

2010



Annual

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“Rudolph Rebels,” by Steve Stiles

Contents – *eI53* – December 2010

Cover: “**Rudolph Rebels,**” by Steve Stiles

[...Return to sender, address unknown...43 \[eI letter column\]](#), by Earl Kemp

[Adios, Cuchuma](#), by Urlo Ocampo

[Home for Christmas](#), by Victor J. Banis

[The Triumph of Avarice](#), by Lawrence Block

[The Spaces in Between](#), by Michael Moorcock

[The City & the City](#), by Rob Latham

[Soft-core’s Halcyon Days](#), by Michael Hemmingson

[Jack Gaughan](#), by Luis Ortiz

[a portfolio](#), by Steve Stiles

[Back cover: “Ho! Ho! Ho! Me Hearties,”](#) by Ditmar [Martin James Ditmar Jensen]

In real life, as in Grand Opera, arias only make hopeless situations worse.
—Kilgore Trout, in Kurt Vonnegut’s *Timequake*

THIS ISSUE OF *eI* is dedicated to the memory of Len Moffatt.

This issue is also in memory of Donald Tuck.

#

Three Special People:

Steve Stiles: The best known, most favorite fan artist in science fiction for decades, is also the most ignored. Steve Stiles should have earned a Hugo Award years ago, but has been consistently overlooked year after year.

To compensate, and to help point out his greatness, we are giving you, as my and Bill Burns’ holiday gift to our readers, a huge, magnificent portfolio of his work elsewhere in this issue of *eI*.

Luis Ortiz: Continuing his series of great art books featuring great science fiction artists, Luis Ortiz has just published his big, profusely illustrated, full color [*Outermost—The Art & Life of Jack Gaughan*](#). And, to commemorate that special occasion, please find Luis’ tribute to Gaughan elsewhere in this issue of *eI*.

Frank M. Robinson: One of the largest, best known, and best condition collections of science fiction related

materials is in the private hands of one megacollector—Frank M. Robinson.

Frank has made arrangements to sell his collection, at auction, early next year. I offered to help promote this once-in-a-lifetime event and asked Frank to furnish details of the auction in this issue of *eI*. Frank, in turn, sent me to John Gunnison at gunnison@adventurehouse.com for that information.

No response from Gunnison.

If you are interested in following this auction, contact Gunnison directly and hope for a reply.

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As always, everything in this issue of *eI* beneath my byline is part of my in-progress rough-draft memoirs. As such, I would appreciate any corrections, revisions, extensions, anecdotes, photographs, jpegs, or what have you sent to me at earl@earlkemp.com and thank you in advance for all your help.

Bill Burns is *jefe* around here. If it wasn't for him, nothing would get done. He inspires activity. He deserves some really great rewards. It is a privilege and a pleasure to have him working with me to make *eI* whatever it is.

Other than Bill Burns, Dave Locke, and Robert Lichtman, these are the people who made this issue of *eI* possible: Victor Banis, Urlo Ocampo, Jacques Hamon, Michael Hemmingson, Rob Latham, Michael Moorcock, Luis Ortiz, and Steve Stiles.

ARTWORK: This issue of *eI* features original artwork by Ditmar and Steve Stiles.

On reading: "With my brains all fired up, I do the nearly impossible thing that you are doing now, dear reader. I make sense of idiosyncratic arrangements, in horizontal lines, of nothing but twenty-six phonetic symbols, ten Arabic numerals, and perhaps eight punctuation marks, on a sheet of bleached and flattened wood pulp!"

—Kurt Vonnegut, intro to the collection *Bagombo Snuff Box*

...Return to sender, address unknown... 43

The Official *eI* Letters to the Editor Column

By Earl Kemp

We get letters. Some parts of some of them are printable. Your letter of comment is most wanted via email to earl@earlkemp.com or by snail mail to P.O. Box 369, PMB 205, Tecate, CA 91980 and thank you.

Also, please note, I observe DNQs and make arbitrary and capricious deletions from these letters in order to remain on topic.

This is the official Letter Column of *eI*, and following are a few quotes from a few of those letters concerning the last issue of *eI*. All this in an effort to get you to write letters of comment to *eI* so you can look for them when they appear here.

Thursday October 14, 2010:

Chris Garcia: Another strong issue, though there are only a few things I can find myself able to comment on. The first of which being the NFFF publishing a novel! I had no idea. I guess this just more proves that I was a complete failure when I was their president! The funny thing, of all the things they published, and I've read about a thousand different zines and pieces, this sounds like the one that would most interest me! I must track down a copy! I've seen a copy of *The Science Fictional Sherlock Holmes*, though it was well beyond my purchasing power. I mean, I was expecting to spend a couple of hundred dollars of Christmas money at WorldCon and that would have more

than doubled that budget! Still, I got a chance to look through it and it seems to be a good piece. I also have a copy of *The Fanscient*, though it's in bad shape. A lot of the stuff I got when Don Simpson dumped his zines on me were in weak shape, this worse than others, though. I swear I've seen a later edition of the *Index of Science Fiction Magazines* though, perhaps from the 1970s? Someone had a copy of *An Index to the Weird and Fantastica in Magazines* at World Horror last year, and I didn't buy it. A running theme, it would seem.

And then there's *The Immortal Storm*. I've always wanted to own a copy, though I read one while I was on my TAFF trip (maybe at Mark and Claire's place?). It wasn't the best Fan History I've read, but it was good enough. I always sorta liked SaM.

If I had known about the existence of *A Checklist of Science Fiction Anthologies*, I would have spent my life trying to get a hold of it. An intro by the greatest SF of the middle-20th Century, Ted Theodore Sturgeon, is enough to make it quest-worthy.

That's an awesome Ditmar BaCover. I love his stuff, and the fact that he's been so generous to so many of us with his art only makes me happier!

Good issue, as always!

Sunday November 7, 2010:

Lloyd Penney: Here's issue 52 of *eI* in .pdf format, and as we contemplate the time warp weekend, and try to remember if we put all the clocks and watches back an hour, there is at least time to start a letter of comment on the issue at hand.

My letter...I have been much enjoying the books I purchased at Mr. Batta's store, and will need a return trip very soon. I have put notice of his sale through local fandom here, and I hope he's had need to dip in the 20,000 books he has access to. Even if it's a tour of what books are there, his shop is a trip back in time, and a lot of fun.

And now, it's the 7th... More wonderful research from Terry. Everyone who has at least attempted to publish a book should get some thanks for trying, and often their efforts, successful or not, have helped to mold the industry we're able to look back on with fondness, even if we never did experience it firsthand. As I go through the lists and descriptions, I remember a few of the stories, but there's so many that are new to me, and even the description dates the story. There's also lots of proof that in many cases, self-published novels just aren't very good, but they need to be counted, too. The authors of SF over the years needed to learn their craft and define what SF was all about, and it has taken some time to do it. Plus, we have to read the bad before we can recognize and appreciate the good.

I bought of the ASFO *The Immortal Storm* long ago, and always found it informative but dry. SaM tried to cover the beginnings of fandoms from elsewhere, and that is where I read about the beginnings of Canadian fandom. I remember seeing issues of MITSFS' *The Twilight Zine*, and I think I do have an issue, but that's all I have seen of it. I am not sure I can carry on with this loc...lots to appreciate about the books from Terry's collection, and I am not sure I can write anything I haven't said. Just bravo, keep it up, and keep putting it here. Earl, many thanks, and I hope there will be more to discuss in the next issue.

I couldn't survive my own pessimism if I didn't have some kind of sunny little dream.

—Kurt Vonnegut, *Hocus Pocus*

Adios, Cuchuma

or

The View Beyond the Fence

by Urlo Ocampo

For 12,000 years the Kumiai Indians (“people of the earth”) lived in peace in the shadow of “the exalted high place,” the sacred mountain Cuchuma. At over 3,000 feet, Cuchama, one of Earth’s holiest places and the highest mountain in coastal San Diego County, has been a communal ritual center for millennia.



Cuchuma from Calle Mexico just beyond the fence.

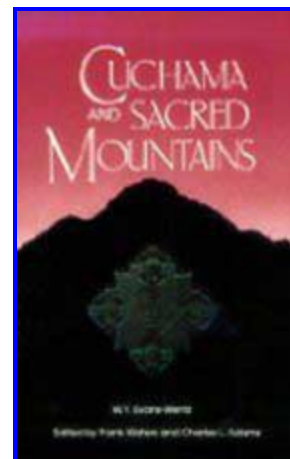
Cuchuma is a sacred place where, for generations, young men would be sent for reflection and inspiration as part of puberty rituals before entering manhood. The legend says that those youngsters, alone and naked, on the verge of burgeoning manhood, were sent to the top of Cuchuma to commune within themselves with Cuchuma, who would teach them the things they most needed to know in an intensive overnight ordeal.

Cuchuma, towering over Tecate, Baja California, Mexico, and Tecate (known locally as Tecatito; “the little one”), California, has, for generations, been a sacred place of worship and healing. Routinely pilgrimages were made to the top of the mountain, where the traditional god of Tecate lived, benevolently protecting the loyal citizens who respected and honored their all-seeing, all-knowing patron.

In all seasons of the year, in all types of weather, the local residents would slowly make the arduous climb up the long, twisting trail to the top where the god lived and where the views were unparalleled in a vast 360-degree panorama. The sun loved Cuchuma and bathed it in radiant glory, nourishing all things great and small that surrounded it. Then in winter, very rarely, a blanket of snow would grace the god’s residence, rapidly melting away into faintly visible glitterings of residual moisture as refreshing as early morning dew.

Originally, Cuchuma was the most sacred place in the world for the Kumiai Indian nation, and one they cherished and honored as much and as often as they could.

On Cuchuma’s summit, many sacred and religious rituals have taken place over the decades. There have been



memorial services, funerals, and marriage ceremonies. Being so benevolent a place, many couples...or more...have engaged in their own most favorite practices astride the top of the mountain, including vast numbers of progeny being conceived in that very spot. So ideally alone and romantic, right at the top of the world where even the occasional batwings fluttering past were as silent as the slithering snakes that now and then passed by in search of nourishment.

So idyllic, so wrapped up in nature's finest colorings and most precious gifts to mankind, is Cuchuma. The big black ravens, always in mated pairs, soaring high above Cuchuma's residence, cawing out commands of reverence. The twittering of lesser fowl, escaping the claws of their bigger brothers. The aromatic vegetation, with licorice-tinged fennel leading the way, reaching above the brilliant yellow native sunflowers and, in season, the vibrant but short-lived blossoms of the different varieties of cacti clinging to the mountainsides...shouting their praises for any who would care to listen, to smell the intermingled fragrances, to feel the persistent breezes waving so enthusiastically at them. The softly murmuring sounds of foraging birds and insects intruding upon the listener's presence.

Unfortunately, the Kumiai nation owned vast acreage that just happened to be where the border between the United States and Mexico was eventually designated and, with the arrival of white men, the savages of God and the Church, they were plundered in the name of the Holy See and deprived of everything of value including most of their lives and their chastity. And, through time, what little they had left was also taken away from them by people as greedy as the plunderers for the Church.

The United States border being one of the depriving, crippling influences. And, true to their habits, the first thing the US did was to rename the Kumiai Indians as Kumeyaay Indians, and to do everything in its enormous federal power to totally separate, divide, conquer, and obliterate them.



Cuchuma as seen from Avenida Revolucion.

Today that once proud and noble nation has dwindled in population to such an extent that it is verging on extinction. Not only has the US contributed considerably to their downfall, but the Mexican nation has also worked its wonders in the same direction, almost totally denying that they even still exist and struggling furiously to take away all of their remaining things of value including, especially the meager area they still manage to hold onto jammed up against the border with the US. The Kumiai live in collectives, similar to communes, called ejidos.

Within the US, they blend into other Amerind (native Indian) cultures, becoming almost invisible and forgetting much of their once cherished culture.

Within Mexico, the Kumiai men have become absorbed into the vast wine economy that dominates most of northern Baja California, becoming workers in the vineyards and wineries, most of them belonging to the

conglomerate Domecq. The women have become weavers of exquisite baskets and yarn artists, and the products of their talents are cherished and sought extensively for private collections and museum displays.



The border fence as seen from Callejon Madero at the corner of 17th. My how close it is.

The Ruta de Vinos, the meandering highway leading all the way from Tecate at the foot of Cuchuma to the glorious Bahia de Todo Santos, Ensenada's sprawling Pacific Ocean deep-sea port opening up to the entire world, is literally covered with vineyards stretching, in some areas, as far as the eye can see in all directions. This is where the Kumiai men toil the fields, tending the lush vines that produce so much delectable wine for the benefit of everyone. At the right time of the year, grapes hang heavily from those healthy, vigorous vines...red, rosé, white...sweet, tart, intriguing...eager and ready for the vintner's touch. You can smell them; almost taste them, as you drive past on the Ruta de Vinos.

#

That was then, and this is now.

Cuchuma has been conquered, suppressed, occupied, and is being used as an observation post for Homeland Security. A large, ugly, Quonset-like metal building now squats directly atop Cuchuma, from which many unknown disasters await orders to condemn and deny. The only sacred things left are the killing weapons aimed downhill to where the huddled masses have been held, like cattle, inside the unbelievably ugly fence (Vietnam "police action" era surplus metal panels) that separates tribal members from tribal members, family members from family members, lovers from lovers...all the innocents and the naïve...the unsuspecting and the watchful.

And, BIG things are in store for those shuttered masses.

Cuchuma is miles from anywhere except los Tecates. Tecate, California, is a place marker only...a once important border crossing for massive cattle drives delivering Mexican grown beef to US slaughterhouses. Its largest single venue is a huge Catholic school reaping the rewards of Mexicans rich enough to send their children to that elite school. Other than that, there is a supermarket, a shoe store, a gas station, a convenience store, a pay parking lot (because the feds do not allow ANY free parking on any of the three "streets" in town), a 99-cent store, a post office (for the convenience of the Mexicans alone), a bank (for the convenience of the Mexicans alone), and import/export offices.

And hundreds of federal employees, most of whom spend their days shuffling around visibly doing nothing but impeding life.

There are NO residences, no residents, no people...only commuting feds and local border crossers.



And tons of building materials, dozens of hulking yellow earthmovers, and lots and lots of people, some of whom are actually working. Most of them are not. They work—or not—seven days a week at times, for long hours daily. Probably some form of no-bid contractors reaping rich rewards for sloth-like movements...maybe even double time.

They work in abrupt sessions, for days at a time and then stop...for days at a time. Continuing ahead at a random pace...building....

What?

For weeks, continuously, those huge earthmovers, noisy, puffing dense smoke, back-up beepers blaring, creating huge, billowing plumes of air-borne dust that floats over Tecate, leaving thick layers of that dust covering everything...cars, houses, people.... No thought given, even momentarily, to the effects of all that noise, pollution, and filth dumped gratuitously upon the local population.

Within the US, it is customary, when disturbing so much earth, to occasionally water down the loose material, compacting it and retarding the accumulating filth.

And, intermixed amid all those workers are a very large amount of uniformed personnel in various federal designs. They are probably supervisors of some sort because not a one of them appears to be doing anything helpful, beneficial, or productive. Typical Homeland Security/Patriot Act drones....

What? What will eventually exist there, miles from nowhere, once all those workers and nonworkers finish their dedicated tasks? Will it be a second, massive, heavily fortified wall similar to the shameful one separating Tijuana from San Diego? Will Border Patrol vehicles run endlessly in both directions on the huge highway atop that massive wall? Will it resemble the Great Wall of China?

Will it resemble the Berlin “tear down this wall, Mr. Gorbachev”?

Are the feds actually isolating us to this extent? At our expense as taxpayers?

Can Cuchuma survive all that negativism and return, once and forever, to protect the citizens of los Tecates?

#



Border Patrol vehicles and personnel lurk atop every high point adjacent to Tecate. They sit there or stand around

their vehicles looking over that awful fence and scowling at the terroristic locals. They look very much like starving vultures who have just spotted a few thousand lean, tender edibles. They can't even recognize them as people.

Overhead, the whining noises of helicopters are heard often and insistently as they fly up and down the border, more often than not over Mexican air space, not over the US, and they fly so low as to just barely clear the rooftops of the Mexican houses. In the States, they are forbidden to fly lower than 200 feet, but that doesn't apply to the hot-shot jocks gunning those helicopters around as if they were joyriding to the closest doughnut shop to pick up munchies for the crews.

Returning from Mexico to the United States for US citizens is a disturbing, unhealthy, and totally unreasonable experience these days. The procedures put in place as "Homeland Security" appear to be designed to punish the citizens for numerous unknown reasons. It seems that each employee one encounters has been schooled extensively in condescension and humiliation. They are forbidden to smile, or act like reasonable people, and have to sneer and insult every person passing them. All traces of humanity have been completely erased from them.

It is commonplace for passports to be examined, scanned, recorded, and placed into your federal dossier along with all your other crimes, besides crossing the US border, THREE times per crossing. Competent clerks would get it right the first time.

It is also commonplace to be routed through the secondary inspection area where you and your vehicle are, again, minutely examined regardless of how many times that has already been done in secondary according to your huge shameful history available to them instantly on their computers.

And the dogs, looking and sniffing at you and every legal item you have in your possession.



The Border Patrol, from atop Cuchuma, keeps a tight grip on the local citizens.

Then, once you have passed through that humiliating ordeal and move on down the highway, you are stopped just a few miles later by a federal roadblock where yet another dog sniffs your asshole and exhaust pipe just in case the previous dog had not acted with proper federal intimidating viciousness.

It is not unusual for these repetitive examinations and compulsory stops to take up as much as an hour and a half of your traveling time.

But they leave you feeling incredibly protected, safe, secure, and firmly put in your place as a loyal, tax-paying citizen of the best country in the world.

Sure they do.

#

And I am not alone in making these observations.

In the *New York Times* of July 31, 2010, Mark Lacey wrote an article entitled “The Mexican Border’s Lost World,” describing his experiences in Mexico and returning through the Border Patrol gauntlet on assignment as a professional journalist working for one of the world’s greatest newspapers.

Among other things, Lacey wrote, “Never a particularly pretty place, the border is at its ugliest right now, with violence, tensions and temperatures all on high.

“...these developments are unfolding in what used to be a meeting place between two countries, a zone of escape where cultures merged, albeit often amid copious amounts of tequila. The potential casualties at the border now include a way of life, generations old, well-documented but decaying by the day.

“The flow of people at the border has never been one way. The 1,969-mile stretch has long been a netherworld crossed by Americans in search of forbidden pleasures as much as by Mexicans desperate for work.

“It is an area neither completely Mexico nor completely El Norte. And a dollop of danger, a quest for sin, was always part of its charm.

“...And as this happens, longtime lovers of the border fear most for the back-and-forth itself — for the interchange, even if asymmetrical and exploitive, of poorer Mexicans and free-spending Americans that over the generations has, to some degree, fostered understanding between the two countries.

“...Friendship Park once connected San Diego and Tijuana and allowed residents on both sides to picnic together. It now is bisected by barriers that keep Mexicans and Americans well away from any contact.

“...But as I cross back and forth at some of the border’s most troubled points, I find that even a journalist faces scrutiny going both ways. American authorities grilling those entering the United States wonder just what an American could possibly be doing south of the border in this climate. And entering Mexico elicits surprise as well from the American inspectors who now regularly stop southbound cars, looking for gun traffickers and money launderers.

““You sure you want to go down there?”” one of them said to me recently.”

#

Is this a proper question to ask a US citizen reentering his country, or is it an unreasonable insult?

Is there any hope for reason and sanity to return? Will the US federal administration ever start doing things for US citizens instead of to them?

How about starting with a simple, “Welcome home, sir”?

I think that one of the things parents have to do is to teach children hypocrisy, because that’s how you survive—by being nice to people who are contemptible. So the kid coming into the world sees hypocrisy and wants to point it out. You’re nice to this awful person? What you’re doing is a crime, isn’t it, Dad?

—Kurt Vonnegut, 10/99 Salon interview

I'll be Home for Christmas

by Victor J. Banis

"The happiest day of their lives was probably the day their father died." I told the police that when they questioned me, and I don't think I did the Wallace twins any disservice by saying so.

Doctor Wallace was born to money but, by means of a felicitous marriage to a woman of similar means and little spirit who died soon after the twins were born, and by a single minded and often ruthless devotion to the management of his investments, he had multiplied that initially modest wealth many times over.

"A man without a heart," some described him, but I do not think that is so—I believe his love for his money was a grand passion indeed, and if there was nothing of affection left over for his sons, I suspect he thought the cost well worth it.

Death, however, is the one investor who can't be cheated, and in time he collected his due and those twin boys, now of a majority, inherited both a considerable fortune and, for the first time in their lives, a measure of freedom.



Victor J. Banis

They had grown up, though, in the care of a constantly changing number of housekeepers, with no one close but one another and while they must surely have felt a sense of release to watch that gilded coffin lowered into the ground, they were entirely unprepared at this late stage in life to venture into the larger world where they might have had some pleasure of the money that was now at their disposal.

I say it to their credit, they satisfied themselves with tending the garden rather than increasing the crop, living very modestly, for men of such wealth. Their house was far from a cottage but neither might one have described it as a mansion. They entertained hardly at all and rarely went out, seemingly content with the company they had known growing up: their own.

Of course, some said, "they are peculiar, aren't they?" but there were many who had long felt an abiding sympathy for those poor, neglected waifs, and no one blamed them now for cherishing their privacy and one another to an extent that might have been regarded as unseemly under other circumstances.

I had lived all my life next door to them and I was not only their attorney, but I suppose I was as well as close a friend as they had ever known, which is to say, not very. They sometimes came over to my house for a drink, always together and never when any other friends were present, and from time to time I was invited to theirs, though these invitations seemed more dutiful than heartfelt.

The truth is, I don't think, not having known it before, that they missed the company of others very much, and I never left them without hearing, in my mind if not my ears, twin sighs of relief that they were once again alone.

There were those who attempted to win their friendship, or more. They were, if not handsome, certainly comely young men. Adam was the older by about thirty minutes, and appropriately somewhat more somber. Robert was the gayer of the two, if only marginally.

He was the more athletic, as well. They played tennis on their own court, and one could see at a glance that Adam was invariably outplayed, and Robert swam every day in their small pool.

He ran, too, always in the early hours before sunrise. Sometimes Adam plodded accommodatingly along beside him, but most mornings when I got out of bed and glanced out my bathroom window, I saw Robert jogging along by himself in the predawn darkness, looking determined if unenthusiastic.

It was the only time that I ever saw either of them alone. Even in their conversation, they referred to themselves together. It was invariably, "The two of us like our whisky neat," Or, "the two of us would like to have you come over

for a cocktail." I found that both charming and sad at the same time.

They were twenty-five now, still content to live apart from the rest of the world. I saw little likelihood of their ever marrying. If either of them, indeed, had ever dated, I was unaware of that fact. I did not give much thought to that aspect of their lives. It seemed to me it was no concern of mine.

It was at this point in time when matters having to do with their investments took Adam, who generally handled their business affairs, to California. Robert had intended to go as well, more for the company than for any practical purposes, but just days before their departure, he came down with one of those bugs that visit us all from time to time. I was surprised that Adam did not postpone his trip, and I said as much when I brought Robert some chicken broth the day after Adam left.

"Oh, we talked about it," he said, a bit off-handedly, it seemed to me, "but it was one of those things that couldn't be put off. Anyway, he's only going to be there a short while."

Which, as it happened, turned out not to be the truth. What was originally to be four or no more than five days became a week, and then two. By this time, Robert was quite recovered from his illness, but I could see that he was afflicted in a different way. He looked understandably lonely, increasingly so as the days passed, and I made it a habit to drop in almost daily, and several times I had him over for a simple dinner, for which he seemed grateful, though he was never what one would call stimulating company.

"You know," I ventured one time—as close as I ever got to interfering in their private affairs, "you could just hop on a plane and go out there."

"Oh, I'm terrified of flying, if you want to know the truth, I can only do it when Adam is there to hold my hand," he said—rather too quickly. But, a bit later, he said, out of the blue, as if he thought it needed more explanation, "You know, he said it was better if I didn't. He said he hadn't a minute to spare, day and night, and I would only be bored out of my mind."

It seemed odd to me, considering how close they had always been, but despite having known them most of their lives, I was not an intimate and supposed that there were things between them that I could not be expected to understand.

The two weeks became a month; then six weeks. It was by now clear that Robert was beyond loneliness. He was obviously despondent. Though we had seen little enough of one another over the years that we had been acquainted, I now had become his chief, perhaps only companion. He got into the habit of dropping by my house every day, sometimes more than once a day. I did not mind particularly. I could not help feeling a tender sympathy for his suffering.

And, suffering it was. Even in that short time, I could see that he had lost weight and he was listless. When he came over, he said little, content to mope about, or wander the room as if he were lost, picking up one of my china birds and putting it back down without any sense that he had even seen it, more to have something in his hands. I found that I could easily enough work on some papers at my desk, and need only reply to his occasional remarks with a monosyllable or a grunt. Once, I ask if he was sleeping properly.

"Sleeping?" He looked astonished by the question. "I'm all alone," he said, as if that explained everything. And perhaps it did.

It was nearly two months after he had gone that Robert practically burst into my kitchen one day, his face glowing with excitement, to announce, "He says he'll be home for Christmas."

I had hardly noticed that Christmas was coming. As a bachelor, I celebrated it not at all, and in the past I had seen no signs that they did either, but this year was different.

"I want to decorate," Robert said. "Help me, please, won't you? I want everything festive when he comes. I want it to be a Christmas to remember."

So we spent the next week or so in a frenzy of buying and decorating. He was not satisfied with just a tree that he

overloaded with expensive ornaments. The winter-shorn maple tree in the front yard and the shrubs around the front door must be festooned as well, until the nighttime glow of lights illuminated the entire neighborhood. He could not seem to find enough decorations. Artificial snow covered the lawn, and elves and Santas suddenly appeared atop it, quickly followed by what looked to be an entire herd of reindeer. Another Santa, with a sleigh and yet more reindeer, landed on the roof. I saw Robert rush in and out daily, his arms filled with packages wrapped in scarlet paper.

Christmas was still more than a week away and I was wondering a bit anxiously what else might appear next door, when I got a call at my office from Adam. He wanted, he said, to go over a couple of legal details with me, but as we talked, it soon occurred to me that the matters we were discussing were of no great importance and certainly of no urgency.

We talked for some minutes to little purpose. Finally, after a pause, he said, "I'll need to change my will."

"Really?" I was surprised. I had done their original wills. There was nothing particularly remarkable about them: each left everything to the other, with some charitable provisions. I couldn't imagine what he needed changed.

"I've gotten married," he said.

I was struck dumb. For what seemed an eternity, I could only stare at the papers on my desk. I could think of no appropriate response. Finally, I blurted out the one thing that came into my mind. "Have you told Robert?"

"Not yet," he said, obviously embarrassed by the question. "I plan to...well, please, don't say anything to him, not just yet. I'll call him."

We left it at that. I waited throughout the evening, with an incredible sense of foreboding, for a visit from Robert, and I stayed up later than was usual, to no avail. The Christmas decorations were lit, and the lights were on in his house as well—every light in the house, it appeared, the windows ablaze—but I could not bring myself to intrude upon whatever private emotional upheaval he must be going through.

It was morning, in fact, before I saw him. I was having coffee and reading the paper when he suddenly pounded on my kitchen door. The smell of liquor came in before him and I surmised at a glance that he had not been to bed at all. His clothes were rumpled, his hair disheveled, his eyes rusted with tears and lack of sleep.

"He's bringing her here, today," he said, seemingly taking it for granted that I knew of what he spoke. "To our home. *Our* home"

"Robert," I said, my heart aching for his evident distress, "I have the spare bedroom. Perhaps you should think about staying here, with me, just for a few days."

The look he gave me was beyond distraught. "Why should I do that?" he demanded. "It's my home too. Mine more than hers, certainly. Why should she expect to take everything from me? What right has she got?"

"She's his wife," I said, perhaps not as tactfully as I might have done. I could not but think that, even allowing for the life they had known together, his distress was excessive.

He all but spat at me. "Don't be an ass. What do you know about anything?" and he added, irrelevantly, I thought, "Besides, it's Christmas, if you've forgotten." He dashed out the door before I could stop him. He did not come back, and I was too much a coward to follow him.

As it happened, I met the bride before her new brother-in-law did. I was in my front yard late that afternoon, setting the garbage cans out for morning's collection, when their taxi pulled in next door and they got out, putting what seemed an inordinate number of bags on the sidewalk before the taxi took its leave. I saw Adam pause and stare in some astonishment at the Christmas trimmings everywhere.

They saw me, of course, and since it would hardly have been polite to ignore me—and I suspect, in part to put off the reunion that awaited him—Adam escorted her the short distance to my yard and introduced us.

"I'm so happy to meet you," the new Mrs. Wallace, said, favoring me with a timid smile and limply offering me an expensively gloved hand.

I was intrigued. I don't know what I had expected, exactly—perhaps some voluptuous siren who had lured this (I would have said) confirmed bachelor into matrimony, but in fact, she was retiring to the point of being mousy, pretty, in a pallid way. In retrospect, however, it did not altogether surprise me that she reminded me rather greatly of the twins' departed mother.

"Adam has told me so much about you," she said.

I thanked her and paid her some trivial compliment, I can hardly remember now what it was. My mind was on more serious matters.

As was his. He glanced in the direction of the house. "Is Robert...?" he started to say, but the front door flew open and Robert appeared. It was clear he had not gone to bed since I had seen him earlier, but had continued his drinking. He swayed in the doorway and had to keep a hand on the jamb to hold himself upright.

"Excuse us," Adam said, growing pale, and taking his alarmed bride by the arm, he piloted her quickly past Santa and his reindeer, to the door of her new home.

I don't know everything that happened once they went in. I heard voices, loud ones, but I was able to make out only one word, repeated in a hoarse scream that I barely recognized as Robert's voice: "Bastard. Bastard." And again, after the slightest pause, "Bastard."

I had planned on going into my office, but I thought after all it might be wiser to stay at home, though what it was I thought I might be called upon to do, I had no idea. It seemed hard to imagine either of the Wallace men coming to me for any assistance.

As it turned out, it was neither of them, but the new bride who rang my doorbell. It was evening by now. I opened the door before I turned on the porch light, and when I did, she blinked frantically and I could see that she had been crying. Her face was as white as the artificial snow next door and her hands fluttered like frightened birds.

"Please," she said, "Help me. I don't know what's going to happen. It's so terrible."

"What's going on?" I asked.

"The most awful scene. And the things they've said...it's horrible. I never dreamed...Oh, please, you must come, I'm afraid of what they might do."

I had no desire to interfere in this domestic storm, but I simply hadn't the heart to turn this distraught young woman away from my door. I went with her, my heart in my throat. Even as we went up the walk, Christmas lights blinking merrily, I could hear their angry voices from inside, and I hesitated on the threshold, wondering if we shouldn't call the police.

We were standing just outside the open door when the shot rang out. In retrospect, I suppose I should have taken her back to my house on the instant and called the police from there, but instead, hardly thinking, I said, "Wait here," and dashed inside. She followed me.

Their front room was a shambles. A headless teddy bear greeted us from just inside the door. The Christmas tree had fallen or been pushed over and lay in a tangle of crushed ornaments and wiring and, bizarrely, multi colored lights that still blinked on and off. Scarlet wrapped packages had been ripped open, their paper and their contents strewn about like so much debris.

Adam lay among it. There could be no question that he was dead. Half of his face was missing. The blood spilled all about him matched the red of the Christmas wrappings.

Robert sat in a grand old Chippendale chair, his head bowed. I'd heard the expression "smoking gun" before, and had never imagined that it was literal, but I saw now that it was. He still held it in his hand, but limply, as if he had forgotten that it was there. His shoulders shook with the force of his sobs.

I went quickly to him and took the gun from his hand. He offered no resistance, did not even look up. He might have been entirely unaware of my presence. Probably, he was. I don't believe he was aware of anything but the dead man on the floor at his feet.

I put the gun on the mantle, behind the big Adams clock there. It did not seem to me that Robert was any threat to either of us, but I thought that he might be to himself and I did not want the weapon too ready at hand. Then I called the police. In all this time, Robert did not move or speak a word.

"They'll be here in minutes," I told the hapless bride. She had remained standing where she was, just inside the room, the beheaded teddy bear at her feet. Grief and shock—and something else much darker—had turned her barely pretty face ugly.

"I think it best," I said, stammering slightly, hesitant to say what was on my mind. What I was about to suggest wasn't altogether illegal, but it was on the border of impropriety. "I am his lawyer, at least for the moment. I'll plead insanity, of course. Perhaps you should say as little as possible to the police when they question you. Just that they were quarreling. You came to my house to get me. I don't think the rest of it..."

"I understand," she said, and then, in a bitter voice that had more force than I should have thought her capable of, she added, "I could never tell anyone anyway...it was so disgusting, the things they said...I can hardly believe it myself."

She looked from brother to brother and then at me, as if she were accusing me of some complicity in events. Already, faintly in the distance, we could hear a siren, growing steadily louder.

"I'll wait outside," she said in a cool voice, and turned and walked from the room. She was standing on the lawn, so still she might have been one of the Christmas decorations, when the police arrived.

In the end, I was able to have Robert confined to a very expensive, very private hospital. He still has not spoken a word. Catatonic, the doctors say.

Even without the changing of the will, Adam's widow inherited half the estate. She left instructions with me to dispose of everything. She had married Adam as a woman of some modest means in her own right, but she went back to California a very rich one. So far as I know, she has never remarried.

I think she was proof of the old adage: money does not buy happiness.

On his tenure with G.E.: "A broken-down movie actor named Ronald Reagan was working for the company. He was on the road all the time, lecturing to chambers of commerce and power companies and so on about the evils of socialism. We never met, so I remain a socialist."

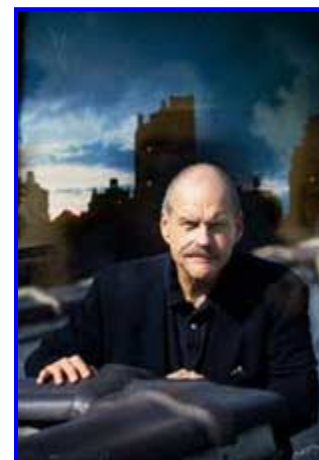
—Kurt Vonnegut, intro to the collection *Bagombo Snuff Box*, 1999

The Triumph of Avarice

by Lawrence Block

Earl, for a couple of years now you've been encouraging me to write something for your e-letter, or webzine, or whatever the hell this thing is. Lately I've taken to replying that it's something I'll get around to one of these days. Well, this seems to be one of those days, as the actress said to the bishop, so here goes. I'll couch it in the form of a letter to you, which I guess it is, but it's an article for your zine, written to your readers as well as to your estimable self. That's why it has a title. I don't generally have titles for letters. (Subject lines, yes, or else my gmail account asks me if I really meant to send a letter without a subject line. Only a question of time, I suspect, before my computer asks me if I really intend to wear that tie with that shirt.)

Let me plunge right in. I've recently inked a deal with an e-book publisher, Open Road Media, and by the year's end they'll be bringing out forty backlist titles of mine in that medium. Included are the five early crime novels recently reissued by Hard Case Crime, along with all the other out-of-print crime fiction I published under my own name, or under the now-transparent pen names of Chip Harrison and Paul Kavanagh.



Lawrence Block



But that's not all. They'll also be reissuing the seven books I wrote as Jill Emerson, my very first novel (*Strange Are the Ways of Love*, by Lesley Evans), a romantic espionage novel nobody knows I wrote (*Passport to Peril*, by Anne Campbell Clark), and a couple of books each by Sheldon Lord and Andrew Shaw.

Toward that end, I volunteered to write afterwords or end notes for each book, and that's been an interesting couple of weeks' work. I haven't always had that much to say about the contents of the books, so I've found myself writing about my life when I was writing a particular book. This has led to a batch of bumpy rides down Memory Lane.

Who knew?

I never thought I'd willingly see any of those Midwood and Nightstand books back in print. I've always refused to sign copies presented to me, and have generally refrained from confirming or denying my authorship. One reason for this is that a great many of the books appearing under the Lord and Shaw bylines were typed by fingers other than my own. I used ghostwriters. It was, I felt, bad enough to be known to have written some of the books I actually wrote; it would be worse to have to bear the shame of the ones other people wrote for me.

Simpler to walk away from the whole thing. On more than one occasion I observed that the best thing to be said for the work of those days was that it had not been printed on acid-free paper. God speed the acid, I said.

So why the change?

Well, with the Jill Emerson titles, I never felt the books had anything to apologize for. I've always been fond of them. I've always wanted them available to readers. The idea of a dual byline—"Lawrence Block writing as Jill Emerson"—works fine for me, and I used it when Jim Seels and Bill Schafer joined forces to bring out their gorgeous edition of *Threesome* a few years back.

And there's nothing embarrassing about the Anne Campbell Clark book, either. It's tame, and some might call it lame, but it is, as the saying goes, a decent example of what it is, and a nice look at the West of Ireland in the mid-1960s. Sure, why not bring it back, and why not acknowledge it?

But Sheldon Lord? And Andrew Shaw?



Well, let me tell you about a conversation I had with Evan Hunter. Charles Ar dai at Hard Case had approached Evan about reprinting Evan’s Matt Cordell stories, published in the mid–1950s in *Manhunt*. The hero, you’ll recall, is a drunken ex–cop who wound up on the Bowery, and sobers up periodically to take a case and right a wrong, then goes back to the gutter. The stories had been collected in 1958 under the title *I’m Cannon—For Hire*, with the hero’s name changed to Curt Cannon. They’d been out of print ever since.

Evan knew I’d reprinted some books with Hard Case, and called with two questions. One, was this guy Ar dai on the up–and–up? (I assured him of my high opinion of Charles.) Two, what did I think about reprinting the Matt Cordell stories? Evan had qualms, thinking they weren’t very good, and couldn’t enhance his reputation any, and wondered whether it was something he ought to do.

I told him I’d read the stories when they came out, and thought they were terrific. As the author, I suggested, Evan was a harsher critic than was warranted. I had trouble reading my own early work, and took a dimmer view of it than others might, and this seemed a near–universal phenomenon.

“And one other point,” I went on. “When I have a decision like this to make, I ask myself which course of action will bring money into my house.”

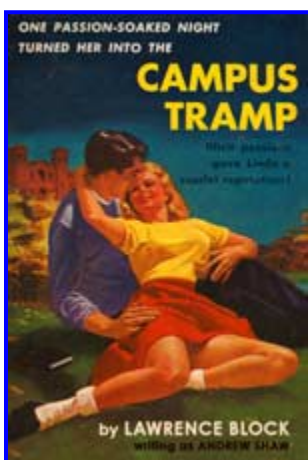
So Evan made the deal with Charles, and *The Gutter and the Grave*, by Ed McBain, became Hard Case’s single most successful title. And got a uniformly enthusiastic reception from critics, too.

I guess I listened to myself, because I went on to re–publish a pair of Sheldon Lord books with Hard Case—under my own name, this time around. *A Diet of Treacle* was once a Beacon book called *Pads Are for Passion*, and *Lucky at Cards* was *The Sex Shuffle* when Beacon published them. Neither was written for Beacon; they were well–meant books that sold there after better publishers turned them down. Charles published them, under my name and with my original titles restored, and I was surprised at the generous reception they got from reviewers. “This is Block at the height of his powers,” they seemed to be saying, “before the long slow heartbreaking decline. . . .”



Well, perhaps I exaggerate. . . .

And other old books had a way of returning to print. At the urging of Ed Gorman and Bill Schafer, I let Subterranean Press bring out *Cinderella Sims*, a book Nightstand had issued as *\$20 Lust*. This had been meant as a crime novel, probably for Gold Medal, but it fell apart while I was writing it, and I finished it up and sold it to Bill Hamling. And here it was, *Cinderella Sims*, by Lawrence Block—and the world didn’t come to an end, did it?



Then *Campus Tramp*. An Andrew Shaw title, the very first Andrew Shaw title, and one that had amassed a cult following at Antioch College. Creeping Hemlock Press wanted to do it, and a coupe of Antioch alums urged me to bring it back, and, well, who was I to say no?

When Open Road expressed an enthusiasm about e–publishing whatever backlist books I wanted to include, I found myself looking at my publishing history in a different light. A kinder, softer light, of the sort with which elderly performers are understandably more comfortable.

Sure, why not?

Why not include *Lover*, an Andrew Shaw title never aimed anywhere but at Nightstand, but nevertheless one I felt at the time was a cut above the rest? (And so evidently did the editor—Harlan, I suppose; he insisted on a sequel. May I at this juncture request a favor from all of you out there? I’m quite certain I did in fact write a sequel to *Lover*, chronicling the further adventures of young Johnny Wells, but I don’t own a copy and haven’t a clue what the title might be. Help me out

here, will you? Y'all know more about this stuff than I do. If I can get hold of a copy, I'll see that it's published. Whatever disservice you'll be doing to the world of American letters will be counterbalanced by the favor you'll be doing to me, so you should be all right in the karma department. . .)

*Lover's on Open Road's list, retitled *Gigolo Johnny Wells*. And Sheldon Lord's first two titles for Midwood, *Carla* and *A Strange Kind of Love*, along with *Candy*. And a pair of Beacon's Sheldon Lords, *April North* and *Community of Women*.*

Where will it all end? How many more of the damn things did I write?

Hmmm. Good question. Well, good questions, really, but let's take the second one first, and answer it unequivocally: "I don't know." I don't have copies of everything, and the titles (especially at Nightstand, where they tagged everything everybody did with these two-word titles, with one of the words generally Slut or Tramp) tend to be interchangeable, and unevocative. I can almost always tell by glancing over a book whether it's mine or not, and I know a lot of you think you've found ways to tell, and here's something I've been meaning to tell y'all for a long time now: You're wrong. You see names like Kallett or Schwerner and you put two and two together, and what you lose sight of is the fact that I coached my ghostwriters. They put in tags like that in the name of fucking verisimilitude.

So there.

You remember the headline I hung on this piece? *The Triumph of Avarice*? Well, there you go. What other titles I decide to reissue will depend at least in part on what kind of money comes in from the ones I've already slated for e-publication. If nobody's interested in them, why inflict more upon the reading public? But, if there turns out to be a genuine demand, well, hell, there's more where those came from.

While I was writing the end notes for a Jill Emerson novel, *A Madwoman's Diary* (originally *Sensuous*), I remembered that I'd based the plot on a case history from one of John Warren Wells's books. So I wound up writing at some length about my career as John Warren Wells and his psychosexual reportage. And it occurred to me for the very first time that I might actually reissue those books as well. Not all of them, I shouldn't think, but one or two. And if people like those—

"Greed is good," Gordon Gekko famously informed us. But why go all judgmental? Greed, I'd say, is beyond good and evil. It is what it is.

Which might be said as well for the books I'm bringing back. And, come to think of it, for their author.

"And what is literature, Rabo," he said, "but an insider's newsletters about affairs relating to molecules, of no importance to anything in the universe but a few molecules who have the disease called 'thought.'"

—Kurt Vonnegut, "Bluebeard," 1987

The Spaces in Between

by Michael Moorcock

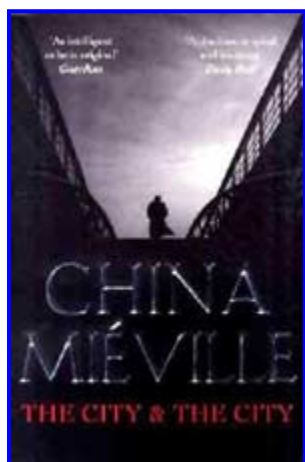
China Miéville is perhaps the current generation's finest writer of science fantasy, that beguiling genre for which J.G. Ballard and M. John Harrison have produced so much of their fiction. Miéville's first novel, *King Rat*, was a grim urban horror story about contemporary London. His later work is primarily set in the alternative world of Bas-Lag—ambitious novels such as *Perdido Street Station* and *Iron Council*, packed with grotesque characters, gorgeous imagery, amazing monsters, political parables, and intricate plotting.

The City and the City is very different. It takes place in our familiar world, a post-Soviet locale which draws on string theory for its ideas and conventional experience for its story. Apart from one exceptional detail, this book could be a clever mystery story told from the point of view of a Balkan policeman struggling to cope with the problems of a society burdened by traditions and attitudes from its recent authoritarian past. Featureless concrete, rattling trams, and antiquated office equipment invoke Greene's *The Third Man* and Vienna's zones of occupation. You can almost hear a zither twanging somewhere in an echoing sewer.



Michael Moorcock

Playing off the current theoretical physicists' notion that more than one object can occupy the same physical space, Miéville demonstrates a disciplined intelligence reminiscent of the late Barrington Bayley (who specialised brilliantly in scientific implausibilities), helping us to hang on to the idea that the city of Beszel exists in the same space as the city of Ul Qoma. Citizens of each city can dimly make out the other, but are forbidden on pain of severe penalties (administered by a supreme authority known simply as Breach) to notice it. They have learned by habit to "unsee". The cities have different airports, international dialing codes, and Internet links. Cars navigate instinctively around one another; police officers cooperate but are not allowed to stop or investigate crimes committed in the other city.



Subtly, almost casually, Miéville constructs a metaphor for modern life in which our habits of "unseeing" allow us to ignore that which does not directly affect our familiar lives. Yet he doesn't encourage us to understand his novel as a parable, rather as a police mystery dealing with extraordinary circumstances. The book is a fine, page-turning murder investigation in the tradition of Philip K. Dick, gradually opening up to become something bigger and more significant than we originally suspected.

Though Kafka is predictably invoked by the publisher, this is in no way an absurdist or surrealist narrative. All mysteries and events are either explained or open to explanation; the protagonist, Inspector Borlú of the Beszian Extreme Crime Squad, is a dogged discoverer of the truth, frustrated by but accepting Breach's rules, which we see early on demonstrated in all their stern inflexibility.

A young woman's body is found on a rundown housing estate and Borlú is assigned to the case. Pretty much from the beginning he realizes there's something unusual about the murder; he's convinced that it involved illegal passage between the two cities and is thus a matter for Breach. Someone with power, maybe a politician, is keeping it as an ordinary police case. But why? Soon Borlú's investigations lead him to request official permission to follow up inquiries in co-existent Ul Qoma; after considerable bureaucratic rigmarole, he meets his rather condescending opposite number, who escorts him across the border from one reality to the other.

The wealthier city has succeeded in getting better foreign investment. North American archeologists have been discovering mysterious remains there for some years. The murdered girl had been participating in a dig which clearly plays a crucial part in the mystery. Under the influence of her team's senior archeologist (who now strenuously denies any such belief) she became convinced that a third city, Orciny, exists in the interstices between

one city and another, unseen by occupants of both and guarding its secret by means of cynical violence, perhaps in direct opposition to Breach or even identical to it.

Steadily, Miéville thickens his plot with exceptional mastery. Next, evidently terrified of something, the senior archeologist disappears, maybe taken by those mysterious Orcinians whose artifacts he's helped to uncover. A friend of the murder victim is next to vanish. Against their wills, Borlú and his partner begin to believe in Orciny, and ultimately events force Borlú into contemplating an act of Breach. But Breach severely punishes all transgressions, no matter what their motives or status. Those who defy Breach usually disappear for good. Even those who commit Breach accidentally are found with their memories wiped. Why does it have to be so unforgiving?

Despite the violent deaths of those he seeks to help or interrogate, and a growing fear for his own life, Inspector Borlú slogs on in pursuit of the truth as the book moves remorselessly toward its extraordinary denouement. As in no previous novel, the author celebrates and enhances the genre he loves and has never rejected. On many levels this novel is a testament to his admirable integrity. Keeping his grip firmly on an idea which would quickly slip from the hands of a less skilled writer, Miéville again proves himself as intelligent as he is original.



China Miéville

*Reprinted from *The Guardian*, Saturday May 30, 2009, and used with the permission of Michael Moorcock.

The big difference between conservatives and liberals is that killing doesn't seem to bother the conservatives at all. The liberals are chickenhearted about people dying. Conservatives thought that the massacre, the killing, of so many people in Panama was okay. I think they're really Darwinians. It's all right that people are starving to death on the streets because that's the nature of work.

—Kurt Vonnegut, *Playboy* 39:5, May 1992

The City & the City

by Rob Latham

A consensus seems to be building that we have reached some sort of post-genre plateau—that the traditional lines demarcating science fiction, fantasy, supernatural horror, and the detective story have been so blurred and transgressed in recent fiction as to render the categories meaningless. As early as 1989, Bruce Sterling argued for a crossbreeding between cutting-edge SF and the postmodern novel, coining the term “slipstream” to describe the work of so-called “mainstream” authors, such as Thomas Pynchon and Don DeLillo, that pilfered the vocabulary and imagery of science fiction, just as work by SF authors like William Gibson was beginning to reach an audience outside the genre. His claims have been borne out by the subsequent careers of such crossover talents as Jonathan Lethem and Michael Chabon, well-regarded by both the literary establishment and the SF community (Chabon’s novels have won a Pulitzer Prize and a Hugo Award). James Patrick Kelly and John Kessel’s 2006 collection of stories, *Feeling Very Strange: The Slipstream Anthology*, showed the range and diversity of this style of writing, which at times seems like SF, at times like magic realism, at times like postmodern experimentalism, but mostly a compound form all its own. The same sorts of claims have been advanced for crossbreedings between mainstream fiction and other popular genres, but also for complex interminglings among the genres themselves, with terms such as “new wave fabulism,” “the new weird,” and “interstitial fiction” generating their own sets of debates and semi-canonical anthologies.



Rob Latham

There is nothing new about this intermixing of genre tropes, however. Indeed, it is virtually impossible fully to disentangle elements of SF, fantasy, horror, and detection in the work of major US and UK popular writers whose careers were launched prior to the advent of the specialty pulps during the 1920s and 1930s. Works by nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries figures such as Algernon Blackwood, Ambrose Bierce, and Arthur Machen read like hybrid texts today if one projects the anachronistic expectations of mid-twentieth century genres back onto them. (The crossover genre of “steampunk” often exploits precisely this temporal pseudo-paradox.) Edgar Allan Poe has been credited, by various scholars, with inventing the tale of supernatural horror, science fiction, and the detective story. Indeed, one could argue that the period of genre segregation prevailing between the 1920s and (roughly) the 1980s imposed artificial boundaries on a process of commingling and fusion that was always going on.

The separation between genres enforced by the pulps (and later the digest magazines and paperback markets) did, however, serve to delineate distinctive norms for each field and to cultivate specific audiences for them. The hybrids produced during this period tended to be sharply defined: think of Isaac Asimov’s SF detective stories, in which a mystery plot is grafted onto a futuristic setting; or the science fantasies of Jack Vance, whose decadent societies cannot distinguish advanced technologies from the operations of magic; or Fritz Leiber’s SF horror stories, in which a supernatural premise is worked out in the rationalized manner characteristic of SF. There is something quite different about the cross-pollination taking place today: the resultant texts tend to be so heavily mongrelized (to use a Lovecraftian term, hopefully without its invidious racial implications) that to even try to unscramble the various generic codes that have gone into their making seems a quixotic enterprise. Hence all the grasping for fresh terminology by baffled reviewers and critics.

Of the major writers who have emerged in the past decade or so, when this confusion of tropes was reaching its height, none has more self-consciously blended (and thus evaded) categories than China Miéville, and his new novel, *The City & the City*, is his most dazzling accomplishment in this regard. His earlier works, such as *King Rat* (1998) and the “New Crobuzon” series—consisting of *Perdido Street Station* (2000), *The Scar* (2002), and *Iron Council* (2004)—have been called urban science fantasies or “London Gothics,” and connections traced back to important precursors such as Mervyn Peake and M. John Harrison (influences acknowledged by Miéville). Yet the experience of reading them is vaguely deranging no matter what lineage they may have sprung from: extravagantly grotesque yet driven by a strong cognitive impulse, evoking both supernatural terror and the sense of wonder characteristic of SF, these books seem to have consumed entire traditions and spat them out radically transformed. In an interview with Nick Gevers published online at *Infinity Plus* in 2003, Miéville described his method of working in the following terms:

For me the process of world-creation is a combination of many different urges and influences, and involves being a complete magpie for anything weird that takes your fancy, but I start off with a particular set of images, often very disjointed. They kind of expand out, and get intertwined with other threads. For me the bestiary is very important—I love monsters, and creating monsters is one of the key things for this. So you mix up monsters with these key elements of grotesquerie ... and a landscape begins to present itself.



China Miéville

In short, the author's "magpie" borrowing from anywhere and everywhere serves an underlying goal: to describe a "landscape" of the weird peopled by monsters, to traverse and map it, and to communicate intensely its peculiar textures and vibes—i.e., to fuse horror, SF, and fantasy impulses at the level of both setting and plot.

The City & the City does all of this, while adding even further to the brew: the novel is also a detective story, a tale of espionage, a political thriller, and an alternative history. This generic complexity explains the range of honors the novel has received: Hugo, Arthur C. Clarke, British SF, and Locus Awards for best novel (the Locus in the "Fantasy" category), along with nominations for the Nebula, J. W. Campbell, and World Fantasy Awards. Yet the book's overarching plot actually derives from *mystery* fiction—which is why it was surprising not to see it nominated for an Edgar Award as well!

More specifically, this is a "police procedural" novel in the format pioneered in the 1950s by Hillary Waugh and Ed McBain and brought to a peak of achievement during the subsequent decades in the "Martin Beck" novels of Swedish authors Maj Sjöwall and Per Wahlöö. Like the masterpiece that opens that series, *Roseanna* (1965), *The City & the City* begins with the discovery of the unidentified body of a murdered girl, and it also borrows from Sjöwall and Wahlöö an atmosphere of gloomy introspection, a tendency toward dour social criticism, and a drab European setting. Yet the setting here, as always in Miéville, is dislocated from any comfortable geography, a landscape of the weird that works a subtle but thoroughgoing alchemy on the classical mechanics of the procedural genre. The meticulous ferreting out of clues, the interrogation of reluctant witnesses and recalcitrant suspects, the confrontations with (and strategic evasions of) bureaucratic authority—all these routine aspects of detective work are here, but so transfigured by the pervasive strangeness of the city (or, rather, cities) in which the story is set as to defamiliarize them completely. Instead, fantastic and alternative-historical elements supervene to restructure the mystery plot.

Miéville's central premise involves sister cities—Beszél and Ul Qoma—that are "topologangers" of one another, occupying the same physical space but separated by socioeconomic and cultural traditions; to grow up in one involves the systematic "unseeing" of the other, a process that must be learned and ruthlessly self-policed. This activity of unseeing (or unhearing or unsmelling, all the senses being involved) is particularly challenging in "crosshatched" areas: spaces—often public parks or routes of passage such as streets and railroads—where the cities abut upon or share terrain with one another. (Miéville borrows the term from an entry by John Clute in his and John Grant's *Encyclopedia of Fantasy* [1997], where a "crosshatch" is defined as a tale featuring "two or more worlds [that] simultaneously inhabit the same territory.") Non-crosshatched areas are either "total" or "alter" depending on whether you are a citizen of Beszél or Ul Qoma, but even in such relatively settled spaces the shadowy presence of the urban other must always be rigorously repressed.



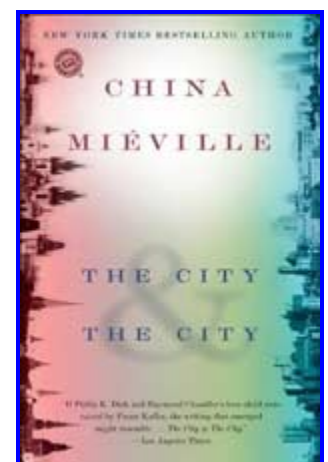
The historical origins of this topological division remain obscure: a single site at its founding some 2700 years ago, the city was split by an epochal event referred to simply as the Cleavage, around which much speculation—and even some bawdy double-entendres—have sprung up. (So shrewd is Miéville's craft in bringing these twinned habitats to life that he sprinkles the text with inter-city ethnic jokes and elements of shared folklore.) Only one approved route of passage now exists: Copula Hall, an immense labyrinth of offices that serves as a transit station for tourists, political exiles, and inter-city immigrants, complete with checkpoints at each side. To cross over in any other way is to commit an act of "breach," which immediately summons, as if corporealizing out

of the shadows, agents of Breach, a feared hovering presence in the lives of dwellers in both cities since those they seize tend to disappear forever. Though Breach's judgments are final, they only intervene in extreme circumstances, when an obvious spatial transgression has occurred; for more ambiguous cases, an inter-city Oversight Committee adjudicates and renders decisions, sometimes "invoking" Breach themselves (the very term, and the atmosphere surrounding the act, suggesting a conjuring of extra-human forces). Complicating this already intricate scenario are whispered legends of a third city, Orciny, lurking in the interstices, in areas of disputed turf and ambiguous sovereignty (referred to as *dissensi* because citizens don't quite know *how* to perceive them)—a hidden city peopled by "[s]ecret overlords ..., more powerful even than Breach, puppetmasters."

Since the Cleavage, Beszél and Ul Qoma have had periods of tense relations (past outbreaks of war are glancingly mentioned), but they are now enjoying a diplomatic thawing both sides jocularly refer to as *glasnostroika*, a direct allusion to the relaxing of cultural restraints preceding the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Indeed, the topol ganger cities recognizably inhabit our own present-day world and share much of its history: they took respective sides during the Cold War, and Ul Qoma is still paying the price in the form of a ban on exports, cultural exchanges, and foreign investment by the United States (a gap that Canada has eagerly rushed to fill). Beszél is relatively undeveloped and protective of its native culture while Ul Qoma is more secular and undergoing an economic boom, yet the cities share political problems characteristic of many European states today: the challenge of assimilating immigrant populations (especially difficult since they must be taught the crucial "unsensing" that citizens practice as a "prediscursive instinct"), the casual curtailment of civil rights such as free speech and assembly (summoning periodic rebukes from Amnesty International), and the growing enmeshment in a globalized network of Western technology and popular culture. Yet while it is easy to identify parallels with real-world situations—the tense checkpoints and borders evoking Cold War Berlin, the simmering ethnic rivalries suggesting the traumatic dismemberment of Yugoslavia—it is impossible to reduce the scenario to a one-dimensional historical allegory. In every way, the text is far too complex to be neatly pigeonholed.

I have spent so much time describing the set-up because the cities are the real protagonists of this book, and also because (it must be admitted) Miéville is compelled to include a lot of exposition—"infodumps" as they are called in SF—that provide essential orientation and background in order to prevent readers from becoming hopelessly lost. As a result, it takes some time for the story to really get moving, but when it does, it develops the headlong narrative momentum for which this author is justly celebrated: his "New Crobuzon" books, each vastly longer than the current novel, are compulsively readable. *The City & the City* is much more densely textured; like the crosshatched maze it chronicles, it takes some hard work—a dialectic of sensing and unsensing—for the reader to negotiate.

Early on, the characters are faceless ciphers one has a hard time telling apart, but our narrator, Besz police detective Tyador Borlú, soon develops a distinctive voice, similar to Sjöwall and Wahlöö's Martin Beck: an agent of power yet skeptical of authority, made uneasy by his job's moral ambiguities but nonetheless very good at it, given to mordant observations and self-lacerating reveries. His investigation of the nameless girl's death soon leads him into a cross-border alliance with an Ul Qoman cop, Qussim Dhatt, because the killer passed (apparently legally) between the cities in order to dump the body. The plot then swiftly unfolds like a monstrous hybrid blossom, with grafts plucked from the political thriller (the schemings of "nationalist" and "unificationist" factions to split or fuse the cities), the spy novel (Borlú conducts his own investigation in Ul Qumo as a kind of undercover operation), and the tale of inter-dimensional conspiracy (the dubious reality of Orciny lodged like a "parasite," a "tick-city, quite ruthless," in the crevices between the two worlds). Specific genre tropes materialize, coalesce, and then dissolve into other forms: the "alien power" of Breach, evoking mystical terror in the earlier sections of the story, suggests a supernatural entity of the kind one expects to encounter in horror fiction, only to be unveiled as a quirky bureaucracy straight out of the pages of Kafka, while the sinister cult of Orciny—evocative of conspiracy and "secret society" novels ranging from Pynchon to Dan Brown—becomes....



But it would spoil your pleasure in reading this gripping, if rather demanding, novel to say more about the specifics of the plot—which is why I have spent the bulk of my review describing its animating warp and woof, its unique "structure of feeling." This latter term was coined by Marxist cultural critic Raymond Williams in the 1950s to refer to the saturating texture of everyday life in a particular society, a set of consensus values and shared perceptions so taken for granted as never to be openly discussed by its denizens. Williams meant this idea to refine and give depth to Marx's notion of ideology—that largely unconscious, yet manufactured and artificial, process whereby consent is

given by exploited classes to economic and political elites. This critical jargon is not a reckless imposition on Miéville's work since he has himself authored a Marxist study of international law (written as a doctoral thesis at the London School of Economics), has been active in the Socialist Workers Party and the Socialist Alliance in the UK, and is a member of the board of the academic journal *Historical Materialism*. He is probably the most forbiddingly learned and self-consciously political writer working within popular genre fiction today.

And *The City & the City* displays this activist and intellectual background quite clearly: the right-wing nationalist groups depicted in the story are a pack of racist thugs, political leaders on both sides are the corrupt pawns of economic forces, and even well-meaning cops like Borlú are drawn into complicity with the exercise of arbitrary power. Above all, the process of unsensing that the citizens of Beszél and Ul Qoma routinely perform suggests the uncanny efficacy of ideology, especially of the kind habitually practiced by city dwellers: the self-enforced, virtually automatic capacity to engage in selective perception, to ignore unpleasant realities of difference (and relative privilege) based on class, race, or ethnicity. Yet Miéville, while unapologetically political, is not an overtly didactic writer: these social-critical themes are clearly present, but not obtrusively, subservient as they are to the overriding goal of conveying, with the author's consummate gift for storytelling, what it would *feel like* to experience such a bizarre and fascinating world.

Though the occult shimmers may ultimately resolve into mundane realities, Miéville knows that the city (and the city) is truly a haunted space—a nexus of puzzling legends and half-told histories, of wrong turns and spooky cul-de-sacs, whose abiding mystery can never be fully dispelled. It can only be experienced and savored, and readers are lucky to have such a masterful tour guide to eldritch landscapes of urban otherness working here at the height of his powers.

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CHINA MIÉVILLE. *The City & the City*. New York: Ballantine, 2009. 312 pp. \$26 hc.

A slightly different version of this review appeared in *Dead Reckonings* #7 (Spring 2010).

I think we don't care much anymore. Most of us, as when we were children, have very sound ethical instincts and realize that it's all a lot of baloney. And so we're completely fatalistic about our government's being for sale.

—Kurt Vonnegut, 10/99 *Salon* interview

Soft-core's Halcyon Days: A Longish Note on Classic Sleaze and SF

by Michael Hemmingson



Michael Hemmingson

Some of sf's iconic masters earned money writing soft-core erotica during the paperback's salad days of the late 1950s-mid-'60s, when novels were printed in the hundreds of thousands for the national newsstand market, a distribution outlet that mass-market paperbacks have not enjoyed since. Midwood, Lancer, Pyramid, Lion, Bedstand Books, Beacon, Softcover Library, and the many Greenleaf/Corinth imprints from William Hamling such as Nightstand, Idle Hour, Midnight Reader, Leisure, Sundown Reader, and Companion Books, as well as a number of short-lived companies like Magnet Books are well-known in the paperback fan and collector market. Lisa Morgan's "Smart Broads and Tough Guys: The Strange World of Vintage Paperbacks," notes that by the late 1950s paperback originals were firmly established and many writers dipped their toes in the water courtesy of pseudonyms, usually employed for "sleaze" or soft-core porn novels.

One of the most sought-after vintage paperbacks now is *Sex Gang* (1959), credited to one Paul Merchant—who was actually Harlan Ellison. Donald E. Westlake was only one of several authors who wrote sleaze novels for the "Midnight Reader" series under the name Alan Marshall. Robert Silverberg used Don Elliott, and even horror-master Dennis Etchison got into the swing with a late 1960s porn novel credited to "Ben Dover."

Whether it is myth or hyperbole surrounding Ellison's public appearances at conventions, I have been told by several people that Ellison has ripped up copies of *Sex Gang: Violent Stories of Naked Passion* that have been presented to him by fans for an autograph, which certainly calls into question legal issues of destruction of valuable personal property. On the other hand, a collector showed me a copy that Ellison signed as "D.S. Merchant"; he said that Ellison seemed in good spirits and didn't mind, although he did indicate that on a different day, he might destroy it. Ellison wanted to use the pen name D.S. Merchant (for "Dirty Sex Merchant"), but publisher William Hamling did not approve. Some of the eleven stories in the volume originally appeared in *Gent*, *Dude*, *Rogue*, *Adam*, and other second-tier men's magazines under the pen names Sley Harson, Landon Ellis, Derry Tiger, and Price Curtis; among other pen names that Ellison has used are Ellis Hart, Jay Solo, John Doyle, and the infamous Cordwainer Bird.¹ Pen names were used to sign genre works deemed unworthy of a writer's real name, and also because one writer under different names could pen the bulk of stories and articles in a magazine. Robert Silverberg, for example, wrote entire issues of Hamling's *Imagination SF*, as did Ellison; sometimes the two worked together. This was done because not enough publishable stories were coming in from freelance writers; besides, tested writers were consistently professional and would not require much editing and the publisher could make a bulk story deal, getting an issue's worth for a bargain price from writers who desperately needed the cash.



Ellison claims he put *Sex Gang* together "for a schlock publisher because I needed the money."² The back cover reads: "A smoldering collection of modern stories mirroring the lust, lives and tempestuous love affairs of woman-hungry men and ... MAN-HUNGRY WOMEN!"³ The stories include "Sex Gang" (originally published in *Cad*); "The Girl with the Horizontal Mind" (originally "The Gal with the Horizontal Mind," by Price Curtis in *Mermaid*); "Wanted: Two Trollops" (original to book); "The Ugly Virgin" (originally "God Bless the Ugly Virgin" in *Dude*); "Sin Time" (originally "The Silence of Infidelity" in *Caper*); "The Pied Piper of Sex" (originally "The Pied Piper of Love" in *Knave*); "Bayou Sex Cat" (originally "A Blue Note for Bayou Betty," by Derry Tiger in *Mermaid*); "The Lady Had Zilch" (originally published in *Adam*); "Girl with the Bedroom Eyes" (originally "Jeanie with the Bedroom Eyes" in *Rogue*); "The Lustful One" (originally "The Hungry One" in *Gent*); "Bohemia for Christie" (originally "The Bohemia of Arthur Archer" in *Dude*). Currently, the two printings by Nightstand Books range in price from \$900-\$1,200 and

the Greenleaf Classics reprint is worth \$400-\$500. The stories are not horrible. They resemble vintage Ellison such as *Love Ain't Nothing But Sex Misspelled* (1968) or *Gentleman Junkie* (1961). "The Lustful One" was re-titled "Nedra at f:5.6" in Ellison's *No Doors, No Windows* (1975). Ellison has been open about his days as a men's magazine and pulp magazine writer, typing up to 10,000 words a day to make ends meet at a penny a word, as did many other writers, including Ellison's lifelong friend, Robert Silverberg.

Soft-core novels kept a number of genre writers financially afloat. Evan Hunter (aka Ed McBain) wrote as Dean Hudson; Marion Zimmer Bradley as Brian Morley, Dee O'Brien, Marlene Longman, Morgan Ives, and Miriam Gardner; Robert Silverberg as Don Elliott, Loren Beauchamp, David Challon, John Dexter, and Mark Ryan. Don Elliott is his best-known pen name and a favorite among sleaze paperback fans, most likely because these books were quite well-written, given the low quality of most of the literature at the time. Unlike the house names John Dexter, J.X. Williams, and Andrew Shaw (originally Lawrence Block's handle), only Silverberg wrote as Don Elliott, except for one title that he had ghost-written when he could not meet a deadline (Silverberg does not recall which title this was). As with *Sex Gang*, the Elliott books are not bad, albeit riddled with typos and awkward grammar; Silverberg's early style, found also in his 1950s-'60s sf, is evident in such titles as *Gang Girl* (1959), *Roadhouse Girl* (1963), *Expense Account Sinners* (1961), *Sin Servant* (1962), and *Sixteen* (1962):

He was a college professor. That was all right. Lonnie didn't mind that. Her own father was a college professor. That was how Ted Rourke had happened to come live with them in the first place.

Ted Rourke was a professor of comparative literature at the college in Illinois. Lonnie's father, Roy Clark, was a professor of comparative literature at Hazeline College in Farnsworth, Massachusetts [...] And when the regular semester ended the first week of June, Ted Rourke came east to spend the summer with the Clark family. He and Professor Clark were going to collaborate on a book. (*Sixteen* 17)

The set-up here is obvious and common: the young professor succumbing to the flesh of precocious girls, students or otherwise. Silverberg explored the psychology of desire; consider the opening of *Sin Servant*:

"I don't know why it is I like to hurt people. I just do. Especially women. It's the kind of guy I am, that's all, and I don't try to make excuses for it" (5).

In *Roadhouse Girl* (1963), Silverberg offers commentary of the socio-economics of the era:

"You work hard for your money here, she thought. You started at six o'clock and you worked four hours straight without so much as a coffee break. Then they gave you an hour and a half off, from ten to half past eleven. Then it was back to duty until four in the morning [...] eight and a half hours on your feet" (5).

The actual sex in these books is PG-13 by today's standards because of strict obscenity laws at the era (when Lenny Bruce was arrested for saying "fuck" onstage), one would not find any cussing, dirty words, or graphic descriptions of genitals (breasts were fine, usually referred to as "fleshy globes" or "mounds"); the writers used subtle hints and metaphor—e.g., arousal was "a fire in the loins," an orgasm was "fulfillment," and women said "love me" when they wanted sex. For oral copulation, a female character might say, "kiss me there" or narrated as "he kissed her loins gently."

In *Convention Girl*, Silverberg employs dialogue to describe manual foreplay between a man and a woman, similar to the sex-against-a-tree scene in Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*, also told in dialogue with hints. I am certain that Silverberg was nodding his head to the Hemingway influence here:

"There. That's better, isn't it?" she asked.

"Lots better." [he said]

"Stay still. Don't move."



“Okay.”

“Hold me here.”

“You like that, do you?”

“Very very much,” she said. “That’s right,” she said a moment later. “Slowly. Don’t rush it. Slow. Keep doing it that way. Yes, Dan. Yes, that’s it. Just like that.”

“I love you.”

“I love you too, Dan. Here. Hold me.”

“Lift up a little.”

“Okay?”

“Okay.” (36)

In his essay “My Life as a Pornographer,” Silverberg reminisced that

I was 24 years old when I stumbled, much to my surprise, into a career of writing sex novels. In 1958, as a result of a behind-the-scenes convulsion in the magazine-distribution business, the whole SF publishing world went belly up. A dozen or so magazines for which I had been writing regularly ceased publication overnight; and as for the tiny market for SF novels [...] it suddenly became so tight that unless you were one of the first-magnitude stars like Robert Heinlein or Isaac Asimov you were out of luck. (*Sin-a-Rama*, p.12)

He claims that he could write a soft-core novel for Hamling or others in six days, working in the morning to produce an 18-page chapter, taking a lunch break, then writing another chapter in the afternoon (evenings he would switch to writing sf and non-fiction). By the sixth, he had twelve to fourteen chapters, 212 manuscript pages (all the Hamling books were always 190-192 pages) and would send the novel off. He produced two to three titles a month at \$1,000 each—very good money for a writer in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Silverberg was able to rent a four-room Manhattan apartment (\$150/month) and purchased his first house with this sex revenue—a 20-room mansion once owned by former New York Governor LaGuardia for \$80,000.

Hamling had come to the rescue of many genre writers who needed to pay their bills, and sex was selling; he contributed significantly to the destiny of paperback publishing and helped to shape sf’s vintage years. He was born in 1921 on Chicago’s South Side, a former Irish-Catholic altar boy whose faith was tested during his service in World War II. When Hamling returned to Chicago, he started to write science fiction. He sold his first story, “War with Jupiter,” a collaborative effort with Mark Reinsberg, to *Amazing Stories* in 1939. In 1940, he founded a fanzine called *Stardust*. He then landed a job with Ziff-Davis Publications, editing the pulps that he had been writing for.



After Ziff-Davis moved to New York City, Hamling got a job with *Today’s Man*, working alongside a young Hugh Hefner, who, like Hamling, had lofty notions about branching out as an independent magazine publisher.

In 1948, Hamling established Greenleaf Publishing in the basement of his house in Evanston, Illinois: Greenleaf was his telephone exchange. He was pumping out sf pulps such as *Imagination* and *Imaginative Tales* (which featured an entire novel in each issue). It was in this same basement that Hamling, with Hugh Hefner, began planning “their” ultimate men’s magazine.

The science fiction market was dwindling and Robert Silverberg noticed that there was money to be made in soft-

core sex books with flashy covers such as those offered by Bedstand and Beacon Books. William Hamling opened his sleazebook operation in 1959 and Robert Silverberg wrote the first offering, Don Elliott's *Love Addict* (Nightstand # 1501), and Silverberg soon was delivering one title a month, while he was also supplying Midwood with novels as Loren Beachamp and Bedstand as David Challon and Mark Ryan (he wrote one as Stan Vincent for Magnet Books, *The Hot Bed*, in 1960). Except for Hamling, none of the publishers knew Silverberg was behind all these names, as they came blinded from the Scott Meredith Literary Agency.

And Hamling had no idea that it was Robert Silverberg's plan to have Hamling turn sleazebook publisher and that Silverberg had convinced Harlan Ellison that he was the person to sell that idea to Hamling in order to insure Silverberg a lucrative market.

Hamling worked out a contract with the literary outfit—Meredith, as the single largest supplier of pornography in the USA, would supply as many new manuscripts for Hamling's paperback books from a team of young writers (Evan Hunter, Lawrence Block, Donald E. Westlake, Hal Dresner, William Knowles). Each writer was contracted to churn out a monthly title. The writers were paid several hundred dollars per manuscript, flat rate, no royalties but a \$200 bonus for each reprint. (But Meredith's contract for furnishing those manuscripts alleged that \$1,000 went to the writer—but few ever received that amount—and an additional \$1,000 went to Meredith personally.) Later some of the "names" (like Don Elliott and Andrew Shaw) were paid up to \$1,500—about the same advance that porn writers receive today, as seen by what Masquerade Books, Blue Moon Books, and Cleis Press pay. The books were sent to Hamling under pen names; the agency kept the writers' true identities secret. Literary agent Richard Curtis (who wrote a handful of the smut books as Burt Alden) represented a number of these titles:



When I worked at Scott Meredith Literary Agency, we handled a lot of soft-core sex novels. Most of the writers churned them out strictly for the money and as a means to hone their writing skills for more serious fiction. It was never assumed that sex novel writing was where you wanted to end your career, and many of the writers tried to have fun with the books. We even had a weekly card game attended by some of the writers and over beer and pretzels we would compete for the most outrageous sex scenes.”⁴

Hamling began publishing *Rogue*, a low-brow men's magazine not quite in the same neighborhood as his ex-friend Hugh Hefner's *Playboy*, edited by an up-and-coming young writer named Harlan Ellison. Taking the success of Beacon and Bedstand soft-core books, Hamling started the Nightstand imprint at Ellison's suggestion following a script written by Silverberg. Technically, these books and magazines were not published through Greenleaf but by a shell company called Blake Pharmaceuticals, a failed firm whose shares Hamling had purchased for pennies. Ellison hated his job and viewed his boss with considerable disdain and walked off the job and moved to New York. Hamling followed and persuaded Ellison to return to work for him once again, and he did, only to quit for a second time. When Ellison returned to New York for the final time to pursue his writing career, A.J. Budrys replaced him, who was in turn replaced by Bruce Elliott who was replaced by Earl Kemp, a familiar face in sf fandom.

Hamling soon decided it was time to get out of Dodge. In a *San Diego Reader* article, "Porno Kings (and Queens)," Earl Kemp recounts that :

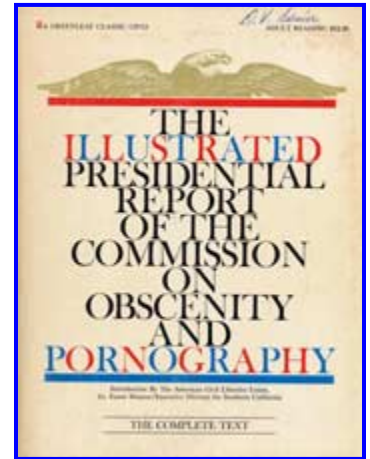
In 1964, William Hamling discovered California. What he found was [...] an elite hideout for the elite, a fantasy in anyone's imagination. Here, everywhere he looked, he saw someone he recognized, someone rich and famous and admired [...] the more he became addicted to California living, the less we saw of him around the Porno Factory in Evanston. Then, much to our dismay, he began making noises about changing the whole focus of the business and moving the operation totally to California where morals were a great deal more relaxed than in Illinois, where the really beautiful people lived, and where the sun always shined. Along with this came his preliminary efforts at alerting certain key staff members to the eventuality of moving along with their jobs. I was one of them. (92)

Hamling fancied himself a publisher of adult literature in the tradition of Barney Rossett at Grove Press and the infamous Maurice Girodias of Olympia. Hamling also published a number of political books under the Greenleaf colophon. In 1963, he released Ben Hass' expose, *KKK*; in 1966, *The Truth about Vietnam: Report on U.S. Senate Hearings*; in 1966, *The Illustrated Presidential Report of the Commission on Obscenity and Pornography*. The last

was a reprint of the government report, accompanied by lewd and shocking (for the times) illustrations that generously filled the pages. J. Edgar Hoover sent his G-men after Greenleaf, for which he had a personal loathing—and he was not alone.

“At times there were as many as half a dozen competing agencies bugging the lines,” Kemp states in the *San Diego Reader* article. “We could get nothing but police radio calls on our phones. I remember going out to a pay phone and calling the cops and demanding that they release at least one phone line for business purposes.” In 1966, Hamling was served a 25-count indictment out of Houston, Texas, for violating the Federal criminal statutes of Interstate Transportation of Obscene Materials. The case was declared a mistrial, much to the chagrin of federal prosecutors, but “Hamling was ecstatic,” Kemp claims. “As he saw it, the courtroom battle that had begun more than 30 years before in the case of *United States v. One Book Called Ulysses*, resulting in a victory for the literary elite, had now ended in 1967 with a triumph for the man in the street.”

On March 5, 1971, Attorney General John Mitchell held a news conference on the steps of the Justice Department to announce the indictment of four Greenleaf Classics employees for alleged crimes associated with the “unauthorized” production of the book *The Illustrated Presidential Report of the Commission on Obscenity and Pornography*. They faced a 20-count indictment. One count prosecuted the book on grounds of obscenity, another on knowingly distributing obscenity. The jury was hung on the obscenity issue and the Justice Department tried a secondary strategy: 12 counts of violating post-office prohibitions against sending sexual material through the mail. This had nothing to do with the actual book, but rather with mailing 55,000 copies of a brochure describing it that included sample illustrations.



“Petitioners were convicted of mailing and conspiring to mail an obscene advertising brochure with sexually explicit photographic material relating to their illustrated version of an official report on obscenity, in violation of 18 U.S.C. 2, 371, and 1461,” wrote Judge Thompson of the Federal Court in San Diego in his ruling.⁵ Hamling received one year’s imprisonment on the conspiracy count and consecutive with that, concurrent terms of three years each on the remaining eleven counts, plus a \$32,000 fine. Kemp—who had since resigned from Greenleaf—received one year and a day on the conspiracy count followed by concurrent terms of two years for each of the eleven counts. Hamling and Kemp were also sentenced to five-year probation terms following their respective release dates.

In February 1976, Hamling and Kemp began serving their time at Terminal Island in Long Beach, California. “We spent three months and one day there,” Kemp contends. “This was (at the time) the federal ‘legal bad boy minimum.’ As things were constructed then, convicted criminals were the personal possession of the judge who sentenced them for three months and one day. At three months and two days, they become property of the Justice Department, so the judge has only that much time, one day, to salvage that criminal from the Justice Department grist mill.”⁶



Greenleaf continued publishing books until 1985, fronted by a shell company owned by Hamling’s son-in-law, Jack Abey. The only publishing survivor existing today and doing business is Leisure Books—and barely, having had one owner after the other over the decades. Leisure is currently an imprint at Dorchester Publishing; the colophon issues original horror paperbacks and sf/fantasy reprints from Prime Books and Wildside Press. Olympia Press has been resurrected as an e-book and Print on Demand provider of many old, out of print titles; the company also issues old titles from other long gone presses under its Ophir Press imprint.⁷ Many of the Don Elliott books are collector’s items, selling in the \$20-\$100 range, depending on first or second printing and condition of the book, and of course Ellison’s *Sex Gang* is a prized treasure among collectors. Publications such as Adam Parfrey’s *Sin-a-Rama* (2004) and Gary Lovisi’s *Dames, Dolls, and Delinquents* (2009), reprinting many of the now-classic covers, are examples of the public’s fascination with the salad days of the soft-core paperbacks. I myself have an extensive collection of these paperbacks, hundreds lined on a shelf in protective

wrappers, which immediately attract the attention of guests, who find these books and their covers far more interesting than my shelf of literary, sf, or mystery books. The era of soft-core sleaze in America will fascinate scholars, collectors, and readers into the 22nd Century.

Notes:

1. See <<http://harlanellison.com/bib/storylist.htm>> for a complete list of Ellison's pen names.
2. See <<http://www.islets.net/collections/sexgang.html>> for Ellison's account of *Sex Gang*.
3. Ellison wrote cover copy for many Nightstand Books even after he left for New York; he was good with the proactive, colorful language needed on the covers.
4. From Earl Kemp's online fanzine, *El*, located at: <<http://efanzines.com/EK/index.html>>.
5. From public record.
6. Personal email from Kemp.
7. See www.olympiapress.com

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*Revised and expanded from an original appearance in *Science Fiction Studies* (Fall 2010) and used with the permission of Michael Hemmingson.

Sleazebook cover scans Courtesy Bruce Brenner Collection <http://www.vintagepbks.com/>

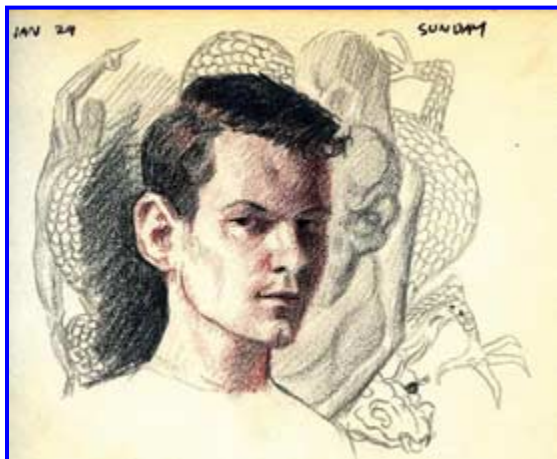
I have been a soreheaded occupant of a file drawer labeled 'Science Fiction'...and I would like out, particularly since so many serious critics regularly mistake the drawer for a urinal.

—Kurt Vonnegut, *Wampeters, Foma and Granfaloon*, "Science Fiction"

Jack Gaughan*

by Luis Ortiz

John (Jack) Brian Francis Gaughan was born on September 24, 1930 in Springfield, Ohio. Within a year the hospital burned down and Jack later liked to tell people that his birth had something to do with the hospital's demise. Early childhood photos show a solemn-faced, shy looking kid with freckles and large ears that jutted out from his head.



Jack Gaughan by Jack Gaughan.

The Gaughans were blue-collar people in a blue-collar town. Jack grew up in what he called "... a Ray Bradbury life of sneakers and hot dusty summers and dogs and cops-and-robbers and comic books." He played in wide open fields filled with praying mantises and harmless snakes. Family picnics were typical during the summer months. Jack always remembered one family gathering that revolved around a hunt. Jack was deemed old enough to carry a gun and shot a rabbit for the first time. The injured animal's squeal horrified the boy and after this incident he never hunted again.

It was a typical Irish household where the Roman Catholic Church held sway at least in all outward appearances. As was the norm in Irish families' adherence to the mother church, all of Jack's schooling took place in the Springfield parochial school system, first at St. Raphael's, then Catholic Central High School. Libby, his mother, thought her quiet, thoughtful son had all the makings of a

priest and at twelve Jack began taking Latin School courses that combined the seventh and eighth grades with instruction geared to guiding students to the priesthood.

Jack had other things on his mind. The idea of one less school year appealed to him. "I was much too young then to really, seriously consider the advantages of an education—like draft deferment or the ROTC." Despite his mother's wishes Jack's schooling eventually led him to a personal secularism. He had many questions that his parochial teachers could not answer.

In his Latin School class one day a sister asked the students to rest their heads on the desk and close their eyes as she read aloud a passage of a man disembarking from a boat and walking along a dock under a full moon. Everyone had to try and visualize the wan light from the moon casting a weak shadow of the man, hear the water lapping the dock, the footsteps creaking on the wood planking, and smell the sea-salty scent in the air. This was the incident that Jack acknowledges later as getting him hooked on making pictures.

Not too long after this epiphany Jack was caught dozing off in his civics class and the Sister of Mercy decided to punish him by sending Jack to the library to write a book report. The book she assigned was *Out of the Silent Planet* by C.S. Lewis.

"It had never, not even once, occurred to me that rockets and moons and faraway planets *existed* outside of *Planet Comics* or Buck Rogers and Flash Gordon or Mandrake the Magician (who went to the moon once when I was a kid). Here was this book with words, no pictures, all about alien places and people shooting through space." Jack was taken by the description of one creature in the book urinating. "I thought that an animal that urinated in the library of a Catholic school has to be a gas." He searched the library for more stories in the same mode and found a second Lewis fantasy on the shelves, but nothing beyond this.



Jack showed little artistic talent while growing up and his cursive handwriting was so bad that his teachers forced him to do his homework using Roman lettering. He was born left-handed, but every time one of the sisters saw him writing with his left hand he would receive a wrack on the knuckles. For the rest of his life Gaughan wrote and drew

with his right hand.

A cartoon he submitted to *Scholastic Roto*, a national pictorial supplement distributed with high school newspapers, got published in the October 1946 issue as the “cartoon of the month” and earned Jack a \$25 savings bond—his first paid, and nationally published artwork. The cartoon showed Wally of Wally’s Tire Shop spreading tacks across the road, Johnny Appleseed like, to increase business.

Jack’s accelerated Latin School curriculum allowed him to graduate high school at sixteen and he enrolled at the art school of Dayton Art Institute in the fall of 1947.

During the week Jack lived in a rooming house near the school and commuted to his family’s home on E. High Street in Springfield on weekends. During his second year as an art student he felt confident enough as an artist to begin submitting samples to pulp magazines. In early June 1949 Jack sent some art samples to John W. Campbell, Jr., the editor of *Astounding Science Fiction*.

For a science fiction reader during the 1940s there was really only one magazine—and that was *Astounding*. Jack had first written to Campbell in August 1948 to inquire about becoming an artist for the magazine. Campbell wrote back that he was in need of science fiction artists—if their work were sufficiently matured—and invited Jack to stop by the Street & Smith office. In the summer of 1949 Jack visited New York on a trip with his grandfather and got to meet *Astounding’s* editor and artist Hubert Roger, who happened to be in the office at the time. Truth be told, Jack did not feel confident enough in 1949 to do art for the editor of the most important science fiction magazine in the field.



In the spring of 1948 Jack mailed art samples to a few of the small press science fiction publishers that advertised in the back of *Astounding*, *Weird Tales*, and other pulp magazines. Most of these publishers could not afford the rates charged by pro artists in the field—and Gaughan realized, with a bit of astuteness, that he might stand a better chance with these. After all, the people behind these publishing concerns were fans and Gaughan was one of them.

Long-time science fiction fan William L. Crawford already had quite a few fan publishing ventures behind him (including a 1936 chapbook of H. P. Lovecraft’s *The Shadow Over Innsmouth*) when he began FPCI (Fantasy Publishing Company, Inc.) and Griffin Publishing House with his wife Margaret in the late 1940s. Crawford also published *Fantasy Book*, an amateur science fiction magazine he edited under the name Garrett Ford. In early 1949, Jack mailed FPCI samples of his artwork. “I sent my elaborate Virgil Finlay imitations out to FPCI because they at that time printed the rottenest artwork I’ve ever seen.” Crawford responded by giving Gaughan his first book cover

assignment for *People of the Comet*, a short novel first published in 1923 in *Weird Tales*.

“I did this magnificent cover for *People of the Comet* consisting of an observatory with stars in the sky. One thing I remember about it is that in *Super Science Stories* Fred Pohl reviewed this book, which is largely about a guy looking at the dirt under his fingernails. Pohl said that the jacket was better than the book, and it wasn't until years later that I realized what Fred was saying.”

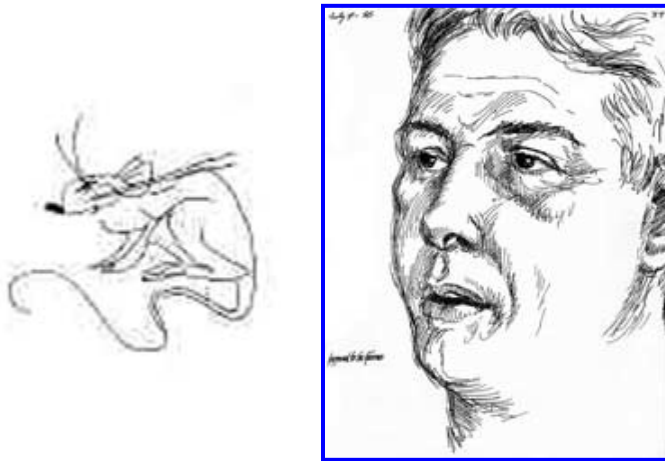
Crawford had tried to pay for the art to *People of the Comet* with a war bond, then offered \$18.75 worth of FPCI books as payment. Gaughan held out and finally got an \$18.75 check that he cashed immediately.

Over the next few years Jack did more FPCI book jacket art. All for pedestrian works of science fiction, which also summed up Gaughan's own evaluation of his art for these books. It seems that FPCI always mucked up his carefully placed typography by clumsily changing Gaughan's layout or the typeface he had selected.

#

Despite his shyness, Jack attended the seventh World Science Fiction Convention (shortened by fans to CInvention) in September 1949 at the Hotel Metropole in Cincinnati. Officially he would be there in connection with the Fantasy Artisans Club, a fan group that Jack was informally involved with. The club was holding an art exhibit and auction at CInvention that included work by Gaughan. Jack hoped to make some connections that would lead to professional art assignments, but, inevitably, during the course of the gathering, he remained a quiet bystander and spent much of his time sketching CInvention participants or in his hotel room.

Jack saw the popular pulp artist Hannes Bok wandering in the hotel lobby without a crowd around him and asked the artist if he would look at his sketchbook. While turning pages Bok complimented Gaughan on his drawing skill. A nervous Gaughan talked about the art courses he was taking at Dayton. When Bok was ready to give the sketchbook back, Jack asked for an autograph. Bok signed the endpaper of the book and drew one of his signature mouse (Abner) drawings. He added the inscription, “Gosh, imagine a lousy Bok mouse in a swell book like this!!” Jack was pleased with the inscription, since it came from a professional artist.



Portrait of Hannes Bok and Abner, his pet mouse.

In 1949 Hannes Bok was 34 years old. He was born Wayne Woodard in Kansas City and his father abandoned his mother early on. Bok was brown-eyed and dark-haired, and he had a calm, friendly, soft-edged face. At the age of twelve he was given a copy of *Amazing Stories* and discovered the art of Frank R. Paul—and the fiction of Abraham Merritt—and was hooked for life. Most of his adolescence was spent in Duluth, Minnesota, living with a stern father who had no use for art or the reading of “cheap trash” magazines. When he was old enough to leave home, Woodard moved to Los Angeles in 1935, took on the name Hannes Bok (a play on Johann Sebastian Bach) and began a career as an artist.

Bok was serious by nature, but had a cheerful smile and liked talking to people. He believed in mystical portents and

gave astrological readings. He was a big fan of Max Steiner's film scores, Maxfield Parrish art, and cats. Bok was also part of an underground coterie of gay and bisexual sf&f fans living in Los Angeles and New York.

Another science fiction personage at the convention was the notorious editor of *Amazing Stories*, Raymond Palmer, who announced he was leaving Ziff-Davis and launching a new science fiction magazine called *Other Worlds Science Stories*. (Palmer's notoriety stemmed from his publishing of stories by Richard Shaver telling of a subterranean world [Lemuria] filled with alien life forms that could control human activities. These stories were presented as fact instead of fiction. Hardcore science fiction fans were up in arms, but somehow the Shaver mysteries drew readers to *Amazing Stories*.)

Jack did not get a chance to talk to Palmer directly at CInvention, but did send him a letter afterward, with art samples. Jack offered his services as an illustrator for Palmer's new science fiction magazine. Palmer wrote back, "Yes, I did see your work at the CInvention.... They show that you can do good figure work."

After CInvention Jack began a correspondence with Bok. They exchanged many letters regarding art and the role of an artist in society. Bok worked up a horoscope for Jack predicting that Gaughan would only succeed in his career if he did the art that he likes to do.

#

Soon after his 19th birthday, in the fall of 1949, Jack made a second trip to New York and had a more fruitful meeting with John Campbell. Though no record was ever made of the encounter, it is known that Campbell would frequently dominate any conversation he was engaged in with whatever topic was on his mind at the moment. Invariably, visitors became a sounding board for pet scientific and story ideas, but for some people it was hard to know when they were engaged in a discussion or putting up with an autodidactic rant. For Jack the meeting must have been less of an interview, or test of his suitability as a science fiction artist, than a baffling trip into Campbell's brain.

Jack did come away with an assignment to illustrate the story "Gypsy," by Poul Anderson, and completed the ink drawing at Bok's apartment. The art appeared in the January 1950 issue of *Astounding Science Fiction*, and Jack got \$30 for the piece. In the 1960s Campbell would call Gaughan's art "second class." It would also be close to 25 years before Gaughan would do more art for the magazine (renamed *Analog*), after Campbell's death in 1971.

The year 1950 began with issues of *Astounding* and *Other Worlds* appearing on newsstands at the same time, both containing illustrations by Jack. *Fantasy Book* also came out at the same time with a color cover by him (even if he hadn't actually selected or applied the colors). Jack was working up cover ideas for Palmer's *Fate* and *Other Worlds* magazines with the hope of seeing his art on newsstands. Palmer began sending Jack more assignments, but Jack was not happy with some of his finished art and asked Palmer to use the pen name Frank Jonbrian for these. Gaughan had already used this pseudonym on fanzine art that he saw as clumsily executed.

His interaction with fandom was fading. A cover he did for the fanzine *Odd* in August 1950 was a self-portrait that he described as "... expressing my opinions of Fantasy fans (I didn't tell this to the 'editor' of the thing, natchery, his being a fan.) This drawing is my farewell to organized Fandom. ... I finally took all I could of the childishness of fandom. So I did this thing ... there is no design nor any particular compositional merit ... it's just me turning up my nose amidst the stock monsters of the trade. I had no fear of the drawing being rejected since, because I have sold two or three illustrations to the smallest of small publishers, these people think I'm a professional." Some of this thinking may be a reflection of Bok telling him about his troubles with fanzine editors and small press book publishers.

By 1951 Gaughan had attained his full height of five feet, eight and a half inches, and weighed 135 pounds. His ears still jutted out, but the freckles on his face were fading. He spent a lot of his time scratching away at his sketchbook, reading, and playing classical records and movie soundtrack recordings—given to him by Bok—that included Max Steiner's *King Kong* and *She*. Like many bright young men going out into the world, sadness was a tonic.



A painted cover that Gaughan did for *Other Worlds Science Stories* over the summer of 1951 was returned with the comment, "... it's art, not a pulp magazine cover." Gaughan liked that in science fiction imagination was important, but he was still learning that there were commercial restrictions to keep in mind. He regularly read the major newsstand science fiction and fantasy magazines, but still could not tell what editors wanted in the way of art. Magazines also came and went—it was all an unpredictable business. Bok was sending Jack professional advice that Bok himself did not always practice. Gaughan also had his imminent induction into the armed service hanging over him.

Jack must have realized that his idea of becoming a magazine illustrator was too simple-minded. His initial encounters, and dealings, with magazine and book editors had thrown him off-stride and made him feel slow-witted. Then there were the many dead ends with publishers.

#

The army finally called Gaughan to duty on October 2, 1952. It was not as if his career was soaring, but as he wrote in a letter to friends, "... though I know I shall probably despise every second of military life, I feel that actually, in spite of the triteness of the all too handy phrase, 'the army may be good for me.'"

In the fall of 1954 Gaughan was a civilian again. Unsure of what to do next he decided to return to the Dayton Art Institute for another atelier year. "It was a warm place peopled with perpetually disheveled art students who never seem to change."

Old habits die hard and he started sending fresh samples to some of the new science fiction magazines he found on newsstands. The art editor at *Galaxy Science Fiction*, W.I. Van der Poel, did not have any immediate assignment for Gaughan, but asked if he could hang on to some of the samples.

Ohio was a quiet, safe place for Gaughan, but it was not a place to pursue an art career—at least the kind of art career that Gaughan had in mind. He decided he had to move to New York.

Bok gave Jack some advice before he came to New York: "Yes, a painter should paint what he likes to paint, as he likes to paint it, but only because by doing so he will put his feelings into his work—you can always tell when an artist didn't enjoy what he was doing. But artists also have a duty to their public and painting just for oneself is often the same as talking to oneself. A really good artist paints for the people as much as for himself—he compromises by painting what others like inasmuch as he himself agrees with them."

Gaughan borrowed his father's Oldsmobile to get to Manhattan during the summer of 1955, and roomed briefly with Bok. Gaughan got into the habit of climbing up the stairs to Bok's upper Westside apartment loudly whistling the opening musical theme to the 1940 film *The Thief of Bagdad* so Bok would know who was coming.

The pair would walk the city together, always heading downtown. "I never knew a man who saw so much when it seemed to me there was so little to see.... Hannes could stop in a walk and in the middle of a machine-gun line of what seemed endless chatter ... he'd stop and pick up a blade of grass or some minute struggling wild flower and tell you what it was and make you— *make you*—see the color and beauty of the thing."

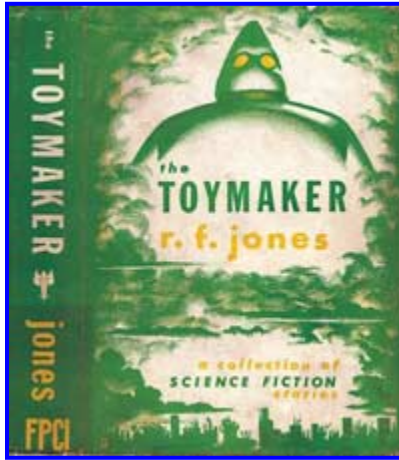
Gaughan eventually found a furnished apartment on West 47th Street over a Spanish bar and restaurant called El Fundador. There he lived—without a phone or doorbell—off his G.I. unemployment check of \$29 a week. The only possession he brought into the apartment was a radio. Gaughan had thought of his time in the Army as a flight from art. The check he now received offered him the opportunity to pursue art at his leisure, without teachers or clients to think about.

Gaughan spent the first day of 1956 with Bok, who stopped by for a visit. Gaughan complained of not being able to complete a color painting that he was happy with, and felt as if he had reached an artistic wall that he couldn't break through.

"You can do anything you want to do if you want it bad enough," Bok told him.

Gaughan had been spending too much time with pen and pencil and was becoming uncomfortable with color pigments. Bok encouraged him to get back to using a brush on canvas.

In New York Gaughan ran into Phoebe Adams, a girl he had dated in Dayton.



On the last Friday of October 1956 Gaughan and Phoebe took an early Saturday morning train to Washington, DC. There the couple set out to get a marriage license, but found the city offices closed. Their cab driver informed them that the nearest place they could get a license was Manassas, Virginia, and he could just get them there before the office closed at noon. They sped off to Virginia and got there in time, but now had to find a justice of the peace in the county where the license was issued. The cab driver wouldn't hear of a civil ceremony and took them to a minister he knew and Jack and Phoebe were married in a warm house that smelled of baking bread. The driver served as witness and kept the meter running the whole time.

#

The Veterans Administration required Gaughan to actively look for work while he was collecting his GI benefits. To show his serious intent, Gaughan built up a portfolio to present to prospective employers. But, he decided to imitate a style of cartoon illustration that he thought no one would want and would thus allow him some more time to loaf. Back at Fort Eustis, Gaughan used to see a small comic book titled *PS: The Preventive Maintenance Comic*.

PS attempted to teach average Army G.I.s basic military maintenance duties (cleaning a gun, changing sparkplugs in a Jeep, etc.) using step-by-step comic strips. The comic book was put together for the Army by American Visuals, a company owned by cartoonist Will Eisner. He was better known as the creator of *The Spirit* newspaper comic insert that appeared from 1940 to 1954.

Gaughan outsmarted himself. Hal-Ben Associates, an art studio associated with American Visuals, hired him as a "comp renderer" and "spot illustrator" at the same weekly payment he was getting from the V.A. Over the next year, Gaughan illustrated *The Farmer's Income-Tax Booklet*, the *Toy Safety Booklet*, and "countless others having to do with boating, building, buying, fixing, etc."

Gaughan's art usually passed by Eisner for a final okay. Some were returned with Eisner's comments, or corrections, penciled in the margins or on memos attached to the artwork. Gaughan remembers one remark from Eisner telling him to "Pay attention to the dummy, dummy." The whole time that Gaughan worked for Hal-Ben he never met or even caught a glimpse of Eisner, but if "My drawing did not communicate, I heard about it. Emphatically."

Gaughan left Hal-Ben (though he continued doing freelance work for them). Phoebe remembers, "Toward the end of that association we began to realize that when Jack received a long overdue payment from them, a few days later he would get a call with another assignment."

Gaughan was still sending art samples and cover ideas to W.I. Van der Poel at *Galaxy Science Fiction*. In response to one of the samples Van der Poel said, "Wit, for sale, is rarer and fetches better prices than nostalgia, longing, frustration, etc." *Galaxy* 1950s covers would come to be known for their witty qualities—though this was mainly seen in the art done for them by Ed Emshwiller.

In April 1956 Van der Poel finally gave Gaughan two stories to illustrate: "Genius Heap," by James Blish, which was scheduled to appear in the August issue of *Galaxy*, and "Problem," by Alan E. Nourse (October 1956). Gaughan completed these interior assignments to Van der Poel's satisfaction and in June he received two more stories to work on, "The Other Man," by Theodore Sturgeon (September 1956) and "I am Nucleus," by Stephen Barr.

Gaughan's illustrations for *Galaxy* were professionally slick, and showed imagination, but also looked stiff and overworked. There were a few artists at *Galaxy*, like Dick Francis and Sanford Kossin, already working in a sketchy pen line style and this seemed to be a style that Van der Poel liked to use in the magazine.

The summer of 1957 found Gaughan creating storyboards at Training Films, Inc., located at 150 W. 54th Street. There he worked on filmstrips for industrial firms and was once chased out of a meeting when he suggested the sequel to a film on the IBM 707 mainframe computer could be titled "Son of 707." According to Gaughan the working conditions at Training Films were "... terrible—the air ... filled with distrust and defensive petulance." The workload at the company was erratic and Gaughan never felt a sense of security there—especially when his job depended on inept producers that he called "promoters," securing work for the company.

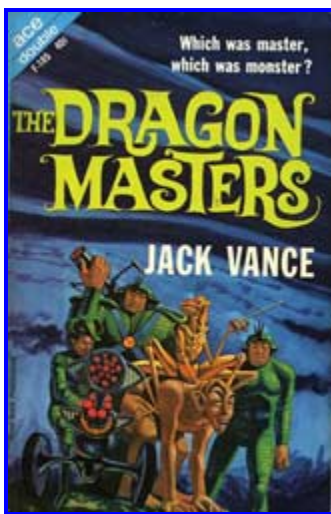


Gaughan could always outwardly laugh when some art job stratagem misfired, then seethe privately. His sketchbooks throughout much of the late 1950s are filled with screeds against idiot bosses and business people. There are also grumbles about New York—the constant rush and crowding, the rudeness, the subways—but the city would remain at the center of his career for the rest of his life.

Gaughan settled into the familiar routine of family and work—occasionally there would be a change-of-pace such as the July 1957 cover of *Galaxy*, which used his concept painting "When Meteorites Strike!" (The art did not illustrate any of the stories in the magazines). Still, Gaughan finally got to see his art on a professional magazine on a newsstand rack. The *Galaxy* cover art exhibited some of his experimentation with color pigments, and the figures were a little stiff, but Gaughan was happy with the design. He did a much better painting for the December 1957 *Galaxy* with the title "Salvage from 50,000,000 B.C." The art showed spacemen working to salvage the pieces of an ancient oversize statue free floating in space. This type of narrative cover was popular with the magazine's readers.

In late 1960, Gaughan and Phoebe moved across the Hudson River to New Jersey, renting a small house in Edgewater, near the George Washington Bridge.

#



The year 1962 was a key one for Gaughan. The fortunes of advertising and commercial film art rose and fell with various economic ups and downs. Gaughan could always tell when times were down as the staff at Training Films started disappearing one by one—laid off by the company's owner—until one day Gaughan was also let go. After moping around the house awhile, Phoebe asked him what he really wanted to do with his career.

"I want to paint pictures." He answered.

Phoebe said, "So why don't you?"

That summer Gaughan began teaching himself to paint again and by the fall had new samples to show.

Frederik Pohl had been assisting editor H.L. Gold on *Galaxy* for many years, doing yeoman editorial duties, and took over as editor-in-chief during 1961 after Gold was involved in a car accident and was unable to continue editing the magazine. Up to this point Gaughan was one of the artists doing occasional art for the magazine without gaining any real recognition. W.I. Van der Poel had also moved on and Sam Ruidich was now the art director though publisher Robert Guinn and Pohl generally had the final say on the all important cover art. Just before Gaughan left Training Films, early in 1962, Pohl received a new novella by Jack Vance, "The Dragon Masters," that he thought needed something extra to help readers visualize the many alien creatures in the story. Pohl seem to think that Gaughan would be the right artist for the job.

Pohl remembers: "It was a wonderful story, full of colorful prose and bright ideas, but what it was also full of was a whole zoo of alien creatures. They were all different, and for a reader to enjoy the story to its fullest, I thought, he needed to be able to keep each one individually straight in his mind. I told Jack what I wanted, and he produced a marvelous set of cameos of every one of them."



The cover art Gaughan drew for the “Dragon Masters” was almost not published. Gaughan learned from Sam Ravidich that Guinn had decided to stop using bug-eyed-monsters covers—even though Gaughan’s sketch had been already approved and followed the story it illustrated closely. Guinn’s decision also affected a second BEM cover Gaughan was working on for another story titled “The Muck Man.”

The situation cast an air of gloom over Gaughan that brought to mind some of his dealings with Fantasy Publishing Company, Inc. a decade earlier. Eventually, Pohl smoothed things over and the previously approved cover art was used. Gaughan’s “Dragon Masters” art received wide acclaim from readers of the magazine.

#

Donald A. Wollheim, the science fiction editor at Ace Books, was not happy with the cover art he was getting from artists who had no real affinity or interest in the genre. Wollheim was a fan of Virgil Finlay and Hannes Bok, but knew that their art did not have the modern look necessary to sell paperback books. He also knew that Ballantine Books was having some success selling science fiction paperbacks using modernistic art by Richard Powers on their covers.

Wollheim wanted artists who had grown up with science fiction and he had taken notice of Gaughan’s art in *Galaxy*. Ace art director Cosmo Scianna contact Jack and had him draw up some ideas for a cover to a collection of science fiction stories titled *Time Without Number*, by John Brunner. This became his first of many Ace Books covers.

His first cover assignment from Pyramid Books came out of a walk-in, with portfolio in hand, where he was given an immediate job. Gaughan never got to read *Slave Planet*. He worked from a synopsis given to him by Donald R. Bensen, the editor-in-chief at Pyramid Books. “It’s a rotten cover ... I made two sketches, a good one and a bad one to insure the sale of the good one but I put so much corn in the bad one that they loved it! Dragons (called Alberts), rockets shooting things, a guy shooting back, buildings blowing up and futuristic gismos scattered about in a leafy landscape. These guys at Pyramid were very nice to me but they’re very odd. I don’t get the impression that they know beans about designs.”

There is always an element of luck, as much as talent, in selling art. Gaughan was nominated for the Hugo award in art in 1963. This recognition encouraged him to hustle for more work from other publishers.

Gaughan’s new visibility would result in a total of 23 book and magazine covers published in 1964, along with numerous black and white interior illustrations for *Galaxy* and *Worlds of If*, and the new companion magazine to these: *Worlds of Tomorrow*. He was able to keep up with the abundance of illustration work coming in by reading the manuscript in a day, taking a second day to do up two or three layout sketches, and painting or doing finished art on the third day (after getting an approval from the art director or editor).

#

In a 1964 artistic credo he wrote to himself, Gaughan said, “Don’t stop! Keep putting lines on paper—keep it up—keep drawing! Anything, good or bad.” Gaughan had only himself to blame when he had trouble putting lines on paper. These times occurred when he was feeling particularly insecure about a picture-making assignment. He did not feel himself at the same technical level as John Schoenherr, or having the anatomical draftsmanship of Frank Frazetta, or able to channel the creative exuberance of Richard Powers, and other illustrators that he admired. Gaughan was in comparison cautious in his approach to illustration—always keeping the client in mind. But there were times when he forgot himself.



In his sketches he would incorporate typography with the art, even if just to make sure everything fit. Paperback Library and Ace Books would routinely use his complete layout, while Pyramid Books went with their own in-house type designs. Gaughan's use of undulating type for the Paperback Library 1963 edition of *Sinister Barrier* by Eric Frank Russell shows how he unified art and type in an energetic juxtaposition of sun and planets. The Russell story involved an insubstantial being and as Gaughan noted in his sketchbook, "How to show something is there without drawing it?" His solution was to work around the idea of leaving a hole in part of the painting.

#

In 1967 Gaughan was nominated and won the best pro artist Hugo award, his win was helped by the art he did to another Jack Vance story "The Last Castle," which appeared in the April 1966 issue of *Galaxy*. That year he had been just as prolific in fanzines as in the prozines and he was also nominated in the fan artist category—and won that award too. This was the first and last time that an artist would win two Hugos in the same year. The rules were later changed to keep pro and fan categories separate in the voting.



Gaughan's art style was malleable. Some of his new cover paintings showed some of the surrealistic touches of artist Richard Powers, and it is easy to see a union of editorial edict and Gaughan's own appreciation of that artist.



Jack Gaughan with his cat Titania.

By the end of the 1960s his science fiction art usually delivered a sense of activity; the spaceman posed with arms extended, torso twisted in motion. He would work up layouts with varying degrees of action going on within the frame and let the publisher decide which would best sell the book. Sometimes it seemed to him that his attention to detail didn't really matter. One day he let Phoebe deliver sketches for approval to Dell and Ace Books, but forgot to identify the layouts. Dell ended up approving the Ace layout and Ace the Dell layout.

By the summer of 1968 the Gaughans had moved into an old stone house in Rifton, New York, about 100 miles north of New York City. Jack began skipping the sketching process in building up illustrations and paintings. He was working directly on sheets pulled from Strathmore pads that were then mailed out to clients.

Gaughan began to see himself more as a "package designer" than an illustrator. "[Book cover art] should be eye-catching (a little poster) and let 'em know it's SF." He believed that science fiction books sold on the strength of author's names—not cover art. "I am willing to admit the possibility of a cover selling a book on its own merits but shall doubt until I am quite clearly shown otherwise."

#

For a melancholic like Gaughan there must have been something particularly sad about nearing forty. All his life he had been trying to reach an ideal in his work, yet he had never managed to beat the feeling of just keeping up. Though he and Wollheim were science fiction fans, they rarely agreed on the best approach toward illustrating a book. As Gaughan grew older he began to have problems with his stomach—in 1965 he had had an attack of kidney stones while painting the art for Andre Norton's *Three Against the Witch World*.

In the spring of 1969 Gaughan received two bits of news that cheered him up. Universal Publishing & Distribution had taken over as the new publisher of *Galaxy*, *Worlds of Tomorrow*, and *Worlds of If*, and asked him to come on as art director for the magazines. Gaughan was also announced as Guest of Honor at the 27th World Science Fiction Convention in St. Louis.

At UPD Gaughan worked with a limited budget, but more importantly had no time to assign stories to artists.

Gaughan found himself reading the copy or getting story synopses for an issue of *If* on Thursday and laying out the complete issue the same day to meet a Monday deadline. Things were so rushed that one of the editors, usually Ejler Jakobsson or Judy-Lynn Benjamin, would phone him to run down story plots or key scenes so that Gaughan could have sketches ready by the next day. At times the deadline for *Galaxy* seemed measured in hours and Gaughan would have to drive 100 miles to New York to deliver his artwork. The rushed through art, good or bad, was all his. There was no time for him to assign art to anyone else.

Years later Gaughan would remember his years at UPD as “... artistic suicide. I became a machine drawing like that, instead of an intelligent animal making decisions.”

The artistic clichés of science fiction and fantasy, constantly reused from the early days of the pulps, was too tightly bound up with the field to ignore, but for an all-too-short period of time Gaughan was able to introduce mass culture and a bit of modernism into his art and to extend and even push the self-life of genre imagery. In some cases speed and simplicity were the mother of creativity, like the Impressionist and Minimalist ink washes that came into focus on the pages of *Galaxy* and *If* as alien creatures or out-worldly landscapes. One looks at Gaughan’s illustrations without lingering, because they appear to be drawn at breakneck speeds. Gaughan drew well enough that there are no visual obstacles, or recognition challenges regardless of the various styles and mediums he utilized. His single-mindedness in mastering the craft of illustration made him a student of art throughout his life.

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By the mid-1970s the science fiction magazine field was shrinking. *Worlds of Tomorrow* was folded into *Worlds of If*, and then *Worlds of If* folded into *Galaxy* at the end of 1974. *Worlds of Fantasy* only lasted four issues. Despite monetary and time restrictions (or due to them), Gaughan had a free hand in the work he did for the UPD magazines and he was able to follow up on many artistic ideas and concepts that had been laying fallow in his brain for many years. For a while both *Galaxy* and *If* stood out on newsstands even if sales were falling across the board for all fiction magazines.

After a few years as publisher UPD was becoming impatient with the lack of real profits generated by the fiction magazines and initiated cost-saving measures that mostly entailed cutting back on issues produced or closing down magazines. UPD did not recognize the bargain they had in Gaughan and informed the artist that he was no longer needed as the art director for the UPD magazine group. The artist had done all of the art for 22 consecutive issues of *Galaxy* and 20 issues of *If*. Gaughan took the news in stride and continued to do some freelance piecemeal work for UPD.

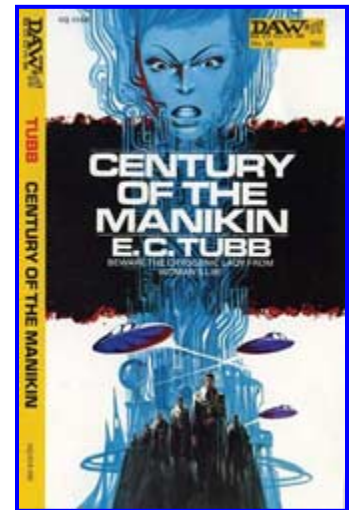
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In 1977 *Cosmos Science Fiction and Fantasy* was an experiment for its publisher that did not work out, even with Gaughan as art director and David Hartwell as editor. *Cosmos* was gone before anyone really had time to notice. By the late 1970’s the science fiction newsstand survivors were: *Analog*, *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction*, and the fast fading *Galaxy* and *Amazing*. A new player, *Asimov’s Science Fiction Magazine*, appeared about the time of *Cosmos*’ last issues. Gaughan quickly added *Asimov’s* to his client base.

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By 1980 a new crop of science fiction artists was moving into a hyper-realistic style at the prodding of publishers who saw *Star Wars* as the new face of science fiction. Many of this new school of illustrators, which included Vincent Di Fate, Michael Whelan, and Wayne Barlowe, had technique to spare. In these artists’ paintings the brush stroke disappeared and surfaces were honed to a photographic level of *verismo*. Gaughan was familiar with most of these artists and even friends with a few; he had discovered Barlowe while art directing *Cosmos*.

Ultimately, Gaughan thought, “As the business gets bigger, so does it become impersonal in regards to art. As a consequence, one sees a lot more editorial content in today’s painting than one sees graphic considerations—and a



little soul is lost too. This saddens me. We are no longer painters, but merely picture producers and assemblers of images. If someone once more says to me about a projected cover, 'Make it reminiscent of *Star Wars*,' I just might spit in his eye."

The longer Gaughan worked at science fiction, the more limited and inward it seemed to him. At heart he was always a fan, but he always maintained a high standard of professionalism—still, even at this late stage he was quietly offended when *Asimov* or *Analog* rejected a layout or, in his opinion, selected a lesser design.

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In June 1984, Gaughan began having stomach pains that he could no longer ignore. He finally saw a doctor who referred him to a gastrointestinal specialist. As a freelance artist most of his life Gaughan had no health insurance. With some difficulties Phoebe was able to get him into a VA hospital in Albany. Gaughan finally underwent exploratory surgery in March 1985 and doctors discovered a cancerous growth that had spread through his abdominal cavity.

Narcotics were controlling his pain and Gaughan was still able to keep a sense of humor and laugh at small things.

He died July 10, 1985 at the age of 54.

Some of Gaughan's colleagues and friends could only begin to sum up what he had meant to them. Hugh Reynolds, an editor at the Kingston, NY, newspaper where Gaughan drew political cartoons, wrote, "Some of the best times we had were when we took what we called the Jack and Sailor Show to various elementary schools. (He always called us Sailor, given our Navy service.) We would open with a few minutes about newspaper cartooning, and then Jack would draw something, usually a monster of some sort. He'd entertain the kids for an hour or two, as long as they wanted, drawing anything they could dream of, and more. They loved him and it was obviously mutual."

When Gaughan first told Reynolds about his illness, and how he would not be able to do more cartoons for the newspaper or Jack and Sailor Shows, he finished with a typical Gaughan line: "Whataya going to do, Sailor?"

Art outside of museums or galleries has always seemed evanescent, always in the service of other agendas. Gaughan left behind a body of art that helped shaped the face of modern science fiction and fantasy.

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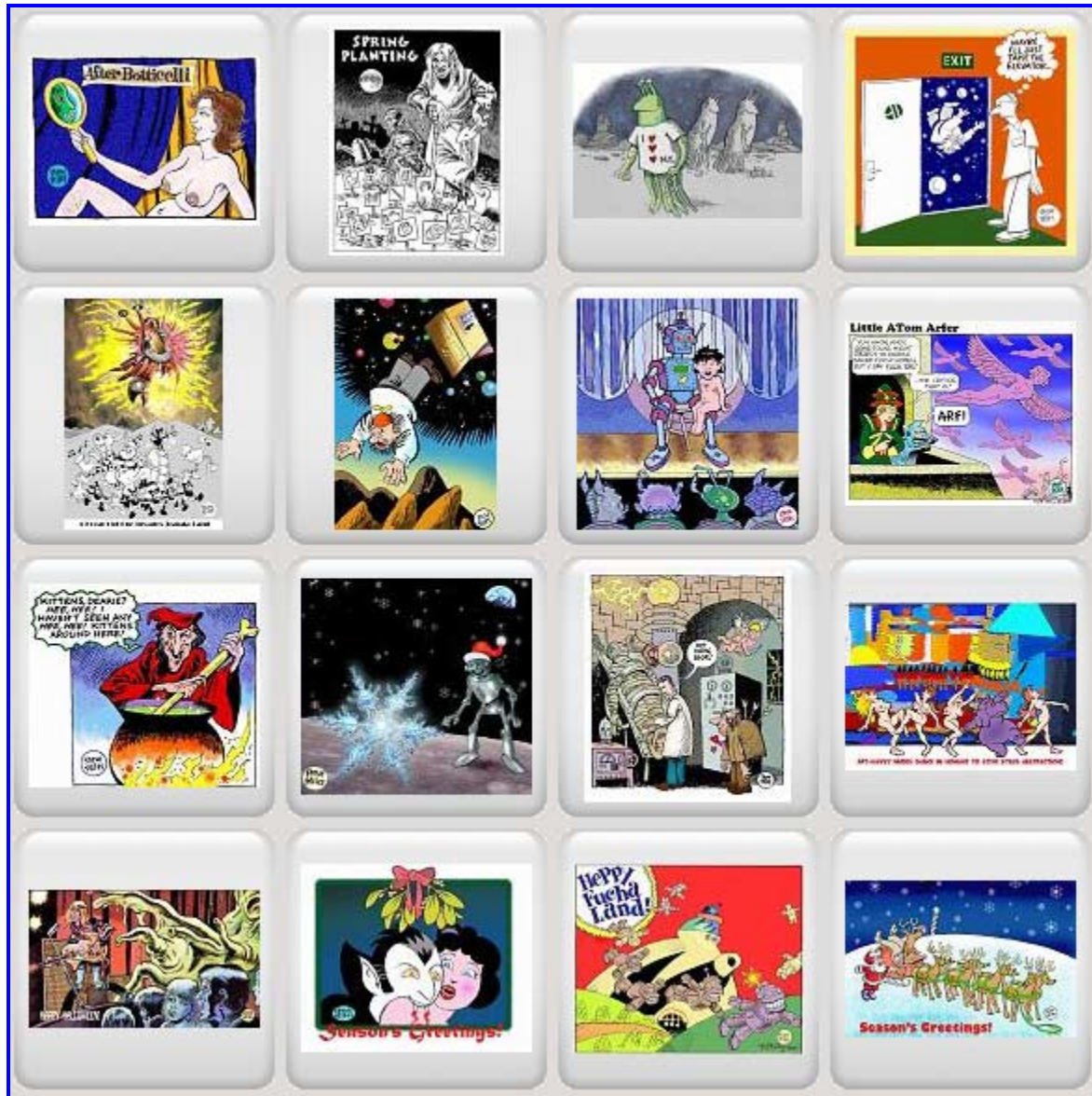
This is a huge country. There are primitive tribes here and there who have customs and moral standards of their own. It's the way I feel about religious fundamentalists. They really ought to have a reservation. They have a right to their culture and I can see where the First Amendment would be very painful for them. The First Amendment is a tragic amendment because everyone is going to have his or her feelings hurt and your government is not here to protect you from having your feelings hurt.

—Kurt Vonnegut, *Playboy* 39:5, May 1992

Steve Stiles - a portfolio

This issue's special supplement is a portfolio of sixteen of Steve's covers for *eI*, shown at a larger size than their original publication, plus a bonus comic, *Screwball Slumber*.

The portfolio may be viewed in full at <http://efanzines.com/EK/eI53/stiles.htm>





“Ho! Ho! Ho! Me Hearties,” by Ditmar [Martin James Ditmar Jensen]