 years earlier. The Galileo had been sent to investigate a possibly artificial object that was passing relatively near the solar system. We know that Something Interesting must have happened because the Lee has brought back not only Galileo's three surviving crew members (dressed in strange alien robes) but also its short-range shuttle, now retrofitted with engines that are not the product of any human technology — and the news that an alien ambassador is now in residence on Coyote. What the very old, very annoyed European Space Agency Director General wants to know is what happened to the mission he sent out so long ago, and the answers are not going to please him. "Spindrift" is the name given to a mysterious object spotted by long-range lunar telescopes, traveling fast, set to pass a little over two light-years out, with a tiny satellite of its own. The clincher is that it answered a ping from the SETI line by line and scene by scene, than his very able ancestor.

Allen Steele may be even more Heinlein-inspired than Haldeman is, especially in the Near Borderline-dangerous ideas without melting down. When yet another crisis develops, Matt and Martha both take a big, two-millennia jump to a time that's just as strange but along a different vector (I think of it as eBay-land, with posthuman décor and amenities and a character called La who definitely isn't from Opar), and then to some quite distant times and sceneries and a resolution that echoes both Wells and Heinlein.

If we were to keep hammering at the Heinlein connection, I would certainly point to parallels with the Old Man's use of the Matter of Time Travel, particularly the nightmarish closed-loop traps and labyrinths of The Hemingway Hoax (reviewed, lordy! in May 1990), with its echoes of "All You Zombies — ." But what seems to haunt Haldeman even more than the prospect of bumping into himself around a corner becoming his own grandpa is an exaggerated version of the kind of time travel we all engage in when we live into a future that leaves us puzzled and isolated. This has been a feature of his work since the time-dilated grunts of The Forever War struggled to make sense of a home front that was more culturally distant every time they returned to it. Here is Matt's take on the world only a few years from his home time in the 2050s:

Movies were either dumb static domestic comedies (during which the audience laughed insanely at things that didn't seem to be funny) or brutal bloodbaths from Japan and India. Popular music set its teeth on edge, harmonic discord and machine-gun percussion or syrupy inane love ballads. Popular books seemed to be written for either slow children or English Ph.D.s.

Why do I keep picturing the writer in slippers, cardigan sweater, and reading glasses, yelling at the damn kids to stay off his lawn? But Haldeman writes with the same vigor and humor that produced "Fuck you, sir!" half a lifetime ago, as in Matt's construction of a possible cosmological model for his situation, based on contemplation of a jar of pickled eggs at the Brain Drain tavern:

Each egg was a closed three-dimensional solid touching other closed three-dimensional solids, unaware that it was floating in a larger universe of vinegar. Unaware of the bartender with his fork, ready to change any egg's destiny.

When the cosmic bartender finally does fish Matt and Martha out of the vinegar, their reward (and ours) is a surprising safe harbor and a bittersweet finish quite consonant, for all the book's picaresque comedy, with the humane and human vision of officially more serious books such as Guardian or The Coming. It's more evidence that Joe Haldeman has become a better writer, line by line and scene by scene, than his very able ancestor.

Allen Steele may be even more Heinlein-inspired than Haldeman is, especially in the Near
"[T]houghtful, engaging characters and an intriguing vision of the future."—Publishers Weekly on Nebula-award-winning Catherine Asaro's "Skolian Saga"

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The Eubian Interstellar Concord. Dominating. Static. A pyramid of cosmic power built on the bones of slaves. Their opponents? The freedom-loving, telepathic Skolian Imperialate. Now centuries of war come to a head and a new galactic Dark Age looms as rival emperors — related by blood, love, and an intrigue as deep as the space between stars — take a desperate gamble to find a way through the carnage of battle to a new understanding. But first they'll have to keep their own heads off the chopping blocks. The latest and greatest entry in the star-spanning Skolian Saga!

DECEMBER 2007

"[A]n epic chase across a near-future landscape enlivened by . . . intriguing technology."
—School Library Journal on Asaro's Sunrise Alley

Charon is dead. Long live Charon!
The creator of a proscribed network of rogue Als and androids has been destroyed, his multiple copies deleted. Except for one. Now beautiful and deceptive android Alpha activates a long dormant master-plan that includes the violent transformation of the world as we know it! The thrilling sequel to cyber-thriller, Sunrise Alley.

JANUARY 2008

Catch a rising star as Nebula-award-winning mistress of SF adventure Catherine Asaro builds on her growing legend with powerful new epics of galactic proportions!

Baen Books is distributed by Simon & Schuster www.baen.com


Since Paul McAuley published the last volume of his far-future Confluence trilogy in 1999, all his novels, despite continuing to contain important science fictional elements, have adopted the vocabulary and mannerisms of the thriller genre, an experiment guaranteeing narrative tension but also entailing a certain formulaic superficiality. Cowboy Angels, a magisterial alternate world tale, takes the means and modes of the thriller and meshes them so perfectly with ambitious political allegory that for the first time a McAuley SF/thriller succeeds on every level, every technique complementing every other, hardboiled characters and dialogue ably supporting momentous themes and supplying a well-measured turn of humor. The result is one of the best SF novels of the year.

It may or may not be the case that McAuley sets out in Cowboy Angels to one-up the cringingly bad TV series Stargate, but his premise is not dissimilar: the US military and intelligence establishment possesses portals, known as Thr­axis, through these on a regular basis. The difference is that the worlds visited are not implausible cardboard colony planets but rather well-drawn alternate Americas, timelines where history has taken different, often morally awkward, courses; and also that the USA performing the interdimensional missions is not our own, but an ironic counterfactual version, where physics made a breakthrough in the '60s unknown to us (thus the Gates), and Jimmy Carter became president in 1981, not 1977. The novel begins in 1981, at a time when this other America, which confidently regards itself as "The Real," has spent 15 years waging surrogate wars in various "sheaves," hoping thereby to spread democratic values and the American way but in practice finding that even North America, in altered circumstances, does not necessarily support such a regime. In one sheaf, the American Bund, German-American Nazis, have been toppled from power; in another, an authoritarian federal government is assisted in recovery from a Cuban Missile Crisis gone nuclear; in a third, a nuclear conflict in 1968 has left little worth saving. As Carter takes office, he reprehends these brute-force failures, purges the intelligence ranks, and insists on a new, humane policy, based on human rights advocacy, cultural exchange, and peaceful intervention. In consequence, the latest planned adventure, an incursion into a Communist America by gung-ho right-wing exiles, has its official backing withdrawn and, like a greater Bay of Pigs, goes terribly awry. The black-ops types within the Company (as their equivalent of the CIA is inevitably known), keenly wedded to the aggressive program, predictably feel affronted and estranged, and their grizzled leader, the wickedly named and now dismissed Dick Knightly, concocts a grandiose plot to undo the actions of the lily-livered new administration.

A lot of postwar American history can be read into this, from the Cold War and Vietnam to the rule of the actual Jimmy Carter to Iran-Contra to the War on Terror and its campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq; some parallels are explicit, others subterfuge (an allusion to Philip K. Dick signals some of these). Whatever the larger dimension, McAuley's plot allows a systematic, clifhanger-intensive, and periodically very funny exploration of various of the affected timelines, as a pair of veteran field agents, usually at personal and philosophical loggerheads, strives to thwart Knightly's Operation Gypsy. Gypsy, it is obvious enough, involves many renegade Company members, but its disguise is excellent and its intended method of upsetting Carter's initiatives highly opaque. Adam Stone, retired and on the whole sympathetic to the policies commenced by Carter, is pulled out of his idyllic retreat in a sheaf where humankind never evolved (ah, the frontier life!) to help investigate a string of assassinations carried out by his old friend and partner, the more conservative and risk-prone Tom Waverley, who remained active after Knightly's departure. For some reason, Waverley has been murdering the cognates or "doppels" of a scientist named Eileen Barrie in a succession of sheaves; he hasn't yet attacked her in the Real, but that central version must potentially be in the firing line. Waverley is trapped in the 1962-nuclear sheaf and before dying there passes vital hints and clues about Gypsy to Stone and Waverley's daughter; they then escape to further Americas, pursued, betrayed, and flummoxed at each turn, yet gradually getting closer to the truth. Appropriately, much of the action occurs in our universe, the so-called Nixon sheaf, one of the many jokes associated with this being the revelation that the Company planned to spark revolution and political collapse in our 1970s but gave that up when a scheme to kill Allen Ginsberg collapsed.

The odyssey of Stone through incarnations of New York sometimes down at heels and sometimes cosmopolitanly vibrant, his arguments and double bluffs with the ebullient and dangerous Waverley, his Hitchcockian struggles with members of Gypsy, his narrow escapes from conspiring gangsters, rampaging hominids (a link to McAuley's earlier novel White Devils there), and sputtering nuclear reactors, his fraught conversations and fascinating historical speculations: these are endlessly exciting and provocative and never let up. McAuley's writing has characteristically been very full, packed with invention, thought, and incident, its idea quotient at a level with Greg Egan and Michael Swanwick, and this has never been truer than with Cowboy Angels. Forget the cynicism, the sardonic invocations of thriller convention, the (again) spiraling body count: these by now are

THIS MONTH IN HISTORY
August 9-11, 2254: Asteroid-killer launch scrubbed. Gloom settles over a doomed Earth as the Chinese-American nuclear missile AK-50, aimed at the approaching "Nancy Eleven" asteroid, misses its three-day launch window, delayed by a temporary injunction from the Islamo-Christian End Times Association. World Court issues regrets but defends the rule of law.
THE SECOND TESS NONCOIRÉ ADVENTURE

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Czerneda always tells a good story!” —Chronicle

A NEW SERIES SET IN THE TRADE PACT UNIVERSE FROM THE AURORA AWARD WINNER JULIE E. CZERNEDA

The first novel in the Stratification trilogy explores the origins of the Clan on Cersi, a world far-distant from the Trade Pact planets. It opens at a pivotal moment in their history when beings from the Trade Pact have just come to Cersi, upsetting the delicate balance between the world's three sentient races. It is a time too, when Aryl Sarc of Yena Clan is on the verge of mastering the forbidden secret of the M'hir....

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subordinate, well-disciplined literary cadres, and the old, triumphantly adventurous McAuley has returned. The final scene of the book is masterfully contrived, the uncertainties of our world (and others?) about the future beautifully captured in an instant of violent quantum doubt; that moment could define the radical openness that SF does not share with the tatty, defensive, formula-bound orthodox thriller.

CIA men in suits are also an element of Robert Charles Wilson’s new novel Axis, although this time they officially represent the Bureau of Genomic Security. Their work is to hunt down people who have incorporated into their personal biologies Martian technology that brings them notionally closer to the vastly powerful aliens dubbed the Hypotheticals; the Hypotheticals being indeed an unknown quantity, perhaps the BGS has good reason. But as Axis proceeds, the matter is taken out of BGS’s hands, and that distinctive Wilsonian narrative climax, the surge into transcendence, occurs, with forceful, ominous beauty, humankind drawing toward ultimate revelation and (one hopes) adventure. Yet not quite, for Axis is the middle volume of a trilogy, and only so much can be disclosed at this stage.

Axis is a sequel to the Hugo Award-winning Spin and links that book to the forthcoming Vortex. Because of this, the current volume is transitional, pendat at one end and unsupported at the other, and has an unsatisfactory texture, a sense of postponement, that could be bothersome to readers. Certainly the main players in Axis are a lot less richly drawn than their well-characterized predecessors in Spin, for the implicit reason that they are simply a means to get from A to C; and the aforementioned final apocalyptic chapters, however impressive their noise and withering glow, carry no decisive burden of understanding. Still, this is a familiar problem in SF and fantasy, those unrepentant citadels of trilogism; Wilson is a resourceful, deeply professional writer, and he makes more of his inherently unsatisfactory project than most authors could. So what, then, are the compensating diversions of Axis?

It will be remembered that in Spin, the Hypotheticals spun the Earth up, so to speak, meaning that while mere decades passed here, the rest of the universe progressed billions of years into a new sene scene. When our Sun grew bloated and red, a protective barrier maintained the normal terrestrial climate, and even though political turmoil and religious fundamentalism scarred the landscape, humankind survived more or less intact, even taking the opportunity to colonize Mars, soon (in Earth years) home to a wise and advanced civilization. From the Martians came forms of nanotech permitting extended life and the potential for direct contact with the invisible, inscrutable Hypotheticals; employed by such visionaries as Jason Lawton, this material proved problematic, sometimes fatal, yet still warranted the hostile attention of the BGS. No cognitive breakthrough really occurred, but one unambiguous, unhypothetical message was received: an Arch linking our planet to another habitable world (soon named Equatoria), a formidable gift indeed. But for what purpose? Axis begins to provide an answer, to a riddle truly worth unraveling, if only partially for now.

Do the Hypotheticals possess any conscious, linear intelligence, or do they simply enact imperatives thrown up programatically by their nature as great complexifying networks of nanomachines in the cold depths of space? By extension, is our form of sentience inferior, or irrelevant, or fataly short-lived? Wilson gets to grips with these grave matters through Isaac, a boy seeded before birth with Jason Lawton’s nanomaterial and raised by a secretive group of Fourthths—that is, adults infected much later in life—in a remote desert region of Equatoria. There is a haunting quality to Isaac’s upbringing in such strange monastic surroundings, his companions elderly yet seemingly ageless, thoughtful people, slow to anger yet firm, even fanatical, in their desire to converse with the Hypotheticals. Isaac is their guinea pig and their messiah, their intended conduit to the aliens. While he leads the last months of his peculiar childhood (one with so many precedents in the literature of SF, knowingly echoed by Wilson), other people are pressured by circumstance to come west and join Isaac in the arid wastes—Sulean Moi, a wise Martian who has kept careful watch on the Fourthths of Earth and Equatoria for many years; Lisa Adams and Turk Findley, a couple on the run from the Provisional Government of Equatoria and the BGS, conflicted in their regard for each other but hoping to find Lise’s missing father, an academic well acquainted with Fourthths; Diane Lawton, the last lingering cast member from Spin, old but a dedicated healer; and Brian Gately, the ex-husband of Lisa Adams and local BGS official, whose pursuit of the others is fortunately half-hearted, given that sinister federal agents have conscripted him as pawn and guide. There is a great deal of (admittedly conventional) suspense as the latecomers migrate desertward, and when they get there near the close, Wilson’s language becomes intense, dreamlike, rhapsodic, as he unfolds authentic, a sortie into eschatology. There are devastating storms, flowers with eyes, blooms of memory hurling themselves into a great alien jaw, voices from beyond the grave, temptations and refusals at the point of Death; noble sacrifice, intimations of immortality. Even though he can’t actually say terribly much, Wilson keeps his counsel with style.

So there are real reasons to read Axis. And Vortex may make them retrospectively stronger. Yet this is a flawed book, and demanding readers may find themselves just passing through.

Michael Swanwick is one of the finest short fiction writers of the last quarter century, and his long-awaited new collection, The Dog Said Bow-Wow, is surpassingly brilliant. It’s remarkable how effortlessly Swanwick glides over the panorama of genre, pointing out and sizing up the highlights before rearranging them into a topography of sardonic wonder. He is a demijure with a wizened faculty for sarcasm. As his best book of stories yet, Dog features worlds appropriately bizarre, baroque, satiric, and parodic. The reprinted stories assembled represent a number of Swanwick’s moods and career phases. There’s his dinosaur stage (best exemplified by the 2002 novel Bones of the Earth), playfully captured in “A Great Day for Brontosaurs”, a mordant extrapolation from the logic of Jurassic Park, and more thoughtfully sampled in “Triceratops Summer”, a touching reflection on the fugacity of existence centering on the image of “trikes” grazing at the edge of a suburban garden: impossible, a fleeting dream. There’s a recurring preoccupation with the mercurial, deceitful lands of Faerie, coming to a climax in the upcoming novel The Dragons of Babel, foretastes of which are vouchsafed by “An Episode of Stardust” (how common must flourish in Efland!) and “A Small Room in Koboldtown”, where distinctions between tribes of supernatuarial beings take on proportions of Tammany Hall district politicalicking. “The Bordello in Faerie” is self-explanatory. There’s Swanwick’s Hard SF thread, seen in “Slow Life”, a masterful novella about a female astronaut on Titan making contact with intelligent life there, a shattering of illusions on both sides; a short piece, “‘Hello’, Said the Stick”, like “Slow Life” first published in Analog, plays ingeniously with Hard SF as a subgenre, lending it a cunning medieval tinge. A recent tale, “Pin Marsh”, turns gritty details about freelance prospecting on Venus into an incisive commentary on cabin fever, really a staple of Hard SF when one thinks of all those swashbuckling speculative explorers. Then there’s Swanwick’s more serious social commentator, looking at how occupational realities never change in the quiet, reflective “The Last Geek”, and at the dire hypocrisy of oversea conflict in the surreal gem “Dirty Little War”, a glistening microcosm of anger over Vietnam. And there’s the ebullient posthistic Swanwick, who relishes the depiction of an arcadian far-future Earth full of novel play and archaic danger: the witty confidence tricksters Darger and Surplus pursue passion and profit in the London of a monstrous Gloriana (“‘The Dog Said Bow-Wow’”), a Paris of inhuman courtesans and Prustian obsessions (“‘The Little Cat Laughed to See Such Sport’”), and a Greece of genetically engineered satyrs and nymphs (“‘Girls and Boys, Come Out and Play’”). There’s also Swanwick the gleeful parodist, celebrating and excoriating A.E. van Vogt in “Legions in Time”, a grand farrago of chortling scientists and liberated supernanomaterials. All 14 of these confections are excellent, written with poetic flair and perfectly calibrated economy; they penetrate to the stuttering heart of SF and fantasy and imbue it with effervescent new life.

But it’s the two new novellas in Dog that truly make the book the leading contender for best collection of 2007. “The Skyfarer’s Tale” begins with a partial amnesiac recalling what details he can of life in Philadelphia in the years following the Napoleonic Wars; decades on, he is hoping to transfer some wisdom to a son about to go to make his fortune in the wider world. The shifting byways of memory have a magnificently rendered hallucinatory flavor, making even perfectly mundane fragments of
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After saving the planet from Mother Earth, Joanne Baldwin is on a search to find herself and the demon that’s impersonating her—shoes and all...

**LOW RED MOON**
Caitlin R. Kiernan
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"Fast paced, emotionally wrenching, and thoroughly captivating.” —Locus

In an effort to put the horrors of the past behind, Chance and Deacon are now married, and expecting a child—but just when they think the worst has passed, it returns in the form of a woman on a quest for blood and violence.

A comics creator noted for his work on series such as Lucifer and Hellblazer, Carey now presents his first novel, a thrilling mystery featuring freelance exorcist Felix Castor in an alternate contemporary England. In this world, ghosts and zombies became an acknowledged part of life some ten years before. Felix, always able to see ghosts, now has the ability to eradicate unwanted ghosts and works as a sort of supernatural detective. Unfortunately, a case involving a friend went horribly wrong, and Felix hasn’t worked since, and he’s broke and desperate enough to be working as a clown at a children’s party when he novel opens. When that goes terribly wrong, he then takes the first job that offers: a case involving a museum ghost turned violent that leads to some very dangerous criminals. Felix is a first-person narrator in traditional hard-boiled style, the smarm-mouthing sort who can’t keep quiet in a bad situation, but he’s nicely self-aware, providing a wry edge of humor even when things get darkest, making him a welcome addition to the growing ranks of supernatural detectives.


Betsy the Vampire Queen is finally ready to wed in this sixth volume in this humorous chick-lit vampire series. However, she’s been verging on turning into Bridezilla so long it doesn’t seem too surprising that the people around her have been staying out of her way – but two weeks before the wedding everyone disappears – even the groom. And then the Wyndham Werewolves turn up. It’s a goofy outing, but fun to watch as Betsy manages, as usual, to stumble on the answer and save the day, just in time for the wedding that’s been so long in the planning – and now passes in a few banter-filled paragraphs.


Murder comes back to haunt Garnet Lacey in this sequel to Tall, Dark & Dead. Garnet first went on the run after Vatican witch hunters killed her coven and the goddess Lillith possessed her and killed the Vatican agents. Now the bodies have been uncovered, and the FBI is on Garnet’s tail, so she’s forced to turn to her vampire ex-boyfriend for help, while trying to keep her current boyfriend, the vampire alchemist Sebastian, from finding out, not to mention trying to keep Lillith from reappearing and wreaking havoc. And then there are all those zombies turning up around town... Garnet’s an engaging narrator, and while the plot occasionally seems a bit over the top, it’s also a consistently fun, fast-paced romp.


What do birhdays mean to vampires? Thirteen authors come up with as many answers in this amusing original anthology, which tends to the lighter side of vampire fiction, with the birthdays frequently tangential to the stories at best. Several stories are part of popular series; among the best are Jim Butcher’s Dresden Files story, “It’s My Birthday, Too!”, in which Harry Dresden tries to get a birthday present to his vampire half-brother, only to run into some live-action roleplayers facing real vampires in an after-hours shopping mall; P.N. Elrod’s lively Vampire Files story, in which Felix hunts down a living vampire. Back at Fleming taking on a phony medium; in Tanya Huff’s Smoke series, “Blood Wrapped” sets Tony and Henry searching for a kidnapped child and for an appropriate gift for Vicki Nelson’s 40th birthday; and Tate Hallaway’s “Fire and Ice and Languini for Two!” finds wiccan Garnet Lacey (of Tall, Dark & Dead and Dead Sexy) trying to convince her vampire boyfriend that his birthday isn’t cursed, despite some chilling encounters. Charlaine Harris’s own entry, “Dracula Night”, is amusing but slight, a Sookie Stackhouse story that finds the human telepath finally on hand when things go wrong during the vampires’ celebration of Dracula’s birthday. Co-editor Toni L.P. Kelner, a mystery writer, presents a punchy, but touching, tale of a vampire who catches a serial killer while on a nostalgic trip to her own home town in “How Stella Got Her Grave Back”. The remaining stories are a mixed bunch, mostly standalone, and some less than satisfying – possibly because they don’t have well-developed series backgrounds to draw on. For fans of the series represented here, however, this is an entertaining birthday party well worth checking out.


Seattle PI Harper Blaine is back in her second novel. In Greywalker, Harper discovered her ability to see and enter the grey, a paranornal realm that parallels ours. She’s still trying to learn to control her abilities when she gets a new case involving a university research project into the paranormal. The project is attempting to recreate an experiment in creating a “ghost” by holding séances in controlled circumstances, but the project has been too successful, and the professor in charge is certain someone is rigging the results. Harper, though, knows something supernatural is happening, something big. Then one of the participants is killed, and Harper has a murder investigation on her hands. Harper’s charmingly stubborn, the liminal world of the grey is fascinating, and some of the peripheral characters are intriguing in their own right, adding up to make this one of the most interesting in the latest crop of supernatural mystery series.


Kaylin Neya returns in her third fantasy novel, still a law enforcement officer in the Hawks and still not dealing with her developing magic abilities, despite a very determined dragon tutor. This time, when everyone else in the city is gearing up for Festival, Kaylin gets handed a case that involves a stolen magic box, a missing child, and the possible destruction of the world. Kaylin is not only forced to learn more about her own magic, but also to work with one of the city’s least popular species: the telepathic Tha’alani. Kaylin, like many others, is repulsed by the idea of having her mind read, but forces herself to learn about the reclusive Tha’alani. As in previous books, the cultural information adds fascinating new detail to Kaylin’s complex world, while the investigation and powerful magic provide plenty of thrills.


Pirates and plotters fill this swashbuckling sequel to Inda. Forced into exile by scandal, young Marlovian prince Indevan-Dal Algar-Vayir went to sea and became Inda Elgar, AKA Elgar the Fox, leader of his own small mercenary fleet, only to be captured by pirates at the end of the first book. Drafted into the pirate crew, under a vicious captain, Inda finds some unexpected allies and opportunities – and a new determination to wipe out the pirates and stop the Venn, a northern empire that is using the pirates to aid its attacks on Inda’s homeland. Meanwhile, the Marlovians, without a navy, are having trouble fighting the coastal raids, while the schemes of the king’s brother and the royal heir threaten to rip the kingdom apart. The Marlovians’ military culture remains intriguing, but now the perspective opens up as Inda and others experience other lands and customs, many in strong contrast to their own. This is a middle novel in this series, still setting the stage for bigger confrontations yet to come, but it’s full of action, adventure, and delightful, larger-than-life characters, and manages a sneakily sudden, uplifting twist at the end that provides a satisfying conclusion despite looming disasters.


A teen moves in with the father she hardly knows and discovers some magical family secrets in this young-adult fantasy, the first volume of the Faire Folk trilogy. Keelie Heartwood was living in California when her mother died suddenly, forcing Keelie to live with her father, a Renaissance Faire craftsman. Keelie’s not happy being thrust back into the middle ages, but she soon realizes that things are stranger than she expected. In fact, this faire has some real elves – and she’s one of them, with no idea how their world works. In the recent flood of YA novels featuring rebellious teens who discover the supernatural world, this one stands out thanks primarily to the quirky ren-faire setting, some interesting wood magic, and a cat with serious attitude.

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RICH HORTON

Kay Kenyon begins a new series, collective title The Entire and the Rose, with Bright of the Sky. The series is SF with elements that have a fantasy feel. I was reminded of various 5910 2-541 -2, $25, 461p p, hc) April 2007. Cover by Stephan Martiniere.

because I have read so much that little seems

the Sky.

Bright of the Sky,


Robert Silverberg is getting good. That is, this newest book in the multivolume reprint series from Subterranean, covering 1962-69, is full of quality stories. Previous volumes in the series covered pulpier works originally published during the tail end of the Golden Age, when the markets were plentiful, the aliens were slimy, and the women wore armored bras. After the collapse of the market in the mid-late 1950s, Silverberg turned his prodigious output to other genres, only writing a handful of science fiction stories. This volume marks the real turning

point, after which Silverberg wrote for love rather than money (after a handful of years where he didn't write much SF at all). As in the other volumes, Silverberg includes autobiographical introductions to each story, discussing his deal with Frederik Pohl in which he would only send Pohl his most stellar best, and Pohl would not reject it. The brief sketches discuss Silverberg's life: his house fire, repairs, and his eventual move to San Francisco, and they also give an insider's perspective of the SF market.

The stories are varied and interesting: A man collaborates with future and past versions of himself in "Now + n, Now - n": a superintelligent dolphin falls in love with a human scientist in "Ishmael in Love"; and San Francisco tap water is doused with an amnesiac drug, giving people a second chance and inadvertently creating a new religion in "How It Was When The Past Went Away". The stories have broader and deeper characterization than previous Silverberg work, as well as more ambiguous outcomes. We don't really know whether the alien beings referred to as trees in "Fangs of the TREES" are intelligent creatures, but the main character Zen has a relationship with them and feels guilt and sorrow when he is forced to kill them; the same theme occurs in "Sundance". "Hawksbill Station" illustrates the psychological consequences of lifelong imprisonment, with the jail located in the deep past. And a strange utopia is portrayed in "A Happy Day in 2381!", where hundreds of thousands of people live in huge skyscrapers, with a culture based on a duty to procreate, neighborly sex, a total lack of privacy, and immediate death to anyone who assaults a pregnant woman: the Christian Right and the counterculture of the 1960s, together at last. This Silverberg volume has a real range of stories, with great prose and ideas. If you haven't picked up earlier volumes, To the Dark Star might be a good place to start.


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Robert A. Heinlein (1940s)


A few pages into his story “The Roads Must Roll” (1940), Robert Heinlein shows us his protagonist Larry Gaines shouting “Halt!” to a group of commuters on the eponymous rolling roadways. They stop:

There is something about a command issued by one who is used to being obeyed which enforces compliance. It may be intonation, or possibly a more esoteric power, such as animal tamers are reputed to be able to exercise in controlling ferocious beasts. But it does exist, and can be used to compel even those not habituated to experience.

I’m not difficult to imagine that as a piece of self-description. Rereading Heinlein’s stories now in conjunction with those of his contemporaries in Astounding – “Doc” Smith, say – is to be struck by how much he was in command, right from the start. He somehow found, or brought into being, a language for describing the future so much more sophisticated than anything else that had been seen. How could you not pledge allegiance to it? Watching his emergence in those first few stories must have been like seeing an adult walking into a room full of children.

There are a couple of aspects to his distinctiveness. The first is the worldly wise sophistication he brought to SF. (It’s worth remembering that when he began writing he was already in his 30s, with careers in business, political activism, and the Navy behind him.) He had an instinctive sense that a science-fictional gizmo would not exist in isolation. It would be brought into being by people with needs – economic, social, whatever – and would be used, at least in part, to satisfy those needs. He’s very savvy about the world of commerce, in a way that ushers the reader into the circle of knowledge too. So, for instance, he devotes a significant part of “The Roads Must Roll” to describing the economic effects that moving walkways between major American cities would have and the kind of business infrastructure that would surround them. Secondly, he’s always thinking about the emergent properties of an invention and its second- and third-order consequences. “The Roads Must Roll” has not only the moving walkways between cities but also Jake’s Steak House, the restaurant that exists only on the roads, and the use of semaphore between employees on the roads. Thirdly, he has a keen sense of narrative drive, of how a story needs to be constructed to keep people reading. A lot of his stories start with a contextless line of dialogue, often a question or a command. Without knowing to whom it’s directed, readers almost think it might be addressed out of the book at them. Lastly, there’s a strain in Heinlein that has its roots in the American tall tale (especially, one suspects, in Twain), wanting to talk about the can-you-believe-it feats of exceptional men. This carries with it the tendency for stories to boil down to aphorisms, maxims for survival on the frontier, but we’ll get to that later.

Most of Heinlein’s central early stories are collected in The Past Through Tomorrow (1967), which provides the core narrative of his history of the future. In it, humanity masters atomic power, expands to colonise the Moon, and ultimately looks further afield. Heinlein may not have been the first author to construct such a large-scale plot out of multiple stories, but he was surely the most skillful. Reviewing Stephen Baxter and Alastair Reynolds in January’s Locus, Gary Wolfe said that “here are the two most important things to keep in mind about future histories: they aren’t histories, and they aren’t about the future.” That may be true now, late in the game, when future histories are, as Gary Wolfe says, “wonderfully architeconic Christmas trees on which to hang a variety of tales.” But I think Heinlein intended his in an entirely different way, as something to be believed in, as an argument for a world that could be made to come true. In particular, it was directed at science fiction fans and argued that

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they were the ones with the vision to bring about such changes if only they listened to Heinlein. So the continuing narrative across stories repaid readers’ attention, in the same way that arc plots in *Buffy* or *Doctor Who* do. If, in a later future history story, you recognize a character mentioned in passing who cropped up earlier, you feel a little warm glow of inclusion. The author is gesturing you into the inner sanctum of those who have followed loyalty

As an example of this, consider two stories in *The Past Through Tomorrow* concerning D.D. Harriman, the entrepreneur whose brilliant bootstrap mankind to the Moon. They are “The Man Who Sold the Moon” (1950) and “Requiem” (1940). The first starts with another exclamation/command: “You’ve got to be a believer!” Harriman is the speaker, persuading his partner, George Stone, not merely that they can build rockets to take people to the Moon, but that they can make money doing so. It’s axiomatic for Heinlein that government would never have the chutzpah to take this step and that private enterprise will have the resources and will to take up the slack. The energy of the story is unmistakable, with Harriman jetting from London to New Delhi to Colorado in one paragraph like some burning man from Bester. Heinlein’s slyness about the world also extends to providing extracts from the newspaper stories and adverts promoting space flight—not appended to the story as in Kipling’s “With the Night Mail” (1905), but integrated into the narrative. By the end of the story, it’s clear that lunar travel will become a fact of human life. But Heinlein gives Harriman a typical last line, after he’s just watched a rocket launch: “You guys still here?” he said. “Come on—there’s work to be done.”

Between this story and “Requiem” in the book are a couple of more minor tales showing how space travel has indeed become established. “Requiem” follows Harriman at the end of his life. He has been banned by his partners from using the rockets he created. He’s now old and clearly ill, and desperate to visit the Moon. So he bribes a crew of astronauts to smuggle him to the Moon aboard their spacecraft and dies as they touch down. His grave marker bears the same epitaph as Robert Louis Stevenson’s in Samoa: ‘Clearly ill, and desperate to visit the Moon. So he...’

Here in a few sentences is Heinlein’s ability to grab the reader by specifying and personalising: suppose we take you as an example. Pinero’s central proposition is set out in his third sentence, and the rest of the speech is spent unpacking that and working back to it. Notice also how conversational and light is the tone of the exposition. Making the milk sour adds nothing to the explanation except making it easier to imagine. Pinero doesn’t want to displace the picture of a human as a three-dimensional entity, but he does want to add to it another complementary one. Heinlein was never particularly interested in strangeness (or cognitive estrangement, if you prefer); he wanted to integrate the new into the given. He wanted to show not only the future, but also how to get there from here.

(Here is probably the best place to mention *For Us, the Living*, the 1939 novel only published posthumously in 2004. I tend to use these columns to dwell on the canonical works of a given author, and I don’t think there’s any sense that *For Us, the Living* has yet entered the SF canon. But it has provided an enhanced picture, I think, of the continuity between the early and the late Heinlein and of how much John W. Campbell must have influenced Heinlein’s early stories. Its prescription for the good society may now seem cranky and irrelevant, but it is the first of many Heinlein stories in which telling you about the future comes to seem secondary to instructing you —yes, you personally, sitting right here —what you can do about it.)

Much of the latter part of *The Past Through Tomorrow* is taken up with two short novels. The first, “If This Goes On...” (1940, revised and expanded 1953), recounts a revolution against a religion-dominated future US government. The second, “Methuselah’s Children” (1941, revised and expanded 1958), describes the adventures of the long-lived Howard family, and especially one Lazarus Long, who also features in much later Heinlein. Both of them demonstrate that Heinlein, even this early in his career, was able to sustain a narrative across 160 pages as well as 60, and that there were a couple of subjects that held his interest even this early. In “If This Goes On...”, the subject is the military structure, the guts of how his rebellion would work and order itself. Heinlein was never happier than when describing how an underdog might kick back against overcontrolling masters. In “Methuselah’s Children”, it’s the desire to explore. There are so many emblematic passages of Heinlein dialogue in the story, almost all given to Lazarus Long, that it’s hard to know where to start with a quotation. Perhaps the best choice is the concluding section. Lazarus has centuries left to live. He could sit around on a newly discovered world and be a “lotus eater,” but he chooses not to:

Libby chuckled again. “Looks like you’re growing up.”

Lazarus replies, “Some would say it was about time. Seriously, Andy, I think that’s just what I have been doing. The last two and a half centuries have been my adolescence, so to speak. Long as I’ve hung around, I don’t know any more about the final answers, the important answers, than Peggy Weatheral does. Men—our kind of men—Earth men—never have had enough time to tackle the important questions. Lots of capacity and not enough time to use it properly. When it came to the important questions we might as well have been monkeys.”

This seems to mean an absolutely central passage, not just for Heinlein, but for SF in general. It presumes that there are findable answers to “the important questions.” For a moment, consider this passage in the context not of Heinlein and SF but of art in general in the 1940s. We’re toward the end of the Modernist revolution in art, in music, in writing. To take some obvious landmarks, Schoenberg’s 12-tone system has been around since around 1910; Eliot’s *The Waste Land* (1922) and paintings like Picasso’s “Les Desmoiselles D’Avignon” (1907) have also been around for nearly a century. All of them, in one way or another, were enormously influential in culture (or, at least elite culture), and all of them assert variably that there is no one way of seeing things, no one tonality or point of view that will capture everything that needs to be captured. Heinlein’s creed here is, at its root, a positivist one: I take positivism to mean that there is one set of “answers,” and that they can be sought through scientific and physical exploration. Lazarus does allow, on the next page, that there might not be any such answers, that “maybe it’s one colossal big joke.” But that seems an idea that the story dismisses, as does Lazarus. The whole premise of modern SF after Heinlein is that, with sufficient intelligence and application, the world can be made sense of. To my mind, the biggest divide in SF writing at the moment is between those who still adhere to some version of this credo and those who don’t. In many ways, the fury aimed at the various new waves of the 1960s and at the cyberpunks in the 1980s was because of their divergence from it. In Gibson’s *Neuromancer* (1984), for instance,
The only hope to save Nanagada lies in a mystical artifact said to be hidden in the frozen north. Only one man who has forgotten more than he remembers, knows the device's secrets, even if he doesn't remember why or how.

"Buckell's first novel conjures a vividly imagined world, spiced with intrigue and adventure that unfolds at a breakneck pace."
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Who do you send to track an alien that doesn't want to meet? Send a man with only half his mind. And pray that you can trust him with the fate of the world.

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2007 Locus Awards and Hall of Fame Induction

Accompanied by classic Seattle weather — alternately stunning and drizzly — this year’s Locus Awards ceremony took place June 16 at the Seattle Courtyard Marriott, only hours before the SF Hall of Fame induction of its new members at the nearby Science Fiction Museum. Connie Willis served as toastmaster, aided by Locus Assistant Editor Amelia Beamer, as Willis once again explained the importance to the awards of the Hawaiian shirt motif, humiliated those who had neglected proper attire, conducted a Hawaiian shirt giveaway quiz, presided over the annual Hawaiian shirt contest coinciding with the 70th birthday of Locus publisher Charles N. Brown (who kept unsuccessfully trying to return to the podium to tell his talking dog joke), and — eventually — presented the awards themselves. Noone seemed to feel the two-and-a-half hour luncheon banquet ever lost its brisk pace, however, and the event was again sold out. Among the attendees were a number of incoming Clarion West students, who were promptly informed by Willis that this very luncheon would be the high point of their careers. And finally, as Willis looked on with the expression of a mother whose least favorite child has just sat down at the piano, Charlie Brown attempted to tell his talking dog joke. Three different versions.

The weekend actually got underway the evening before, with a 70th birthday party for Charles Brown, partly for the benefit of those who would be unable to attend the actual 70th birthday party set a week later in Oakland. Among those present were Connie Willis & Courtney Willis, Eileen Gunn & John Boy, Neal Stephenson, Greg & Astrid Bear, Jack Skillingstad, Jim Frenkel, Mark Kelly, John Picacio, David Hartwell, Gardner Dozois, Leslie Howle, Rome Quezada of the SF Book Club, Nancy Kress, and Vernor Vinge. Sporting his new gift of a bedraggled-looking beach bum straw hat, Vinge presented a number of informal testimonials, and an assortment of other, um, colorful birthday presents, including a coconut bra, Hawaiian shirt-shaped Christmas lights, and an air fresher shaped like a Hula Girl.

Saturday morning saw two panel discussions, “Thinking about Humanity,” moderated by Eileen Gunn with Connie Willis, Gardner Dozois, and a late-arriving Nancy Kress (delayed by traffic), and “Thinking about the World,” moderated by Charles Brown with Neal Stephenson, Greg Bear, and Vernor Vinge. The idea was to explore — without falling into a simple humanists-vs.-geeks dichotomy — the idea of possible singularities, the role of society in affairs, and whether humanity might or might not remain fundamentally the same over the coming centuries. Not too surprisingly given the intellectual stature of the discussants, the question proved not quite as polarizing as it might at first have seemed, although early on Gardner Dozois — who even such a transformational event, it would occurr to be universal, and poverty and homelessness would persist even into the future. Connie Willis challenged the members of the second panel to present evidence that such a singularity was ever likely given human nature, but those panelists barely took time to argue that configural evidence rested rather on the terms of the original terms of his famed “singularity,” while noting that many science fiction readers seem to have long held the belief that humanity is somehow improbable, and Bear argued that singularities in one form or another have been around at least since Arthur C. Clarke’s Child­hood’s End — even to questions of technique — what, if anything, does this all mean to the practicing SF writer? — and both, interestingly, touched upon the notion that encounters with radically different alien societies aren’t all that new in human experience. Bear cited Mel Gibson’s Apocalypto as among the most effective portrayals of an alien culture in film, and Charles Brown noted that his various trips to China sometimes seemed like visits to an alien world.

Following the panel discussions came the awards ceremony itself. After explaining the Hawaiian shirt business, Willis praised Locus for its coverage of the SF field as its major coverage of Pamela Hilton, but in the way which fully — ostensibly designed to permit the sartorially challenged haole to redeem themselves by winning one of a number of Hawaiian shirts which Willis had picked up at resale shops in Colorado — the questions about TV shows like Hawaii 5-0 or Elvis movies like Blue Hawaii turned out to be almost completely irrelevant. Everyone, in fact, seemed to buy the baubles she offered, even if there was a bit of irony in her announcement that Therese had asked him to do some variation of “Welcome to the Science Fiction Museum’s Hall of Fame Award Ceremony” and he’d done exactly that — writing a brief randomizing program using those words. He kept the program effortlessly on schedule, with each award being preceded by a presenter’s remarks and a brief video for sale.

Artist John Picacio introduced the first award, to the late legendary SF artist and experimental filmmaker Ed Emshwiller, though the brief film clip hardly did justice to Emshwiller’s film work. Eileen Gunn accepted on behalf of Emshwiller’s widow Carol and the rest of his family. Actor Wil Wheaton, best known to SF audiences as Wesley Crusher on Star Trek: The Next Generation, presented the next award to Eugene Roddenberry, Jr., who accepted on behalf of his father, Star Trek creator Gene Roddenberry. Wheaton also recalled how Roddenberry had given the young actor his own Navy ensign insignia years earlier, and now took the occasion to return the bars to the family. Seattle-area film critic and festival curator Warren Etheridge accepted the third award on behalf of Ridley Scott (who was out of the country), acknowledging that Scott had won his place in the Hall of Fame almost entirely on the basis of the films Alien and Blade Runner (though some in the audience might have counted Legend as well). Finally, the only award to a fiction writer, and the only one to an inductee actually in attendance, was presented by David Hartwell to Gene Wolfe, who — alluding to the parade of stand-ins who had preceded him — began by claiming that he was far more important than the person who had agreed to accept the award on behalf of Gene Wolfe, but who quickly revealed that he was “shaken to the core” by the honor, and thus cut his remarks gracefully short.

Following the ceremony, attendees adjourned to tour the Hall of Fame exhibit in the museum, kept open late for the occasion. The new inductees already had their Lucite plaques installed in the exhibit, and Wolfe was joined by his wife Rosemary and daughter Teri Goulding for a photo session, providing a rare center of real literary gravity amid the glitz and pop of the museum displays. Those of us visiting the museum for the first time were a little surprised and delighted to see the cultural weight given to SF literature and art held its own among the media displays and movie memorabilia, and that some of it was surprisingly current: a towering stack of handwritten pages that is the manuscript of Neal Stephenson’s Baroque Cycle, for example. Gene Wolfe wasrepresented in the museum not only by his books, but by a 1970 letter to him from Damon Knight, and several original Emshwiller paintings adorned the substantial but eclectic art collection. John Picacio spent some time examining them and trying to puzzle out the essential characteristics of the Emshwiller style. Roddenberry and the Star Trek franchise were of course well represented throughout the displays, as was Scott’s Alien and its sequels; Bladerunner showed up mostly as part of a CGI video diorama on future cities, along with images from Metropolis, The Jetsons, and The Matrix.

Thanks to Liza Trombi, Therese Littleton, and the Locus Awards arrangements, Leslie Howle and Northwest Media Arts for co-sponsoring, and to 123 Awards for donating the Locus Award plaques. Next year’s Hall of Fame Awards are tentatively scheduled for June 21, 2008 in Seattle; next year’s Locus Awards may be the same weekend. Watch Editorial Matters for more information.

—Gary K. Wolfe (with Amelia Beamer)
WEIS HICKMAN JULY 2007

"Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman mine [their] series for a fresh look at the original heroes and villains." Publishers Weekly

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Robert A. Heinlein:

As a boy (1900s)

With his brothers (1910s)

Cadet (1929)

Midshipman (1930)

Author (1940s)

With L. Sprague de Camp and Isaac Asimov (1943)

With L. Sprague & Catherine de Camp and Isaac Asimov (1975)

Worldcon Masquerade (1961)

Author/Engineer (1950s)

Worldcon Guest of Honor (1961)

Guest of Honor speech (1961)

Building his house (1966)


On the ice (1952)
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Available again—50th Anniversary Edition... with a brand new White Hart story written in collaboration with Stephen Baxter.

Although written, as the author informs us in his introduction to the 1969 edition, in such diverse locations as New York, Miami, Colombo, and Sydney, there is something inherently English about these stories. London's famed Fleet Street district has changed dramatically in the five decades since the collection's first appearance as a Ballantine paperback original... and, of course, many of the regulars of the White Hart (based on the White Horse pub on Fetter Lane) are no longer with us. But the White Hart's most prominent raconteur, Harry Purvis can still be found propping up the bar and regaling us all once again with tales of quirky and often downright eccentric scientists and inventors.

Here, for example, are a man who could control a giant squid; a man who could silence an entire orchestra at the flick of a switch; and a French genius who invents a machine that can record all human pleasures and transmit them to any client rich enough to afford such luxury. And rounding up the whole affair is "Time Gentlemen, Please", in which we encounter a gadget able to accelerate the passage of time in a small volume... immensely useful for vaccine research where an entire year's worth of study could be completed in seconds. But the hapless inventor finds himself walled off by immobile air molecules... and even worse. It's a tale which points out, with some nostalgic resonance, that we simply cannot slow the passage of time. A fitting last word for one of SF's most enduring watering holes!
there may be “ultimate answers” about how the world works and why, but they’re not accessible to any of the street-level characters Gibson is clearly interested in depicting. Survival, or survival with grace, is the best they can hope for. So where did this credo come from?

Heinlein was a profoundly American author, as the repeated references to frontier imagery in his work make clear. (This also perhaps accounts for why only a handful of his works are in print in the UK, as opposed to all the major — and many of the minor — works of Asimov, by any standard a far weaker writer.) The US is a country that, at least in theory, always has the right to remake itself. As Paul Monette might write, “we humans shall not cease from exploration. We’ll want, like Stevenson, to be buried under alien skies.”

It’s fair to say that the stories in The Past Through Tomorrow showcase Heinlein’s strengths and weaknesses in ways that were not to change much throughout his career. He was always a dialogue-driven writer, for instance, and one can see that influencing a contemporary writer like Gibson is less pronounced, at least in the future tense. Heinlein’s first-person narration is nicely offset by a brief clatter of his narration is nicely offset by a brief

The Door into Summer also has a first-person narrator. Lawrence Smith is left almost penniless. The body of the book is of contempt he holds for those, such as the union strength and weaknesses in ways that were not robots) have been purloined by his partner, and he ready. The flip side of these values is the degree of the alien species encountered in “Methuselah’s Children,” where they shall not cease from exploration. We’ll want, like Stevenson, to be buried under alien skies.

After Heinlein’s initial appearance with the Future History stories and after the hiatus of World War II, a couple of things happened to his career. He broke into the slicks like The Saturday Evening Post; and I’m thinking of it, but where you somehow don’t mind current Ace edition carries the cover line “The Past Through Tomorrow, and I’m simply astonished that it now seems to be out of print in the UK and the US.

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The arguments against the worldview presented in Starship Troopers are so extensive, and the debate has been had so many times, that it's hard to know where to start. It's fastidiously, some say, it's misanthropic, it's nothing but a vehicle for Heinlein to tell us his views of militaristic, it's poorly characterised, it's nothing but a vehicle for Heinlein to tell us his views of how society should react to certain pressures. The last seems to me the criticism most sustained by the text. Starship Troopers describes a world in which military war is the only kind of war that one should care about. The voices against this worldview — for instance, Johnny's father's patronising instruction to make sure he's out of sight before signing up — are so obvious that it's hard to imagine anyone taking them seriously. Johnny finds in his training an answer to all the questions he has about the world and his place in it, laid down with a dogmatic ferocity that's breathtaking at times. This is a former teacher of Johnny's, an ex-Marine:

"I do not understand objections to 'cruel and unusual' punishment. While a judge should be benevolent in purpose, his awards should cause the criminal to suffer, else there is no punishment — and pain is the basic mechanism built into us by evolution which safeguards us by warning when something threatens our survival. Why should society refuse to use such a perfectly performed survival mechanism? However, that period [when capital punishment was banned] was loaded with pre-scientific pseudo-psychological nonsense. "As for 'unusual,' punishment must be unusual or it serves no purpose."

Note, for a start, the implacable certainty again: the idea that because one knows things about science (in this case evolution), those ideas are automatically transferable to an entirely different sphere of human life, crime and punishment. Note also the assumption that the only reason criminals might be put in jail is to punish them. Completely gone are ideas about prison familiar to anyone who's thought about it for a second: that it might also be there to protect society and to be used to an environment where those who can be rehabilitated are allowed to become useful citizens again. And look at the contempt for "pseudo-psychological nonsense" which might stop the infliction of cruel and unusual punishment. You could open Starship Troopers at any page and find a passage with similar views, or indeed stronger ones. I'm don't think I can justify the charge of fascism against the book, but it certainly feels totalitarian in many ways: either you're with me, or you're a traitor. And the vehemence of the responses to it demonstrates again an old lesson: escalatory language breeds escalatory ustup.

It's not surprising that Stranger in a Strange Land (1961) has been so much more popular, for its pleasures are so much more uncomplicated. (Put very crudely, it's a book advocating greater sexual freedom — not the most difficult sell for most people.) And one can see very easily how it would have been taken up by the Sixties' counter-culture as a manual on how to live. It's unusual for Heinlein, I think, because the story itself is subservient to the tone. It's very simple to offer a plot summary, that the "Martian man," Valentine Michael Smith, comes to Earth and spreads his arguments about what he knows about human nature, culture, and how to live. What matters is the background, the hugely amplified version of the present day that Smith wanders through, Clandie-like. For once, it's a Heinlein book where I'd suggest he owes debts to other authors: to Pohl and Kornbluth for the density and sparkiness of the future, and to Theodore Sturgeon, for the intensity with which he puts forward Smith's views on sex and love. Indeed, there are very obvious comparisons to be drawn between Starship Troopers and Sturgeon's particularly published Godbody (1986), not least because of the way in which they appropriate religious imagery and try to use it to their own ends. Heinlein's not without some self-awareness here, as one of his characters explains about the quasi-religion gathered around Smith:

"Let's say it's not a religion. It's a church, in every legal and moral sense. But we're not trying to bring people to God; that's a contradiction, you can't say it in Martian. We're not trying to save souls, souls can't be lost. We're not trying to get people to have faith, what we offer is not faith but truth — truth they can check. Truth for here-and-now, truth as matter of fact as an ironing board and as useful as bread... so practical that it can make war and hunger and violence as unnecessary as well, as clothes in the Nest."

The sort of truths, in other words, that Lazarus Long went looking for many years back. (And what is science composed of if not truths you can check?) Stranger ends up as a summation of the benign side of Heinlein's worldview; it's one of those books so varuous that everyone can take what they want from it. It's also by a long chalk the most consolatory of Heinlein's books. That's not just because it delivers a message of liberation from restraint that chimed with its times. But it also offers the consolation one most often associates with fantasy, that death might not be the end. When Smith is killed by a mob, his last words to a grasshopper are "Thou art God." He then "disorporates" and heads off to what can only be described as a kind of heaven. He's referred to as "the archange Michael," and it's made clear that he may have to undertake similar work in the future. So he does his job (the book) at the beck and call of a God (or author), whose will trumps the laws of physics. It's a harbinger of the sour solipsisms of Heinlein's books. After the intensity of Stranger, The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress (1966) might seem like a relaxation, a return to Heinlein doing what he knows best. There are a lunar setting, a politically motivated rebellion against overarching authority, thrills and spills. It's certainly more fun to read than almost any Heinlein for a decade or so. And it shares with Stranger an interest in language, in the ways that new phenomena will generate new terms around them. But the political side is far more foregrounded than in, say, "If This Goes On...", with Heinlein's thought experiments about what might happen to utopian culture if it goes obvously in the way of the story. In a sense, then, this is a comedown for him; as I've suggested earlier, in his prime, one of his great skills was being able to integrate information and debate about a future into his narratives. This is also the point at which, for me, he starts skewing his speculations overtly to meet his ideological needs. He describes, for instance, a lunar society where men heavily outnumber women, and where this breeds exaggerated respect, almost veneration, for the female population. But wouldn't it be more likely that men (or, at least, enough of them to make a difference) would start exploiting women and coercing them to do their will? But to put forward that kind of picture would make Heinlein's rebels seem far less idealistic than he wishes.

Another trait of Heinlein's that has been present throughout but that reaches, for me, a limiting point here is his tendency to put aphorisms into his characters' mouths. Some samples: "Never tease an old dog: he might still have one bite," "You don't get milk by shooting a cow" — and, perhaps more significantly, "The best thing as a free lunch," often abbreviated to "tanstaafl." These are, in a sense, an outgrowth of Heinlein's tendency to conduct the argument of his books through dialogue. (For a writer so interested in exploration, he's a remarkably unvisual writer.) But they wind up all too often being a substitute for argument. If you can couch something in a "common sense" way like this, you'll almost always win the debate in Heinlein. Another persistent theme this ties in with is Heinlein's suspicion of "book learning," as opposed to experienced gained doing work in the world. Words like "fancy" or "clever" often become pejoratives in his work, used to describe the man who-sit behind desks and try to govern those doing the real work. ("Gover," in Heinlein, is almost always a synonym for "steal from").

The book also returns to a theme present right at the start of Heinlein's career, his fascination with frontier societies. It's very easy to imagine the Moon as an 18th-century American West and, as I said earlier, to see the revolution as a model for making or remaking America. But by this time, it must have been clear to Heinlein that, if there were frontiers left, they were not in the US. There was the brief flurry of the moon landings, of course, but whatever else they led to, it was not the creation of new societies along the lines described in this book. In the 30-odd years since humans last stepped onto the Moon, we've surely become far more concerned as a species about the problems we have on this planet than on venturing farther afield. Meanwhile, the space program has taken humans no further than Earth orbit. Of course, there are still space-travel advocates, many of them inspired by Heinlein's fiction: perhaps this is his greatest achievement. But the disjunction between the rhetoric of space advocacy and what has actually been achieved in the last few decades is pretty wide. It's no wonder, then, that The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress represen...
This discussion took place during Readercon 2007 on July 6 and 7, among John Clute, Gary K. Wolfe, Charles N. Brown, and Graham Sleight, with help from Locus editor Amelia Beamer. Following on the success of the "Readercon program-ming" with a private discussion, making one continuous narrative. Our critics hardly need introductions: John Clute is a science fiction critic and encyclopaedist; Gary K. Wolfe is a professor, critic, and Locus reviewer, Charles N. Brown is the publisher of Locus, and Graham Sleight is a critic, Locus reviewer, and the incoming editor of Foundation. The discussion takes off from Graham Sleight's "Yesterday's Tomorrows" column on Heinlein, on page 37.

**CNB:** I want to open with a conclusion we all seem to share: all modern science fiction is based on Heinlein. He's the elephant in the room. It doesn't matter if anyone's reading him now; he set the course of modern science fiction.

**GKW:** I don't think he's the elephant in the room so much as the room around the elephant. He's the person who invented the language of modern SF. Look at SF and fantasy - in terms of genre history - as a hospital room. Some people build the frames and platforms, and other people build on those platforms. You can go back to earlier platforms such as the Gernsbackian technology tale, or even the utopian tale, which I see as kind of a room around the elephant: it's not only that, it's the operating system by which science fiction is read and written.

**GKW:** I think you're using "operating system" in two senses. First, Heinlein's efforts to create an operating system. Heinlein's construction of the future, the engine generation of the future, became a kind of generative grammar, a set of rules for imagining the future. The fictional operating system - the technical rules for writing SF - isn't just an operating system; it's a fourth-generation COBOL system, patched and updated by subsequent generations, but probably never entirely retired. It's like Windows - based on MS-DOS, with a friendly user front end. But most people coming into the field after 1970 see Windows and don't know that MS-DOS is underlying it. That's where I think Heinlein's influence is now submerged.

**CNB:** But I think MS-DOS is still there. Like Vernor Vinge says, every one of these operating systems is isomorphic with the operating systems that enable the human world.

**GKW:** That's why I was using a generative grammar model, the Chomskian model, where you set up a series of rules, techniques, or technical principles by which science fiction stories can be generated by authors other than Heinlein. Later writers and readers have internalized that grammar, that set of rules that generates a particular kind of science fiction story, which is still probably the central kind of science fiction story.

**CNB:** That is the structure of not explaining everything, the most revolutionary thing he ever did. If you've got ways of argument. As far as SF can go, Heinlein stories' operating systems are isomorphic with the operating systems that enable the human world.

**GKW:** That's why Heinlein's attempts to create an operating system are so polarized. Either he's a fascist, and we hate him for that reason, or he's the founder of many of the virtues we adhere to, and anyone who says otherwise just doesn't get him. There's also the sense of personalization of response. Many people who've read Heinlein and like him couch themselves as - one of the subtexts of the Heinlein Centennial that's going on this weekend - Heinlein's Children. People who read Heinlein and get him have such a personal response.

**AB:** In terms of the elephant in the room, and the room around the elephant: it's not only that, it's the operating system by which science fiction is read and written.

**CNB:** I agree. We don't even know we're reading Heinlein because traditional and contemporary science fiction is so imbued with Heinlein he's invisible. His influence was pervasive and authoritative, and so unanswerable that it became the way we talked. Then there's the drama of his career and writing and life, far more telling than, say, Jack Williamson, whose life in a biological sense encompasses the entire field and whose death marked a symbolic tellin. Heinlein's creation of modern science fiction was a venture into the room around the elephant: it's not only that, he gave us in the early '40s, so he's the room we're in.

**JC:** I'd like to utter the phrase "Heinlein contract." In 1940, Heinlein was in a position of making a decision: He'd recently written *For Us the Living*, which is a utopia and contains almost all of the ideas that surfaced late in his career, in embryo. It is a bad novel, although in many ways very well writ-

**AB:** Graham used the word "language" in the beginning of his essay to talk about the authoritative tone, the structure of the actual content. By the end, he was talking about language in terms of syntax or grammar. That's the operating system.

**JC:** You can describe any story as working in terms of an operating system. You've got syntax; you've got ways of argument. As far as SF can go, Heinlein stories' operating systems are isomorphic with the operating systems that enable the human world.

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**GKW:** Heinlein sold the reader on a very convincing future: it was lived-in, it was achievable; you could understand how it worked. In order to be in this cool future he invented, we had to listen to him talk to us. Eventually the talking overcame the future; there's nothing very interesting about the future in his later novels. There was no framework on which to hang the ideas; the ideas just hung.

**JC:** I've never seen a more fascinating previously unpublished novel, because it contains the whole of his career.

**GS:** He gets away with the didacticism in the '40s and '50s, which distiguishes that from the works of the '70s and '80s.

**GKW:** Heinlein sold the reader on a very convincing future: it was lived-in, it was achievable; you could understand how it worked. In order to be in this cool future he invented, we had to listen to him talk to us. Eventually the talking overcame the future; there's nothing very interesting about the future in his later novels. There was no framework on which to hang the ideas; the ideas just hung.

**JC:** I thought by 1959 his influence was starting to wane for all sorts of reasons; one of them being the course of history was not the course of enablement that he'd thought was appropriate. I think he thought that the contract he'd enforced upon himself had been broken by the field itself. The last novels, certainly from 1970 on, are novels that are repudiations of the whole world that he'd created over the years of his commercial success. History broke its contract with Heinlein, so he had nothing to talk about but exfoliations of Heinlein in those later stories. It wasn't solipsism; it was filling up the void history had left. His eventual departure from the field came through these irminable iterations of departure, disillusionment, and of real hatred; a kind of death long before he actually died. It's an astonishing representation of part of our model of SF itself.

**GKW:** In his 1957 University of Chicago lecture he said, as the writer, you have a contract with the reader to place the reader in this universe, but if you have to stop the narrative in order to explain what the universe is, you've violated that contract.

**GS:** From a writing point of view, that's Heinlein as a set of techniques, what Amelia told us is called "Heinleinizing" in SF writers' workshops. That is something you need to do in an SF story, something you usually don't need in a non-science-fiction story, and something you might do historical fiction. Bruce Sterling was one of those writers who internalized Heinlein at a very early age. You look

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at a Sterling story, say “The Blemmye’s Stratagem” (set in North Africa in the 12th century), and it’s technically developed like a Heinlein story. He puts you into this universe, but he doesn’t explain anything about it. Also Gene Wolfe’s Solder of Sidon books: Gene Wolfe has internalized Heinlein to the extent that he sets out to write a historical fantasy, he introduces the setting in the way Heinlein would have. What Gene did, particularly in Shadow of the Torturer, was to take the Jack Vance future and “Heinlein” it — in effect, providing the archaeology that enables you to see how this radically alienated future came about, which makes Gene Wolfe the bastard son of Heinlein and Jack Vance. And Damon Knight was the midwife.

Heinlein effectively abandoned the visionary novel of the future which had been common in earlier SF. That is, rather than saying, “This is a vision of the future,” he said, “This is a future that has been constructed through the following principles,” and then made us understand the principles. What you see in any of the classic stories is a future whose archaeology is embedded in the narrative. You not only have to deduce the narrative itself, but you have to deduce the history and archaeology of it.

This is what made Science Fiction; he argued for that in 1947. He thought the act of speculation was the act of writing fiction. Speculation is different from Gemsback, different from Poe, Verne, the utopian writers. Part of what happened in the later years was he reverted to writing prescriptive futures. And it falls apart.Essentially Heinlein became a writer. And that is by definition the antithesis of speculation.

GC: Part of the definition of SF I would use is an argument of continuity between some point in world history and the story being told. It’s an easy way to distinguish SF from fantasy. It allows in a lot of alternate world SF, since an argued continuity doesn’t have to be from the present point of world history, it can be something that greatly altered the universe back then, which simplifies the methodological swamp a lot.

CNB: The Locus obituary in 1988 ended with a quote from Frank Robinson that we’re all Heinlein’s children in that he’s the one who shaped a lot of our ideas. Not all the books, but the advocacy of space travel, intelligent characters, etc. Damon Knight’s article on Heinlein, called “One Sane Man”, said he was pretty much the only adult writing science fiction in the ‘40s. He was older; he’d been in the navy, in politics. He was a personal father figure to me. I knew him for over 30 years, and he actually did take the place of my dad for part of that. Even though I was a left wing liberal and he was right wing libertarian, it didn’t matter — we just didn’t discuss our differences at all. His best friend was Sprague de Camp, and every time he started to discuss politics with Sprague, Sprague would say, “I can’t help it, Bob. I’m a yellow domino character, and I always will be,” and that was the end of the conversation. But I think we all consider ourselves Heinlein’s children in some way.

GS: What do we mean when we say “we”? As I was doing this piece, I talked to some friends of mine in Britain, both people younger than me and older than me. Very few of them had the formative SF experience with Heinlein that people in the US did. People in the UK had Asimov or Bradbury, or if they were younger, Banks or Gibson. I think there are only three or four Heinlein works currently in print in the UK, as opposed to the complete major Asimov. People whose characteristics are peculiarly American characteristics.

JC: Spider Robinson once said in a review it would be unpatriotic of Americans to let other people read Heinlein, because his message was so American and so much to the advantage of the justly exceptional race of Americans.

CNB: Do I think that Heinlein is a particularly American author? Yes. On the other hand, all of Heinlein’s books were regularly popular in England too, through the ‘60s and ‘70s. The sea change wasn’t until the ‘70s and ‘80s. Brian Aldiss always said that his basis was Heinlein.

GKW: But what does “basis” mean? One of the things that comes up repeatedly with Starship Troopers is that a lot of people, as Graham says, find the book almost unactable, but you could build a library with the responses. Chip Delany, Joe Haldeman, Brian Aldiss, Gordon R. Dickson, Harry Harrison — you can put together a whole panoply of anti-Starship Troopers novels that then subsequently have their own influences over the future. There’s the direct Heinlein influence, and the influences of the Heinlein response, to some extent moving into England.

GS: I don’t want to suggest that England is the norm and the US is the outlier, but you can’t argue the opposite either.

CNB: Haldeman, Dickson, and even Delany aren’t necessarily anti-Starship Troopers. They are arguing with the assumptions and conclusions, not throwing them out. Heinlein loved their responses, but not the Harrison, which he considered frivolous.

JC: It might be the case that an English writer like Brian Aldiss had a healthier anxiety of influence of American authors than the American writers did. Aldiss was able to make use of Heinlein and to create from that model a corpus of works that is radically different, showing the lines of dissent and divergence. The problem with many American writers was that Heinlein was so pervasive and, we haven’t said it yet, so slippery as a thinkertext that it’s difficult for an American writer to actually work out an influence to see if he created postmodernists like David Brin, continuing to sound like Heinlein in a world that does not correspond to that kind of advocacy, that kind of assumption that you can derive moral certainties from scientific data.

GS: Can I perhaps unpack that a bit? The distinguishing thing about Heinlein is this axiom that the world is infinite and there are no answers, or at least very few, and that you can derive answers to the questions we have, and someone who’s smart enough and works hard enough can get somewhere by using those answers. Ultimately, this is philosophically a positivist point of view, as opposed to, say, modernism or postmodernism, in which there are no answers or multiple answers. You can see the latter point of view in someone like Gibson, with the idea that there may well be answers on how to manipulate the world of cyber-space, accessible to people with power and money, but we’re not concerned with them. And certainly, in the world of slipstream, say, there are no answers at all; there’s no way out of the maze. One of the things that bothered me about Heinlein is that he didn’t believe in the space between people who adhere to some form of that positivist doctrine, that you can find answers, and those who don’t.

GKW: You’re describing an engineer’s view of the world, essentially. Heinlein was a pioneer of engineering fiction. There’s remarkably little science fiction today that deals with the creation of new devices and stalwart engineers solving problems in society, building the future he wanted to build, but they’re not speculatively adventurous. One example of how these don’t work in the modern world is the various efforts within the last 20 years to resurrect the Heinlein juveniles. Heinlein juveniles worked amazingly well for their period, but you look at the attempt of reviving these on the part of Jerry Pour-nelle and Charles Sheffield, and they’re basically awful. They don’t address reality as perceived by young people today.

JC: In 1939 or 1940, it must have been an experiment in the sense of wonder for readers to find that it was actually possible to domesticate these ideas, to make them integrated. Most of the science fiction before Heinlein did not really constitute a competent advocacy of anything or present an assumption that we move from here to here. A great deal of the science was terribly bad; inviting you to go somewhere, but giving no consequences, no outcomes. Unlike a large proportion of his predecessors, Heinlein gave a vivid sense that he actually liked the idea of the future, liked the idea of working out the engineering, enabling ways of understanding how we would get there.

GKW: In “The Roads Must Roll”, there’s the engineering of the moving roadways, but what defines it as a Heinlein story is the restaurant on the road: this is a technology that has this economic effect, which leads to...The story itself is largely about labor relations. No one remembers that Heinlein’s ideas didn’t survive as well as his lived-in future.

JC: There’s a presumption or dream that the future is determined by what science fiction is or was about. The severe gap thus opened between dream and reality burdens science fiction with a persistent adolescence, but also exposes the way that science fiction is about desire. Heinlein’s later ideas didn’t survive as well as his lived-in future.

GS: Without wanting to play the youth card too heavily, I don’t remember any moon landings. My formative 13-year-old space travel experience was seeing Challenger explode. The space exploration that made the most impact was the Voyager mis­sions. But the prospect of getting humans to the planets, the stars, or even to the moon in any settled way seems more and more distant. On Charles Stross’s blog, he recently posted a cameo, reasoned, 4,000-word piece on why both interstellar and inter­planetary travel is implausible, that it would require so much propulsion and cargo and it’s simply not believable to assert that humans can do it. There ensued a huge comment thread. Hardly anyone materially challenged his conclusions about energy and cost, but a lot of them said that as a sci­ence fiction writer it’s a kind of treason not to follow Heinlein’s example. Many explicitly evoked him and said, “If it’s your job to find solutions.” Some at the more extreme end said, “Well, if you think the physical laws of the universe prevent us from doing this, you should damn well make some technology to subvert those laws.”

GKW: That’s the Heinlein model that hasn’t been challenged and probably shouldn’t be challenged. When Heinlein did say that the consensus future was the assumption that this is a linear upward curve. The only writer I know who suggested we might abandon space is Fredric Brown in The Lights in the Sky are Stars, and even that ends with us returning to space. There might have been a dialogue starting in the 30s and 40s about the likelihood and desirability of constant engineering and expansion, but that dialogue was shut down.

JC: But you said two different things, the likelihood and desirability. The gap between the likelihood of this future history and desirability is, though variable, very clear. The stress lines started to show irrevocably and deeply by the time Heinlein started to feel he’d lost the world, and the
world had lost him.

GKW: Heinlein's futures became alternate history. By modern standards, you could say they were asking the wrong questions.

JC: It is so patently a series of profoundly wrong guesses that the thing is a mid-wall of scathing and technological brutalism. What happened to the world instead was the beginning of the information revolution, which science fiction writers ignored for extremely good reasons (because information is invisible and hard to put in story form). I don't think Heinlein spent much time on what was actually happening. I just find it strange, it's the stuff outside of the novels that one can start to triangulate him, and the fiction, and the political views expressed outside the fiction.

GS: The future of the world is going to be more complicated than any story you can tell.

JC: There was a rhetoric in 1940 that this was not the case, that there was an enabling, domesticating agenda that translated the huge, radical leaps in scientific knowledge into the way we lived, and that we would be a way of isomorphically describing how the future was going to go. It sounds as though it was believed in the Campbell editorials of the early '50s. They feel as if it's 200 years ago; the language would be a way of isomorphically describing how the future was going to go. But it's only when he had to write for advertisers - he'd read James Branch Cabell, Jerome K. Jerome, he brought a new sensibility to the field.

CNB: Anther thing Heinlein brought to science fiction was dialogue. If you look at the earlier stories, they were mostly description. Heinlein used dialogue in all those early stories, and he used it very well, better than anyone else at the time. All of Heinlein's characters and dialogue up to the '80s is from the '30s.

GKW: Oddly, though, the dialogue in these stories from 1939-1942, which I think was the period of his greatest influence, seems less dated than Stranger in a Strange Land.

JC: Take Katherine Hepburn, whom we naively take as one of the women of the future you describe. The stories all ultimately marry her off. It might be possible to read some of those movies as having subservient subtext, but I'm not sure you can get that subtlety out of Heinlein safely.

CNB: Heinlein was subservive. He talked about how he wrote Starship Troopers and Stranger in a Strange Land at the same time and kept moving scenes from one to the other, where they would fit better. The two books are interchangeable, two sides of the argument about freedom. When Heinlein had to go into the hospital for surgery, his wife, Virginia, had I Will Fear No Evil published even though Heinlein wanted to cut it more. It's the only Heinlein book he ever talked about. He told me, "If I hadn't gotten sick, I'd have rewritten the book, and what makes you think the protagonist survived the first operation?" His argument was that it wasn't a science fiction book; it was "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" by Ambrose Bierce (1900). The lead character dies in the first scene, and none of the brain transplants ever happen.

GS: The author is absolutely the last person to believe in a sufficient amount of truth for what people say Heinlein do is deniability. You get extreme material presented, but in a way where the author has enough elbow room to say, "Actually, I don't believe it, and you were a fool for thinking I might." At the same time, it certainly looks like this is very close to the voice of the author. With Heinlein there's a sort of amount of biographical and political stuff outside of the novels that one can start to triangulate him, and the fiction, and the political views expressed outside the fiction.

GS: The point is the difference between these two traditions: David G. Hartwell says science fiction is the antirealist literature.

GKW: I think you can make an argument that Heinlein was doing a pulp version of modernism by introducing language that was not delineated in the way that Gerschombackian language was, or Wells. In a way, it's revolutionary. It was only when he had to write for advertisers - he'd read James Branch Cabell, Jerome K. Jerome, he brought a new sensibility to the field.

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of alienation runs through the '70s, and the '80s were about disappointment.

JC: There is an argument I've read that Starship Troopers is a parody of a government propaganda piece. Whether or not Heinlein wanted that to be picked up, another way to keep the reader utterly insecure as to where he was, I don't know.

CNB: Starship Troopers is a book that caused arguments across fandom and science fiction. It's a very powerful book. Heinlein was very proud of it.

GS: Is Stranger in a Strange Land a science fiction novel or a fantasy novel?

CNB: Neither. It's a satire. Does he believe in the heaven he's pushing? No. Is it real in the book? I don't know. It's listed as a science fiction novel, and under the premises he uses, it is. The stuff does exist, though it's an imagined world.

GKW: Stranger in a Strange Land seems more adolescent than his earlier works, more so in some ways than the juveniles.

CNB: Half of it was written in the '50s, and the rest in the '60s. I like the first half better, which is all the political manipulation up to the point where Mille Miller is attached. I think the first half is closer to top-notch Heinlein writing. The second half is a different book, very much affected by James Branch Cabell.

GS: I feel strongly how much Stranger in a Strange Land is close to what Sturgeon was doing in the '50s. It's relatively pale in comparison to the great juvenile stories about how you can be human and how that entails having to be close to other humans, and models for doing that, which are different from society's. I get so much more of an emotional connection to Sturgeon that Heinlein.

CNB: It's the first Heinlein book that's entirely about relationships, not an engineering book at all. I think he was very affected by Sturgeon, who was a friend of his.

GKW: None of the sex in Heinlein struck me as being sensual. There's a clinical attitude; it's presented in engineering terms, like assembly instructions.

JC: That had a power in the '30s, because when a woman said something to a dude, it was not the protagonist's assumptions that she's talking obscenely, because she's talking about her body as something she owns and can operate. His characters are making this strenuous utterance that they own their bodies. All of this is arousingly frank.

CNB: In Time Enough for Love, there's a section where Lazarus Long, at 230 or so, marries a 20-year-old, and they live out her entire life. And she claims, "Your 200 years doesn't make a difference, because all that matters is our life together."

I really liked that. It was the same thing Jack Williamson said to me: "We're contemporaries, because we've known one another for 40 years."

JC: In erotic fiction, of course, where you're talking about how heterosexual men appreciate naked women and value them at the same time, there's a lot of carnage. Heinlein's either vulnerable or oblivious to it, but it's conspicuously the case that he writes in a fashion that's arousing to heterosexual men. And that's dangerous territory to some men, some women, depending on what decade you're in during this 50-year war. He's right in the center of it, because his women are always extremely attractive, and they're described by men. Certainly as a teenager, I went along with it.

GKW: I don't think you're going to get very far rehabilitating any writer of the '30s or '40s, in terms of portraits of women. But the titillation was there in For Us the Living and was proto-

syllogisms generate a profound cruelty in the minds that suck Heinlein up. Listen to David Brin or Greg Benford. They are avowed Heinlein fans, and they punish everyone who doesn't obey the story.

GKW: Heinlein would imagine something like a novum and instinctively explore the consequence of the consequence, creating a realized world in a way other writers weren't. In the later novels, he seldom took the time to do that. He was so preoccupied with his ideas that the narratives become less interesting, and dogma sets in. Instead of exploring the idea, picking it up and seeing what's under it, he hammers you over the head with it.

CNB: I was thinking of Steel Beach, by John Varley, which has Heinlein fingerprints all over it. The Heinleiners in that book are not the characters you want to emulate.

GS: One of the unhelpful things he gifted science fiction is the archetype of the character who says things just to be provocative, which I think is immensely damaging to the adulthood of the field. You can see all sorts of successors.

JC: Someone said that in the Heinlein novels who is wrong is allowed to make a decent joke; that's part of the way the whole thing is skewed. People who are wrong, they're wrong: turtles all the way down. That setting up of the skewed deck ties into the syllogisms, because a provocative utterance often turns out to be a loose syllogism.

GKW: Graham, you made a point about his sense of right and wrong versus his weak sense of good and evil. His characters are never mistaken, only wrong. You cannot correct yourself or change your mind. You are doomed. It's an interesting religious point, very dogmatic and pretty infantile when it comes to the reality of human relationships.

JC: The only way to tolerate them is as a radical, violent response of the failure of our story, and that's a way other writers weren't. In the later novels was from people who appreciated him as a Midwestern philosopher. There were people who hadn't read the earlier works, which stunned me completely. I thought the readers of the later books were the same as the earlier books, and they weren't.

GKW: He was privileged to see most of Heinlein's correspondence. All of the correspondence about the later novels was from people who appreciated him as a Midwestern philosopher. There were people who hadn't read the earlier works, which stunned me completely. I thought the readers of the later books were the same as the earlier books, and they weren't.

JC: The early photographs of him showed a slippery man, a leader, and someone who charmed the room. Through whom the other people understood where they were and what they were doing.

If I come to any temporizing conclusion about Heinlein from rereading him, it's that this is the most complicated figure other than maybe Alice Sheldon. It's not just the science fiction story; it's the failure of the Western world. Heinlein had motivations - affronted hebrubs - to repudiate the field that he thought had devoured itself. Heinlein was doing these things as a catastrophically exaggerated response to the failure of our world.

GKW: I was thinking of Steel Beach, by John Varley, which has Heinlein fingerprints all over it. The Heinleiners in that book are not the characters you want to emulate.

CNB: Heinlein was one of the best didactic writers, but he was didactic in that in the '40s he said, "Here's what I've learned." In the '80s, he was saying, "I know everything; you should learn from me." And this is the difference between a didactic writer when he's young and when he's old.

One of Heinlein's idols was James Branch Cabell, who wrote about the strangeness of the human race. Cabell used this to say to the time they're 50. After that, they're just repeating themselves and lecturing. Cabell continued to write hectoring novels.

JC: People who write say everything they're going to say to the time they're 50. After that, they're just repeating themselves and lecturing. Cabell continued to write hectoring novels.

JC: One doesn't really want to go into hero theories of literary history, but this is about as close as one could comfortably get. If Heinlein had not come into the field when he had, John Campbell's Golden Age would not have existed, and science fiction would have become very quickly, almost certainly, a genre that was indistinguishable in intellectual aspirations from the Western.

—Amelia Beanes, Charles N. Brown, John Clute, Graham Sleight, Gary K. Wolfe
Dear Mr. Heinlein,

I’d like to call you Robert, or even Bob, but we were never properly introduced. The closest I ever came was some years ago when I finagled MGM into optioning your brilliant book *Have Spacesuit, Will Travel.* (The script I wrote is now sitting on a shelf in the same warehouse where they store the haunted house fake cobwebs.) After the agents and lawyers had all done their thing and the deal was inked, as we say in Hollywood, my phone rang one morning. My ex-wife answered it, and it was you on the line. You asked to speak to me, and she said I was still sleeping, but she would go and get me. You, being your usual polite self, asked her not to bother me and she didn’t.

Many hours later, after a long session with a rubber hose, waterboarding, the electric generator from a field telephone, and other things I’m sure are prohibited by the Geneva Conventions (and might even be too much for Dick Cheney), I had the whole story out of her and was able to reconstruct most of the five-minute conversation she had had with you. You said you liked my stories (you had actually taken the time to read them!), and you wished me well on the film project. That was basically it. For weeks I alternated between the depths of despair at having missed the most important call of my life and rapture that, to quote Sally Field, “You like me! You really like me!”

*Letters to Heinlein* (2004)  It was many years later that the thought first occurred to me: I could have called you back. Surely I knew somebody who had your number. Yeah, right. Call you back. Like that old gospel song: “Operator? Information? Give me Jesus on the line!” Sorry, by the time I’d drunk enough courage to do that, I’d be passed out. So I missed my opportunity, and before long it was too late.

Maybe it’s just as well. I don’t suppose you really needed a lot of ego boosting by that point in your life. That’s what I would have done, stuttered about how much I loved your books, stammered about how they literally changed my life when my junior high school librarian, Mr. Green, handed me a copy of *Red Planet* and said I might like it... and I returned 24 hours later, hollow-eyed as any heroin addict, asking him if there was any more of this stuff on the bookshelves. *There was!* And the best of it was by you. And I’d have mentioned that when there weren’t enough stories by you and others I started writing my own pitiful little stories, two or three pages long, awful little things, but they got better. And how my fascination became my career. All because of you.

No, that’s not true. I’d have been too shy to say much about any of that. I was too shy to call, right? But if my ex-wife had awakened me and handed me the phone, I’d have mumbled something about how much I respected you and your work, and that I’d do my best to turn your book into a movie worthy of the source. And I did that, and nothing came of it, I’m sorry to say.

All I can say at this point is thank you. Thank you for so many hours of exploring your worlds with you, and for diverting my life from a career in science, which is where I was heading, and which would have been boring compared to what I have done.

—John Varley

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**ROBERT A. HEINLEIN**

by Frederik Pohl

The time of my first encounter with Robert A. Heinlein was identical with that of the rest of the science fiction community. It came when I picked up the latest *Astrounding* and discovered on the contents page the name of a new writer. A little later he showed up there again, and before long it became obvious that he was not only good but a lot better at writing SF than almost anyone else around.

Then things changed somewhat. At the age of 19, principally because of dumb luck, I found myself the editor of two professional science fiction magazines, *Astounding Stories* and *Super-Science Stories*, and one of my contributors was that same Robert Heinlein.

That statement conveys an implication that is unjustified. In such a relationship it is supposed to be the editor who makes the buy-or-bounce decisions, and therefore it is the editor who dominates it.

In this case that was incorrect. It happens there is a member of my immediate family who exemplifies the Pohl-Heinlein relationship of that period more accurately. Her name is Millie. She is a five-year-old Jack Russell, and at every meal she sits at my feet, waiting for me to finish so she can lick the crumbs of my plate. This well describes how things were between Robert and me around 1940. Everything he wrote went at once to John Campbell. The few that John rejected went to me — to be run only under a pseudonym, to be sure, because that was how John had decreed it.

Still, it wasn’t too bad for either Millie or me. Millie makes a fair living out of my dinner plates, and I got some really nice stories that John had been too opinionated to publish.

Of course, later on things improved for me. By the time I was editing *Galaxy* and *If* in the 1960s John and Bob had suffered some sort of cooling off, and so I had become the editor who got first look for serial rights of everything Bob wrote. I didn’t buy everything, but I did buy quite a lot.

I was, I admit, a little rueful because Robert had by then apparently begun to run out of steam. Novels like *Podkayne of Mars* were reasonably cute, but a long way below the products of his glory years. Then, without warning, along came the *The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress*, not only right up there with his best but maybe his very best novel ever. I began running it at once.

Naturally it won that year’s Hugo (so did the magazine I ran it in, largely because I had been lucky enough to get such good serials), and I couldn’t have been more pleased.

—Frederik Pohl

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Dear Mr. Heinlein,

A century is nothing. You’re still a youngster, and the older I get, the younger you seem to me. Your stories and ideas resonate and enlighten and infuriate in new ways every decade. Your experience in politics and insight into mass human behavior — filtered through a strong lode of rugged individualism — make you a kind of American Kipling. And I envy you the period in which you wrote — despite the extreme turmoil and cruelty, it seemed far more friendly to science and notions of continuing human progress. It really is all about culture and personality, and you were very lucky to have written for the best and the brightest of the 20th century. I sincerely hope our kids in the 21st century can match their greatest achievements and exceed them — not just repeat them!

I expect your stories and novels will be inspiring and upsetting for more centuries to come. Good job, sir.

You are one of the great admirals of the ocean-of-imagination.

—Greg Bear
Dear Robert,

Congratulations on your 100th birthday! You have gotten me into science fiction, so you might be happy to know that I am still at it. As I recall, I first established contact with you through your brother, General Heinlein, whom my astronaut friend, Karl Heinize, met on his speaking arrangement in Kansas City. (Karl had two dreams in life: fly in space and climb Mt. Everest. After fulfilling his first dream, he joined the team that climbed Mt. Everest without any oxygen tank, despite the admonition from his buddy Storey Musgrave. Karl died while climbing the highest peak in the world and is buried on Mt. Everest. One might say that Karl was a character straight out of Heinlein stories.)

Some time later, you phoned and invited me to a dinner when you testified at the hearing of the Congressional Joint Committee. I had the pleasure of meeting Ginny and your agent, Eleanor Wood, at dinner. You kept my wallet hostage so I could not pay for the whiskey bottle after the dinner. When you invited me to your alumnus party in Annapolis, later on, I met Jim Baen, one of your publishers. After the party, Jim took me to a Georgetown bar and talked to me about writing in Seattle in 1961, and other convention meetings. I remember vividly all the meetings once I moved to California in the early ‘70s, at your home in Bonny Doon – and your two visits to my house. I love the gift you gave me for my 50th birthday, when you were 80. Now I’m 70, and you’re 100. All these round numbers!

It’s been almost 20 years since we last talked, and some interesting things have happened. Your prediction about most of your books going out of print after your death was completely wrong. Ginny made sure they stayed in print. I’m not quite as happy with the way Ginny imposed the earlier texts on the world. I still think the finals were sharper. But she did worship every word you wrote. We kept visiting Ginny every month or so until she moved to Florida. She insisted I be a director of the Heinlein society, just to keep them in their place, and I’m still doing that.

You hated to talk about your fiction, and only talked about it once or twice over 30 years. But now that you can’t complain, let me say a few things. As you know, Bob, you get taken to task a lot for *Starship Troopers*, but I think it contains some of the most fascinating arguments you’ve ever done. *Starship Troopers* is mandatory military reading, and I can see why. It isn’t because it’s pro-war (I know it isn’t), it isn’t because it’s fascist (certainly isn’t), it’s because it’s about patriotism and civic duty, and one proposal for how it might work. I know about your hatred of prisons, and that you wish all prisons would be shut down. You said that in your story “Coventry”. You believed in the military view of discipline – swift, appropriate, and then over. You felt that punishment should be instantaneous, and the offender should be returned to society, not to a prison society, since you didn’t believe that a prison society rehabilitated people to be part of our society. I also agree with your point in the book, that people who vote should give something to society, and earn that privilege in return. The book is still creating all the arguments it did almost 50 years ago, which should make you very happy.

You became my father figure very early, and I’m glad I was able to tell you that. And to tell you that I loved you. And still do.

—Charles N. Brown

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**Letters to Heinlein**

**Dear Robert,**

Congratulations on your 100th birthday! You have gotten me into science fiction, so you might be happy to know that I am still at it. As I recall, I first established contact with you through your brother, General Heinlein, whom my astronaut friend, Karl Heinize, met on his speaking arrangement in Kansas City. (Karl had two dreams in life: fly in space and climb Mt. Everest. After fulfilling his first dream, he joined the team that climbed Mt. Everest without any oxygen tank, despite the admonition from his buddy Storey Musgrave. Karl Heinize died while climbing the highest peak in the world and is buried on Mt. Everest. One might say that Karl was a character straight out of Heinlein stories.)

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—Charles N. Brown
Robert Silverberg

I’m not sure he was a forgiving man—he wrote a book called Grumbles from the Grave, after all—but he forgave me on at least two occasions. The first was when I bought a big house in New York in 1961. He wrote to me and said, “Of course you’re going to put a bomb shelter in it.” (That was a big thing of his at the time, bomb shelters for the home.) No, I told him, I wasn’t interested in surviving an atomic war and scrabbling around in the radioactive ruins of New York, so it was my hope that when Armageddon came, the Russians would drop their bomb right on top of my unsheltered house and finish me off quickly. That angered him: here I was, one of the brightest new kids in the SF world, telling him that I wasn’t interested in survival! How dare I! But he forgave me after a while.

Then, 12 or 13 years later—I had moved to California by then, and was living in another house without a bomb shelter in it— I reprinted a story of his called “The Year of the Jackpot”. At least, I reprinted most of it. One day I picked up the phone, and there was Bob Heinlein, asking me if I had looked closely at that recent anthology of mine, and at his story in particular. I hadn’t. But I took a close look then, you betcha, and observed that the story had been reprinted minus its last line. He didn’t sound really furious, just surprised. I mollified him a little by telling him that I hadn’t read the galleys myself, but had farmed the job out to my wife—not Karen, back then, but Barbara. He was very good natured about it, under the circumstances. He had a high opinion of Barbara’s intelligence, as was quite appropriate, and was certain that she must have had some good reason for failing to notice that the story ended in midair. I arranged for the paperback edition of the anthology to run the proper text, and I never heard any more about it from him.

Note that I called him “Bob” Heinlein in the previous paragraph. All his friends—and I was a friend of his from about 1960 onward—knew him as “Bob” until, suddenly, somewhere around 1974, word went forth that he was to be called “Robert” and only “Robert”. We all attempted to make the transition (A lot of people had called Isaac Asimov “Ike” until about 1965, when he let it be known that he hated the name, and we stopped doing it forthwith, so we had had practice at such transitions.) The problem for Heinlein and me is that we had the same first name, and I am a Robert who wants his friends to call him “Bob.” The next time we spoke, he slipped up and called me “Robert,” and I slipped up and called him “Bob,” and then we remarked each other that he was supposed to be Robert and I was Bob, and we kept it straight from there to the end of his days.

Oh, and also he was one hell of a science fiction writer. He turned our little field upside down between 1940 and 1942, and it was never the same again, because he had showed us the right way to write the stuff. Everybody who was anybody in science fiction after 1942 wrote SF in the Heinleian way, because it was plainly the best way to do it, and we all still do.

—Robert Silverberg

MEMORIES OF ROBERT

by Spider Robinson

In Ed Regis’s The Grant Manh a Chicken and the Transhuman Condition, there is an entire chapter on the repeated efforts of Keith Henson and the Alcor Foundation to get Robert Heinlein to agree to be cryogenically frozen after his death. I was aware of this effort while it was going on; Henson wrote to me, entreat ing me to help him persuade Robert. I politely declined to argue with Robert on so personal a matter, but I certainly wished Henson luck. And I could not help but wonder why Robert had turned Alcor down. They were willing to waive all fees. Sure, it was a long shot—but consider the prize! And what did he have to lose?

The night Robert died, I was on the phone with Jim Baen for over an hour, sharing the grief. At some point I brought up cryonics and said I wished now I’d had the guts to at least ask Robert why he’d said no. “I asked him once,” Jim admitted.

So when I finally met Keith Henson later that year, I was able to tell him the answer to the mystery that had driven him crazy for so long. And then when I’d told him, he stared off into the far distance with a baffled look and was silent for a long time.

“How do I know it wouldn’t interfere with rebirth?” Robert told Jim.

He once called long distance to say happy birthday to my seven-year-old daughter, whom he never met.

We were in New York; Jeanne had been invited to perform with Beverly Brown Dancers at the Riverside Dance Festival. I wrote to Robert with a technical question about pressure suits and mentioned that we were all enjoying New York, except our daughter, Luanna, was a little scalder at being screwed out of a birthday party since she didn’t know another kid in town.

On Luanna’s birthday (how did he know the date?) he phoned (how did he get the New York number?) and said, “You and I can talk another time; put Luanna on.” And he spoke with her for over ten minutes.

She seemed puzzled at first, to be speaking to some old man she’d never met, but soon she was giggling, and she hung up with a broad smile. “He said dates aren’t such a big deal. He said your birthday isn’t really over until you’ve shared it with everyone you love. He said to tell you that I could have two birthday parties—one when the calendar says, with you and Mom, and one when I’m back home with my friends.”

Of course I asked what else he’d talked about. “He says I can say, ‘None of your business!”’ She added only that he was a very silly man, but very, very nice.

Years ago, I visited my cousin Clare Costello at her office in New York. As I chatted, I found that for some reason, my eyes kept invol untarily, and inexplicably, sliding sideways to a bookshelf in the corner. She caught me at it, finally, and sighed, and said, “Go ahead, look.” So I did.

Of course! Clare was then the children’s books editor at Scribner’s, treasurer to (and antithesis of?) Robert’s infamous cross-to-bear Alice Dalgleish. There on her wall were all the Heinlein Juveniles, original hardcover editions in alphabetical order, just the way they were in the library when I was six years old and my mind came awake for the first time: a powerful subconscious gestalt.

“That happens with half the visitors I get,” Clare said.

That’s how beloved he was, and is.

I will not be remotely surprised if Robert and Ginny show up at his 100th birthday party in Kansas City. It would be absolutely typical behavior for both of them. And if they don’t make it... hey, how do I know they haven’t been reborn?

—Spider Robinson

ROBERT A. HEINLEIN

by Frank Robinson

I only met Bob Heinlein once—when I spent three days as his guest at Jenny Drony Down (his home in California) when I interviewed him for Playboy. But I had heard him speak at conventions, and I had been a fan of his since 1939 when I first started reading Astounding.

I had three science fiction heroes back then—A. E. van Vogt and Ted Sturgeon. (I almost hate to admit it, but L. Ron Hubbard was my favorite author in Unknown.) I liked almost any science fiction writer back then, but Heinlein was the first who made the future seem real. His characters may have been limited by their logical backgrounds always struck me as based in reality—the true basis for extrapolation.

When I first started to learn how to write, I once sat down and copied a few pages of a Heinlein story to see what it looked like in manuscript form, where the magic lay. I did the same with Elmore Leonard and discovered in both cases that the story was the thing, that you couldn’t analyze the author’s way with story and words from a few isolated paragraphs.

I loved everything Heinlein wrote, from his novels in Astounding to his juveniles in F&SF (juvenile only because of the age of the protagonists). He had a background in science, and his extrapolations for the most part were a short leap from reality. At heart, Heinlein considered himself an educator, and his juveniles were his attempt to interest younger readers in the field of science. Heinlein’s chief asset as a writer was his ability to make you feel the future—“This is the future—and you are there!”

A few other writers have held the same fascination for me—Stephen Saylor for his books about ancient Rome where Rome comes alive for me, and in a different genre, J.K. Rowling in her first several Harry Potter books. (“Look, Ma, no dragons!”)

Toward the end of his writing career, Heinlein abandoned the magazines for a spot on the best-seller lists, but his novels never held the same appeal for me after that. One of the last of the “old” Heinlein—The Moon Is A Harsh Mistress—I regard as his attempt to return to “old Heinlein” with Friday I considered...
a failure. The sense of reality was there, but I regard the main character of Friday as a fantasy figure, an author’s wet dream.

But his earlier work had never been equaled. All were fresh, all were an extension of reality, all had the feel of a tangible future, and all of them were “idea” stories. It was Heinlein, along with Wells, who invented many of the basics for science fiction story. I even borrowed one, I’m not ashamed to admit, for probably my best science fiction effort—The Dark Beyond the Stars, a generation ship story. I got myself of the creative hook by pointing out that the originator of the concept was not Heinlein, but Don Wilcox in Amazing Stories. But with all due respect, it certainly wasn’t Wilcox who was my inspiration not only for The Dark but two shorter novels as well.

The high point of my infatuation with Heinlein were the three days spent at Bonny Doon interviewing him, primarily about the moon landing. He was an early proponent of going to the moon, and when we finally did, he admitted that he broke down and cried. It was vindication for years of having people point their finger at him as a fantasist, one who wrote those crazy stories about the future and played god on the moon.

The interview sadly never appeared in Playboy. A reporter for a local San Francisco paper had interviewed Charles Manson at the time of the Manson murders and said that Manson claimed he’d modeled his life after that of Valentine Michael Smith, the protagonist of Heinlein’s most famous novel, Stranger in a Strange Land. Hefner wanted Heinlein’s comments on this, and Bob refused—it wasn’t part of the deal, he had made a lifelong decision never to discuss his own work. I could have finessed it in the introduction to the interview, but Hefner wanted it from the horse’s mouth.

Bob refused and returned the check that Playboy had given him for the interview. (Playboy seldom paid for interviews; Heinlein was one of the few exceptions.) Heinlein had, in turn, given the money to the fund for the three astronauts who had been fried in their capsule. A.C. Spectorsky, editorial director at the time, refused to accept the check and sent it back. The interview, though announced as forthcoming in Playboy, was killed by Hefner. The interview was, in Out, a later comparison to Playboy (several thousand words were killed to make room for a full-page cartoon). Bob was disappointed and angry. I was, to be frank, devastated. The interview was as close as I ever came to personal homage.

Later, Heinlein hired a private investigator to check out the story. It turned out that Manson was a near illiterate, that he had probably never read a book in his life.

In writing this, I realize I may have said too much about myself. Please forgive me—there was no other writer in the science fiction field who had as much influence on my writing as Bob Heinlein. When he died, the field lost a giant, and I lost a beloved mentor.

—Frank M. Robinson

ROBERT A. HEINLEIN by Russell Letson

I think this story must be repeated so often by writers and fans that it ought to just get a number, like the jokes at the comedians’ convention. The first science fiction novel I ever read, at age ten, was a library copy of Rocket Ship Galileo. I followed up over the years with the modern versions of the library’s juveniles and then store-bought Signet paperbacks (often with wonderful Stanley Meltzoff covers) of the crucial novels and stories from the ’40s and ’50s: Beyond This Horizon, The Puppet Masters, Revolt in 2100, The Day the克Ktusses Came Down, The Man Who Sold the Moon, and Methuselah’s Children. I was particularly taken by the notion of a Future History, and I spent a lot of time poring over the chart, seeking out and checking off stories, and figuring which ones I might live long enough to experience. I had acquired a taste for internally consistent fictional universes in a third-grade encounter with the Arthurian cycle and Edith Hamilton’s synoptic account of Greek mythology; Heinlein’s Future History, along with Kenneth Roberts’s Arundel cycle of historical novels (which had always wondered about the philosophical implications of his thinking far beyond the military/legal/protocol follower and the nearly anarchic individualist is interesting but not necessarily paradoxical: protocols and codes (particularly those that are rooted in a solid model of human nature) are a primal defense against folly, slovenliness, disorder, and selfishness, all of which Heinlein clearly detested.

And SF also turned out to be a good fit for him—imagine trying to exercise that interest in first principles and alternate social arrangements in mainstream literature. He probably could have made it as a writer of, say, historical fiction, especially set in the Revolutionary War period (Kenneth Roberts provides a convenient template, career, but SF seems an optimal choice: plenty of room for social speculation and consideration of the basics of human nature, for his Shavian habit of turning conventions on their heads, as well as a place to apply his considerable understanding of engineering and the sciences.

Heinlein was capable of following some of the philosophical implications of his thinking far beyond what he could understand his work or him— skew of four paranoid/solipsist fantasies.

While I am reasonably satisfied with my grasp of the literary side of the work—I think I understand what the Old Man wrote—I do not think I have anything like an equal insight into the human being. The connection between the art and the life is full of oddities and incongruities, and I am hoping that William Patterson’s full-scale biography will help to sort some of them out. Meanwhile I puzzle over the write Joe Haldeman called “this strange and important man.” In an online memoir (“Oh Them Crazy Monkeys!”), Alexei Panshin writes, “I still haven’t finished the job of trying to get my head around Robert Heinlein.” Me too.

—Russell Letson
One way of looking at science fiction's growth — and here I'm talking genre history, not deep literary history — is as a kind of housing development, a series of platforms or scaffoldings or frames on which later writers could build. The marvelous journey (which Verne used repeatedly) was one such platform, the scientific romance another, the Gernsbackian brushed-aluminum technology-tale yet another, the pulp space opera still another. In the same neighborhood, we can look over and see other platforms and scaffoldings, some still under construction, some long abandoned — the rather bland façade of the utopian tale, that weird little structure built by the reclusive guy from Providence (how did he get a zoning permit?), the old Munsey adventureland fort, the marvelously detained palace of Tolkien (with all those more recent outbuildings that aren't quite as pretty), that crazy Frank Gehry-like thing frames on which later writers could build. The unadorned style of naturalistic fiction (he did it entirely on his own is still open to debate, of course — the release a few years ago of his unpublished first novel For Us the Living suggested that he might have been content to settle onto the utopian platform, before Campbell and the need for actually making money got hold of him — but even in his earliest Astounding stories he had begun to perfect the technique of plopping his readers into an unmediated future, presented in the unadorned style of naturalistic fiction he once professed admiration for writers like Herman Wouk and MacKinlay Kantor). In a lecture at the University of Chicago in 1957, Heinlein identified this as the central technical problem of writing a science fiction story. "The science fiction writer must build up a scene strange to the reader in this family, but every step he takes in the dust. He must make it convincing, else he will not simply lose empathy with his reader, he will never gain it in the first place." Furthermore, "the scene and all necessary postulates of the story must be made convincing without cluttering up the story." This is hardly news today, after decades in which the "scenario" has been bastardized by generations of workshop leaders, teachers, and academics, but it was a significant insight in 1957, and was nearly revolutionary in 1940.

The most famous example, of course, and easily Heinlein's most famous sentence — thanks to those workshop leaders and teachers — came from the 1942 serial Beyond This Horizon: "He punched the door with a code combination and awaited face check. It came promptly; the door dilated, and a voice within said, 'Come in, Felix.'" Heinlein knew he was onto something with that "dilated" business, and he continued to flog it for years in his later fiction. ("The door dilated and a bellman came in," from the 1949 "Q" story; for example.) Some other writers later complained about it — Asimov supposedly said it would be an inefficient use of space and a problem for wheeled vehicles or robots — and I myself remember, as a kid, worrying irrationally about what would happen if you got caught in it when it undilated, but reactions like these are missing the point. The point was to signal an estranged but immediately unpackable future setting with a maximum of economy, and over the next few decades it became a mantra for SF scene-setting and, to some extent, as a way of separating real SF readers from literal-minded amateurs. Patrick O'Leary captured this distinction well in his 2002 novel The Impossible Bird, in which an eight-year-old is trying to explain it to his older, somewhat thicker brother:

"Heinlein makes sense." "Oh, shut up about your damn books..." "I was just saying: his stories — you believe them." Mike was silent, chewing. Danny continued, "Like he writes: 'The door dilated.'" "What's dilated?" "Like an eye. You know, when the iris closes 'cause it gets too much light." Mike had studied that. "So?" "So it's not just tricks. It's the future. It's on a spaceship and a round door makes a little click:" "Airlock?" "In case there's an accident. Like a hull breach." "What the hell's a hull breach?"

And so on. It's clear that Danny is the SF reader in this family, but every step he takes toward exploring the implications of the word "dilated" leaves his brother Mike further behind in the dust.

This has led some people, notably Samuel R. Delany, to suggest that SF has to be read with a bellman comes in through a door that — dilated. And no discussion. Just: "The door dilated." I read across it, and was two lines down before I realized what the image had been, what the words had called forth. A dilating door. It didn't open, it irised: Dear God, now I knew I was in a future world.

After that, the deluge. Everyone was talking about how Heinlein had invented SF language, and everyone was paying homage, to the extent that a normal, hinged door seemed like a deliberate perversion. He'd given SF a bone it would not release. Here are some random examples.

I.F. Baldwin: "The door dilated, and Alexander ushered Kennon into the room."

Mike Resnick: "He heard the water stop flowing as the door dilated and he stepped through to the corridor."

There's a certain irony in all this, of course, since in general Heinlein's use of language was never regarded as his most distinctive talent, and since Heinlein himself never quite gave up on the background-lecture infodump that had been so widely characteristic of SF before he (even later in Beyond This Horizon, as Gary Westfahl points out, one character asks another if he knows about the Genetic Wars, then goes on to say, 'It won't do any harm to recapitulate.') Followed by a plot-stop- apologizing lecture. In fact — and not just in his bloated later fiction — Heinlein was often fairly messy in mortaring his ideas into the narrative, and the ideas themselves could be pretty messy. It seems increasingly unlikely that he'll be remembered as the social philosopher he sometimes fancied himself to be. In one sense, the things he wrote best about were the things that mattered least to him: he knew how to make a future entirely out of synecdoche, with its dilating doors and rolling roadways and walkways and smartass computers — that was all technique and panache — but he wanted us to listen to him tell us about how these futures could be constructed or avoided, whether it be through libertarian economic schemes or military discipline or weird sex.

But it hasn't entirely worked out that way: today almost no one remembers the scientific utopia he designed in Beyond This Horizon, but everyone knows about that damned dilating door; everyone remembers the title image of "The Roads Must Roll", but not the ideas of labor economics that provided the story's central argument. Even the religious and sexual satire of Stranger in a Strange Land falls into period pieces, but water sharing and grokking still seem kind of cool. His platform may be the sturdiest one that provided the story's central argument. Even the religious and sexual satire of Stranger in a Strange Land falls into period pieces, but water sharing and grokking still seem kind of cool. His platform may be the sturdiest one that provided the story's central argument. Even the religious and sexual satire of Stranger in a Strange Land falls into period pieces, but water sharing and grokking still seem kind of cool. His platform may be the sturdiest one that provided the story's central argument.


Boston, and others. Cover by Megan Stringfellow. Subscription: $18 for six issues, to David C. Kopaska-Merkel, 1300 Kicker Rd., Tuscaloosa AL 35404. Make checks out to David C. Kopaska-Merkel. E-mail: <ckmdnmag@gmail.com>.

Fantasy Magazine—Paul G. Tremblay & Sean Wallace, eds. No. 6, Spring 2007, $5.95 plus $1.00 s/h, quarterly, 80pp, 21 x 27.6 cm. Small-press magazine devoted to fantasy with stories by Bruce McAllister, Beth Adele Long, and others; interviews with Lisa Snellings-Clark and Andrea Kail; and book reviews. Cover by Enrica Leighton. Subscription: $20.00 US/$32.00 Canada/US$30.00 elsewhere for four issues, to Fantasy Magazine, 9710 Traville Gateway Dr., #224, Rockville MD 20850-7408; email: <wildside@stf.net>; website: <www.wildside.com>.


Mythic Delirium—Mike Allen, ed. Issue #16, Winter/Spring 2007, $5.00, biannual, 28pp, 13% x 21% cm. SF-related poetry semimonthly. Contributors are Darrell Schweitzer, Sonya Taaffe, Yoon Ha Lee, and others. Cover by Tim Mullins. Subscription: $3.00 for two issues, checks to Mike Allen, 3514 Signal Hill Ave. NW, Roanoke VA 24017-5148.

The New York Review of Science Fiction—David Hartwell et al., eds. Vol. 19 No. 10, Whole No. 226, June 2007, $4.00, monthly, 24pp, 21 x 28 cm. Review and criticism magazine, with essay-length and short reviews, etc. This issue includes essays by Geoff Ryman on the philosophy of a group of SF writers called the Mundanes; by Rob Latham on the boom-bust cycle of SF, the coming and going of various SF movements and how Cyberpunk and the New Wave fit into this cycle; and by Jason Sanford on the literary establishment's relationship with SF. Subscription: $38.00 per year, to Dragon Press, PO Box 78, Pleasantville NY 10570; email: <nyrsf@comcast.net>; website: <www.nyrsf.com>.

Science Fiction Studies—Arthur B. Evans et al., eds. Vol. 34 No. 2 (Whole #102), July 2007, $15.00, three times per year, 212pp, 15 x 23 cm. Academic journal. This issue focuses on Afrofuturism with articles on the work of Ishmael Reed, Samuel R. Delany, Nalo Hopkinson, and others; and book reviews. Subscription: $26.00 per year US individual (write for possible reasons behind the Muslim reaction to Salman Rushdie's award of knighthood. OpenDemocracy—<www.opendemocracy.net>, (6/27/07) discusses the official condemnation of the UK's award of knighthood to Salman Rushdie, the lack of public outcry it engendered, and possible reasons behind the Muslim reaction to the Satanic Verses. Reason (8-9/07) includes an article on the Heinlein Centennial which examines how Heinlein presaged social change in the US. Wired (7/07) has "Dispatches From the Hyperlocal Future" a short story by Bruce Sterling.

The Outer Limits—BBC News (6/27/07) ran a story on the Muslim response to Salman Rushdie's award of knighthood.

Yog's Notebook—Audrey Eschright & Lucas Graybowksi, ed. Issue 2, Summer 2007, $5.00 print, $2.00 pdf, quarterly, 40pp, 17 x 21% cm. SF and horror zine with short fiction, features, reviews, and columns. Subscription: Not currently available. For more information contact: Yog's Notebook, PO Box 40626, Portland OR 97240; website: <yogsnotebook.com>.

Children of the Atom by Wilmar Shiras

Take advantage of this special offer from Locus Press and purchase Wilmar Shiras's classic SF tale of super-intelligent children in hiding.

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Books Received - June

Compiled by Charles N. Brown & Carolynn Cushman. Please send all corrections to C. Brown at: LOCUS@Locusmag.com. We will run all verified corrections.


* Aguirre, Forrest Swans Over the Moon (Wheatland Press 978-0-9794054-0-2, $14.95, 112pp, tp) Fantasy novel about a di mmwitted crook who becomes a见者 of Satan. Authors are Julie Kenner, Kathleen O'Reilly, and Dee Davis.

* Banks, L. A. The Forsaken (St. Martin's 978-0-312-94860-3, $25.95, 438pp, hc, cover by Paul Youl) SF novel, the first volume of the Company.


* Boyce, Linda Round the Twist (Wheatland Press 978-0-9794054-3-3, $14.00, 269pp, tp) Humorous romantic comedy, the third book in the Watercourse game, the third book in the Watercourse trilogy. Copyrighted by Wizards of the Coast.


* Cast, P.C. Goddess of Love (Berkeley Sensation 978-0-425-21527-2, $14.00, 314pp, tp, cover by Danny O'Leary) Anthology of three paranormal romance stories about three daughters of Satan. Authors are Julie Kenner, Kathleen O'Reilly, and Dee Davis.

* Chang, P.C. Chanur's Legacy (DAW 978-0-7564-0444-1, $7.99, 312pp, pb) Fantasy novel, the second of two volumes in a single novel about a romance between a two people of very different cultures.

* Child, Maureen More than Fiends (Penguin/Signet Eclipse 978-0-451-22128-7, $14.00, 269pp, tp) Humorous contemporary paranormal novel. Cassidy Burke learns she is the next in a long line of demon-dusters, who spot and kill demons with their housecleaning abilities.


Books Received

Clarke, William. *The Worlds of Change* (Simon & Schuster 978-0-7432-7314-6, $14.00, 240pp, tp) Reprint (Simon & Schuster 2006, not a previous edition about the ghostly events at a historic site known for its haunted past.)


* Gernsbach, Hugo Gernsbach* *A Man Well Ahead of His Time* (Penguin/Roc 978-0-451-46154-2, $23.95, 393pp, hc, cover by Paul Young) Fantasy novel. The first US edition, this new series featuring Eddie Drood (code name Shamus Borid) is on the run from his own family. This is the second in the series.

* Gernsbach, Hugo Gernsbach* *The Dance of Death* (Baen 978-1-4165-2167-2, $7.99, 270pp, tp, cover by Ebby May) Original collection of ten erotic stories, several with SF or fantasy elements.


In this new "Asteroid Wars" novel, the discovery of an alien artifact brings the destinies of the Zacharius family, Elverda Apacheta, Dom, Martin Humphries, and his son together in a confrontation that transforms the solar system.

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When Manuel Rodrigo de Guzmán González disappears, Wendell Apogee decides to find out where he has gone and why. Spaceman Blues is a literary retro-pulp science-fiction-mystery-superhero novel.

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—Jeff Vandermeer, World Fantasy Award-winning author of City of Saints and Madmen

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**Books Received**

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<th>Title</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
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<tr>
<td>Haig, Matt Samuel Blink and the Forbidden Forest</td>
<td>(Penguin/Putnam 978-0-307-39703-2)</td>
<td>$16.99, 306pp, hc,</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>cover by Peter Farrow, Yolanda fantasy novel. Orphans Samuel and Martha move in with their Norwegian aunt, who forbids them to explore the mysterious forest nearby. First US ed. (Bodley Head 5/07 as Shadow for a Reason)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hamilton, Lauren K. The Harlequin (Berkley 978-0-425-21724-5)</td>
<td>$25.95, 422pp, hc, cover by Craig White</td>
<td>Dark fantasy novel based on Anita Blake, Vampire Hunter series. Hamilton, Lauren K. Strange Candy (Berkley 978-0-425-21521-9)</td>
<td>$14.95, 405pp, tp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hampton, Warren KOP (Tor 978-0-765-7123-2)</td>
<td>$24.95, 331pp, hc, cover by Chris McGrath</td>
<td>SF noir detective novel set in a danged, coated city ruled by the Queen of the Thieves. Illustrated by Jason Chan. This includes a reader’s guide by Haydon.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Haydon, Elizabeth The Thief Queen’s Daughter (HarperCollins 978-0-06-6888-8, 9715, 319pp)</td>
<td>cover by Jason Chan</td>
<td>Young-adult fantasy novel, the second in the series The Lost Journals of Ven Polysem. Ven’s first job as Royal Reporter of Serendai takes him to the forest of Gondin. A demon takes a vacation in the body of a new evil.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hill, W.A. The Last Days of Madame Ray (Carrol &amp; Graf 978-0-78671-681-8)</td>
<td>$24.95, 326pp, hc, cover by Whitney Cookman</td>
<td>Dark fantasy mystery, the second in the Stephan Razer investigations series. Illustrated by Herbert Properties. This includes a Dune story, “Treasure in the Sand”.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hill, Joey W. The Vampire Queen’s Servant (Berkley Heat 978-0-425-21589-0)</td>
<td>$14.00, 379pp exp 1</td>
<td>Vampire novel. The Howling Delve (Berkley 978-0-425-21525-4)</td>
<td>$14.95, 405pp, tp</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kemp, Debra A. The House of Perdiction (Amber Quill Press 978-1-59279-699-1)</td>
<td>$17.00, 266pp, pb</td>
<td>Arthurian fantasy novel, sequel in a series about Arthur’s estranged daughter, Lin. This is a print-on-demand edition available online at <a href="http://www.amberquill.com">www.amberquill.com</a>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>King, Stephen Lisey’s Story (Pocket 978-1-4165-2335-2)</td>
<td>$9.95, 665pp, cover by Mark Stutzman</td>
<td>Fantasy mystery novel. This is a tall-size edition.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knight, Angela Master of Dragons (Berkley Sensation 978-0-425-21424-6)</td>
<td>$5.95, 288pp, tp</td>
<td>Fantasy novel. A teen with the Sight and one poem and adds three stories to the Ova Hamlet papers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kaufman, Jon Dark Shall Come (Dark Horse 978-3-86173-290-4, $12.99, 407pp, cover by Peter Ferguson)</td>
<td>Young-adult fantasy novel, the second in a series featuring Sergeant Torin Kerr.</td>
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<td>Maberly, Jonathan Dead Man’s Song (Pinnacle 978-0-7866-1816-1, $6.99, 501pp, pb)</td>
<td>Horror novel, the second in a trilogy. Pine is still a team, a serial killer’s rampage 30 years before, faces a new evil.</td>
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<td>Mackay, Scott Phytosphere (Penguin/ roc 978-0-451-40158-2, $9.96, 376pp, pb)</td>
<td>SF novel. The Earth is trapped in a mysterious green sphere that blocks all sunlight from the planet.</td>
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<td>Marr, Melissa Wicked Lovely (HarperTeen 978-0-6-012146-5, $16.99, 396pp, pb)</td>
<td>Horror novel, the second in a trilogy. Pine is still a team, a serial killer’s rampage 30 years before, faces a new evil.</td>
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<td>Massey, Brandon, ed. Whispers In The Library (Kensington/Daikon 978-0-7564-0415-4, $14.00, 313pp, tp)</td>
<td>Original anthology of 19 stories of horror and suspense by 19 authors, several with supernatural or SF elements. Only the editor’s introduction indicated this is the first US ed. Massey’s stories appear in <em>Writers of the Future</em>. Authors include Tananarive Due, Wrath Hill, Joey W., Del Rey LucasBooks 978-0-345-47737-3, $12.99, 289pp pb</td>
<td>Horror novel, the second in a trilogy. Pine is still a team, a serial killer’s rampage 30 years before, faces a new evil.</td>
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<td>Llywelyn, Morgan The Greener Shore (Ballantine Del Rey 978-0-345-47767-5, $14.95, 301pp, tp, cover by John Everett Millais)</td>
<td>Reprint (Berkley 1991)</td>
<td>SF novel based on a Dune story, “Treasure in the Sand”.</td>
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<td>Lucy, Tom Timmy Failure (Gollancz 978-1-4013-6021-4, $14.95, 405pp, tp)</td>
<td>Dark fantasy novel, third in a trilogy begun in Night Watch about a Moscow inhabited by the supernatural Others, where the creatures of the Dark are policed by beings of Light on the Night Watch. Translated by Amanda Gowthorpe from the Russian Samoruchenny Dozer (2003).</td>
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<td>Maberry, Jonathan Dead Man’s Song (Pinnacle 978-0-7866-1816-1, $6.99, 501pp, pb)</td>
<td>Horror novel, the second in a trilogy. Pine is still a team, a serial killer’s rampage 30 years before, faces a new evil.</td>
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Rowe, Stephanie He Loves Me, He Loves Me Not (Bantam 978-0-553-38553-4, $7.99, 332pp, pb) Humorous paranormal-romance adventure, the third volume in the Diaries of Date Me, Baby, One More Time.


Shutterstock, Will The Gospel of the Knife (Tor 978-0-312-86631-0, $25.95, 336pp, tp) Horror novel, the first in a series. Ten years after the destruction of Dogland, a mysterious benefactor offers an orphans’ year-old Chris Nix an exclusive school.

Showalter, Gena Red Hand (Pocket/MTV Books 978-1-4165-3224-8, $13.00, 262pp, tp) Young-adult SF romance, the second in a series. Phoenix Germaine gets in trouble when she tries a drug originally invented to stop alien aggression and is recruited by the Alien Investigation and Removal Agency.


Smith, Dean Wesley, ed. Star Trek: Strange New Worlds 10 (Pocket 978-1-4165-4618-0, $15.95, ix + 145pp, ed., ix + 140pp, tp) Original Star Trek anthology of 19 stories written by fans as part of a contest (run by the fanzine Xerces); an introduction by Smith. Copyrighted by CBS Studios.


Snyder, Lucy A. Sparks and Shadows (HW Press 978-0-9792346-1-3, $35.95, 250pp, tp) First in the War of the Worlds. Collection of 17 stories (four original), four short stories set in the regular continuity, and seven poems (four original). Introduction by Nalo Hopkinson. This is a limited edition of 300 signed by both Snyder and Hopkinson. HW Press, Fair Lawn NJ 07410; <www.horrorworld.org>.


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short fiction: nick gever

regard, and when a human tour guide is hired to conduct a deceptively shaped alien to the caldera rim and then has to protect the being from disguised assassins, ontological doubts can only grow. Reed recounts this adventure with some ironic revisions, second in the Crosstime Traffic series about traders doing business in alternate dimensions.

* Twelve Hawks, John The Dark River (Doublade 978-3-05-51429-3, $24.95, 368pp, tp) Reprint (Del Rey 2006) alternate-history novel, third in a series sequel to the Great War and American empire.

* Ursu, Anne The Siren Song (Simon & Schuster/Altheneum 978-1-4169-0599-9, $16.99, 455pp, hc, cover by Eric Fortune) Young-adult fantasy novel, book two in the Crowns Chronicles trilogy. Derangements occur in the present day, as it becomes out of fashion and he gets his grandfather to help him.


* Webster, minced. The Renovated Miss Blackboard (Dorchester/Image Point 978-0-550-53076-8, $6.99, 310pp, pb) Humorous paranormal romance novel. This story begins with a young woman who is a sort of obstacle to a mysterious and powerful father's pursuit of her.

* Weis, Elizabeth E. The Lion Hunter (Penguin/Viking 978-0-670-06135-6, $12.95, 277pp, pb, cover by Emily Nelsen) Associate YA Arthurian novel, the first in a Mark of Solomon series. The sequel, based around a series of stories and flashbacks and told through the eyes of a young girl, is The Winter Prince. Copyright by Elizabeth Gatland.

Weis, Margaret Master of Dragons (Tor 978-0-7653-9779-9, $24.95, 370pp, pb, cover by Stephen Yourell) Reprint (Tor 2005) fantasy novel, the third book of the Dragonvald trilogy.

* Weis, Margaret & Tracy Hickman Dragons of the Highlord Skies (Wizards of the Coast 978-0-7666-5143-3, $25.95, 456pp, tp) Reprint (Putnam 2006) fantasy novel, the second volume in the Dragonlance: Dragons of the Highlord Skies. Non-fiction, a gathering of 11 essays exploring how the authors, in one way or another, tend to change to reflect changes in the real world. Essays include notes and bibliography; a general index is included, McFarland, Box 61, Jefferson NC 28640; 800-253-2187; <www.mcFarlandpub.com>

* Williams, Liz Precious Dragon (Night Shade Books 978-0-976-089-22-2, $24.95, 242pp, hc, cover by Jon Foster) Dark fantasy mystery, the third featuring Cherrit Balderch. Oh no, then is assigned to escort an emissary from Heaven on a mission to Hell. A limited edition (100-93, $40.00) is also available.


* Yolen, Jane & Adam Stemple Troll Bridge: A Rock 'n Roll Fairy Tale (Tor/Starscape 978-0-671-53852-6, $12.99, 278pp, pb) Reprint (Starscape 2006) young-adult contemporary fantasy novel drawing on Scandinavian fairy tales.

June 2007

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locus August 2007 / 67
**Nick Gevers**

*Visual Journeys*, the second SF anthology edited by Eric T. Reynolds for Hadley. Rille Books, does homage to space artists, from pulp era illustrators through Chesley Bonestell to contemporary figures like Frank Wu. Each reproduced painting is accompanied by an original story it has helped to inspire, and, given the veritgious power of the artwork, many of the stories are highly readable, if at times too literal in their tributes. The best tale overall is “After Bonestell” by Jay Lake, a spectacular vignette of a man awakening on a sentient Earth dragged across space for eternity by aliens. Also well worth reading are “Io, Robot” by Tobias S. Buckell, about how the blurring of human/machine boundaries could become categorically hazardous, and “Indifference” by Paul E. Martens, an exploration of civil resistance strategies that require absolutely no effort, and “Monuments of Flesh and Stone”. Mike Resnik’s wry misperception of heroic statuary (could that planet be...a basketball?), and “Hell Orbit” by G. David Nordley, concerning a perilously juvenile love affair on a colonial ocean moon where the only organic release is skateboarding through space above a huge planet with unpleasant weather patterns. James Van Pelt’s “Of Late I Dreamt of Venus” is quite impressive in its portrait of a woman’s obsession, spanning a thousand years, with a massive terraforming project, a case of misapplied emotion; and Richard Chwedyk’s “Where We Go” considers, in realistic vein, the commercial and aesthetic pressures behind early space art, a compelling, heartfelt summary of the anthology’s guiding theme.

A final note: the latest issue of the small press zine *Flytrap*, Number 7, is literate, offbeat, inspired. Particularly good is Leslie What’s “Frankenfetish”, an exercise in the domestic grotesque which satirizes cultural obsessions with immortalizing the Dead; tumors must ever afterwards seem absurdly unsavory. “My Shoes” by Ray Vukcevich is a tellingly oblique and surreal glimpse of the forces behind human social opacity; and “The Gardener of Hell” by Amy Beth Forbes extends civil rights considerations into the afterlife, where they seem special. (Applicable)

**Recommended Stories:**
- “The Final Voyage of La Riazza”, Jayme Lynn Blaschke (Interzone 6/07)
- “The Merchant and the Alchemist’s Gate”, Ted Chiang (F&SF 9/07)
- “Prologomenon to the Adventures of Horton @sffnet”, for review. Because of location, Nick will accept material in electronic form.

**Short Fiction: Rich Horton**

For 12 Collections and the Teashop. The first part of the book is 12 fairly short linked stories. Each story is about a collectible of unlikely things – fingernail clippings, stories, etc. These stories are at times whimsical, somewhat philosophical, wry, and a bit scary, and are cutely linked by such devices as the recurrence of people whose names begin with P, or the color purple. Collectively they suggest something small – the occasional silliness of collectors, and something larger – attempts to find meaning in the face of death. The pendant story, “The Teashop”, is thematically resonant with the rest, and it’s a lovely piece of work. A woman stops at a teashop while waiting for a train, and among the shop’s huge collection of teas she chooses a tea made of stories – and that indeed is what she gets, and we get. An intricate, indeed Ouroboric, lacing of stories told by people in the shop.

**Recommended Stories:**
- “Buttons”, William Alexander (Zahir Summer ’07)
- “The Last Worders”, Karen Joy Fowler (Lady Churchill’s Rosebud Wirlesset 6/06)
- “The Moonshot Goodnight”, Jan Harding (All That Remains / All That Remains: Retrospective 11/06)
- “The Prophets of Flores”, Ted Kosmatka (Asimov’s 9/07)
- “Pluto Tells All”, John Scalzi (Subterranean Spring ’07)
- “Heartstrung”, Rachel Swisky (Interzone 6/07)
- “Prologomenon to the Adventures of Childe Phoenix”, Marly Youmans (Lady Churchill’s Rosebud Wirlesset 6/07)
- “The Teashop”, Zoran Živkovic (12 Collections and the Teashop)

**Gary K. Wolfe**

As a metaphor for the account of a group of physicists trying to stage a conference in the chaotically indeterminate world of Hollywood. Apart from “The Last of the Winnebagos”, set in a diminished world in which a plague has rendered dogs extinct, the stories that make fullest use of their science fictional settings are two previously uncollected ones: “The Curse of Kings”, narrated by a cynical tabloid journalist covering a “cursed” archeological expedition on a remote planet, and “Carnal Nightmares”, set in a dystopian future of a world subsisting on a cruelly exploited colonpy planet. The only other story that takes place off Earth is the rather dark “All My Darling Daughters”, set on a rundown space station serving as a private school for privileged or troubled kids. None of these are among the strongest stories in the book, but “All My Darling Daughters” is distinguished by what is perhaps the most callous and unsympathetic narrator – a rebellious and nihilistic brat – in all of Willis’s fiction; it may be the story that most surprises fans of Willis’s apparently sunny disposition.

The classic stories here are pretty much the ones you’d expect. “Fire Watch” remains an exquisite example of how time travel can provide a unique perspective on what is essentially historical drama (though the consistency of this fully realized portrait of London under the Blitz gets a bit wobbly in the related story...
“Jack”, where characters who apparently wandered in from another fictional work are introduced; and both “A Letter from the Clearys” and “The Last of the Winnebagos” achieve the genuinely elegiac feel of Edo” may be the characteristic story of this period of consolidation of the strengths he’d been developing than a decade ago, it takes on an added poignance now, sionate, the Digital” offer postmodernist perspectives out what the Leggy Starlitz stories or the Chattanooga stories (1982-1984, follo wed by...tional settings like “The Subjunctivity of Science Fiction”, that are...he knew what to care about. seem to some to rei nforce an unfortunate stereotype with the Shaper/...in from another fictional work are introduced), and storied by Somerset Maugham. Both stories deal with...ances: The Subjunctivity of Science Fiction”, that are...things that are; SF readers who’ve followed Sterling’s ca-
out by an interesting selection of published letters and six essays, none of these essays overlap with those collected back in 1995 in To Write Like a Woman. This means that the two classic essays mentioned above are not here, nor are her important essays on Willa Cather, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Mary Shelley, or the modern woman's gothic. There is still some substantial pieces: an early (1970) piece on "The Image of Women in Science Fiction", an essay on "The Wearing Out of Genre Materials" (which may even be more relevant today than it was in 1971), "Daydream Literature and Science Fiction" (1969), and "Alien Monsters" (another important feminist statement from 1977). These are round out by a reference book entry on H.P. Lovecraft - Russ has confessed to being a closet horror freak - and an invited piece on her own writing from 1989. Several of the reviews and letters deal with feminist or gay subjects rather than SF proper and originally appeared in venues as varied as "College English, The Village Voice, and the Washington Post." All are insightful and written with Russ's usual sharp elegance, but the book is in no sense a definitive collection of her critical writings.

The SF reviews, however, are very nearly a revelation and sometimes are astonishingly prescient. In the very first line of the very first review here, she identifies the damage then being wreaked on the anthropology market by opportunists: Roger Elwood and Sam Moskowitz's Strange Signposts is a "bottom-of-the-barrel" anthology that is "one of that damned fashion game that one so often imagines doomsday scientists are now making up in the market, exasperate reviewers, and disappoint all but the most unperceptive readers." Commenting on Gene Wolfe's first novel, she writes that Operation Ares "is going to do the author's reputation a disservice. The reader comes to recognize that "by the time you read this, Mr. Wolfe will be as far above Operation Ares as Ares is above the worst science fiction hack-work." Similarly, M. John Harrison's first novel, The Committed Men, is "good written throw away"; again, she recognizes Harrison's incipient talent. In 1975, she was among the first to recognize Carol Emshwiller's odd brilliance - it is "a terrifying, inexplicable, totally authentic world in which even the commas are eloquent." At the same time, she's found that Michael Swanwick's first novel The Ackermanns' Alien Edifice is "as close to mainstream realism as science fiction can get without moving out of s.f. altogether," but was "interesting but not moving." A generally enthusiastic review of Le Guin's The Dispossessed notes that the book "presents a 'radicalism with teeth' and makes 'uncomfortable forays into Big, Public Subjects when the author's real talent lies elsewhere." While this sort of nugget gathering is inevitably vain, what really makes any collection of old reviews worth much as they can. It certainly doesn't help that even the magic-wielders among the hastily assembled new government may actually be dumber than the people who came with power, the true meaning of the fabled past, the religion-mad Vralia of Kushiel's Justice. Elend the idealistic young nobleman is no more ready to be king than Prince Otah in Abraham's novel; even if his new position will allow him to try out some of his pet theories. Aside the importance of the artificial rabbits, Vin still prefers her old thievish ways, ninja/superhero feats of action powered by the form of magic known as allomancy, while practitioners of the alternate version (feruchemy) are more like a combination of a hidebound priesthood and computer neofuturism. I like high-minded revolutionaries or college dom­mates, everyone - gifted, aristocratic, or otherwise - spends much of their time in fierce debate over such topics as reason vs. religion, the responsibilities that come with power, the true meaning of the fabled past, the fabled past, etc. Meanwhile, several enemy armies form and draw near, but even with invaders at the gates the principals are still arguing. One says in frustration, "Why do anything, if it was just going to end like this?" Another observes that he's "a man of action - an end to centuries of deadly stasis if progress was ever to take its natural course, and then there are the belli­

The story's central, mysterious procedure, though, is what brought Ramirez and two crewmates back to Earth after having vanished more than a half century earlier, and it involves both the aforementioned secret agenda(s) and conditions. There that no one could have imagined, let alone anticipated at the mission's beginning. The revelation of the nature of those con­ditions provides a series of trapdoors through which the characters fall, and if some are fairly predictable (what the politicians and their creatures are up to, for example), others are not, and that is where the procedural framework does its job of holding the story together while providing clues and hints and feints. In the last section of the book (interestingly titled "The World, the Flesh, and the Devil") these trapdoors give access to ever wider and stranger spaces, and the Coyote milieu itself opens out beyond the scope of liberation struggle or even planetary exploration and colonization. I'm sure that the Old Man would approve of both the craft and the content of the story - and the ingenuity with which his student has expanded this particular future history to accommodate new cycles of adventures in an expanded universe.

Russell Letson  
*p. 27*  

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-Farr Miller
Science fiction in this light isn’t just about religion: it’s an expression of faith in humanity.


When I think of Japanese SF, I think of “The Savage Mouth”. Years ago, I read it in the John L. Apostolu & Martin H. Greenberg anthology The Best Japanese Science Fiction Stories (1989), and it’s reprinted in Savage Japan, a book of Japanese SF stories. “The Savage Mouth” concerns a man in the process of eating his body, replacing each limb with cross-references, but mainly by a sense that the terrifying force haunting them is the same: a chthonic entity associated with a cavernous mouth and the name Belphegor. This antediluvian and subterranean being, in its preconscious yet calculating intellect, to regard homo sapiens as an unsatisfactory species to be no ordinary criminals (horrific hints abound); in “Bulldozer”, a trio of bounty hunters find their prey to be no ordinary criminals (horrific hints abound); in “Procession”, a visit to an abandoned barn puts a wealthy couple on the critical list, with awfully gaps opening in their minds, bodies, and surroundings;

in “Parallax”, with its superb surprise ending, the ultimate in self-sacrifice is demanded; and in “The Imago Sequence”, the full character of Belphegor shines out, in a series of photographs diabolically prefiguring the extinction of the protagonist. These tales, relentless in their nightmarish subjectivity, at the same time imply an objectively hostile surrounding that is the essence of cosmic horror. Lovecraft is often emulated, but rarely with this conviction and psychological acuity.

The long original story in Imago, “Procession of the Black Slot”, has similar qualities, but takes place in Hong Kong and assembles its gruesome clues and shambling portents - shapes seen out of the corner of the eye, inexplicable images on TV screens, mysterious rites performed by old expatriate ladies - into a distinct suggestion that the protagonist is dead and in some sort of Hell. Which is probably where he belongs. Other pieces, “Old Virginia”; “Shiva, Open Your Eye”; and “The Royal Zoo Is Closed”, are shorter and less striking, but do illustrate in miniature Barron’s compulsive command of mood and the particulars of inner disintegration; “Hour of the Cyclops”, included only in the limited edition, is also minor, though its central Lovecraftian joke is amusing. With four bloodcurdling sketches and six harrowing novelettes, The Imago Sequence, then, is an authorial manifesto of quality and significance, though hopefully not straight from Belphegor.

-Nick Gevers

Divers Hands

is religious scholar Gabriel McKee’s thoughtful analy­sis of religion as occurring in science fiction, taking SF as a middle ground between religion and science. The subtitle refers to television shows betraying the media’s dominance over literature in our culture, but McKee draws from a balanced range of sources, in­cluding Arthur C. Clarke’s “The Nine Billion Names of God”, Olaf Stapledon’s Star Maker, works by Ted Chiang, Robert Silverberg, and others, as well as Star Trek, the Matrix trilogy, and more. Each chapter is arranged thematically, examining concepts including free will, sin, the Messiah, and the soul. McKee is the author of Pink Beams of Light from the God in the Gutter: The Science-Fictional Religion of Philip K. Dick (2004), as well as articles on religion in pop culture, and the writing here is impressively readable for a scholarly work. Companion titles in the series from Westminster John Knox Press (an imprint of the denominational publisher for the Presbyterian church) include works on religious themes in Star Wars and Tolkien.

Science fiction readers already know that part of what makes us human is our drive to question our­selves and our role in the universe: as McKee says, “The purpose of human life is thus revealed [in SF] not as a clearly defined concrete end, but rather as the search for meaning itself.” Humanity’s fallen, post-Garden of Eden state is not a function of our inherent laziness and self-interest, but a result of unclear passions and desires, and our own mortality. As McKee says, “Free will does not merely mean the choice between good and evil ac­tions. It means the ability to determine one’s attitudes and character - in short, the freedom to choose an identity.” Good and evil are not self-evident; religion and science fiction can each help distinguish one from the other.

Readers know that humanity is also an expression of our capacity for empathy. McKee writes, “No individual can understand another’s mind and experience self-awareness,” but he suggests that the act of reading is the closest we can come; indeed, the Bible itself is a collection of parables and stories meant to explain that which is not directly explainable. McKee manages to be insightful about both science fic­tion and religion, without coming across as preachy.
first translation into English here. The editors are trying to follow through with Judith Merrill's intent of translating Japanese SF into English and fostering cultural exchange between the US and Japan through SF. To this end, the anthology also contains essays, introductions, and afterwords describing SF in Japan and Merrill's efforts toward publishing it in English.

The stories are actually quite readable, despite some pulp in the writing. “The Legend of the Paper Spaceship” by Tetsu Yano is about the village idiot and her bastard son, slowly and delicately revealed to be aliens. “Another Prince of Wales” by Aritsune Toyata has a war between England and Japan with spectators sitting on blankets to watch the battle; war has become a kind of sport, and countries must follow specific rules limiting technology and the number of combatants. My favorite, Koichi Yamada’s “Where Do the Birds Fly Now?” is a dreamy, episodic story in which birds can fly across dimensions. Many of the works are idea stories, focusing on the speculative element more so than character, plot, or theme, but there are still a unique Japanese sensibility and tone throughout. With the Science Fiction Worldcon in Japan this year, Japanese SF is getting more attention. Speculative Japan is overdue.

**Boy, Takeshi Kitano (Vertical 978-1-932234-35-0/932334-35-7, $17.95 tp, 128 pp, $22.00 hc) July 2007**

Japanese filmmaker Beat Takeshi may be best known for his bleak yakusa gangster movies, but he has a soft spot. In the 80 pages of **Boy**, he has written three sentimental and evocative stories of early, middle, and late boyhood, which together provide a structure for growing up. The first piece, “The Champion in a Padded Kimono”, has a frame story of two adult brothers talking in a bar, but the true narrative involves the brothers as children on Sports Day. Similarly, the other two stories are told from the perspectives of boys—the frame in the first story may be a subtle counterpoint to the end of the third story, which is an adolescent’s reflection: “‘So people like this,’ he thought to himself, ‘are adults.’”

Like Takeshi’s movie Akujirou, about a young boy in search of his mother who ends up paired with the bad-tempered ex-yakusa (played by Takeshi, who also directed), these stories have a sense of immediacy and also the wistful fuzziness of memory, tone, theme, and feeling dominate, and the stories have the verisimilitude of real life — they aren’t carried by plot so much as the tragedies and discoveries of childhood. The narratives are delivered as a series of static scenes, with much attention to worldbuilding; while not exactly speculative fiction, the writing has the feeling of SF. And there’s a great deal of sensawonda in the second story, “The Nest of Stars”, about two boys stargazing as a way to deal with their father’s death (in which it literally feels as if the world is ending). Despite a few British idiosyncrasies in translation (“blossoms,” “skive off”) the essential nature is Japanese, and Kitano gives the reader a feeling of what it is like to be these young boys.

—Anelia Beamor

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**British Books - May**


- **Gascogne, Marc & Christian Dunn, eds. Warhammer 40,000: Tales from the Dark Millennium** (BL Publishing/Black Library 1-84416-389-7, £6.99, 412pp, tp) Reprint (Trumbuck Books 2006) as **Pirate’s Passage** young-adult fantasy novel of a sea captain in the 1950s who appears to know a bit too much about the time of pirates.

- **Gunn, David Death’s Head (Transworld/Black Library 1-84416-359-7, £6.99, 412pp, tp) Reprint (Trum­[buck Books 2006) as **Pirate’s Passage** young-adult fantasy novel of a sea captain in the 1950s who appears to know a bit too much about the time of pirates.

- **Gaescoigne, Marc & Christian Dunn, eds. Warhammer 40,000: Let the Galaxy Burn** (BL Publishing/Black Library 1-84416-288-5, £6.99, 753pp, pb, cover by Jim Burns) Anthology of 36 stories, three original, set in the SF roleplaying game universe. Reprint stories were selected from the previous Warhammer 40,000 anthologies into the Maelstrom (1999), Dark Imperium (2000), and Words of Blood (2002). This was published in 2006 but not seen till now.


- **Earl, Robert Warhammer: The Corrupted (BL Publishing/Black Library 1-84416-907-0, £6.99, 252pp, pb, cover by Ralph Horsley) Novellization set in the roleplaying game universe. This is dated 2006 but not seen until now.**

- **Eddings, David Enchanter’s End Game (Transworld/Corbi­g 978-0-522-55480-0, £6.99, 36pp, tp, cover by Paul Young) Reprint (Del Rey 1984) fantasy novel, book five in the Shannara series.

- **Erikson, Steven Reaper’s Gale (Transworld/Bantam UK 978-0-593-04632-6, £12.99, 910pp, tp, cover by Stone) Fantasy novel, the seventh volume in the Malazan Book of the Fallen series. A limited edition hardback (€46321-5, £20.00) was announced but was not seen till now.


- **Gotov, C.S. Warhammer 40,000: Dawn of War: Tempest (BL Publishing/Black Library 1-84416-359-7, £6.99, 412pp, tp) Novellization based on the world of the SF roleplaying game universe. This was published in 2006 but not seen till now.


- **Hill, Stuart Blade of Fire (The Chicken House 978-1-905294-29-3, £6.99, 640pp, tp, cover by Mark Edwards & Carol Law-
son) Reprint (The Chicken House 2006)
young-adult fantasy novel. Second in The
Icemark Chronicles after The Cry
of the Icemark.

*Keefe, Matt Necromunda: Outlander
(Black Library 1-84416-411-X, £6.99, 254pp, pb, cover by Clint
Langley) Novelization based on the
roleplaying game universe. This was
published in 2006 but not seen till now.

Kenyon, Sherrilyn Dark Side of the
Moon (Gollancz 978-0-575-07687-3, £6.99, 222pp, pb, cover by Steve Stone) Reprint (HarperCollins
Australia 2005) fantasy novel, book
three in the Fire of Heaven series.

* Kyne, Nick Necromunda: Back from
the Dead (Black Library 1-84416-376-8, £6.99, 254pp, pb, cover
by Clint Langley) Novelization based on
the roleplaying game universe. This
was published in 2006 but not seen till now.

Lee, Tanth Wolf Wing (Hodder Chil­
dren's Books 978-0-340-91815-9, £6.99,
194pp, tp) Reissue (Hodder Silver 2002)
young-adult fantasy novel. This was
published in 2006 but not seen till now.

* Kirkpatrick, Russell The Right Hand
of God (Little Brown UK 978-0-340-91815-9, £6.99, 334pp, tp, cover by David Franklin) Reprint (Alma­

* Kilworth, Garry Jigsaw (Little Brown
UK 978-1-904233-76-3, £12.99, 276pp, hc) Young-adult fantasy

King, William Warhammer: Gotrek &
Felix: The First Omnibus (BL Publish­ing/Black Library 1-84416-372-5, £6.99, 245pp, pb, cover by Clint Langley) Fantasy
novelization based on the roleplaying
game universe. This was published in 2006 but not seen till now.

* McDermott, Will Necromunda: Car­
ним Ride: The Angel Experiment and
Maximum Ride: School's Out Forever.
Six young people with the power to fly
are pursued by killers. Simultaneous
publication with the US (Delacorte) edition.

* Patterson, James Maximum Ride:
Saving the World and Other Extreme
Sports (Hodder Headline 978-0-7553-
220-8, £12.99, 403pp, hc) Young-adult
SF novel. Third in a series after Maxi­
mum Ride: The Angel Experiment and
Maximum Ride: School's Out Forever.
A virus causes sufferers to merge with
the dead. Winner of the British Fantasy
SAGA Magazine competition.

Walker, Victoria The House Called Had­
lows (Fidra Books 978-1-906-12302-4, £12.00, 205pp, tp) Reprint (Dutch 1972) young-adult fantasy novel, second in a series after The Winter of Enchant­ment. This includes a 2007 preface
by the author. There is no price on the
cover. Available from Fidra Books Ltd.

60 Craigcrook Road, Edinburgh UK EH4

Webb, Beth Star Dancer: The Book of
Air (Macmillan Children's Books UK
978-0-330-44570-2, £5.99, 343pp, pb, cover by Paul Young) Reprint (Macmillan
Children's Books UK 2006) young-adult
fantasy novel. First in a quartet.

* Werner, C.L. Warhammer: Witch Killer
(Black Library 1-84416-355-4, £6.99, 254pp, pb, cover by Darius Hinks) Novelization based on the
roleplaying game universe. Book three of the
Witch Hunter series. This was published in 2006 but not seen till now.

* Zindell, David The Diamond Warriors
(HarperVoyager 978-0-00-224762-7, £14.99, 472pp, tp, cover by Geoff Taylor) Fantasy novel, the fourth and final in the
Eaicycle. A hardcover edition (-224761-0, £20.00) was announced but not seen.

May 2007

Year to Date

SF Novels 4 SF Novels 16
Fantasy Novels 4 Fantasy Novels 31
Horror Novels 0 Horror Novels 14
Paranormal Paranormal
Romance 2 Romance 11
Anthologies 3 Anthologies 8
Collections 0 Collections 8
Reference 0 Reference 0
History/Criticism 0 History/Criticism 5
Media Related 7 Media Related 13
Young Adult 2 Young Adult 45
SF 4
Fantasy 7 Fantasy 38
Horror 0 Horror 2
Paranormal Paranormal
Romance 0 Romance 1
Other 0 Other 0
Omnibus 2 Omnibus 9
Art/Humor 0 Art/Humor 1
Miscellaneous 0 Miscellaneous 13
Total New: 174 Total New: 294

LOCUS August 2007 / 73
### Locus Bestsellers

**HARDCOVERS**

2. *1634: The Baltic War*, Eric Flint & David Weber (Baen) 2 1
3. *No Humans Involved*, Kelley Armstrong (Bantam Spectra) 1 -
4. *White Night*, Jim Butcher (ROC) 2 2
5. *All Together Dead*, Charlaine Harris (Ace) 1 -
6. *The Last Colony*, John Scalzi (Tor) 2 7
7. *Rollback*, Robert J. Sawyer (Tor) 2 5
8. *The Name of the Wind*, Patrick Rothfuss (Daw) 2 4
9. *Ysabel*, Guy Gavriel Kay (Roc) 4 -
10. *The Yiddish Policemen’s Union*, Michael Chabon (HarperCollins) 1 -

**PAPERBACKS**

1. *The Ghost Brigades*, John Scalzi (Tor) 1 -
2. *The Sharing Knife, Volume 1: Beguilement*, Lois McMaster Bujold (Eos) 2 9
3. *Kushiel's Scion*, Jacqueline Carey (Warner) 1 -
4. *When Darkness Falls*, Mercedes Lackey & James Mallory (Tor) 1 -
5. *Old Man's War*, John Scalzi (Tor) 5 7
6. *Red Lightning*, John Scalzi (Ace) 1 -
7. *Rainbows End*, Vernor Vinge (Tor) 2 3
8. *Storm Front*, Jim Butcher (ROC) 4 4
9. *Light*, M. John Harrison (Bantam Spectra) 1 -
10. *Phantom*, Terry Goodkind (Tor) 1 -

J.R.R. Tolkien’s *The Children of Hurin* stayed at the top of the hardcover bestsellers, with 1634: The Baltic War by Eric Flint & David Weber in a distant second place. Wizards by Jack Dann & Gardner Dozois, eds. (Ace) was runner-up. Nominations were 52, up from 48 last month.

The *Ghost Brigades* by John Scalzi championed paperback lead, ahead of Lois McMaster Bujold’s *The Sharing Knife: Beguilement*. Runner-up was Undead and Unpopular by Mary Janice Davidson ( Berkley Sensation). 60 titles were nominated, down from 67.

A *Nameless Witch* by Lee A. Martínez, came in first for trade papers;

### TRADE PAPERBACKS

1. *A Nameless Witch*, Lee A. Martínez (Tor) 1 -
2. *Wicked*, Gregory Maguire (Regan Books) 17 -
3. *Reaper’s Gale*, Steven Erikson (Bantam) 1 -
4. *Dead Sexy*, Tate Hallaway (Berkeley) 1 -

*Overclocked*, Cory Doctorow (Thunder’s Mouth) 2 -

### MEDIA-RELATED

1. *Star Wars: Legacy of the Force: Betrayal*, Aaron Allston (Del Rey) 4 -
2. *Star Wars: Legacy of the Force: Sacrifice*, Karen Traviss (Del Rey) 1 -
4. *Star Wars: Legacy of the Force: Exile*, Aaron Allston (Del Rey) 4 1
5. *The Making of Star Wars* (Del Rey) 1 -

### GAMING-RELATED

1. *Halo: Ghosts of Onyx*, Eric Nylund (Tor) 7 1
2. *DragonLance: Dragons of the Dwarven Depths*, Margaret Weis & Tracy Hickman (Wizards of the Coast) 2 2
3. *Mass Effect: Revelation*, Drew Karpyshyn (Del Rey) 1 -
4. *Forgotten Realms: The Gossamer Plain*, Thomas M. Reid (Wizards of the Coast) 1 -

*Warhammer 40,000: Chapter War*, Ben Counter (Black Library) 1 -

runner-up was last month’s lead, C.E. Murphy’s *Coyote Dreams* (Luna).

There were 59 nominations, up from 51 last month.

Star Wars: Legacy of the Force: Betrayal by Aaron Allston topped media-related titles. The Official Firefly Companion by Joss Whedon (Titan) was runner-up. Titles nominated were 18, same as last month.

Halo: Ghosts of Onyx by Eric Nylund held first in gaming-related titles for the fifth consecutive month. The runner-up was Forgotten Realms: The Crystal Shard, by R.A. Salvatore ( Wizards of the Coast). There were 23 nominations, down from 25.

Compiled with data from: Barnes and Noble (USA), Bakka-Phoenix (Canada), Borderlands (CA), Borders (USA), McNally Robinson (2 in Canada), Mysterious Galaxy (CA), Pages for All Ages (IL), St. Mark’s (NY), Toadstool (2 in NH), Uncle Hugo’s (MN), University Bookstore (WA), White Dwarf (Canada). Data period: May 2007.

### General Bestsellers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HARDCOVERS</th>
<th>NY Times Bk Review</th>
<th>Publishers Weekly</th>
<th>Washington Post*</th>
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<td>5/8 13 20 27</td>
<td>5/3 14 21 28</td>
<td>5/6 13 20 27</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>The Children of Hurin</em>, J.R.R. Tolkien (Houghton Mifflin)</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>White Night</em>, Jim Butcher (Roc)</td>
<td>11 16 24</td>
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<td><em>For a Few Demons More</em>, Kim Harrison (Eos)</td>
<td>28 34</td>
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<td><em>Into a Dark Realm</em>, Raymond E. Feist (Eos)</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td><em>Heart-Shaped Box</em>, Joe Hill (Morrow)</td>
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<td><em>The Yiddish Policemen’s Union</em>, Michael Chabon (HarperCollins)</td>
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<td><em>No Humans Involved</em>, Kelley Armstrong (Bantam Spectra)</td>
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<td><em>All Together Dead</em>, Charlaine Harris (Ace)</td>
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<td><em>Bant</em>, Chuck Palahniuk (Doubleday)</td>
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<td><em>Pearl Harbor</em>, Newt Gingrich &amp; William R. Forstchen</td>
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<td><em>Thomas Dunne</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>After Dark</em>, Haruki Murakami (Knopf)</td>
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<td><strong>PAPERBACKS</strong></td>
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<td><em>The Road</em>, Cormac McCarthy (Vintage International)</td>
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<td><em>Slaughterhouse Five</em>, Kurt Vonnegut (Delphi)*</td>
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<td><em>Wicked</em>, Gregory Maguire (Regan Books)*</td>
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<td><em>Everything’s Eventual</em>, Stephen King (Pocket)*</td>
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*Ironside* by Holly Black, *Warriors: Power of Three: The Sight* by Erin Hunter, and *Specials* by Scott Westerfeld made the hardcover YA list. *Eldest* and *Eragon* by Christopher Paolini and *Maximum Ride: School’s Out Forever* by James Patterson made the YA paperback list.

See Locus Online for weekly charts of genre books on these and eight other general bestseller lists! *Lists top 10 only *trade paperback
Kage Baker, *The Sons of Heaven* (Tor/7/07). For years, Baker has been tantalizing readers of her Company series with questions of why the infamous toasted doom strikes that sinister time-traveling organization on July 9, 2355; now all is revealed in this final novel. “Is the ending as witty and frenetic as what came before... Baker has erected an extraordinary monument to the power of SF as an humane, complex, reflective and even philosophical genre.” — [Nick Gevers](http://www.sfsite.com/)


Lois McMaster Bujold, *The Sharing Knife*, Volume Two: *Legacy* (Eos/7/07). The second half of Bujold’s romantic fantasy *The Sharing Knife* finds farmer girl Fawn facing monumental disappointment from her new husband’s nomadic people—until a new Blight Bogle attack forces some to reconsider. Culture clashes and adventures that will interest even those not particularly interested in romance.

Emma Bull, *Territory* (Tor/7/07). Occult forces lurk behind the events of the Shootout at the O.K. Corral in this historical fantasy that “...envisions a spirit of old Arizona... it transforms the tropes of the Western to a degree that goes beyond the category of ‘genre hybrid’ to achieve a power very much its own.” — [Faren Miller](http://www.sfsite.com/)

Peter Crowther, ed. *Postscripts Number 10* (PS Publishing 5/07). This special more-than-double is a collection of the best of the noted magazine/anthology honors World Horror Convention guest-of-honor Michael Marshall Smith, who provides seven pieces, along with 23 additional stories by a stellar roster of writers including Lucas Shepard, Graham Joyce, Ramsey Campbell, and Stephen King.


Hugo Gernsbach, *Hugo Gernsbach: A Man Well Ahead of His Time* (Poptoonx 6/07). Gernsbach tells you his own story in this biography [edited by Larry Segriff](http://www.sfsite.com/). Segriff and the unsung inventor when he closed down Gernsbach Publications in 2002. This focuses primarily on electronics and Gernsbach’s own inventions (and his ability to foresee future inventions), but still paints an intriguing picture of the early days of SF, as seen by one of its founders.

Sergei Lukyanenko, *Twilight Watch* (Miramax 6/07). This third volume in the acclaimed *Night Watch* series about a Moscow inhabited by supernatural Others, and the protagonist of *Night Watch*, returns as a renegade threatens to destroy the balance between Light and Dark.

Melissa Marr, *Wicked Lovely* (HarperTeen 6/07). Aislinn has all the problems of normal teens, but has also inherited her grandmother’s Gift and tried to hide it all her life; now a faerie king is stalking her, and nothing is safe. A “sexy, charming, sometimes harrowing YA contemporary fantasy... an assured debut.” —[Tim Pratt](http://www.sfcafe.com/)


Alastair Reynolds, *Galactic North* (Ace 6/07). Reynolds’s first collection revisits his Revolution Space universe in this collection of eight SF stories, three original. First published in the UK by Gollancz (2006). “Reynolds is one of the giants of the New Space Opera, and of more down-to-Earth SF as well; he has the gift of expressing sweeping visions in compact form as well as in 500-page epics.” —[Nick Gevers](http://www.sfsite.com/)

Will Shetterly, *The Gospel of the Knife* (Tor/7/07). The sequel to the critically acclaimed *Dogland*, this fantasy/magical realism novel finds Chris Nix a 14-year-old in the turbulent late 1960s, the strange events that destroyed the family tourism attraction all lead to a forlorn mission. A mysterious benefactor offered to send Chris to an exclusive school.

Clark Ashton Smith, *The Collected Fantasies of Clark Ashton Smith*, Volume 2: *The Door to Saturn* (Night Shade 6/07). Night Shade’s ambitious series celebrating one of the masters of the weird returns with this collection of 20 stories from 1932, with corrected text following existing manuscripts wherever possible.

Steph Swainston, *Dangerous Offspring* (Eos 7/07). Winged messenger Jani seeks a way to end the war with the alien Insects once and for all in this third book in the critically acclaimed New Weird fantasy series begun in *No Present Like Time*. First published in the UK by Gollancz (4/07 as *The Modern World*).

Liz Williams, *Precious Dragon* (Night Shade 2007). Detective Inspector Chen and his demon partner Zhu Irzh return for a third outing in this entertaining dark fantasy/mystery series mixing a futuristic Singapore with Chinese mythology. This time, Chen is assigned to escort a Heavenly diplomatic mission to Hell. “...wild, bumpy ride...fun.” —[Faren Miller](http://www.sfsite.com/)
Dick has attained a level of fame in Hollywood sufficient to make him the basis for a new biopic, set to star Paul Giamatti, and produced by Anonymous Content, the same company that made *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, a strikingly similar film about memory erasure. Dick’s life – which encompassed five marriages, drug use, mystical experiences, and paranoia – certainly seems rich enough to make into a film. One wonders how the man himself would have felt about seeing his life recreated artificially on screen, with a simulacrum – who doesn’t even really resemble him – pretending to be him.

Robotics and AI researchers love Dick, too. Why wouldn’t they, when his books are populated by androids who think they’re human and realistic imitation animals? In 2005 an android version of Philip K. Dick was presented to the public at a series of events. The realistic robot was designed by Hanson Robotics, and was even capable of interacting with people. It had cutting-edge speech recognition software and an “artificial-intelligence-driven personality” that enabled it to hold conversations and answer questions, with a vocabulary mostly based on lines from Dick’s books. The robot’s cameras and biometric sensors in the robot’s eyes are able to track faces, recognize specific individuals, and even understand facial expressions. Unfortunately, the robot wasn’t long for this world – the head disappeared in January 2006 while being shipped to California on a commercial airliner. The owners of the robot are looking for a new version of PKD, as something from a Philip K. Dick story.

The Data File

week before the launch, Amazon announced the “Harry-est Towns” in the US and Canada, chosen for having the highest pre-orders per capita (for towns with populations over 5,000): Falls Church, Virginia in the US and Banff, Alberta, Canada, winning.

Promtsky sued both DeepDiscount.com and their distributor, Levy Home Entertainment, for sending out early. Pre-release copies were also distributed for their public libraries.

J.K. Rowling was “staggered” when reviews of *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* appeared – with spoilers – before the book’s July 21st release date, in “complete disregard of the wishes of literally millions of readers” according to BBC News. The *New York Times* got their copy at a store on the 18th; the *Baltimore Sun* got hold of a copy mailed early by online retailer Deep-Discount.com. UK publisher Bloomsbury called spoilers “unauthorized.” In the US, Scholastic promptly sued both DeepDiscount.com and their distributor, Levy Home Entertainment, for sending copies early. Pre-release copies were also offered on eBay.

Another major leak was reported July 17, when at least three different versions of the book, or parts of the book, appeared on peer-to-peer file sharing sites. The most complete version supposedly showed photos of every page of the finished book, with the text overlaid with handwritten notes. It was open; the resulting images are reportedly readable with difficulty. Neither Bloomsbury in the UK nor Scholastic in the US would comment on whether the photos were the real thing. *PC World* called the photos “convincing” and also noted “it appears that the person who took the pictures of the book left his camera’s meta data attached to the image files… and with that information and time authorities could track down who took the pictures.”

The British Royal Mail released *Harry Potter* stamps on July 17; the first-class stamps feature the covers of all seven books. Another set of five stamps feature the houses and school crests. Special first-day postmarks include appropriate images such as owls and Harry on a broomstick. Pre-orders broke records, at 340,000 beating the record of 300,000 set by a January series of *Beetle* stamps.

Israel’s Trade and Industry Minister Eli Yishai threatened legal action against stores staying open on Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath. Stores had announced plans to participate in the worldwide release the book July 21, 12:01 Greenwich Mean Time (the US release is later), or 2 a.m. Saturday in Israel (the Jewish Sabbath runs from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday). Yishai, a member of the ultra-Orthodox Shas party, said he would have inspectors report stores. “We will certainly issue fines and prosecution orders, but I hope it won’t come to that,” he told Israel Radio, according to Reuters. It is illegal for businesses to force employees to work on the Sabbath, but at least one bookstore chain, *Tosmet Sfarim*, avoided the issue by scheduling only non-Jewish employees to work the launch.

Asda, the UK arm of Wal-Mart and the second-largest bookstore chain in Britain, issued a press release July 15, 2007, accusing Bloomsbury of “holding children to ransom” and “blatant profiteering” in its pricing of *Deathly Hallows* at £17.99 ($37.00). In response, Bloomsbury called the statement libelous and announced on July 17 that Asda’s 500,000-copy order for book would be cancelled, due to outstanding debts. Asda paid up and apologized “unreservedly” to Bloomsbury later the same day, and announced the book would be in their stores by the launch date, to be sold at £5.00 a copy (a maximum of two per customer). Supermarket chain Morrisons responded by slashing their price £4.99. Tesco offered the book for £5.00 to customers spending at least £50.00.

British bookstore chain Waterstone’s launched “The International Campaign to Save Harry” with an online petition asking J.K. Rowling to keep the series going, or at least not rule out another installment. The goal is to get one million names by July 21.

Nigel Fardale in the *Telegraph* summed up *Harry Potter* by suggesting it was a phenomenon of Tony Blair’s time in office as Prime Minister – ten years just ended, just like the books – with Voldemort and his Death Eaters standing in for Osama bin Laden and his death cult, al-Qaeda.

Farrar Moves • Farrar, Straus and Giroux will move from their 46-year home in NYC’s Union Square to a new location at 18 West 18th Street, closer but still separate from their fellow Holtzbrinck-owned publishers in the Flatiron Building. They expect to complete the move by the end of the year.

Perseus Pays Up • Perseus Book Group, the new distributor for many former clients of the bankrupt American Marketing Services and their subsidiary Publishers Group West, sent out the first post-settlement checks to clients in early July.

Many publishers have been struggling due to disrupted cash flow. When AMS went bankrupt, publishers went months without being paid, effectively losing all income for the last quarter of 2006. For the first two months of 2007, they had to subist on weekly checks from PGW. As part of the bankruptcy settlement, Perseus agreed to pay publishers 70 cents for every dollar they were owed. About 124 of PGW’s clients signed up, and Perseus made them a lump sum payment in March 2007 totaling around $13 million. For the next few months, though, no more checks were forthcoming. On July 9, Perseus began sending out checks for March billing, and should be making payments on a normal monthly schedule from now on.

Most companies distributed by Perseus received checks in July, except for a few who had negative balances due to returns. Perseus CEO Richard Steinberger says they will continue to distribute those companies until they climb out of the red.

Philip Pullman’s Northern Lights (AKA The Golden Compass in the US) placed first in an online poll that asked readers to choose their favorite book from the past 70 years of Carnegie Medal winners. Pullman won with 40% of the total vote, and received the greatest number of votes from non-British readers, a total of 36%. This “Carnegie of Carnegies” poll was organized to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the prestigious children’s book award. Pullman declared himself “humbled and honored,” and said it was “without any question the most important honor I have ever received, and the one I treasure the most.” The other finalists were Skellig by David Almond; Junk by Melvin Burgess; The Dead Travel Fast by Kevin Crossley-Holland; A Gathering Light by Jennifer Donnelly; The Owl Service by Alan Garner; The Family from One End Street by Eve Gamett; The Borrowers by Mary Norton; Tom’s Midnight Garden by Philippa Pearce; and The Machine Gunners, Robert Westall.

The Helsinki SF Society has inaugurated a new annual award, The Tähtifantasista (Star Fantasy) Award for the best translated SF book published in Finland each year. This year’s nominees are White Apples, Jonathan Carroll; New Weird, Jukka Halme, ed.; A Storm of Swords, Part Two, George R.R. Martin; Ombría in Shadow, Patricia A. McKillip; City of Saints and Madmen, Jeff VanderMeer. The award winner will be chosen by a jury of experts, and announced in August.

Announcements • Author and former editor Laura Anne Gilman will teach a three-hour seminar, “How to Sell Your Genre Novel!”, August 29, 2007, 6:30-9:30 p.m., 494 Broadway (Spring & Broome), New York NY 10012. The price is $65. For more information, visit www.mediatribro.com.

The Speculative Literature Foundation has announced the 2007 Gulliver Travel Research Grant, which provides $600 to help an author pay for travel expenses while researching a work of speculative fiction, poetry, drama, or creative non-fiction. For more information, visit <www.speculativeliterature.org> or write to <travel@speculativeliterature.org>.

International Rights • French rights to Terry Brooks’s Magic Kingdom for Sale, Black Unicorn, Wizard at Large, Tangle Box, and Witches Brew sold to Editions Bragelonne; Russian rights to The Wishsong of Shannara went to Eksmo; Czech rights to Morgawr sold to Classic; Italian rights to The Elves of Cintra, The Sword of Shannara, The Wishsong of Shannara, and The Elfstones of Shannara went to Mondadori, Spanish rights to Armageddon’s Children, The Elves of Cintra, and the as-yet-unitled sequel went to Ediciones El Anden, all via Del Rey. German rights to Empire of Ivory and books five and six in the Temeraire series by Naomi Novik sold to Random House Germany via Del Rey.


Russian rights to Shadowbridge by Gregory Frost went to AST via Del Rey. John Scalzi’s Old Man’s War sold to Science Fiction World in China, Librairie D’Atalante in France, EKSMO in Russia, Minaturno in Spain, Bard in Bulgaria, Random House Germany, Yanshu in Israel, and Hayakawakai Japan, all via Ethan Ellenberg.

Finnish rights to Pawn of Prophecy by David Eddings sold to Karisto Oy via Del Rey.

German rights to The Summonsor and The Blood King by Gail Martin went to Lubbe via Ethan Ellenberg.

Russian rights to Patricia Bray’s The First Betrayal went to AST via Alexander Korzhenevski in association with Jennifer Jackson of the Donald Maass Agency.

German rights to the first three books in Jim Butcher’s Codex Alera series sold to Blanvalet via Bastian Schlupeck in association with Jennifer Jackson of the Donald Maass Agency.

German rights to Mel Odom’s four-book Rover series went to Random House Germany via Ethan Ellenberg.

Spanish rights to Sharon Shinn’s The Truth-Teller’s Tale went to El Anden, and Japanese rights to Summers at Castle Auburn went to Shogakukan, via Ethan Ellenberg.

Allen un rights to Tales Before Tolkien, edited by Douglas A. Anderson, went to Family Leisure Club via Del Rey.

French rights to Tower of Shadows by Drew Bowling went to City Editions via Del Rey.

German rights to Command & Conquer books one and two by Keith R.A. DeCandido went to Paladin via Victor Lake.

Hungarian rights to Transformers and Transformers: Ghosts of Yesterday by Alan Dean Foster went to Del Rey.

German rights to Mass Effect: Revelation and a sequel by Drew Karpyshyn went to Panini via Del Rey.

Other Rights • Limited edition rights to His Majesty’s Dragon, Black Powder War, Throne of Jade, and Empire of Ivory by Naomi Novik sold to Subterranean Press via Del Rey.


Allen un rights to The First Gift went to the SFBC as a featured alternate via Ace.

Wizards edited by Jack Dann and Gardner Dozois sold to the SFBC as a featured alternate.

The Sunrise Lands by S.M. Stirling went to the SFBC as a main selection.

Star Wars: Legacy of the Force: Inferno by Troy Denning went to the SFBC as a featured alternate via Del Rey.


Electronic rights to several of A. Bertram Chandler’s John Grimes books went to Toni Weisskopf at Baen via Joshua Bilmes.

Financial News • The US Census Bureau reported May bookstore sales of $1.10 billion, a drop of 4.3% over the previous year, and the fifth straight month of decline. Sales for the year were $6.20 billion, also down 4.3%. Retail sales overall were up 5.6% in May and up 4.1% year to date.

The Book Industry Study Group reports that children’s book sales rose a disappointing 2.5% in 2006; a 5-6% increase is more typical. Hardcover unit sales were flat, although that was due largely to a surge in sales in 2005 caused by Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince. One researches at the Institute for Publishing Research noted that children’s books sales are volatile, driven by blockbuster hits; 2007 looks to be strong thanks to Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows, but no clear successor is waiting in the wings.

UK bookstore chain Waterstone’s continues to struggle. Their full-year sales of £537.5 million were up 28%, but that includes revenue from the recently acquired Ottakar’s chain. Same store sales were down 4.1%. Operating profits of £16 million were down 24% from the year before. The company blamed increasing competition from supermarket and online sales, and announced plans to increase the children’s category, which has seen fewer sales moving to the Internet. The continuing consolidation of Waterstone’s and Ottakar’s will see about 10% of the current stores closing over the next few years. A new consolidation centre is planned to centralize and streamline their ordering process, but publishers expressed mixed feeling about the concept — and Waterstone’s requests for greater discounts.

Publishers may pay a steep price to get optimum display space for their books this Christmas. Waterstone’s fees were revealed in a Times of London report on “The Hidden Price of a Christmas Bestseller”; packages cost as much as £45,000 per title — their premium option, available for only six titles, with window and front-of-store displays and inclusion in national advertising. Prominent display space at the front of stores and at the cash registers is available for £25,000, with room for about 45 new titles. It costs £7,000 to get a book included on the Paperbacks of the Year list, while inclusion in Waterstone’s Gift Guide (with a review) is available for £10,000. Such fees have caused Waterstone’s to drop books from their premium spaces at chains. A spokeswoman at WH Smith noted that their premium spaces are “oversubscribed, which suggests that publishers feel they are getting value for money.” However, Anthony Cheetham, chairman of small publisher Quercus Books, commented, “It’s not a system you can opt out of. If Smith’s offer you these slots and you say no, their order book doesn’t go down from 1,000 copies to 500 copies. It goes down to 20 copies.” Books selected for year’s best lists won’t appear on those lists unless they pay. The Borders book of the month is voted on by store employees, but a chosen book won’t receive the accolade unless its publisher pays a fee.

Scholastic reported net sales of $350.4 million for their fiscal fourth quarter ending May 31, 2007, up 5% over the previous year. Revenue for the quarter was $611.7 million, up 2%. For the year, they had revenues of $2.18 billion, a drop of 4.5%, with net income of $60.9 million, down 11%. The Children’s Book Publishing division had sales for the year of $1.16 billion, down from $1.30 billion from the previous year, which included the publication of Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince.

Deathly Hallows promises to have a similar influence in the new fiscal year, and Scholastic hopes to “ensure that Harry Potter remains a best-seller to generations of readers.” One outside analyst estimated that Scholastic will continue to see sales of between $10 million to $15 million a year just from the backlist for Harry Potter.

Book Notes • Stephen King’s 2002 collection Everything’s a Little Bit Better returned to the bestseller lists in June thanks to the movie 1408, released June 22, based on the eponymous King story. There were already some 945,000 hardback and 1.8 million mass-market copies in print; movie tie-in trade paperback and mass market editions added another 615,000 copies.

Irish author Michael Scott made the Publishers Weekly and New York Times’ YA bestseller lists with The Alchemyst, a contemporary fantasy about the foundation of Notre Dame and the first book in a series. The US edition had a 250,000 copy first printing. Foreign rights have been sold in 30 countries; New Line Pictures acquired rights to the series, with Mark Burnett slated as producer for the first film.
The Data File

Publications Received • The ASFA Quarterly, Vol. 22 No. 1 (Spring 2007), journal of the Association of Science Fiction & Fantasy Artists, with news, articles, and reviews. US membership is $40 per year, $45 elsewhere. Information: Memberships, ASFA, PO Box 65011, Phoenix AZ 85082-5011; website: <www.asfa-art.org>

Burroughs Bulletin, #870 (Spring 2007), quarterly publication of the Burroughs Bibliophiles, with articles on Edgar Rice Burroughs life and works, plus letters and reviews. Information: George T. McWhorter, c/o The Burroughs Memorial Collection, University of Louisville Library, Louisville KY 40292; phone: (502) 852-8729; e-mail: <george.mcwhorter@louisville.edu>

The Heinlein Society Newsletter, June 2007, with information on the Heinlein Society. Membership is $35 per year. Information: The Heinlein Society, PO Box 1254, Venice CA 90294-1254; e-mail: <membership@heinleinsociety.org> website: <www.heinleinsociety.org>

Mythprint, Vol 44, Nos. 6-7 (June/July 2007), monthly bulletin of the Mythopoeic Society, with news, reviews, etc. Information: Edith Crowe, Corresponding Secretary, PO Box 6707, Altadena CA 91001; e-mail: <correspondence@mythsoc.org>; website: <www.mythsoc.org>

SFRA Review, #280 (April/May/June 2007), newsletter of the Science Fiction Research Association, with SFRA news, reviews, etc. Information: SFRA Treasurer Donald M. Hassler, Dept. of English, PO Box 5190, Kent State University, Kent OH 44242-0001; e-mail: <extrap@kent.edu>; website: <www.sfra.org>

The SFWA Bulletin, #173 (Spring 2007), quarterly journal of the SF & Fantasy Writers of America with articles, news, market reports, etc. Information: Membership: $21 per year US, Mexico, and Canada, $25 elsewhere. Contact Melissa Bell, SFWA Secretary/Treasurer, 1225 West Freeman St., Apt 12, Carbondale IL 62901; e-mail: <sfwasecretary@sff.net>; website: <www.sfwa.org>

Star Line, 30/3 (May/June 2007), bimonthly journal of the Science Fiction Poetry Association, with poetry, news, reviews, market information, etc. Membership: $21 per year US, Mexico, and Canada, $25 elsewhere. Contact Melissa Bell, SFWA Secretary/Treasurer, 1225 West Freeman St., Apt 12, Carbondale IL 62901; e-mail: <sfwasecretary@sff.net>; website: <www.sfwa.org>

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"Williamson's military expertise is impressive." — *SF Reviews*
OBITUARIES

Fred Saberhagen

Fred Saberhagen (2004)
the Neck (1996), and A Coldness in the Blood (2002).

FRED SABERHAGEN, 77, died June 29, 2007 at home in Albuquerque NM following a long struggle with cancer. Saberhagen is best known for his Berserker SF series, about the war between humankind and spacefaring machines programmed to destroy all life. He also wrote various fantasy and vampire series, as well as a number of stand-alone novels, totaling around 60 novels, seven collections, and about 60 short stories.


Saberhagen’s first known fantasies are set in a postholocaust world where magic has returned, beginning with the Empire of the East series: The Broken Lands (1968), The Black Mountains (1971), Changeling Earth (1973; as Ardhne’s World 1988), and Ardhne’s Sword (2006). His Swords trilogy is set in the same world and includes The First Book of Swords (1983), and The Second Book of Swords (1983), and The Third Book of Swords (1984). He also wrote eight books in the related Lost Swords series from 1986 to 1995.


Frederick Thomas Saberhagen was born May 18, 1930 in Chicago. He joined the Air Force and served from 1951-55, then attended Wright Junior College in Chicago from 1956-57. He married Joan Dorothy Spicci in 1968. Saberhagen worked as an electronics technician for Motorola from 1956-62. He freelanced until 1967, then became assistant editor at the Encyclopaedia Britannica until 1973, where he wrote the entry on SF, among many other articles. From then on he was a full-time writer. Beginning in the 1980s he worked on adapting his own works as computer games. He is survived by his wife, Joan; three children; and seven grandchildren. A memorial service will be held September 14, 2007 at 11 a.m. at the John XXIII Catholic Community, 4831 Tramway Ridge NE, Albuquerque NM.

FRED SABERHAGEN by Walter Jon Williams
Fred Saberhagen created two undying archetypes for science fiction, the first being the Berserkers, robotic combat machines whose destructiveness outlined the war for which they were created. So powerful was that archetype that it was repeatedly used by other hands (the Star Trek episode “Doomsday Machine”), sometimes by people (Alien vs. Berserker) who had no idea with whom the concept originated.

Fred’s second creation was that of the modern, rational vampire who tells his own story. The Dracula Tape, in which the eponymous vampire was given his own sardonic voice, was the first example of what turned out to be an enormously successful genre. Anne Rice and many others owe him a huge (and so far as I know unacknowledged) debt.

Fred’s nonseries work show a highly individual imagination at work: Octagon, A Century of Progress, and Love Conquers All are not only very different works from the Berserker books, but each is so distinct that it’s hard to believe they were all from the same hand. And The Veils of Azlaroc is so freakishly strange that it’s clearly a candidate for the Weirdest SF Novel of All Time.

In person, Fred was soft-spoken, but had a sly, understated sense of humor that I wish was more apparent in his fiction. During one of our first meetings, at a Halloween party, I found myself staring at his teeth with great unease. (He had commissioned a dentist to make him a set of highly realistic vampire Fangs.) When he encountered a young, enthusiastic Dracula fan who said that meeting him made this the most important day of her life, Fred replied, “Fortunately you are young, and have many days ahead of you.” During his final illness, Fred woke one morning after having dreamed of thorozo eggs from a local restaurant. His family got him the eggs, which he enjoyed. The next morning, when asked what he’d like to eat, he replied, “I have had no prophetic dreams about breakfast this morning.”

This was one of the few cases where his gift for prophetic dreaming failed him. I’m going to miss him a lot.

–Walter Jon Williams

FRED WAS THERE FIRST by L.E. Modesitt
Last week Fred Saberhagen died. I can’t claim to have been a close friend, since Fred and I talked less than a dozen times over as many years, but he was always thoughtful, kind, and insightful, what anyone would have called, and many have, “a class act.”

In thinking about Fred, however, I realized there is an important aspect of Fred’s writing that’s been mentioned in passing, but not really emphasized to the degree it merits. In more than a few areas of fiction, Fred was there first.

Fred’s use of Vlad Dracula – historically depicted as one of the great semimythic villains – as an intelligent and sympathetic hero not only predated all the other vampire books, but does so with wit and charm, and, to my way of thinking, his books are not only better written, but far more thoughtful. Just a few years later, I wrote The Fires of Paratime, in which I made the Norse mythic villain Loki the hero. While I had not yet read Old Friend of the Family or the Dracula Tape, it didn’t matter. Fred was there first.

Underlying his Swords books and Empire of the East is the premise that atomic warfare would change the very principles of the world on which
we live — in a way an overlooked use of a metaphor that has come to pass. In this, and in his use of technology, myth, and modern techno-metaphor...

Fred was there first.

— L.E. Modesitt, Jr.

Author, editor, and artist STERLING E. LANIER, 79, died June 28, 2007 in Sarasota, FL. Lanier was the managing editor at Chilton Books — which mostly published automotive manuals — in the ’60s, and he expended great effort to convince the company to publish Frank Herbert’s Dune, which had been rejected by no fewer than seven other publishers. Mostly to honor Lanier, Chilton acquired Dune and published about 2,000 copies. When the novel became a bestseller, Chilton reaped great financial rewards, because it owned half the copyright. Years later Chilton sold its half of the copyright to Ace for one million dollars, losing out on millions in potential income. Lanier also encouraged Chilton to publish The Witches of Karres by James H. Schmitz (1966), along with other SF titles.

Lanier’s own SF writing career began with “Join Our Gang?” in Astounding (1961). Most of his short work is in the Brigadier Ffellowes series of fantasy club stories, the majority of which appeared in F&SF, and which were collected in The Peculiar Exploits of Brigadier Ffellowes (1972) and The Curious Quest of Brigadier Ffellowes (1986). His first novel was for children, for the Lot (1969), but his most important work is posthumous novel, Hero’s Journey (1973) and sequel The Unfinished Hero (1983). Later book Menace under Marswood (1983) is set on Mars. Lanier was also an accomplished sculptor, known for his renderings of characters and creatures from Tolkien’s The Lord of the Rings.

Sterling Edmund Lanier was born December 18, 1927 in New York. He attended Harvard, graduating in 1951, and did graduate work in anthropology and archaeology at the University of Pennsylvania from 1953-58. From 1958-60 he was a research historian at the Winterthur Museum. He served in both the Marines during WWII and the Korean War before becoming an editor for the John C. Winston Company and Macrae-Smith, finally settling at Chilton from 1961-67. From then on he was a full-time writer, sculptor, and jeweler. He married twice, to Marta Hanna Pelton in 1961 (divorced 1978) and to Ann Miller McGregor in 1979. He is survived by his wife, a son, a daughter, and three grandchildren.

Author DOUGLAS [ARTHUR] HILL, 72, was run over by a bus in a pedestrian crossing on June 21, 2007 in North London. He was pronounced dead at the scene.

Hill was the author of nearly 70 books, mostly SF for teens and children, and was also an editor and non-fiction author. His earliest works of genre interest were non-fiction The Supernatural (1965, with Pat Williams) and Magic and Superstition (1968). He edited SF anthologies including Window on the Future (1966) and Way of the Werewolf (1966) and was an associate editor for New Worlds from 1967-68. His first SF for children was Coyote the Trickster (1975, with Gail Robinson), and he went on to write various SF and fantasy novels, notably the last Legionary novels beginning with Galactic Warlord (1979); the Huntsman series beginning with The Huntsman (1982); the ColSec sequence, starting with Exiles of ColSec (1984); the Talents fantasy series beginning with Blade of the Poisoner (1986); and the Cade trilogy beginning with Galaxy’s Edge (1996). His Del Curb space opera series Fraxil (1989) and sequel The Collogi Conspiracy (1990), was written for adults, as was the Apothecary fantasy series, which begins with The Lightless Dome (1993). He also wrote numerous standalone novels. His YA Demon Stalkers trilogy is forthcoming.

Hill was born April 6, 1935 in Brandon, Manitoba, Canada. He grew up in Saskatchewan and attended the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Toronto. Hill married Gail Robinson in 1958, and they had one son (the marriage was dissolved in 1978). Hill relocated to the United Kingdom in 1975 to become a freelance writer, and he was also literary editor of the socialist weekly paper Tribune from 1971-84.

Irish author PAT O’SHEA, 76, died May 3, 2007 in Manchester, England. O’Shea is best known for her outstanding YA fantasy The Hounds of the Morrigan (1985) and also wrote Finn MacCool and the Small Men of Deeds (1987). O’Shea was born Catherine Patricia Shiels on January 22, 1931, in Galway, Ireland and was educated at the Presentation Convent and the Convent of Mercy, graduating in 1947. She moved to England in 1947 and married J.J. O’Shea in 1953 (though they separated in 1962) and had one son. She settled in Manchester, where she wrote for the theater without much success. In the early ’70s she began writing short stories and poems to amuse herself, eventually writing The Hounds of the Morrigan over the course of about 13 years. Once published, it became a bestseller.


Ronda L. Widener was born October 14, 1955 in Ponca City, OK. She moved to Amarillo with her family in 1963, graduating from Amarillo High School in 1963. She sold her first novel Isn’t It Romantic in 1996 and published regularly from then on. She is survived by her husband, Mike (married 1984), a son, a daughter, and a stepdaughter.

Anthologist ROGER [PAUL] ELWOOD, 64, died of cancer February 2, 2007 in Norfolk, VA.

Elwood edited more than 80 original SF anthologies, most appearing in the ’70s, and coedited several other original and reprint anthologies, beginning with Alien Worlds (1964, with Sam Moskowitz). At one point, Elwood’s anthologies accounted for about a quarter of the total market for short SF. Many blame Elwood’s overproduction for the collapse of the once-lucrative anthology market. Between 1972 and 1977 Elwood edited 55 SF anthologies — most mediocre at best — with more than 20 different publishers, and the resulting glut on the market led to disappointing sales for all the titles. As a result, anthologies remain a difficult sell for publishers to this day.

The quality of Elwood’s anthologies was highly variable, with most containing a few worthy stories and a lot of filler material, though his 1976 anthology Epoch (with Robert Silverberg) won a Locus Award, and his Continuum series (1974) also published consistently high-quality work.

Elwood’s Christian religious convictions led him to put restrictions on content, and he didn’t allow pornography or “graphic” sex, though he once commented, “Sometimes I accepted sex in the area of homosexuality, but only if the ultimate effect was to condemn. After all, you can’t preach against it if you cannot show how evil it is.”

In 1975 Elwood founded the Laser Books imprint for romance publisher Harlequin, with the idea that it should be possible to package and sell SF in the same way romances were sold, with strict guidelines on length and content. Laser Books closed after two years due to disappointing sales, but from 1975-77 Elwood published 58 books, including first novels by Tim Powers and K.W. Jeter, all with original covers by Frank Kelly Freas. Many authors objected to their treatment at Laser, which sometimes included unauthorized rewrites. Piers Anthony’s novel But What of Earth? (1976) was revised extensively by Robert Coulson, whose name appeared on the covers co-author, without Anthony’s permission. Elwood also edited SF lines for publishers including Pyramid, Bobs-Merrill, and

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Pinnacle. He founded an SF magazine, *Odyssey*, which did not last long, and also edited *Starstream Comics* (1976).

In 1977 Elwood left the SF world to become editor of the beloved religion magazine *Inspiration*. He made many critical remarks about science fiction writers and readers after leaving the field, saying, “It’s a field which attracts rebels and drug addicts, and they tend to lose themselves in another world literally... I would tell myself, ‘Here I am, a Christian, but I am involved in a field which makes me feel as if I am being compromised as a Christian.'”

Elwood wrote many “inspirational” novels, some with SF and fantasy content, including the long-running Angelwalk series that began with *Angelwalk* (1988); the Bartlett Brothers duology *Disaster Island* (1992) and *Nightmare at Skull Junction* (1992); and at least 30 more books, including standalone titles in the *Oss Chronicles* and *Without the Dawn* series.

Elwood was born January 13, 1943 in New Jersey and began to work in publishing shortly after graduating high school, editing wrestling magazines before getting into the SF field. In later years he was writer-in-residence at a Bible college.

**ROGER ELWOOD**  
by Tim Powers

After a San Francisco convention in 1975, Roger Elwood told me with nervous laughter, “You know, for a nice guy, it’s too bad he smokes dope all the time.”

Actually I would have been smoking either Am­phora or Balkan Sobriety tobacco, but I’m glad he thought I was a nice guy. He could be a high-hand­led editor— he insisted that I be “Timothy” rather than “Tim” on my two Laser books, for instance — but he was the optimistic first publisher of a lot of us, and I’ll always be grateful to him for that.

— Tim Powers

Agent Perry H. Knowlton, 80, died July 6, 2007 of complications from Alzheimer’s. After serving in WWII, Knowlton worked in regional sales at Scribner’s, later becoming an editor there. In 1959 he joined the Curtis Brown literary agency, rising to the position of chairman and CEO. During his long career he represented W.H. Auden, C.S. Lewis, A. A. Milne, Frank M. Robinson, C.J. Cherryh, Diana Gabaldon, and many others. Besides his literary pursuits, Knowlton was an occasional actor and model, posing as one of the original “Marlboro Men.” A noted philanthropist, Knowlton was active in the Sierra Club and Friends of the Earth. He is survived by his son Timothy Knowlton, current president of Curtis Brown.

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I usually hate birthdays, but it’s been fun turning 70 — with three parties! Seattle was a great warm­up for the main affair in Oakland, and Readercon a great long tail. We’re covering Seattle and Reader­con parties in their respective reports, but the main party, oh, the main party! For the first time in my life, I wasn’t worried about a party. I did no­thing, and no preparation. It was just like being seven again. Groveling thanks to Amelia, Liza, Kirsten, and the rest of the staff, who did the work and let me follow the Woody Allen dictum: I showed up.

There was champagne, cakes, drinks, people. Ed Bryant and Karen Burnham each flew into town, Mikey Roessner & Richard Herman drove up from Tehachapi, and Cecelia Holland drove down from Fortuna. Bob Silverberg and Dick Lupoff, both 72, made sure I wasn’t the oldest person there (I met Bob in 1959, and Dick in 1960, so they also furnished old fart continuity). Other attendees includ­ed Karen Haber, Nancy Farmer, Pat Lupoff, Terry Bisson & Judy Jensen, Paul Park (visiting from Mass­achusetts), Peter Beagle, Lizzie Lynn (fully recovered from her recent heart attack), Night Shade’s Jason Williams, Cordelia Willis (with fun *CSI*-type stories), Vivian Perry, and *Locus* folk Tim Pratt & Heather Shaw (next up to have a baby), Liza & Matt Trombi, Kyra Paige Trombi, Carolyn Cushman, Kirsten Gong-Wong & A.Aaron Buchanan, Teddy Buchanan, Carol Buchanan (that’s three generations of Buchanans), Franc­escas Mazar (outstanding employee), and Amelia & M. Jokela.

Teddy, who is usually the youngest person at the party, is now seven, and had to give way to Kyra, who was only seven days old, and of course was the star, with everybody billing and cooing over her, triggered by their hardwired maternal and paternal instincts. Teddy was a great hostess, carrying snacks around and showing everyone how all the various toys worked. The house was redecorated with all of the toys I’ve gotten over 20 years — windups, tin toys, creepy crawly things, an inflatable disco ball, life-size inflatable “scream” figure, etc. I usually don’t like to have birthdays because I don’t care for the bright lights, and clatter, and, when everybody wishes me many, many more. Let’s take things one year at a time.

I’m also a hard person to give presents to, and ask the staff not to get me anything. Fortunately, they’re bad at following orders and keep me delighted with silly toys and sometimes surprises. The surprise this year was a beautiful hardwood floor. I was happy when everybody around me for a half hour. I didn’t touch, but it was close. I wanted to keep her, but alas the staff said it was only a loan. She interrupted a *Buffy* singalong conducted by Cordelia Willis, but it was worth it.

Carol Buchanan and I share a birthdate (but not year!), as well as initials. We had separate cakes and separate off-key birthday songs. Other fascinating presents included a 1950s Navajo frog sculpture, which now sits atop my desk with Post-Its in its generous mouth, a collection of Hieronymus Bosch figures from The Last Judgment, a special rosewood pen and case engraved “Charles N. Brown — Guru,” a handmade bowl with initials CB on bottom so someday I can claim I made it, an Ethel Merman CD I didn’t know existed, a Shmoo, a new coffee pot from (and for) the staff, and various books (worse than coals to Newcastle since I can’t burn them). The final present arrived in mid-July from the Kansas City *Locus* office and had a side of Kobe ribs cooked Kansas City style with all the fixins. It was still frozen, and will be consumed soon. Teddy knows what to do.

**EARTHQUAKE!**

There was a 4.2 magnitude earthquake with its epicenter almost under the house early this morning. It can be exciting living practically on top of the Hayward fault. I was up before 0500 (earthquake at 0450) looking for damage. There were some art pieces and tchotchkes scattered around, but most undamaged until I got to the kitchen. There was broken crockery everywhere. Plates and coffee cups seemed to have leaped out of the cupboard and flown across the room before committing suicide on the hardwood floor. What was I to do? Easy. I went back to sleep and let the staff clean it up in the morning. Yes, I still love California even though it can be a moving experience.

**GARDNER & ME**

Usually, when I feel down physically and am depressed, I call Ed Bryant and we play one downs­manship. I’m always more cheerful afterwards. This time, it was even easier, I could call Gardner Dozois, who was still in hospital. Gardner had quintuple bypass surgery on July 5, and was recovering nicely when he code blued a week later. I went into hospital July 13 for removal of a cho­lestestoma between my middle ear and brain. Ac­cording to the surgeon, the mastoid was gone com­pletely and he could look at the pulsing brain, so I guess I still have one. Special thanks to Amelia, who stayed with me throughout. She was the last person I saw before the general anesthesia (more scary to me than the actual surgery) and the first person I saw when I sort of woke up. I had some complications and a minor scare two days later, but I’m now home, eating and drinking and dieting both cured it. I’m mostly recovered a week later, although I still have no strength, am still bleeding slightly, sleep a lot, and need strong pain pills. I have to go back in three months for more surgery, and maybe middle-ear reconstruction.

So I called Gardner.

Carol Buchanan, Charles N. Brown

I got his son Chris, who put Gardner on as soon as he finished using his breathing exercise machine. He says he died and was resuscitated, or maybe he said resurrected. It was that sort of conversation. They operated a second time, checked out his carburetor, and put a new regulator in. Apparently, they also misplaced his pants after his heart stopped. I wonder how Gardner will deal with that in future descriptions. Gardner’s 60th birthday was the next day. I hope it was OK. We talked medication, bodily functions and those other things old guys are obsessed with. I felt much better afterward.

**READERCON**

Readercon was enjoyable, as usual. Oddly enough, the two conventions I have the most fun at, are the two with the most serious programs — ICFA and Readercon. I tend to hang out with the same group at both — Gary Wolfe, John Clute, Graham Sleight, Liz Hand, Amelia, plus a larger group which makes one or the other, Barry Mal­zberg, Peter Straub, Russell Letson, John Kessel, Karen Burnham, etc. All are intensely interested in SF, what makes it tick, why it’s important, its history, etc. We all share a basic canon which we constantly discuss or reorganize in some way.

For me, this was the Heinlein Centennial. Al­though the official one was being held in Kansas City, it was important to me that *Locus* organize its own, and Readercon was the perfect venue to do part of it since the three critiques I respect most would be there. I offered to do part of it as a Readercon program item and the convention accepted. We did the first 50 minutes with an audience, then adjourned until the next day for several hours of private taping. The results are here in this issue, thanks to Amelia for speed transcribing and the first editing in only two days, Liza for the second edit, Tim for the third, and then to me, Gary, John, and Graham for final comments, corrections, and reorganization of some thoughts. I think it’s a pretty balanced view of both the virtues and faults of this important writer.

This is the second time we’ve done a critical round-table (the first one, on horror, was in the May 2007 issue). What should we do next?
My third birthday party took place on 7/7/07 — so while Amelia dealt with it. She came outside a few minutes later, saying, "They'll seat us now." I don't know how she did it.

VISITORS

The week around my non-surprise birthday party was crowded. Beth Gwinn, in town for the Weisman/Elson wedding (she was the official photographer) came by for a few days. It was like the old times, with decent conversations. We had several interviews: Lusius Shepard, Maureen F. McHugh, Theodora Goss, Peter Watts, and Cathearyne M. Valent. They should start appearing in four to six months.

There were interesting meals with interesting people, and fascinating program events, most with too many people on them. John Crowley should appear with one other person or possibly two. Any more is just sound bites. Same with Barry Malzberg. Both with Vivian Perry, my usual opera companion. The rest of his output is minor. I was under the impression the award was for an important underrated or obscure writer such as C.M. Kornbluth, or John Taine or A. Merritt, who is not read today, but strongly affected the field.

Of course, it's easy to complain about awards in retrospect. I've been a judge enough times to know how strange the final results can be.

HEINLEIN REDUX

Why are we doing a separate Heinlein Centennial issue when there is a special Heinlein Centennial convention, a Heinlein society, and other Heinleiners keeping his name alive?

Because most, if not all the others are more interested in Heinlein's ideas and philosophy than in how he changed the structure of science fiction writing. This special issue concentrates on that structure. Even the various letters and appreciations are mostly about Heinlein as a fiction writer. Both the review section and the roundtable emphasize this. I couldn't, however, miss getting in a decade by decade photo spread.

I loved Heinlein, but it was the writing that did it. I identified with nearly all the leading characters — even Podkayne! I also loved the man for his warmth and interest in everything. We had so many areas of agreement, the others more or less background.

This issue is really my love letter to him.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

We're still playing around with sub rates, etc. We won't actually know what the new periodical rate will be until we mail the September issue, since the rate rise is so complex, it can't be figured without special software.

Meanwhile, we've had some bumps with overseas airmail. We've been using DHL packaging and subsidizing every copy by quite a bit. It's too much with the sudden influx of former sea mail subs now switched to airmail. Instead of raising the airmail rates, we switched to Air Speed, which is about a week longer than our former mailing option. Air Speed sends the issue airmail in special packages, and then puts them at the mercy of the local postal authorities. The most recent issue went out late overseas because of the switchover, but we hope things will speed up with this one. We've had a few cancellations from both sea mail and airmail subscribers, but most have been very understanding, even with slightly slower service.

NEXT ISSUE

September will be a forthcoming book issue, and Carolyn is already girding herself in the basement. Our planned interviews are Guy Gavriel Kay and Ysabeau Wilce. Alas, it will be out before the Worldcon, so the Hugo results won't be available.

COMPLAINTS

These aren't your complaints, they're mine!

The John W. Campbell Award suprises me as it retreats further into the past. The last half-dozen winners are so retro it reminds me of the Worlds of Tomorrow of Disneyland, which instead of being revamped for the future retreated to the world of 1939. Titan by Ben Bova is a minor book in all senses. In fact, most of the books on the long list are preferable to the Bova. Maybe there should be term limits on all the judges.

The Cordwainer Smith Rediscovery Award winner Daniel Galouye is not only obscure, I think he's justifiably obscure. Only Dark Universe (1961) is of any interest, and even it has only a novel setting. The writing is still pulp with cardbaord character. The rest of his output is minor. I was under the impression the award was for an important underrated or obscure writer such as C.M. Kornbluth, or John Taine or A. Merritt, who is not read today, but strongly affected the field.

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Watch Locus Online for them.

Several Locusites (but not me) are off to Comic-Con this week, and somebody from here will probably cover the Writers of the Future. Otherwise, its World Fantasy, which many of us plan to attend.

¡Hasta la vista! —C.N. Brown
People may say it's boring when you have a 51-6 Superbowl, but it's not (as long as you're not the losing team). We like to win, and win big. We like underdogs who then win big. The nice thing about fiction is that it's manageable. You can tell the story, and you can have the ending you want. The real world is messy, and it makes a mockery of your scripted endings. The president's 'Mission accomplished!' line is a perfect example of that. The mission wasn't accomplished. It's almost like they said, 'OK, here's where the story ends,' when in fact there were endless installments. Fiction has manageable expectations. You have your story, your end result, and everybody walks away, whether the happy ending is 'objective achieved' or 'hero gets promoted' or whatever. Real life isn't like that. Military fiction gives us the idea that these things are doable and not as messy as they are in reality. There's no closure in real life. Fiction has a set goal and a set time (length) in which to do it. I have, contractually, one hundred and fifty thousand words to have to get everything done in that hundred thousand words. Real life takes millions and billions of words (seconds), and it doesn't follow the whims of an author.

But Old Man's War and The Ghost Brigades aren't actually about war; they're about people and the journeys those people take. I tell their stories in the context of action and excitement and explosions, people getting stabbed, guns firing, and stuff like that, because all those things are fun, and war is an interesting crucible of character. But they're fundamentally about the people, and that's one reason readers connect with them.

The third book in the series is The Last Colony. I've done the regular military, I've done the Special Forces military, and this book is about running a colony: a sort of unusual colony, because instead of colonists coming from Earth, it's getting them from the other colonized worlds, and this is the first time that's been done. As it turns out, the colony is really bait for a large agglomeration of alien races that want to keep humans out. The humans are trying to force the point, to provoke a confrontation with the aliens. My characters John and Jane (from the earlier books) have to figure out what's actually happening, because if they don't, they're going to be dead. It's a series of rugs being pulled out from under the characters and the readers. You have a theory of the way the universe works that seems reasonable, and then a chapter or so later you have a new theory....

The book also explores more about the government of the Colonial Union. Humans are at war, and in wartime you have to make some concessions regarding how you expect your government to run. But is the universe truly hostile, or is it hostile because that's the reaction to humanity? Frankly, what it comes down to is 'Are we getting the government we deserve?' While there's some relevance to the real world, there's no direct analogy to what's going on in America.

When Old Man's War came out, somebody said, 'This is a book that could only have been written after 9/11.' The funny thing is, it was almost all written before 9/11. You can read Ghost Brigades with the same question: 'Is this a commentary on our government?' And The Last Colony explicitly asks, 'Can you trust our government?' But if you want your story to have resonance beyond the current moment, you have to make sure it's not merely a commentary on your time but is about something larger.

In The Android's Dream, the world government is the American government, almost by an accident of history. The aliens Caligula to its Tiberius, we're going to see the pendulum swinging back. Generally speaking, the American philosophy and ethos are good, and I wouldn't mind their surviving for the next two or three hundred years.

In SF, there's the American can-do 'We will find a way to engineer our way out of these problems' vs. the Moorcockian/New Wave European 'Nature red in tooth and claw,' where we are just another animal. It's definitely a national schism, because Americans have invested so much of their perception in the idea that we are competent can-do people who are going to set the world right. Are we going to see the same sort of narrative arc for the American Age as for the British one?

In both Old Man's War and Android's Dream, humans are not necessarily at the top of the food chain. In War they're in a fight for their survival, and in Dream they're as Burkina Faso is in the UN of this world to the sort of galactic UN there, and it galls them: 'Damn, we should be at the big kids' table!' So it's the American character, in a universe with a more socialist sensibility. The main character is an archetypal Campbellian type, but the universe continues to kick his ass anyway.

A book is an operating system. You set up a stage and give the reader some particular details and instructions in the world; how they use that operating system about the world is pretty much up to them. I don't write a lot of description because I find it boring, and also because I don't think it's necessary. In Android's Dream I have a character named Sam, and you never find out what Sam's sex is. It works either way, but it's interesting to see what the reader thinks it is.

There are lots of places where you can leave the world uncolored and give people a box of crayons and say, 'Color in the world.' If you believe a book is a dialogue between the author and the reader, you want them to participate in building up that universe; you want to give them something to run with it. One of the reasons books are so damned thick these days is that everything has to be explained. But it's more fun to speculate, to engage your brain. There are two reasons for leaving parts of the universe a bit sketchy: one is possibly because you can follow it up in a sequel, and the other is that it's fun to engage the reader.

The science fiction audience is a smart and interesting audience, so their input is useful. On the very first page of Ghost Brigades, I say something's in a parabolic orbit, and I've been getting e-mails saying, 'No! That's not parabolic.' Hopefully, the paperback edition will just say 'orbit' instead. SF has such a great dialogue with its readers, it's a Talmudic. They've got the scrolls, and they're arguing with God: me or other writers. It's aggravating sometimes, when you're caught in a stupidity, but they care, and it's essential that they feel their contract with the author is one of communication. The author-reader relationship is not exactly one-to-one, but it's pretty damned close.
Raymond E. Feist & Joel Rosenberg

“Twisting, wondrous tale full of magic that only Neil Gaiman could have written.”
—Chicago Tribune

“Feist is without question one of the very best writers of fantasy adventure practicing today.”
—Science Fiction Chronicle

Neil Gaiman & Terry Pratchett

“Reads like the Book of Revelation, rewritten by Monty Python.”
—San Francisco Chronicle

“The Apocalypse has never been funnier.”
—Clive Barker

Acorna’s Children: Third Watch
Anne McCaffrey and Elizabeth A. Scarborough

“Combining colorful characterizations, lots of fast-paced action, and a decided sense of menace...this is entertaining fare indeed.”
—Booklist

Murder in LaMut
Legends of the Riftwar: Book II
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Good Omens
The Nice and Accurate Prophecies of Agnes Nutter, Witch
Neil Gaiman & Terry Pratchett

“Portrays a richly detailed world filled with memorable characters.”
—Library Journal

Fortress of Ice
C. J. Cherryh

“A twisting, wondrous tale full of magic that only Neil Gaiman could have written.”
—Chicago Tribune

Stardust
Neil Gaiman

“The Eunuch’s Heir
Elaine Isaak

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