

# ALEXIAD

(ΑΛΞΙΑΔ)

\$2.00

The Barnes & Noble SF reading club chose Stephen King's *Gunslinger* as next month's book. My first thought was Yuck! Stephen King, that mindless purveyor of horror! No way, José! I will not read Stephen King on a plane. I will not read him on a train, Sam I Am! Then I reminded myself it was not really fair to judge the book without reading at least some of it. I sought out a library copy and took it downstairs to the employee lounge. Grimly I settled down to what I expected would be nothing more than Freddy and Jason on every page. What I found instead was a novel of surprising complexity. By the time my shift ended the next day I found myself postponing going home and eating lunch because I absolutely had to know how the novel ended. There are scenes of graphic violence but I did not think it as bad in the violence department as a lot of SF military novels. The best way I can describe *Gunslinger* is that I think it is what would have been had Ray Bradbury and David Drake written *The Postman* instead of David Brin. At least in *Gunslinger* I thought King's work had some of the wonderful old fashioned feel I always enjoyed in that of Bradbury. *Gunslinger* is the first King book I remember reading. It will not be the last.

I read *From a Buick 8* after *Gunslinger*. It was also well worth reading. The next time I see someone with a Stephen King novel I will understand why they have chosen to invest time and money in one of his books.

— Lisa

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The Dormition of the Theotokos is **August 15, 2004**.

**NorEasCon 4**, the Sixty-Second World Science Fiction Convention, will be **September 2-6, 2004** in Boston, Massachusetts, USA. For further information write to

**NorEasCon Four****Post Office Box 1010****Framingham, MA 01701-1010 USA**or check <http://www.noreascon.org>

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Deadline is **October 1, 2004**

## Reviewer's Notes

by Joseph T Major

Anyone remember the scene after the party in Fred Pohl's *The Day of the Pussyfoot*? The guy wakes up, flips on his voice-activated wireless Internet connection — no, Pohl doesn't call it that in the book, but that's what it is, by Joe (as in "A Logic Named") — to check his bank balance and finds out he had somehow managed to blow \$20k without even noticing it.

He finds out that life is more expensive those days.

I have been thinking about this recently. Particularly after facing the \$\$\$ bill for a brake job. Costs of labor are going up. The brake & muffler shop said its hourly labor charge was \$78. Even assuming a big overhead, I wish I got *paid* like that!

Well, we've a couple of years to recover from that. Maybe more, if by some odd circumstance, Yokohama wins the 2007 WorldCon bid, and Fans discover the joys of ¥25,000 per night double-occupancy tube hotel "rooms".

Everyone going to Worldcon, please come see me at the panels I'm on: "Heinlein's Juveniles" on Sunday at 2, "Kennedy Survives Dallas" on Saturday at 2 (with Mike Resnick); and "Building a Better Fanzine" which was scheduled for Thursday at 1 (opposite the Opening Ceremonies) until its moderator Steve Silver pointed out he was scheduled to arrive at the airport at 12:20. Well, you be there.

When I looked at the program schedule, I found that there were two panels on fanzines opposite each other, "Luddites of Fandom" and "Building a Better Fanzine". Worse yet, they were both opposite the Opening Ceremonies! It looks as if we may have problems.

Thanks to Darrell Schweitzer, Martin Morse Wooster, Victoria Strauss, and all the other people who provided information.

An index of book reviews in this zine is now available.

## RANDOM JOTTINGS

by Joe



Anyone wanting to see the Original Brass Braed Babe can find her on the internet at:

[http://www.noosphere.com/showcase/IMAGE/S/planet\\_winter39.jpg](http://www.noosphere.com/showcase/IMAGE/S/planet_winter39.jpg)

This is the cover for *Planet Stories* Volume 1 Number 1, Winter 1939, by none other than Frank R. Paul himself, illustrating the story "The Golden Amazons of Venus" by John Murray Reynolds.

At Borders the other day I got on DVD two TV miniseries that I'd really liked, and oddly enough both had Siân Phillips (Livia in *I, Claudius*, Reverend Mother Gaius in *Dune*) playing the wife of the principal character.

One was *Winston Churchill: The Wilderness Years 1929-1939* (Lance Entertainment; ISBN 0-7942-0328-0; 1981, 2003; \$39.99) with Robert Hardy as WSC (as well as making a career of playing the man, he is also Cornelius Fudge in the Harry Potter movies and Sir James Caird in *Shackleton*) and Siân Phillips as Clementine Churchill.

The other was *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* (Acorn Media; 1979, 2002; ISBN 1-56938-526-2; \$59.99) with Sir Alec Guinness as George Smiley ("Help me, George Smiley, you're my only hope." Naaah.) and Siân Phillips as Lady Ann Smiley. It's the "happy ending" version of the Philby case; the mole is caught and doesn't even get to write his version of *My Secret Life*. (And in the thrilling sequel, *Smiley's People*, Smiley obtains the defection of his cryptic and resolute opponent, Karla (Patrick Stewart (!?!)). James Angelton never had it so good.

What was it that they were saying about American fantasies?)

*Flashman on the March*, the section from the Flashman Papers concerning the Abyssinian Campaign of 1868, will be released in the UK on April 5, 2005 (HarperCollins, £17.99). This valued collection of original memoirs, edited by the Scots journalist and historian George MacDonald Fraser, has provided new and revealing insights into the history of the nineteenth century. The unique perspective of Sir Harry Flashman, V.C. has increased our understanding of the many famous and significant events he participated in. (Well, about a third of the initial American reviewers of *Flashman: From the Flashman Papers* (1969) thought it was a real memoir. Damn their eyes! Us fans of Flashy lust, knavery, cowardice, and greed, on the other hand, now have something to look forward to.)

One wonders if Monty had read Sun Tzu. Montgomery of Alamein said in description of his cautious plans of attack that he would "pounce upon the enemy like an angry rabbit."

SUN TZU said:

61. Therefore at first be shy as a maiden. When the enemy gives you an opening be as swift as a hare and he will be unable to withstand you.

— *Ping Fa* (The Art of War), Chapter XI "The Nine Varieties of Ground"

Now if only Patton had been a Chinese general in a previous life . . .

**Andrian Grigoryevich Nikolayev** has died, on June 3, 2004 in Cheboksary, capital of the Chuvash Republic. Born September 5, 1929 in the then Chuvash Autonomous Republic of the then RSFSR, Nikolayev entered the cosmonaut program in the first group and was the third to fly, in Vostok III, call sign "Falcon", in August 11-14, 1962. He married cosmonaut Valentina V. Tereshkova, there was one daughter, Elena. The marriage ended in divorce. His second flight, Soyuz 9, in June of 1970, lasted eighteen days, setting a new record. Nikolayev was twice a Hero of the Soviet

Union for his spaceflight accomplishments.

Harry called it football; Peter called it soccer. It was a break from Quiddich, I guess. So their teams played and I saw the score on the Showcase Cinemas board:

Spiderman 2  
Harry Potter 3

Home team goes on top, I guess. Someday they will run out of sequels to make, probably just about the time the movie industry collapses. (Not before they do the one Lisa saw there — *Star Trek: RUGRATS*.)

The parody was "J. Pretentious". And there was always a cutting-edge hip trendiness about the J. Peterman Company's "Owner's Manual" catalog. Nevertheless, for all that *Seinfeld* and the various canned characters of corporate merchandising symbolism (think the "Mr. Prestos" of *The Demolished Man*) form one's expectations, the late J. Peterman Company was founded and run by a very real J. Peterman. I read his book, *Peterman Rides Again: Adventures Continue with the Real "J. Peterman" Through Life and the Catalog Business* by John Peterman (2000). Who was, and at last report still is, from Lexington. The problem with the J. Peterman Company was that it was so disproportionately image. This led them to overexpand and think they could overexpand. Then Peterman got caught in a cash crunch; after all there are only so many image-obsessed yuppies and bobos willing to buy Authentic Western Linen Dusters . . .

## MONARCHIST NEWS

Trinlay Khadro sends a copy of an article from the June 4, 2004 *Milwaukee Journal* about the burial of the heart of the Lost Dauphin. The doctor who performed the autopsy kept the heart and then it got passed around. DNA tests performed in 2000 proved that the heart was from someone of the right ancestry.

The rightful Louis XVII, or as much as can be determined of him, was buried **July 8, 2004** in the Saint-Denis Basilica, two hundred nine years after his death. R.I.P.

## THE FIGURE OF A MAN — Part 3

Commentary by Joseph T Major on  
*A CLOCKWORK ORANGE*

by Anthony Burgess  
[John Anthony Burgess Wilson]  
(1962)

## IV. Juno Was a

One imagines a hypothetical Canadian fan crossing the border to see this new movie. It was initially rated X, recall; unlike the pornographic movies usually rated such (though they usually, boastfully, rate themselves "XXX") Kubrick actually submitted *A Clockwork Orange* to the Motion Picture Association of America ratings board and got this. (After some editing a "R", for restricted, rating was granted to this movie. Thanks to the activities of the porno producers there is now a "NC-17" rating that means what "X" used to.)

Our hypothetical fan has read the book, and been impressed by it, and is criticising the realization and admiring it. Then the credits start rolling and he thinks, "They've lost a reel," then calls, "Hey, they've lost a reel! Projectionist! There's a reel missing!"

Americans reading *A Clockwork Orange* after its initial publication might have possibly, though I understand most didn't, noticed a certain asymmetry about it. The first section, from the beginning in the Korova Milkbar up to Alex being told his latest burglary has had a fatality, is seven chapters. The second section, from the prison church service to Alex's release, is seven chapters. The third section, from Alex's bewilderment at what to do now that he is free up to when he realizes he is cured all right, is six chapters.

In the early nineteen-sixties, Anthony Burgess was not in a very good position with regard to his publishers. Financially, of course, he was if not exactly desperate at least in no position to bicker over payments. For example, he sold movie rights to the book for a pittance. (Five hundred dollars — it was to an American speculator who got a spectacular Return on Investment when Stanley Kubrick went looking for rights.)

The American publisher found the book as originally published a trifle overblown. This happy ending, they said, vitiated the point of the work. Burgess, having the last word some years later, described the attitude involved as perceiving the British as frightfully Pelagian, unable to imagine an unredeemable man, while American audiences were tough and able to take an Alex who would forevermore rave; and rape

and rip and rend, quite Augustinian in matters of original sin. The later American editor opined that Burgess had rather overstated his position; they had only suggested, not demanded, and he had been quite willing as long as money was in the equation. (Two hundred dollars. Burgess was not at all well off financially back then.)

For you see, the edition originally published in the author's homeland, and in its associated countries (including Canada) had twenty-one chapters, three sections of seven each. Not only is this symmetrical, but it invokes the age of maturity. Burgess intentionally wanted it to be that way. He said, "To lop the final section of the story, in which the protagonist gives up his youthful violence in order to become a man with a man's responsibilities, seemed to me to be very harmful: it reduced the work from a genuine novel (whose main characteristic must always be a demonstration of the capacity of human nature to change) to a mere fable." (From "A Clockwork Testament", his commentary for the aforementioned stage adaptation.)

A JD novel where the anti-hero went straight at the end would indeed be vitiated. Reading such works is for the thrill of the violence; having the leader of the Sharks decide to go straight and have a regular job would be definitely uncool. Did the people at W. W. Norton see this work, with its arcane and exotic language, as nothing more than one of those publications that could be found on drugstore stands for 25¢, with a garish cover showing a punk in leather jacket with coffin nail in corner of mouth, and chick in skin-tight blouse and jeans? One suspects they fixated on the violence, wanting to have the transgressive and subversive rush of pleasure in celebrating destruction, giving the squares a little of the old ultra-violence, that should show them. Or worse yet, imagining Alex and the droogs as Limey editions of the Sharks and Jets. The music might be a little too elevated, they expecting more on the order of "When you're a droog you're a droog all the way . . ." "Gee, P. R. Deltoid, you're really a square, this boy don't need a job, he needs an analyst's care . . ." and so on, a *West End Story* sort of work. It wasn't going to be that.

Now Kubrick's movie is, as said, very faithful to the events of the novel for as far as it goes. Burgess said as much, and even went so far to characterize his filming procedure as

saying at the beginning of a day's shooting that he planned to film a certain set of pages in the book on that day. But Kubrick worked from the American twenty-chapter edition, for all that he was filming in Britain seemingly unaware at first that there existed a longer text, available at many fine book dealers'. Didn't anyone on the set know? (Not that film types have much time for extraneous reading. Likely, the only persons on the set of George Cukor's film *The Personal History, Adventures, Experience, & Observation of David Copperfield the Younger* (1935) to have read Dickens's original book were the screenwriter (Sir Hugh Walpole, who also played the Vicar) and the actor playing Mr. Micawber, the Great Man himself, W. C. Fields. Yaaas.)

Well, Burgess did. They brought him in, and he described how he found Kubrick and associates manifestly uninterested in Alex's change of life. When the movie was roundly denounced as a celebration of violence, Kubrick retreated behind his own door, leaving Burgess to defend a work he did not really create as it stood.

The final chapter changes the story. There are many examples of this, the most notorious of which being Mickey Spillane's response to editing, wherein he claimed that he wrote so finely that deletion of even one word could ruin one of his works. He was challenged on this, and responded by sending in a manuscript (that would become *Vengeance Is Mine* (1950)) involving the pursuit by Mike Hammer of a suspect named Juno, the usual desirable but sinister Spillane chick. At the end of the manuscript, Juno was undressing to seduce or distract Mike when he took care of the matter in his customary method, and the scene as delivered ended with "Juno was a".

The editors got the idea, and the era of auctorial dominance began, leading to such triumphs as Heinlein's *The Number of the Beast* . . .

"What's it going to be then, eh?" Alex's new friends ask.

For a moment it seems that life has pushed a reset button. Alex is back in the Korova Milkbar with his droogs, making up their rassodocks what to do with the evening, a flip dark winter chill bastard through dry, dressed up in the height of fashion, trying to ignore the three devotchkas in the milkbar . . .

In short, Alex has gone back to his old hangouts and habits. Not that he is doing

badly otherwise, having as settlement for the infliction of Ludovico's Technique been given a job at the National Gramodisc Archives, where he gets to listen to music (without nausea), is given free records, and incredibly enough even gets paid. All this and ultra-violence too. What more could a nadsat droog want? So here he is, sitting in the Korova Milkbar with three new droogs, ready to go out and pull off another evening of ultra-violence.

When they decide to go into the pub (same pub!) to set up an alibi, Alex's new droogs find out that their new leader is now going all wobbly. He's already been standing back from the old ultra-violence, but now, when it's Scotch all round, he only orders a beer. Then proof of how much he is wimping out is displayed before them, when he dumps out his wallet to pay for the round — there's a picture of a baby in with the pretty polly.

Alex feels wrong — different, somehow. He pours out the beer, announces that he is going off and the droogs can do as they like tonight, and walks out of the pub to walk around.

The police are out in force now, though urban crime has also become more harsh. (One wonders if Dim and Billyboy out on patrol tonight, and what they would do if they saw Alex passing by.) The times are changing.

So is Alex. He notes, with some odd detachment, that his tastes are shifting; now he plays *lieder*, more romantic music, and wonders if it is some remnant of the conditioning, coming back to bite him.

He didn't want even beer; what he wants is a nice bolshy chasha of milky chai [**"a nice big mug of tea with milk"**] and by good fortune here is a teashop, a place full of the dull ordinary people who he ordinarily would have nothing to do with. He goes in and orders some.

Perhaps his worries about the conditioning having lasted were exaggerated. The devotchka at the next table is quite desirable, inspiring even more so than his expected desires; he just doesn't think he would want to just throw her down and do the old in-out in-out, but have her around for a while. Then her companion turns around. It's Pete.

Since Kubrick did not care to include this chapter in his work, he made some changes on George's fate, having him be Dim's partner for example. He had even less idea on what to do about the other droog; in the

movie, Pete does not have any lines. Perhaps, not having this result before him when he conceived the idea, and not caring to change a concept in mid-shooting, Kubrick had no idea what Burgess intended to do with the character, and without a clear idea, decided that Pete would indeed do nothing.

They start catching up on old times and old folks. The devotchka has an opinion, too:

'He talks funny, doesn't he?' said this devotchka, like giggling.

'This,' said Pete to the devotchka, 'is an old friend. His name is Alex. May I,' he said to me, 'introduce my wife?'

My rot fell open then. 'Wife?' I like gaped. 'Wife wife wife? Ah no, that cannot be. Too young art thou to be married, droog. Impossible impossible.'

Impossible it may be but present it is. Pete proceeds to explain how he and Georgina get by, but not so finely that they can't have some socializing. Which they are going to, and they leave a very meditative Alex along in the teashop.

He begins to consider his situation. "Eighteen was not a young age," he thinks, and compares all the great successes of "old Wolfgang Amadaeus" and "Old Felix M." and others by that age, as compared to his less spectacular accomplishments. Again, notice the musical perspective, he compares himself to Mozart and Mendelssohn. This realization leads to a further one, he reaches the conclusion that he has been unwittingly approaching for some time, he now understands why he has been listening to romantic music, and why he cut out a picture of a baby and carried it with him: he will settle down and have a family.

But even then there is a melancholy undercurrent to this return to normality:

Yes, yes, yes, there it was. Youth must go, ah yes. But youth is only being in a way like it might be an animal. No, it is not just like being an animal so much as being like one of those malenky toys you viddy being sold in the streets, like little chellovecks made out of tin and with a spring inside and then a winding handle on the outside and you wind it up grrr grrr grrr and off it itties, like

walking, O my brothers. But it itties in a straight line and bangs straight into things bang bang and it cannot help what it is doing. Being young is like being one of those malenky machines.

Alex seems to be admitting that even before the Ludovico's Technique he was a sort of clockwork orange, less than fully human. The maturation process — Pete's dull bourgeois life of working for an insurance company, with his wife typing, so they can manage — is curiously contradictory; while to the youth it seems dull, the change of perspective creates a realization that it is exactly the opposite. Alex had limited his adult appreciation to music, and while this limited field of maturity did indeed promote a way out, at the same time it showed how inexperienced his judgment was; the cultured, indeed slyly commenting music expert seemed so out of place in the crude brutal thug. He did not apply his standards for music to his standards for life; he was one of those malenky ["little"] toys that could not help what it was doing.

Thus the true evil of the conditioning; while giving its clockwork orange the semblance of socialization, it deprived him of any real socialization. It was value-neutral; the conditioning could have been exactly the opposite, to become revulsed by peace, to become revulsed by ugliness . . . To defend the results, those who apply it have to appeal to standards that they do not in fact hold; Brodsky's exulting of Alex as now being a true Christian when in fact he is only the semblance of one — or, it might be better put, a parody of one.

Accepting the Catholic point of view brings us to a weary realization of innate depravity and original sin and all that:

My son, my son. When I had my son I would explain all that to him when he was like starry enough to like understand. But then I knew he would not understand or would not want to understand at all and would do all the veshches I had done, yes perhaps even killing some poor starry forella surrounded with mewing kots and koshkas, and I would not be able to really stop him. And nor would he be able to stop his own son, brothers.

And so it would itty on to like the end of the world, round and round and round, like some bolsky gigantic like chelloveck, like old Bog Himself (by courtesy of Korova Milkbar) turning and turning and turning a vonny grazhny orange in his gigantic rookers.

One hopes that Alex's descendants would at least dream up and pull off some exciting new crimes instead of returning (indeed, making many happy returns) to the same old ones, going on to the end of the world, like God Himself turning and turning a smelly dirty orange in His gigantic hands. (Imagine, if you will, *A Clockwork Orange II* where Alex II speaks 133+ ["leet"] to his ever so out-of-it pee, goes surfing the Web to flame people picked at random, suck cash out of bank accounts, and otherwise engage in ultra-cyberviolence, while Alex sits by his new CD system and retreats into the new Luna City Philharmonic performance of Wilson's Symphony No. 16 "Napoleon".)

Alex seems to be despondent about the possibility of moral education. In the debased society that exists in the world of this work, the problem is very real. If Alex did not get his appreciation of music from his pee and em, he did not get any moral standards from them either. Or, more likely, he threw them out for those of his new droogs in the third form at school.

In spite of which, he realizes that he has to change, that he is changing, that he is becoming complete; no longer a youth without will, but an adult, with the ability and the desire to change. No orgasmic pursuit of a nagoy devotchka, britva in hand, to rave; and rape and rip and rend, not any more:

. . . And all it was was that I was young. But now as I end this story, brothers, I am not young, not no longer, oh no. Alex like groweth up, oh yes.

But where I itty now, O my brothers, is all on my oddy knocky, where you cannot go. Tomorrow is all like sweet flowers and the turning vonny earth and the stars and the old Luna up there and your old droog Alex all on his oddy knocky seeking like a mate. And all that cal. A terrible grazhny vonny world, really, O my brothers. And so farewell from

your little droog. And to all others in this story profound shooms of lip-music brrrrrr. And they can kiss my sharries. But you, O my brothers, remember sometimes thy little Alex that was. Amen. And all that cal.

## V. Welcome to the Real World

Would Kubrick have made a different movie if he had read the complete edition before starting? He seems to have realized everything and comprehended nothing about the book. By celebrating Alex's deconditioning, his conversion from a superficially good boy back to a thoroughly nasty ultra-violent malchik, he ends up celebrating violence and destruction.

In fact, he seemed to believe that Burgess had added the final chapter at the publisher's insistence, or so he said to Michael Ciment. One would think he had not noticed the structure of the book. This could indeed call into question his comprehension of the idea of the book — again, realizing everything and comprehending nothing. Small wonder that when Burgess did a play, the first person Alex mugged somehow happened to resemble Kubrick.

Moreover, Burgess's theme, the idea that as a human being Alex has freedom of choice, and has a soul, as shown by his love of music, is present throughout. Alex considers the misuse of Beethoven's work a sin; his being conditioned against violence included conditioning against enjoying music. He had the concept of "sin", something the conditioners seemed to lack; because he had that concept, because he had freedom of choice, he could choose to apply that concept to his entire life.

So much had changed in the few years between the publication of the book (1962) and the release of the movie (1971). The general climate of intellectual belief had soured, so to speak, on the concept of order, and had become enamored with that of chaos. Burgess was thoroughly disgusted, after seeing the movie; "A vindication of free will had become an exaltation of the urge to sin. I was worried," he said (in *You've Had Your Time* (1990)) and he found himself having to defend something he did not wish to defend, while the adaptor who had been so able at realizing his incomplete realization did and said nothing until much later. Even then, his comments displayed that curious blend of realization and incomprehension; he said that

the movie was about freedom of choice, about good and evil, but found the combination of those two themes to bring about a conclusion to be false and artificial.

It is fair to note that the last chapter contains a considerable amount of introspection. It would be very hard to film the final section, the one in which Alex considers his changing perspectives, the growing differences in his life. Then too, it changes the whole work — if not from a fable to a novel, as Burgess said, certainly from a celebration of violence to a story of difficult change.

In the first section, Alex has the knowledge to amend his condition, but lacks the will; he can't make the connection, can't see that his vast cultural knowledge has any wider context. As he says, he is like a wind-up toy, a thing, beneath the level of morality — but, because he has this awareness of something different, he has the potential to change. In the second section, he learns that he can change, but that he can be changed as well. The Ludovico's Treatment leaves him apparently better off but in reality far worse; he can no longer employ the means for change, even as he becomes aware that it is possible to change. In the third section, he reconciles his knowledge, becoming fully human — but only in the twenty-first chapter.

One can argue that much of this discussion of conditioning and such matters is arguing about matters that once were significant but now don't matter anymore; the dance of the dead ideas, a discussion on the same level as discussing seriously the crisis in the Sudetenland, the pornographic content of *Jurgen*, the desire for the perfect black tulip. Once behaviorism was a topic of great importance, a matter of freedom and dignity; now it seems a very dead issue, one as dead as Skinner himself.

But what is not dead is the desire to control and remake. In the thirties, it was expunging the inferior genes from humanity by expunging their transmission — or their bearers, which latter got the idea discredited. But then it was succeeded by the desire to reeducate the morally askew. Whether by means as innocuous as standing at the table with a sugar-coated lollipop hung around the neck or as direct as sending shocks through the body at the projection of an undesired image, such methods were deemed to have utility and goodness on their side. At about

the time that Burgess was writing, it was considered desirable to decondition homosexuals, for example.

The means and methods change, but the underlying desire remains unchanged. Arguing about the problems of making people averse to violence through chemistry is a dead issue; but it is all too important that it is clearly wrong to control people's minds. For what one person thinks undesirable, others may find the best of behavior; and contrawise.

Alex says (in effect), "where I go now is all on my own, where you cannot go," to the future world where his son will grow up and commit the same crimes all over again, world without end. There are some questions even about that. He has already found himself unable to escape his past, and one imagines with some horror Dim and Billyboy, out on patrol one day, deciding that they will get back at that bratchny, er bastard, who got them in trouble with the bosses (even though he can now fight back), or even some other victim retaliating.

But more than the physical remnants of the past, there are the intellectual ones to consider. Alex will forever and ever be the notorious Victim of Ludovico's Technique. Will people react to the Victim and not to the person?

(One also imagines yet another stream of behaviorists coming forward to urge the employment of their new methods. "We know that Ludovico's Technique has untoward side-effects, but this new Frazer's Technique, from that place in America, has avoided them!" Unfortunately, the great victory is rarely as complete from the perspective of the losing side as it seems from that of the winning side.)

But that is the reactions of others. Will Alex himself be able to overcome his own past? This, we see, is happening in some measure. He is now disengaged from ultra-violence; "More and more these days I had been just giving the orders and standing back to viddy them being carried out," he says, and while this does not diminish his moral culpability (indeed, it could be said to **increase** it) it does show his growth away from **being** violent.

This is Burgess's point, the point that went away with the American publisher's and filmmaker's decisions to focus on a celebration of violence. Because Alex is

human, he can choose; because of that humanity, he can choose to be violent or choose *not* to be violent. Celebrating the choice of violence is a reflection of the rise of nihilism that was taking place at the time of the writing of the book, the values that Alex's change reflected were themselves denigrated. Those like Kubrick who lived safely behind secure walls felt themselves free to celebrate violence; those like Burgess who had been personally confronted with violence longed for moral choice to produce a turning away from it.

When Alex protested, using the images of sin and righteousness, and Dr. Brodsky responded with his contemptuous dismissal of music, their conversation might be considered no more than a clash of tastes, of the esthete being tormented by the philistine. But there is a deeper contrast to this confrontation. In discussing a rather trivial work, *One* by David Karp (1953), the story of a professor named Burden who, like Winston Smith in George Orwell's *1984* and Rubashov in Arthur Koestler's *Darkness at Noon*, is targeted by those in power for his thought-crimes (as opposed to Alex, whose crimes involve little thought), Damon Knight says:

. . . Like Rubashov, like Smith, Burden is a member of a vanishing class, a man old enough to remember another state of affairs and another set of values. The Rubashovs are replaced by the Gletkins, the "Neanderthals" with no memories and no traditions, "a generation born without umbilical cords"; the Smiths are replaced by Parsons; and the Burdens also have no heirs; they die and are replaced by the dehumanized young members of the Church of State, eager, conscientious, honest and unimaginative, who never say "I".

— *In Search of Wonder*, Page 77

The younger man is the one able to summon up the other set of values in this case. The successors of Gletkin used their own psychological methods; anyone who objected to Soviet power was schizophrenic. One wonders if they might have been more successful in obtaining the support of their colleagues abroad, had they only not been so blatant about the uses of their methods. But then, by the time the Soviet mental health professionals were denounced for their use of

such techniques, the popularity of behaviorism was declining.

To consider an example from a work of parallel theme, Alex would full well understand "a boot stamping on a human litso forever." Though, as we have seen regarding other matters, evidently he would at first have wanted his boot to be doing the stamping; and equally so, in the drab world of Airstrip One he would not be the stamper, but the stampee.

This clash of values may contain a depth of horror beyond the obvious. It isn't that the Brodskys and the Gletkins (and even, perhaps, the Fraziers from *Walden Two*?) have been aware of the choice and chosen wrongly. It's that they don't even admit there's a choice, the matters of good and evil, of sin and righteousness **don't mean anything** to them. We see this in Brodsky's casual dismissal of the value of music; "I know nothing of it myself. It's a useful emotional heightener, that's all I know." And he uses it in this case to heighten the reaction of his subject. Algis Budrys's comment in *Rogue Moon* (1960) seems well placed: "Did you expect a *machine* to care what it acted upon?" In the comparative reactions of Alex and Brodsky one can see the depth of their respective claims to humanity; that they made Alex into the sort of being that they had made of themselves. Alex might have thought that he had snuffed it already, in light of the comment a couple of sentences further on in *Rogue Moon*: "When a man dies, he falls into enemy hands — an ignorant enemy who doesn't merely spit on banners but who doesn't even know what banners are." That universal unconcern is all too good a description of the conditioners' attitudes. When Alex describes the use or misuse of Beethoven's work as a sin, not only the concept of the music but even the concept of sin means nothing to his conditioners.

A similar invitation is worth noting in this context:

But this is not your fault — you are sick. The name of this sickness is IMAGINATION.

It is a worm that gnaws out black lines on the forehead. It is a fever that drives you to escape ever farther, even if this "farther" begins where happiness ends. This is the last barricade on our way to happiness.

Rejoice, then: this barricade has already been blown up.

The road is open.

The latest discovery of State Science is the location of the center of imagination — a miserable little nodule of the brain in the area of the *pons Varolii*. Triple-X-ray cautery of this nodule — and you are cured of imagination —

FOREVER.

You are perfect. You are machinelike. The road to one hundred percent happiness is free. Hurry then, everyone — old and young — hurry to submit to the Great Operation. Hurry to the auditoriums, where the Great Operation is being performed. Long live the Great Operation! Long live the One State! Long live the Benefactor!

— Yevgeny Zamyatin, *We* (1921, 1952, 1972), Thirty-First Entry

In the terminology here: "You are perfect. You are a clockwork orange."

It can be argued that Zamyatin's D-503 is inexplicably writing in the terms of not his society, but that of the nonexistent time before the One State; that he somehow is aware of another state of affairs and another set of values. The book would almost certainly not have been improved by comments in the style of "As you know, O-90, we no longer consume sustenance in the fashion that existed before the days of the One State . . .".

Zamyatin showed the fundamental contradictions of this concept, even as he ended his work with a chapter that is the equivalent of "He loved Big Brother." Even as he praises the moral and emotional sterility that human life has become under the One State, D-503 does so in the most vivid and effusive of language; he pens the contradiction that is not only his life but his world.

Perhaps Burgess hoped that even his great evil would not be irreversible. What if Brodsky and his colleagues been proffered, or even developed, a process that would wipe out criminal thought by "Triple-X-ray cautery" of some part of the brain or something similar? Does it seem likely that they would have refrained from employing this great operation? A great operation that would create an Alex not only well and truly a clockwork orange, but one unable of ever being what he had been, or even imagining

that he had ever been anything else. As Burgess presents them, they would have been even more enthusiastic than the followers of the Well-Doer.



One minor stylistic quibble: *who* is Alex addressing? Not his droogs. Not his unborn son.

One literary trope that Robert Heinlein indulged in to some extent is the “how-I-got-here” narrative, a subset of his “The Man Who Learned Better” plot. “If This Goes On —” (1941, 1953) is an early example of this; its narrator John Lyle was required to write a explanation of his reasons for joining the Cabal, starting with A, B, and C in effect, and then after that point in the narrative, carried it on. (If you look at the lifespan bars in the Future History Chart, John’s ends close to the end of the story, while Magdalene’s (the woman he marries) runs a good bit farther on. There may be a story in that.) Much the same applies to *Double Star* (1956), the story of how the narrator grew from talented but obnoxious actor into successful politician. (Then there is *The Door Into Summer* (1956, 1957), where the reason the narrator narrated the course of his learning better seems to have fallen through the cracks . . .)

“The Veck Who Learned Better” is Alex to the life, o my brothers.

“Juno was a man.” What a drag!

## DOWN TO THE GULF OF MEXICO

Commentary by Joseph T Major on

**LE SUPERBE ORÉNOQUE**

[*The Mighty Orinoco*]

by Jules Verne

Translated by Stanford L. Luce

Edited by Arthur B. Evans  
Introduction & Notes by Walter James Miller  
(Wesleyan University Press; 1898, 2002;  
ISBN 0-8195-6511-3; \$29.95)  
“*Un Voyage Extraordinaire*”

Refer if you will to Colleen Cahill’s interesting review of this work in *Alexiad* Volume 3 Number 1.

I do, however have some issues to take with the editors, if not M. Verne himself. It is clear that Verne, not M. Clancy, is the father of *le roman à technosuspense*, er technothriller. What else can we say about the almost maniacal listing of equipment and its uses? (Yes I know that, for example, *King Solomon’s Mines* has a listing of equipment, particularly guns; but guns turn out to be important in the plot.)

The notes themselves contain several useful comments on, for example, the different translations. They universally disdain the Fitzroy Editions that Ace published in paperback in the sixties, which are usually what I had.

The editors overreach themselves, in my opinion, in claiming that *The Lost World* derives from this work and from the dinosaur battles in *Voyage au centre de la terre* (1864; *Journey to the Center of the Earth*). This relationship seems to have escaped the attention of Doyle scholars. For example, *The Annotated Lost World* cites Doyle’s interest in dinosaurs going back to 1885. One imagines Professor Challenger tossing the entire Wesleyan University Press out the window.

The footnotes contain useful information on continuity errors and contemporary allusions not explicable nowadays. They also contain postmodern race-class-gender theorizing. Anyone who can read Kipling as urging the Yanks to go crush the Filipinos can’t be much of a scholar. (“The White Man’s Burden” is that of *uplifting* other cultures.)

Indeed, their comments about imperialism can be called into question simply by checking another Verne book given its first English edition by this publisher: *L’Invasion de la mer* (1905; *Invasion of the Sea*). There, the extension of the *mission civiliatrice* to the Sahara, to be carried out by flooding the depressions of Algeria (hence “invasion of the sea”), is seen as a universal good. “*Prenez le fardeau de l’homme blanc . . .*”

## THE FINAL COUNTDOWN

Review by Joseph T Major of

**WEAPONS OF CHOICE**

by John Birmingham

(Del Rey; 2004; ISBN 0-345-45712-9;  
\$15.95)

“Book One of *The Axis of Time*”

### I Swear I Did Not Write This:

No, that had to be that moment when an ashen-faced Navy commander had appeared to tell him what had happened at Midway. Roosevelt shook his head at the memory as he spotted flashing red-and-white lights descending from the northwest.

“Hell’s bells, Turtletaub,” he’d yelled out at the unfortunate officer just a week earlier. “What madness is this? Next you’ll be telling me space lizards have landed.”

— *Weapons of Choice*, Page 215

Overall, the President and his people might well wish that the Race had landed. Truth.

What did come was interesting enough. It’s 2023. The War on Terror has continued, moved around, and is now in Indonesia. Then a little experiment goes wrong, and an allied fleet is, uh, cast back into the Sea of Time (that, by the way, became a standard phrase on usenet groups, and in fact one alternate-history work there was a little more generous in having 2002’s U.S. transported back into 1942), in fact right into the middle of the U.S. fleet sailing to fight the Battle of Midway. Since one of the first vessels of the multinational force the Americans encounter is a ship of the Japanese Maritime Defense Force, much untoward and asymmetrical conflict ensues before the travelers can get things sorted out.

The acculturation sometimes has problems. The seaman from USS *Astoria* who is mercifully shooting the sex slaves on board this Jap ship, for example . . . Other examples of eighty years of social change make hard going, never mind the technological change.

The technology they bear is a little too hard to duplicate — but, unfortunately, a little too easy to pass around. This means that it’s Klingon time in the Imperial Japanese Navy.

But the strains of realignment express themselves in various ways. Those two crewpersons found murdered in Hawaii, for example . . .

On a more strategic level there is the matter of No Man Left Behind. Or, having the raid on Los Baños in the Philippines take place a couple of years earlier, to free the POWs. It’s not quite Son Tay.

However, some of that technology did indeed get into the wrong hands (perhaps a bit too fast, it seems to me), and it is causing some rather far-reaching consequences.

Eighty years of separation rather rules out the presentation of an encounter between someone at two ages, though someone might seduce a grandparent there. Not to mention Captain Prince Harry Windsor of the SAS getting to meet Colonel David Stirling, or even Grandma Lilibet. (One of the more notorious lines from the book had to do with him having a brief fling with what must have been by then a fading and never very talented to begin with singer, no doubt multiply married and divorced by then.)

Those looking for stories of how a band of natural supermen starts kicking the serfs in the teeth with their boots along the way to establishing a dominion of natural rulers where only the strong survive may have to wait. For now, the primary problem, for those who traveled and those who received them is surviving themselves when this story is . . . [To Be Continued]

I once formulated a difference between science fiction and mainstream fiction. Mainstream fiction is **normalizing**; at the end of the story, any wondrous change goes away and the situation is basically unchanged. For example, in *The Final Countdown* (1980) the USS *Nimitz* returns to 1991, leaving the Second World War unchanged.

I know this knocks out some works considered SF; e.g., Michael Crichton’s *Sphere* (1987), which takes this idea to extremes. What this does is to highlight the conceptual difference; Malzberg’s definition of SF as fiction that realizes that change is a reality. Which makes General Sir George Tomkyns Chesney, K.C.B., C.S.I., C.I.E., M.P., author of the book that started the future-war genre, *The Battle of Dorking: Reminiscences of a Volunteer* (1871), a Father of SF, but what the hey.

In this case, the task force has changed the course of events. They can’t normalize now.

**DISPELLING**

Review by Joseph T Major of  
*BROKEN CRESCENT*

by S. Andrew Swann [Steven Swinarski]  
(DAW; 2004; ISBN 0-7564-0214-X; \$6.99)

You know, there has to be a reason why the human kidnapped to another world has to be both extraordinary and in a crucial spot. Tortha Karf observed that Calvin Morrison was lucky; most of the people picked up by the Paratimers were mercy-killed, one way or another. (He must have been thinking of that fellow Benjamin Bathurst who, when "He Walked Around the Horses", found himself swapped to a nearby time-line and learned the hard way that sentries don't carry loaded guns to keep them from putting their hands in their pockets.)

I imagine the usual Emma-Bull-style fantasy ending rather differently: the Person Brought to Save Faerie lies in bed sweating torrents and screaming for "Shit! Horse! Black Tar! Big H! Dope! Smack!" while the bewildered inhabitants of Faerie risk the threats of the foe to bring to their convulsing miracle-rescuer what he seems to be asking for, not knowing that like so many rockers, he is a junkie, and in withdrawal. Or he might be dependent in some fashion on a non-recreational drug.

Nate Black has gone cold turkey and detoxed himself of a far more subtle and powerful addiction: computer hacking. Once upon a time, Azrael was the hottest, most techie hacker that swam the seas of cyberspace. Then, his meat persona realized that, you know, some of those things are very very illegal. Nate had to and did purge his hacker alter ego Azrael with a thoroughness that might not even be possible. That was six years ago.

Today (back in 2002, actually) someone has sent Nate an email that says, "**they know azrael, take the road that is offered.**" This message really worries Nate, but before he can launch his investigation, the road is offered.

Not that at first the destination seems all that great. Nate rather soon finds himself in the hands of the Authorities, and suffering the fate of any inexplicable stranger in a backwards community. They don't torture him, though prison fever is about as bad.

All unwitting, he has plunged into a society riven by dissension and built on

racism. At least the racism has to do with a real other race of intelligent beings, one cursed moreover with aphasia. But Authority knows what to do with this outre stranger; and he finds himself studying magic.

I suppose it's the legacy of Randy Garrett with a touch of Rick Cook; there are rules and order to this magic, and Nate turns to trying to hack it. Unlike his fellow students, who take the habit of making notes just a little too personally. Thus, his computer skills and habits play a significant role in his understanding of this world and its methods.

But that hacker habit leads Nate to find out how and why, then to act . . .



Swann has played up the sheer marginality of pre-modern life; unlike the vast bulk of contemporary fantasies, this is not a work where *The Tough Guide to Fantasyland* is a guideline. The gritty harshness of life in the world plays a significant factor in the story.

Other clichés are also absent. The oppressive religious authorities are a real religion, not a lightly painted over imagined Fundamentalism oppressing gentle sensitive Wiccans. Indeed there are no witches, women warriors, or the like here, though

there are female characters. The ghadi, the other race, is not a Symbol representing some oppressed group; their oppression is their own, not some slightly modified oppression from history. Swann has created his own world, to tell his own story.

**ESCAPE**

Review by Joseph T Major of  
*RESNICK AT LARGE:*

*Mike Resnick Speaks His Mind on Everything*

by Mike Resnick  
(Wildside Press; 2003;  
ISBN 1-59224-160-3; \$19.95)

Bwana has a variety of opinions and fields of interest, and the dedicated Resnick fan, or even the casual one, will find this collection to be of interest.

The essays and articles come from a variety of sources — webzines, fanzines, and just plain magazines — and cover a diversity of topics, from science fiction to horseracing to ethnology. If you want to know who to read now that you've exhausted the big ones, why the horse crop of 1954 was so great (so that's why Lisa is so drawn to me), where Lucifer Jones came from, or what to do about the vanishing African elephant, this has Resnick's observations, comments, and explanations.

In the fields of intersection, for example, I have but to cite his glowing praise of Eric Frank Russell's spy novel *Wasp* (1957) — and how, if he had only made it a contemporary thriller, instead of a SF novel, he would have been up there with Ambler! And, at the other end of the spectrum, you have his ruthless dissection of the stoopid sci-fi movies from *E.T.* on.

(I think I have one answer. Regarding that last film Resnick asks, "what is a divorced woman with a day job doing living in an \$900,000 house in one of the posher parts of the Los Angeles area?" (Page 37) Because all the divorced women with day jobs the production people knew lived in \$900,000 houses in the posher parts of the Los Angeles area. Remember in *Flashdance* Alex lives in a loft the monthly rent of which would equal her pre-tax monthly income from both jobs. They write what they see.)

But he doesn't just discuss fiction. (And not the art of selling what you write, which he did in *The Science Fiction Professional* (2002), wherein he encourages the would-be

author to avoid places like, say, Publish America.) Rather than focus on his many visits to Africa, I mention the story of his epic struggles with the Florida Health Care system and the Social Security Administration . . .

The horse matters I will leave to Lisa. Of course, thanks to Joan Hillenbrand and Gary Ross, Seabiscuit is no longer as obscure as he was when Resnick told the story.

This book is an amusing, diverse look at the interests of a diverse, amusing man. Oh yes, I read it over dinner one night.

**TAHITI NUI**

Review by Joseph T Major of  
*THE CHINA VOYAGE:*

*Across the Pacific by Bamboo Raft*  
by Tim Severin

(Addison-Wesley; 1994;  
ISBN 0-201-48394-7; \$25.00)



In 1956, the French boater Eric de Bisschop tried to reverse Thor Heyerdahl. As you know, Heyerdahl had sailed a balsa log raft, the *Kon-Tiki*, from Peru to Polynesia, trying to prove his theory that the Polynesians were descended from South American Indians. This guy decided to go him one better and prove they could have sailed both ways, and built a bamboo raft in Tahiti to sail to South America.

He maintained that his raft, the *Tahiti Nui*, made

the distance. However, it didn't actually get there; after the raft was blown in a circle by winds, the bamboos became waterlogged, the

lashings began to break up, and de Bisschop and his crew had to be rescued.

Such recreations suffer from a number of problems, one being that the explorers know there's something out there. Their hypothetical predecessors didn't have that certainty or even perhaps that urge. This didn't stop Heyerdahl, de Bisschop (who died on his return voyage), or Tim Severin, who has crossed the Atlantic in an Irish coracle (*The Brendan Voyage* (1978)), the Indian Ocean in a dhow (*The Sindbad Voyage* (1982)), and the Black Sea in a triakonter (*The Jason Voyage* (1986)). His source is a Chinese historical reference to a sailor who even preceded Cheng Ho (Zheng He); Hsu Fu (Xufu). According to the ancient historian Ssu-ma Ch'ien (Sima Qian), the First Emperor, Ch'in Shih Huang-ti (Qin Shi Huangdi; and Severin confuses lo-quan even further by calling him "Qin Shihuang"), having conquered the mainland, decided to investigate the islands, and sent Hsu Fu off to the Blessed Islands to look for the immortality drug they had there. On his voyage he encountered a great Mage who told him that the quest was futile. [Where did Ssu-ma Ch'ien get a copy of the *Silmarillion*? And what *did* Gandalf have to say to Hsu Fu?]

Later in his voyage Hsu Fu encountered a dragon who told him that if he brought workers and young women he could get the immortality for the Emperor. Workers and women were forthcoming (let's do lunch), and Hsu Fu sailed off again and never came back.

They don't build bamboo rafts in China any more. It rots. Not taking the hint, Severin persevered and found one place where they still make bamboo rafts in the old style: Vietnam!

In the village of Sam Son, the bamboo raft-makers were quite eager to show off, and with surprising ease, Severin got the bamboo, the workers, and soon had him a raft, the *Tsu Fu*.

Now that he had the boat, he had to get some nuts, er crew. Fortunately, there were people who had sailed with him before and for some reason wanted to again, and others enthusiastic to join. Not to mention the master raft builder, who wanted to take his workmanship all the way to the Imperialist Oppressor. (Boat people?)

Modern times contribute their own strains, and many of the crew had other commitments that constrained their participation in one

fashion or another. Like one man who thought he would take a couple of weeks off to sail the raft from Hong Kong to Taiwan and found out that that stage of the trip took rather longer. Or the artist who was so enthusiastic she hid the fact she had hepatitis and should have stayed longer in the hospital.

The raft actually made landfall in the Ryukyus, where the main obstacle to not having Japanese visas (they hadn't been planning to go to Japan) was that the raft was a Sensation and the Japanese officials all wanted to see it. Then they set off across the North Pacific.

They sailed eastwards for a hundred and five days, encountering problems. The lashings that held together the bamboos of the raft began to break up. The bamboos themselves were attacked by teredo worm. The *Hsu Fu* was blown in a circle by winds. I think you can see where things are going, or aren't. Fortunately there was a container ship near by that could give the travelers a lift . . .

Severin cites several cases in historical times of Japanese ships drifting across the Pacific, including one where a crew spent a year at sea, fortunately having both fishhooks and rice; the three survivors found out that since it was 1832 in the outside world they weren't welcome at home any more. This may explain those steel knives from Japan in the Pacific Indian village that was buried by a mudslide around 1492.

Nevertheless, one suspects that any explorer setting out across the Eastern Ocean would run into like problems. But it's an interesting story.

. . . Now she would sail on without us. Her silhouette faded into the blackness, the weary shabbiness was invisible, only the elegant shape of her three roach-fin sails could be seen faintly against the black sky. How long would she sail on by herself? To circle forever in the great whirlpool that the ancient Chinese believed to exist in the Eastern Ocean? To join the other debris in the great Pacific Garbage Patch? To break up in pieces or be eaten by shipworm? Or perhaps to be carried by the current and washed up one day on the American shore.

— *The China Voyage*, Page 308

. . . And tales and rumors arose along the shores of the sea concerning mariners and men forlorn upon the water who, by some fate or grace or favour of the Valar, had entered in upon the Straight Way and seen the face of the world sink beneath them, and so had come to the lamplit quays of Avallónë, or verily to the last beaches on the margin of Aman, and there had looked upon the White Mountains, dreadful and beautiful, before they died.

— *The Silmarillion*, Akallabêth

### TRAVELS INTO SEVERAL REMOTE NATIONS OF THE WORLD

Review by Joseph T Major of  
*A PIRATE OF EXQUISITE MIND:  
Explorer, Naturalist, and Buccaneer:  
The Life of William Dampier*  
by Diana & Michael Preston  
(Walker & Company; 2004;  
ISBN 0-8027-1425-0; \$27.00)

"What are you writing, Long John?" I asked the old one-legged cook.

"Har. I be writin' me paper for the Royal Society, about the finches of the Galley-pagoes. If a lad such as ye, with keen eyes, was to look at 'em, ye'd see that they bears certin similarities, which to the practical mind, such as of a gentleman of fortune, shows that they are all descended from one kind of finch, but developed differen' on account of the differin' conditions they lived in onst they got to them there islands. Now I be scrivenin' all this down for publication in the issue next of the Proceedin's, or would be if'n I didn't have to anser the questions of cabin boys."

"You are writing a paper on natural philosophy?!"

"Har. Yes I be. And I be not the only one on this ship doin' such. Take an observation of Bert Stone over there, and ax him about his writin's."

The navigator was more than a little eager to explain. He stuffed tobacco into his pipe, smiled, and said, "It vas when I saw der eclipse in der South Seas. Dere vere stars all out of

place, pulled in to der Sun. Ach! It gave me to tink, how it vas zo. I taut about it for many monts, and when der next eclipse came, I vas proven right! Der stars vere moved chust as I predicted."

"What does that mean, Bert?"

"Dot der attraction of der Erde, as explained by the Herr Professor Königlicheprägungsmeister Ritter Neuton, is a condition of spaze!"

— Not from *Treasure Island*

George MacDonald Fraser dedicates his comic romp *The Pyrates*:

IN MEMORY OF  
The Most Reverend and Right Honourable  
LANCELOT BLACKBURNE  
(1658 — 1743)  
Archbishop of York  
and buccaneer  
— *The Pyrates*, Page 5

Some people have very odd ways of paying off their seminary student loans. But it's somewhat surprising to learn that a very great naturalist, anthropologist, and geographer had his own way of getting research grants. But this biography, written by the author of the moderate life of Scott, *A First Rate Tragedy: Robert Falcon Scott and the Race to the South Pole* (1991), and her husband, tells the story of the strange life of the famed inspirer of fiction.

William Dampier would certainly find himself in strange and fictive places, though none quite as exotic as "Laputa, Balnibarbi, Glubdubdribb, Luggnagg, and Japan." Neither would he have all his work done by Friday, in fact his one-year's voyage to the Caribbean would end up taking twelve years and involve a trip around the world, traveling into several remote nations.

What made Dampier noteworthy was that he kept notes. The text contains dozens of comments to the effect that this animal or that location was first made known by Dampier: he observed, he wrote, he published.

How many scholars could write about a piratical attack on a Spanish stronghold in Panama? I mean, from a first-hand perspective. For those uninterested in natural history, Dampier also reported on the exciting world of piracy and the exotic field of Spice Islands trade.

The "exquisite mind" comes in part from

the surprising nature of Dampier's character. He was remarkably free of ethnocentrism; a surprising attitude for anyone in any era. He observed the differing peoples he encountered fairly and with little prejudice; he did not feel the need to curse the wogs. He loved liberty and prized individual accomplishment.

The Prestons recount Dampier's step-by-step journey to the Caribbean, then into the Spanish American Pacific, the "South Seas", thence to the Spice Islands and Southeast Asia generally (including Tonquin, now in Vietnam), and finally home to England. He had been there, done that, and written the book.

The book, *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697) was to be useful. Both James Cook and Charles Darwin found its observations correct and useful, to take two examples.

Its author became quite the hero of the hour, and before long found it useful to set out again, on an expedition to New Holland, i.e. Australia. This expedition was not as successful as the last, due to suspicion, insubordination (ironically, Captain Dampier, R.N. had less fidelity and obedience from his subordinates than the pirate captains he knew did), shipwreck, and intrigue. They were afraid he would follow William Kidd's example.

Third time doesn't quite pay for all, and his own privateering expedition was a bust. But Dampier was trusted enough to have a place in Woodes Rogers's privateering expedition to the South Seas and there he managed to hit the jackpot twice. First off, they took the Manila Galleon and netted some 150,000£! (Unfortunately, between lawyers, fees, and corruption, Dampier didn't get most of his share until too late to matter.) The other had to do with this stop they made in the Juan Fernandez Islands to have the crew recover from scurvy. There was someone there to greet them, a fellow named not Robinson Crusoe, but Alexander Selkirk . . .

Dampier was so well known back then that the author of *Travels Into Several Remote Nations of the World* enhances its credibility by claiming kinship with him. The people who read *Gulliver's Travels* nowadays don't appreciate the effort Jonathan Swift put into ensuring a suspension of disbelief. And Dampier's having rescued Alexander Selkirk enabled Daniel DeFoe to create his own fictionalization of Selkirk's life; those who enjoyed *Robinson Crusoe* have Dampier to

thank.

Sadly enough, the date of Dampier's death is not recorded, and his burial place is unknown. Dampier was not of his time but of all time; the Prestons have done their part to bring him back to us.

### RIVERS OF BLOOD

Review by Joseph T Major of

#### RIVERS OF GOLD:

#### *The Rise of the Spanish Empire, from Columbus to Magellan*

by Hugh Thomas (Lord Thomas of Swynnerton)

(Random House; 2003;

ISBN 0-357-50204-1; \$35.00)

"Listen, O king! Listen, O people! Listen, O mountains and plains and rivers, home of the Kukuana race! Listen, O skies and sun, O rain and storm and mist! Listen, all things that live and must die! Listen, all dead things that must live again — again to die! Listen, the spirit of life is in me, and I prophesy. I prophesy! I prophesy!"

The words died away in a faint wail, and terror seemed to seize upon the hearts of all who heard them, including ourselves. The old woman was very terrible.

"**Blood! blood! blood!** rivers of blood; blood everywhere. I see it, I smell it, I taste it — it is salt; it runs red upon the ground, it rains down from the skies.

"*Footsteps! footsteps! footsteps!* the tread of the white man coming from afar. It shakes the earth; the earth trembles before her master . . ."

— *King Solomon's Mines*, Sir H. Rider Haggard

Zikali should have sent Gagool across the ocean and back in time to warn the inhabitants of those continents, but who among them would have believed the old witch?

The Lord Thomas of Swynnerton has returned to the New World with a history of the Spanish Empire that stretches from one foreigner to another: from Cristoforo Colombo to Fernao de Magalhaes — locally known as Cristobal Colón and Fernando de

Magallanes, and also known as Christopher Columbus and Ferdinand Magellan, respectively.

While there are many detailed descriptions of the parts of this endeavor, from Samuel Elliot Morison's *Admiral of the Ocean Sea* (1942) to Robert Silverberg's *The Longest Voyage* (1972), what Thomas has done is to show them as parts of a single process, the expansion of Spain into the world.

This process is not popular, it is now seen as a destruction of nature. Another counterbalance Thomas provides is an unsparing look at the natives. The Spanish did not expand into an earthly paradise of anarchist communarians living in harmony with Nature, but a violent, disease-ridden, grim society. The Tainos of the Caribbean, the first contactees, "suffered from endemic syphilis" (Page 114), for example, and that doesn't even begin to take into account the Caribs, much less the Mexica. (When the Caribs said "Let's have you over for lunch," you wouldn't be hungry for long, or anything else for that matter.)

Not that they were all that good themselves; the history here is one of slave-raiding, gruesome suppression of uprisings, bloody war, and other bloodthirsty spectacles. What made a Spanish conquest of the Mexica different from a Mexica conquest of Spain was that there was some conscience among the Spaniards. Thomas cites the example of such as Father Bartolomé de las Casas, the advocate of los Indios to their new rulers.

Between the Genoese and the Portuguese there were a few Spaniards involved. It is somewhat startling to learn that the first Spanish colony on the American mainland was at Darien in modern Columbia, established in 1513. (And about as successful as the subsequent Scots colony of the seventeenth century, which by bankrupting so many prominent Scots facilitated the Act of Union of 1707.) Balboa set out from there and was later beheaded there.

Somehow I had the idea that Hernán Cortés was illiterate. His first job was as a notary in Cuba and Thomas says "He had a skillful way with a pen, as his artful letters to Charles V suggest; these are the only documents still worth reading of the large body of literature created by the conquests." {Page 480} He also had a way with women — La Maliniche wasn't his only personal conquest along the way to his conquest of

Mexico.

His diplomatic skill seemed to be not to bad, either. In fact he had apparently persuaded Moctezuma that it would be possible for them, working together, to conquer China. (Imagine a brief note in a report of the Governor of Guangzhou province to the Chia Ching Emperor to the effect that several hundred barbarians of assorted types arrived in ships, started a fight, and were killed.)

Other empires were involved, and as background to this mighty change in the world Thomas described the relations and actions of Charles V — Karl V the Holy Roman Emperor who also happened to be Carlos, King of Castile and Aragon and all the other lands that made up the newly unified Spain. The genealogy of the Spanish kingdoms is a significant factor, and the combination of daughters and intermarriages that delivered this mighty assemblage of dominions to one prince of German ancestry and Flemish culture is a fascinating construction of happenstance and human actions.

Thomas is not above taking other sides. "[The] Almohades, a fanatical sect, the al-Qaida of the Middle Ages, that had conquered half of Spain in the twelfth century." (Page 519) But this comes in a description of the then capital of the New World — Seville, which was already a blending of Islamic, Hispanic, and Renaissance culture and was now becoming further enriched by the resources of yet another world.

History is a process. It is often hard to set bounds about an event, to show where one "history" ends and another begins. The European expansion into the rest of the world was made possible by ideas and by new technologies. In this book, Thomas has shown us how from Columbus to Magellan, the Spanish Empire expanded until it was the first dominion on which the sun never set.

Arguably, he should have devoted more space to the natives, the ones on the receiving end of this expansion. A concomitant of this new intercourse and commerce was the spread of diseases; because Thomas focuses on the Spaniards, he skims over the massive die-off of the indigenous inhabitants of the Americas. Not completely; he discusses how the Spaniards tried desperately to do something for the poor Indios, or at least how the government ordered it done. (And remember that disease spread both ways.)

*Rivers of Gold* introduces the reader to this transition by which a besieged outpost being hemmed in by invincible Islam became a world-spanning power.

(Incidentally, in 1503, Columbus was stranded in Jamaica. When the natives proved uncooperative, he threatened to put out the Moon — and did, whereupon they realized he had talent on loan from God. Actually he had an almanac and could predict a lunar eclipse. Nearly four hundred years later Sir H. Rider Haggard described this trick . . .)

### POSTAL COVER

Commentary by Joseph T Major on  
**THE TURNSTILE** (1911)  
by A. E. W. Mason

#### Oh there's that silly thing Shackleton sent to Con.

. . . Then the stillness of her husband's attitude caught her attention. She saw something in his face which she had never seen there before, which she had never thought to see at all. He wore the look of a man caught quite out of himself. He was as one wrapped in visions and refined by the fires of great longings. It seemed to her that she saw a man whose eyes, brimful of light, looked upon the Holy Grail.

He turned back to her. He brought her the letter still unopened and placed it in her hands. Cynthia received it as though written upon its cover she would read the revelation of his secret. Yet she saw nothing but a soiled envelope with a foreign stamp. She gazed up at her husband mystified.

"Look at the stamp, Cynthia!" said Rames in a queer voice.

Cynthia looked. It wore the head familiar to English people. But the lettering around the head was strange. She spelled it out.

"Rexland."

With a start she turned to him.

"That is the country you discovered."

"Yes. A stamp was struck to commemorate my discovery of it. . . . It is issued by the post-office — for a penny. Just think of it! A penny stamp brings a letter from the Antarctic seas to us here in

Warwickshire."

"Mr. Hemming sent it?"

"Without a doubt. . . ."

. . . She tore open the envelope.

Harry Rames stood at the window waiting for the letter to be read to him; and it seemed to him that he waited for an eternity. He had heard the tearing of the envelope. The letter was open in Cynthia's hands. Yet she did not speak a word. Rames's heart sank.

"Then he has reached the Pole?" he asked with a studied carelessness.

"I don't know," Cynthia replied in perplexity.

"Read it."

"There is nothing to read."

Rames turned round and came swiftly towards her.

"He must have forgotten to enclose his letter. There is nothing but this," said Cynthia. She was holding a blank sheet of note-paper in her hand. "No, there's not a word written anywhere. Do you understand it?"

"Yes. He has failed. . . . He would have written, you see, if he had taken it more lightly. He has nothing to say. That is what his blank sheet of paper means. That is what it must mean . . ."

— *The Turnstile*, Chapter XXXIII, "A Letter from Abroad"

A postal cover is valued among stamp collectors. Some collect first day of issue postmarks, others unusual ones.

Among the many means by which Ernest Shackleton raised money for the British Antarctic Expedition of 1908 was to sell postal covers, for which he got himself made a postmaster in the New Zealand Royal Mail. These envelopes, with the New Zealand stamp and the Antarctic postmark, helped defray the costs of the expedition.

He gave some away as gifts, or sent them off, including to Robert and Kathleen Scott. Wherein lies a tale.

For a postal cover is merely an envelope. An envelope with nothing in it will face grave stresses in the mail; hence, such envelopes have something in them. A blank piece of notepaper, a blank card, something like that.

Evidently, Robert Falcon Scott and Kathleen Bruce Scott and their circle of

friends, including Alfred Edward Woodley Mason, did not collect postmarks or know anyone who did or . . .

#### I thought you would rather have a live donkey than a dead lion.

But our story begins in a realm unconnected with either the frozen polar wastes or the Empire upon which the sun never sat. Robert and Joan Daventry are two of the many expats, men and women who left the tiny, rainy, fusty islands off the shores of Europe to make their fortune elsewhere. In this case; Argentina. Don't cry for them; their estate they farm is rich. But, like so many in their state, their hearts are still bound to home.

The second thread that makes up the tangled skein of this tale begins with a different sort of expat, the young man packed off with a bit of money lest he embarrass the family. James Challoner has managed to overstep the bounds of confidentiality and has been dismissed from his post as a clerk. He must have thought he was a century later, he peaked too soon to say that greed is good. But before he can realize anything, an earthquake deprives him of everything except his infant daughter.

This is another way in which matters have changed in the intervening years; he takes the girl with him when he begins a remarkable quest across the Andes. A man with a child can more easily be pitied, and when he brings her to a foundling hospital in Argentina he places her in the turnstile and leaves.

Somehow the Daventrys now have a child, a graceful, self-assured daughter named Cynthia. The reader is left to make the likely guess, but then that's because that was what the story contains. Two events mark Cynthia's happy life. In one, a strange irascible man shows up with a wild story about having deposited his little girl in a foundling home, because he could not take care of her, and he tracked her to there. This is silly, of course, the Daventrys say, for Cynthia is their niece. However, she herself fears that this wild wandering man James Challoner (we jumped over a few years, didn't we?) is right.

The second one is the news that an expedition is being fitted out to reach the South Pole, led by a handsome Navy officer twice her age of seventeen, Captain Harry Rames. Admiring him from afar, she

dispatches an anonymous telegram wishing only "Every heart-felt wish for a triumphant journey, from an unknown friend in South America."

But very soon she begins to lose her resemblance to that description. The Daventrys decide that it is after all time to take a long vacation at home. En route, Cynthia has the wonderful thrill of seeing Captain Rames's ship of discovery, the S.S. *Perhaps*.

But age and illness soon take Cynthia's parents, and leave her a very eligible and personable heiress. Before he dies, Robert Daventry tells Cynthia what is obvious to the reader; James Challoner was her real father. Then he places her fate in the hands of his friends, including one Isaac Benoliel, and dies.

We then find Mr. Benoliel entertaining the hero of the hour, Captain Harry Rames, just back from Antarctica. Mr. Benoliel is evidently a Person to Reckon With, though he holds no ostensible power. Oh yes, he's an Oriental Jew [presumably saying "Sefarad" or "Sephardi" would mean nothing to the audience] and therefore an International Man of Mystery.

Whereas Captain Rames, being a celebrity, should put that celebrity to good purpose, like standing for Parliament. (It should be noted that sitting in Parliament did not mean any obstruction to serving afloat, odd though this may seem.) After some thought he agrees.

Then, just out of courtesy, Mr. Benoliel introduces his two latest projects to each other. Cynthia has a shocker for the Captain; she thinks he should have gone back South. Instead he talks of the wonders of Parliament to her, somewhat disappointingly.

#### I'm afraid you'll regret it, sir.

This is where complications ensue. Rames has an encounter with a curious Frenchman. Cynthia sits in on the beginning of Rames's campaign, and then meets another Member of Parliament come to help in this district. It bothers her that the man's name is "Challoner"; as he discusses his past and present it becomes painfully clear to her that he is her grandfather.

Rames comes in first in the poll (it's interesting to note how the election counting was done in such a town-meeting style, with everyone in the town hall watching ballots

being stacked up) and takes up his new career. Meanwhile, Cynthia is not quite taking up the marriage Benoliel is arranging for her. She wants Captain Rames, M.P.

The Honourable Member's attentions are divided between parliamentary maneuvering and romantic. (The problem some modern readers may have with this book is simply that so much of this part of the plot takes for granted the intricacies of parliamentary procedure.) But, as seems to be the case, the Woman Always Knows First, and he yields to her persuasions without even knowing about her twenty-five thousand pounds a year.

This isn't Mr. Benoliel's intent. He married a younger woman, and his life was less than fulfilled. Hoping to warn Cynthia, he tells her the story of his life, as a boy in the Jewish quarter of a city in Morocco, and how he suffered the disabilities of being a Jew in an Islamic country. He made his way out, and by applying himself got financial security. Then he married a younger woman from a good but impoverished family. They couldn't live together; indeed, he started going back to his birthplace every now and then.

(Yes! Mason created a sympathetic Jewish character, animated by motives that were real, not stereotypical. Indeed, one significant point about the portrayal of Benoliel is that he is portrayed as *normal*. The writers of that period made errors of ignorance, but it is hard to say that the worldly-wise mentor Isaac Benoliel is a pushy, greedy, Elder of Zion. Oy, Yitzchak, you never should have married that shiksa.)

Nevertheless, Cynthia does marry Harry Rames. She takes up his life, as a good parliamentary wife, following through petty divisions, minor bills, and other such issues. And then Rames gets sucked into an effort to push through agricultural reform. The details of the matter hardly seem to matter; but much of the book is devoted to the Parliamentary maneuvering needed to get it presented. (How the Rameses reconcile his desire to encourage smallholdings of about 75 acres with her huge agricultural estate in Argentina is left as an exercise for the reader.)

Much of this will be irrelevant and even perhaps boring to the reader. The crucial part, though, is that Colonel Challoner is one of the Members that Rames and his associates are relying on; and Cynthia has to come to terms with her knowledge of their relationship. Not to mention whether or not

to reveal it.

But the shadow of the past reasserts itself. One day a mysterious visitor comes to see Captain Rames. Walter Heming, one of Rames's subordinates on the last expedition, has bought the *Perhaps* and is mounting his own expedition to the South. Rames discusses the madness of explorers; but there is a certain credibility lacking in his dismissal.

Matters begin to move rapidly. Rames's agricultural bill will come up for a reading; Cynthia has decided to write to Colonel Challoner and tell him about his son, her father. The bill needs the colonel's support; but rather dramatically he dies in the House, going to vote against it. And then there is the case of their one associate who turns out to have a dreadful secret.

**Whatever regrets may be,  
we have done our best.**

Antarctica looks very attractive about now, and Rames decides with great moral force that he should renounce it permanently. His life as a parliamentarian goes on.

Then, one spring morning, in the mail there is a letter (of sorts) from Rexland . . . More news comes later; Heming has tried and failed.

The couple are now divided; not from each other, for their devotion to each other may be holding each of them together. They are each divided within themselves. Rames is still going on inertia in politics; he finds his career rewarding but not satisfying, and though he is making a substantial effort to get a supporter elected there is a hollowness in his ways. Cynthia doesn't want to part from her husband; but she sees him as needing to go.

After the election she persuades him to look at his expedition materials, which he had locked up and thrown away the key. It had been quite a busy trip; he hadn't even looked at all the telegrams of support he had received. Not even the one from Argentina, the one that offered him "Every heart-felt wish for a triumphant journey, from an unknown friend in South America."

The Woman Always Knows First: Cynthia reveals the telegram, gives it to her husband, and says, "I watched you closer still, and the longing grew too big to be hidden."

So they will go. He will take a ship south, trying again. She will go not quite as far south, to her estate in the Argentine.

**We have passed the veneer of outside things.  
We have suffered, starved, and triumphed,  
grovelled down yet grasped at glory,  
grown bigger in the bigness of the whole.**

At the end of *We Have Fed Our Seas* (1959), Poul Anderson's Wise Old Man (the equivalent of Mr. Benoliel, or the Third Stage Heinlein Individual) brings his widowed daughter-in-law to the realization that pushing the envelope of human experience is a good thing. I don't know if Anderson read *The Turnstile* but it could have smoothed a few of the edges of his presentation, for all that he does it more powerfully than Mason.

Tom Wolfe's *The Right Stuff* (1979) and the splendid, if less correct and more dramatic, movie that Philip Kaufman made from it (1983) showed the costs and the strains of this Cynthia would have to live with the chance that her Hero would not come back, she would pay a price for the love of her Hero.

The oddness of this work is that it shows an Eagle set to mundane tasks. The work of Parliament — the creation of just laws (well, it is to be hoped they are just), the enforcement of the rights of the voter against the authority of those in power, the governance of the country — is a useful and valuable part of society. There is nothing in the story that make Rames out to be an incompetent, overwhelmed, or poor parliamentarian. He finds that his interests are best directed elsewhere. In this era of legislative chambers of lawyers, someone with a different background would be more desirable to the voters and less so to the other legislators.

It's interesting to consider Cynthia's motives. At first, or superficial, glance, she appears to be the pliant, submissive wife of the dull suburban legend: "I gave it all up for my husband." Looking more carefully shows more method to her measures, she turns out to be the enabler and director of her husband's urgings. She found a man who could make her dreams and desires real, and then aided and led him into doing so.

**I may not have proved a great explorer, but  
we have done the greatest march ever made  
and come very near to great success.**

Mason knew the Scotts. One can assume that he could get some of his research

material first-hand. With the associated problems that the original source may have its own agenda.

Understandably, this is not about the expedition per se. And some of the relationships are just a bit different: Rames says of his former underling Heming: "I told him to use not only my harbour, but the depots of food I had made along my sledge-route from the harbour toward the Pole." This is just a bit cordial; Scott's wrath toward Shackleton over the latter's use of Ross Island was well known, and in *South* (1919) Shackleton comments ruefully that no one has ever been able to use or even find the depots of an earlier expedition.

In an expression of real attitudes, but an inversion of real usage, Heming's polar dash fails because:

. . . "The dogs gave out," [Rames] said to Cynthia. "The dogs are the trouble. You can't carry enough food for them and for the sledging-party as well. Of course, it's bad luck on Heming. But I doubt if he followed the highest traditions of British exploration."

No, not man-hauling; but he should have tried from someplace else. Rames says: "Oh I should search for a harbour a long way to the east of my old one." Roald Amundsen did not need to read *The Turnstile*, even if he could have (he spoke English, but was already on the way by the time this was published), to find the harbor a long way to the east of Ross Island.

Robert Scott would no doubt have been very much satisfied with a wife who had twenty-five thousand pounds a year, and surely Kathleen Bruce, later Scott, would have found that an income gave her freedom to paint and sculpt. (I've run across personal budgets Scott and Shackleton drew up. Shackleton budgeted 200£ a year for his wife's personal expenses. The Scotts hoped to live on all of 300£ a year!)

The image of a turnstile is a recurring theme throughout the book. Cynthia characterizes each significant change in her life as a passage into a new mode, controlled by a turnstile. She chooses when and how to go, and who goes with her.

I'd like to thank Lisa for finding this book and giving it to me.

**It seems a pity,  
but I do not think I can write more.**

### **A THREAD OF DECEIT**

Review by Joseph T Major of  
**THE DECEIVERS:**

*Allied Military Deception in the Second World War*

by Thaddeus Holt

(Scribner; 2004; ISBN 0-7432-5042-7;  
\$49.95)

SUN TZU said:

17. All warfare is based on deception.
18. Therefore when capable, feign incapacity; when active, inactivity.
19. When near, make it appear that you are far away; when far away, that you are near.
20. Offer the enemy a bait to lure him; feign disorder and strike him.
21. When he concentrates, prepare against him; where he is strong, avoid him.
22. Anger his general and confuse him.
23. Pretend inferiority and encourage his arrogance.

— *Ping Fa* (The Art of War), Chapter I “Estimates”

The colorful (or, perhaps, “colourful”) espionage tales that Rupert “Nigel West” Allison was at such pains to refute in *Unreliable Witness: Espionage Myths of the Second World War* (1985; American title *A Thread of Deceit*) and *Counterfeit Spies* (1998) often read like novels, are the source for novels, and in one case (Quentin Reynolds’s *The Man Who Wouldn’t Talk* (1953)) had been republished as a novel. In a way, it is a pity, for the real stories are often more interesting, more dramatic, and (since they are real, and not bound by what editors will think is plausible) far more fabulous than mere fictions.

Indeed, this story of deception involves nobs, snobs, and bun-fights; writers, actors, and conjurers (one imagines the new Chief of the Deception Service, Sir Edmund Blackadder, gleefully explaining, “I want rustlers, cutthroats, bounty hunters . . .” while his dimwit assistant Baldrick searches himself for a pen); comedy and tragedy, excitement and let-down — source material for dozens of

far more dramatic stories than the Secret Agent Dispatched With Lies, the Agent Betrayed to Hide a Secret, the Conspirator Who Worked for All, and the other stock plots of thriller fiction, now lame and weary through overuse.

Indeed, the problem is that they are so commonplace that many can’t tell the difference. Petty murderers have explained how they were secret-service assassins. On a grander scale, tales of vast spy agency conspiracies proliferate. And everybody knows all about all this because they read it in a book somewhere. The line between fact and fiction becomes blurred, to the advantage of lies.

This is, moreover, a venue in which lies are common. Indeed, this is a book full of lies! However, one hopes, coming on sixty years after the fact (or the lie) that the lies are at least recounted honestly.

Holt begins his tale with a genealogy of deception. Intellectually, of course, the use of deception in warfare goes all the way back to the beginning. But the direct descent begins with Thomas Jonathan Jackson, who did more than just stand like a stone wall at Manassas Junction, or outmarch the Yankees up and down and up the Shenandoah. During the Seven Days, while rushing off to reinforce the Army of Northern Virginia, Stonewall left the Federals morally certain he was going to attack in the Valley; making surveys, moving cavalry around, and undertaking the preparations for an attack.

In 1898, Colonel G. F. R. Henderson published a biography of Jackson, based on on-site research and interviews of surviving officers of his army, stressing this point. Two years later, Colonel Henderson found himself on the staff of Field-Marshal Sir Frederick Sleigh Roberts (soon to be the Earl Roberts of Kandahar; for what that’s worth, that title was for defeating the Afghans in Afghanistan, so you see, someone could indeed do it), known from Mr Kipling on down as “Bobs Bahadur”.

Bobs was fighting the Boers, considered invincible by cause of their intimate acquaintance with the veldt, and from the string of defeats they had handed the British, there was certainly enough proof of this thesis. Bobs however decided to let them know where he was attacking. Then in a shockingly unsporting trick, he attacked elsewhere, relieving the besieged garrison of Kimberley. Those demned Indian officers . .

One of the officers under Bobs in this battle was Edmund Henry Hynman Allenby, called “The Bull”. But this bull used the cape to divert the Turks at Gaza in the Great War of 1917. After two direct attacks failed he made sure they saw a third coming there. When his real attack came at Beersheba they were dumfounded. Just to make sure, he repeated the policy at Megiddo, and the ensuing battle was indeed an armageddon for Ottoman rule. Which is why Allenby’s heir is Viscount Allenby of Megiddo.

One of the officers under the Bull in this fight was Archibald Percival Wavell. In the even Greater War, Archie Wavell found himself thoroughly surrounded. More deceit was in order. Fortunately, he remembered a man who just might be able to do something about it.

Enter the master deceiver, Dudley Wrangel Clarke, Lieutenant-Colonel, Royal Artillery. (Had he met at Woolwich a would-be Sapper, Charles Wright Clarke from Somerset [father of Arthur]?) Dudley was born in Johannesburg, son of gold mine executive Ernest Clarke (did he bank at the Bank of Africa with Arthur Tolkien [father of Ronald]?), served across the breadth of the Empire, and had met General Wavell. Wavell had a way of getting men with unusual and needed skills (read the story of Ralph Bagnold, F.R.S, founder of the Long Range Desert Group, who admittedly comes off not very well in this venue).

Once they had the men, what did they do? Holt very thoughtfully lays out the principles of deception in the early pages of the book:

Specifically [Dudley Clarke] had learned:

First, the CAMILLA principle: The object of a deception is not to induce the enemy commander to *think* something, but to induce him to *do* something: To act as you want him to act. And its corollaries: Your *target* is the mind of the enemy commander. You must judge what estimate of the situation given to him by his intelligence services will induce him to act as you wish. Your *customers* are the enemy intelligence services. You need to know how they operate, and what information given to them will induce them to give their commander the estimate of the

situation that will cause him to act as you want him to act.

Second, the K-SHELL principle: Never conduct a deception with no clear object simply because you can do so.

Third, a proper deception plan must have time to work. Only a quick and simple tactical deception can be expected to work on short notice. A major operational deception may take weeks to percolate through the enemy system; a large-scale strategic one may take months.

— *The Deceivers*, Pages 50-51

The building of this deception system required some “outside the box” efforts. Much of it was done through informal, casual connections. Holt finds that the less rigid British staff system made this easier to do and that the more rigid American system initially impeded American efforts. For example, would a second lieutenant in the USAAF be able to entertain generals? But a RAF pilot officer (the equivalent rank) working in the deception system could and did. It helped, though, that said pilot officer was Dennis Wheatley, the famous writer. Wheatley wrote thrillers (some even with a SF touch) before and after the war. He could invite admirals, generals, and air marshals to lunch at a posh club or dinner at his splendid home, and treat them with respect and dignity. This courtly treatment made British commanders *very* open to deception planners.

SUN TZU said:

9. Subtle and insubstantial, the expert leaves no trace; divinely mysterious, he is inaudible. Thus he is master of his enemy’s fate.
10. He whose advance is irresistible plunges into his enemy’s weak positions; he who in withdrawal cannot be pursued, moves so swiftly that he cannot be overtaken.
11. When I wish to give battle, my enemy, even though protected by high walls and deep moats, cannot help but engage me, for I attack a position he must succour.
12. When I wish to avoid battle I may defend myself simply by drawing a line on the ground; the enemy

will be unable to attack me because I divert him from going where he wishes.

13. If I am able to determine the enemy's dispositions while at the same time I conceal my own then I can concentrate and he must divide. And if I concentrate while he divides, I can use my entire strength to attack a fraction of his. There, I will be numerically superior. Then, if I am able to use many to strike few at the selected point, those I deal with will be in dire straits.

14. The enemy must not know where I intend to give battle. For if he does not know where I intend to give battle he must prepare in a great many places. And when he prepares in a great many places, those I have to fight in any one place will be few.

— *Ping Fa* (The Art of War), Chapter VI  
“Weaknesses and Strengths”

What of the customers? In spite of the commonplace legend of the Teutonically Efficient Gestapo, the Germans were sadly inefficient in the intelligence department. Intelligence was given a lower priority in staff tables of organization. The Nazi system of organization meant that competing intelligence agencies spent more time struggling against each other than they did collecting or organizing information (Walther Schellenberg's *The Labyrinth* (1956) is more about organizing his organization, the *Sicherheitsdienst* [“security service”], than it is about the intelligence it obtained, for example).

If anything, the Japanese were far worse. Holt recounts the efforts of British, and later American, deception efforts aimed at the Japanese which seem not even to have been noticed. It was very frustrating to have such hard work go unappreciated. Japanese foreign intelligence was very poor. (Thus fears of a pro-Japanese uprising, as for example in Hector Bywater's *The Great Pacific War of 1931* (1925), were unfounded, and in retrospect the internment of Japanese-Americans becomes even less justified, though they didn't know that at the time.)

The best Axis intelligence service, one whose efforts were not supported by the other

parts of its country's government, was the Italian. The Italian army's *Servizio de Informazione Militare* (SIM) was considered a far more capable and efficient opponent in the deception game, and its officers saw through some of the deceptions laid against them.

Who were the men who laid these plots? Besides Clarke and Wheatley, one of the first deception specialists was stockbroker, polylinguist, and World War vet John Bevan. Johnny had links to Society, as his wife was Lady Barbara Bingham, daughter of the Earl of Lucan, one between the Charge of the Light Brigade and the nanny-snuffing gambler. (Her brother-in-law, General Sir Harold Alexander, would prove very amenable to deception plans in his turn.)

Another was a world traveller, a man who had been there, done that, and written a book. Books indeed would run in his family. But back then, Peter Fleming was the famous one, while his brother Ian, Ian Fleming, was just an aide to Admiral Godfrey of Naval Intelligence.

Not all the planners were British. The way the war progressed, the British took the lead in the European theater, while the Americans deceived in the Pacific. Given that the Japanese proved thickheadedly impervious to deception, the successes tended to go to the British, and that meant that the Americans were overshadowed. Yet they had their own outstanding characters and planners.

One of the leading American deception planners was in his way as “outside the box” as Wheatley was. Sergeant Ballantine in *Gunga Din* told Emmy that he wasn't the sort of man who would desert his friends. Captain Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., U.S.N.R. (and later hon. K.B.E.), like his character, wouldn't do that either, but he would gladly trick his enemies. Not surprisingly, Dudley Clarke liked working with one of the actors he liked.

Oddly enough, Colonel Newman Smith, another of the chief American deceivers, was the brother-in-law of Zelda Fitzgerald, whose husband Scott had done rewrite work on *Gunga Din*. It seemed slightly more important that he was a WWI vet and a banker, and spoke French, German, and Spanish.

SUN TZU said:

9. Doubled agents are enemy spies

whom we employ . . .

17. It is essential to seek out enemy agents who have come to conduct espionage against you and to bribe them to serve you. Give them instructions and care for them. Thus doubled agents are recruited and used.

— *Ping Fa* (The Art of War), Chapter XIII  
“Employment of Secret Agents”

The workers, the doubled agents who turned against their ostensible owner through intent, planning, or pressure, were the ones who made the clever plans of the deceivers work. Head and shoulders above the rest, the man who planned as well as worked, was the artful Catalan Juan Pujol García. (Holt correctly refers to him as “Pujol” throughout.) After a *Good Soldier Schweik* style career in the Spanish Civil War, a marriage, and the birth of a son, Pujol began his career making up spy information for the Germans, who ate it up. (He said that Glasgow dockworkers were generally close-mouthed but tended to open up after a liter or two of red wine. They believed him.)

Then, thanks to ULTRA, the British discovered this guy. Cross-checking revealed that he had approached them earlier, asking to be taken on. They repaired that omission, flying Sr. y Sra. Pujol y el niño to Blighty, and since as a spy, he was the greatest actor in the world, he was given the code-name GARBO. (It's also been pointed out that in case of compromise, a woman's name would be more indicative of a female agent.)

Throughout the war they gave him instructions and cared for him, and in return GARBO — ARABEL to the Germans — performed splendidly, in his most effective role sending information to the Abwehr about General Patton's First U.S. Army Group, ready to land at the Pas de Calais. Not to mention explaining how this landing at Normandy was only a diversion, then misdirecting the V-1 buzz bombs. (For his own story, read *GARBO: The Personal Story of the Most Successful Double Agent Ever* (American title *Operation GARBO*) (1985) by Juan Pujol García and Nigel West.)

As an example of how the plan could fail in spite of everyone's best efforts, consider Agent TRICYCLE. (So called either because he had two real sub-agents, he liked having two women at a time, or he was so generously

built . . . well, this is a family zine; the Abwehr called him IVAN.) Dusko Popov was sent to the U.S. to set up a notional spy ring, working with the FBI. The Feds had broken up one spy ring, with attendant publicity, and apparently wondered where these other Nazi spies who were supposed to be approaching Popov. Annoyed, he went back to Spain to explain things, and continued bluffing the Germans until his controller was arrested, whereupon much concern, fortunately in vain, over their double-agents being revealed took place. (In one meeting with his German handlers, Popov was given the notorious “Tricycle Memorandum”, which asks a lot of questions about US airplane production — and about Pearl Harbor. It is thought by many that that was the first indication of the attack on Pearl Harbor, but the attribution is less certain than it has made out to be by others.)

Popov gave his own side of the tale in *Spy/Counterspy* (1974) and Montagu backed him up in *Beyond Top Secret Ultra* (1978). At one point in his book Popov tells a story about using \$50,000 of Abwehr spy money to intimidate a boastful bettor in a Lisbon casino, which made his British handler concerned. The handler was Ian Fleming.

Once Ian's involvement in the security services during the Second World War is considered, the origins of many of the events of James Bond's career become obvious. In “The Living Daylights” (a story which aside from having Bond and a pretty Soviet cellist has nothing to do with the movie of that title) M refers to “cracking a day's setting” of the Soviet code machines, which has nothing to do with Soviet methods (they would use one-time pads, but see VENONA) and everything to do with the Enigma machine. Similarly, Ernst Starvo Blofeld got his start spying for the Germans, by making up his information using a railway directory. In the real world, so did GARBO, and so did another man, Paul Fidrmuc, codenamed OSTRO by the Germans. The British didn't consider Fidrmuc worth recruiting, although he did strike close to the truth occasionally, and inconveniently. One might well say he was running his own personal deception, giving out for his own gain fabricated information.

SUN TZU said:

10. Expendable agents are those of our own spies who are deliberately

given fabricated information.

— *Ping Fa* (The Art of War), Chapter XIII “Employment of Secret Agents”

Griffin uses “expendable” as an alternative to “death”. Of course, an “expendable agent” need hardly be alive: case in point, Operation MINCEMEAT, “The Man Who Never Was”. Holt has added to this story by revealing the name of the dead man whose body was used to plant evidence indicating allied landings in places besides the real target of Sicily, and other issues related to the operation. Ewen Montagu, author of the eponymous book on the subject (*The Man Who Never Was* (1953)) was not as significant as he made himself out to be. Holt points out that the one member of the Nazi government who believed it was a ruse was Reich Propaganda Minister Josef Goebbels, Dr. Phil. — something about a liar being able to know one when he saw one.

The direct ancestor of this is Richard Meinertzhagen’s “knapsack” deception, planting a knapsack with forged maps on the Turks before Allenby’s attack at Beersheba. Clarke also hoaxed Rommel in that fashion before the Battle of Alam Halfa. Not all the “expendable agent” deceptions actually needed bodies, that is.

Peter Fleming tried to pull off his own Operation MINCEMEAT, but had trouble finding a body — there were plenty of bodies in India, all wasted by famine — and then when he planted the dead agent, the Japanese apparently didn’t even bother to look!

In “The Quaker Cannon” by Frederik Pohl and Cyril M. Kornbluth (*Analog*, August 1961), deception proves to be a significant plot element in a rerun of FORTITUDE combined with MINCEMEAT. Instead of the spurious signals and double-agent fakery that Hesketh, GARBO, & Assoc. employed, or the documents planted on a corpse that Montagu and Fleming dispatched, the deceivers here have to actually dispatch an officer in a manner straight out of Sun Tzu, to break under interrogation and reveal the deception plan, which he believes is perfectly true. One finds it hard to believe the planners would employ only the one source, much less that the Communist Bloc alliance would credit it. I take it Pohl and Kornbluth hadn’t heard of the capture in January 1940 of the German plans for the invasion of Belgium — after which the allies congratulated themselves for

not falling for this blatantly obvious deception operation. Well, the real invasion used a different plan . . . something about the earlier invasion plan having been compromised.

The book concludes with overwhelming infodumps of material; listings of the deception campaigns, tallies of the deception agents, orders of battle of the fictional armies. There is enough material here for several alternative histories of the war. (And material far more interesting than a bite-by-bite description of the consumption of a bowl of cereal.)

Did others do this? Holt is writing a book on **Allied** deception; i.e., the concept of Axis deception is outside the view of his work. Did they do any? Given the poor standing of their services, apparently not.

However, there is one Ally which isn’t mentioned at all, and which already had a reputation for strategic deception. However, the access to their records is erratic. The Soviet Union had already pulled off one grand deception, the notional counterrevolutionary organization called “The Trust”, and would repeat it after the war in Poland. There is a work on this matter which I unfortunately have not been able to obtain, *Stalin’s Secret War: Soviet Counterintelligence Against the Nazis* by Robert W. Stephan (2003). The best-known Soviet deception of the war, however, was only meant to tie up German special warfare resources and avert disruption of their effort.

In his memoirs, *My Commando Operations*, German special warfare expert Otto Skorzeny describes the great effort he was at to succor a fellow German officer. A resolute colonel named Scherhorn had organized hundreds of German troops trapped behind the Russian lines and was attempting to lead them to safety. Skorzeny organized supply drops and the infiltration of medical personnel, but never quite could get anyone out.

In his memoirs, *Special Tasks* (1995), Pavel Sudoplatov explains why Skorzeny’s efforts didn’t work; the entire force was a fraud. This was only a minor deception, but it opens the possibility of deeper and greater ones. Sudoplatov got no recognition at the time for his efforts.

SUN TZU said:

2. One who confronts his enemy for

many years in order to struggle for victory in a decisive battle yet who, because he begrudges rank, honours, and a few hundred pieces of gold, remains ignorant of his enemy’s situation, is completely devoid of humanity. Such a man is no general; no support to his sovereign; no master of victory.

— *Ping Fa* (The Art of War), Chapter XIII “Employment of Secret Agents”

Dudley Clarke became a Companion of the Bath in the Victory Honours; quite a leap for a mere Brigadier. Secretly, Juan Pujol García became a Member of the Order of the British Empire; he would wear the medal during his visit to London in 1984. And I’ve mentioned the honorary Sir Douglas Fairbanks. Others were rewarded variably, sometimes even proportionally to their efforts.

Intelligence is like insurance; it’s expensive and confusing, you never quite know if you needed it, but if you didn’t have it, you would find out that you should have. In this long, exhaustive, and personal history, Holt has described the people who hoodwinked the enemy and the ways and means they used to hoodwink them.

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### DEADLINE

Review by Joseph T Major of

#### **MORTAL CRIMES:**

*The Greatest Theft in History: The Soviet Penetration of the Manhattan Project*

by “Nigel West” [Rupert Allason]

(Enigma Books; 2004;

ISBN 1-929631-21-9; \$27.00)

Since last January, when the uranium fission reaction was first announced, progress towards the solution to the problem of practicable, commercial atomic power has been so rapid that only weekly bulletins could report the succeeding waves of advance. Now . . . not the atomic physicist, but the physical chemist must make the next step — the isolation of Uranium isotope 235.

— “Arthur McCann”, “Isotope 235”

Sir Arthur C. Clarke’s *Astounding Days* (1989) and Alva Rogers’s *A Requiem for Astounding* (1964) recount the escalating predictions made by John W. Campbell, both

directly (under his own name and pseudonyms such as “Arthur McCann”) and through his writers, regarding the progress and utility of atomic fission, beginning with the above, published in 1939. A faithful reader of such stories as “Deadline” by Cleve Cartmill (*Astounding*, March 1944) would hardly have been surprised by the events at ENORMOZ — er, that is, the Manhattan Engineering District.

Thus Campbell proved himself smarter than General Leslie Groves. In response to a radio host’s cheerful announcement of a secret government project “investigating the energy of the atom”, Groves issued an order forbidding the media from even using the word “uranium” (Page 88). This would have put a crimp in Campbell’s publication efforts.

British journalist and historical debunker Nigel West [Rupert Allason] has turned his attention to TUBE ALLOYS — the inter-Allied project to develop nuclear weapons, and in particular the Soviet attempt to obtain its secrets. It is well to remember that both these efforts began long before December 6, 1941, long before Franklin D. Roosevelt read the letter signed by Einstein and approved funding for the Manhattan Engineering District. To begin:

The first step in the development of the atomic bomb can be traced to the memorandum written at the University of Birmingham by Professors Otto Frisch and Rudolf Peierls, who had studied the delicate question of the critical mass of uranium or, in layman’s terms, the point at which uranium would support a chain reaction and create the explosive energy associated with nuclear fusion.

— *Mortal Crimes*, Page 1

This was in early 1940, and the government proceeded at a slow but definite pace towards employing this energy. (West does indeed cite H. G. Wells’s *The World Set Free* (1914) as an early example of such weapons.)

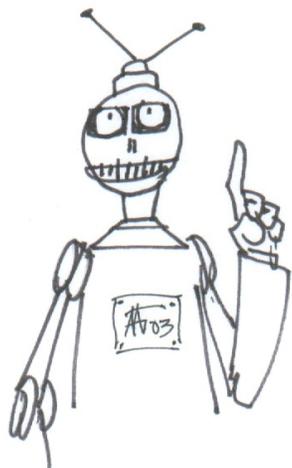
But with early enquiry came early disclosure. In October of 1940 the initial report was submitted to the War Cabinet. One of the secretaries to the ministers was John Cairncross, the Fifth Man of the Cambridge Ring of Five, Agent LIZST. Who communicated this to his controller, Anatoly

Gorsky, who sent it to Moscow. West discusses the problems of the Schecters' defective research for *Special Tasks*, which led to confusion in (for example) this incident (Pages 16-17). Then, in May of 1941, Peierls acquired an assistant, Klaus Fuchs (Agent CHARLES).

By November 6, 1941, the British had begun to establish the systems needed to research and produce such a weapon. The events of a month and a day later indicated that some sort of broader cooperation was needed. Similarly, by then the Soviet organs of intelligence had begun recruiting and deploying agents and setting up analysts to prepare this. West lists several other agents besides Fuchs, and this was before the principal American agent effort.

One of the mysteries that has emerged in the recent revelations has to do with an agent whose codename was PERS or PERSEUS (and initially VOGEL; codenames were changed). West argues that PERS was not particularly significant. Yet one of the suspects is Rudolf Peierls himself (Pages 169-171).

WELL YES, I THINK ABOUT  
MECCA A LOT, BUT MECCA  
IS SHORT FOR MECCANO,  
THE LOST... CALL IT THE  
GARDEN OF EDEN!



Another agent of as much mystery but far more significance was VEKSEL. Here West uses an interesting linguistic argument; the code name is usually translated as "Bill of Exchange" but he argues that a "veksel" is more properly a promissory note, a financial instrument involving compulsion, the high-living young nobleman finding himself temporarily strapped for cash and signing a "veksel" to get enough to gamble away that evening. Then he points out that Enrico Fermi would have needed money to move his family from Italy to the US.

He also touches on the other suspect for VEKSEL, J. Robert Oppenheimer. West discusses the odd circumstances of Oppenheimer's circle of family and friends, who seemed to be all members of the Communist Party (he translates the code name for such as COMPATRIOT). There are a number of suggestive events in Oppenheimer's life and in the various archives, but no hard proof of any detailed link. (Oppenheimer, you will recall, was the model for Robert Stadler in *Atlas Shrugged* (1957). What Ayn Rand would have made of this additional information . . .)

Besides PERS and VEKSEL, West discusses at some length the better-known spies: Fuchs, Ted Hall (MLAD; "Young"), and Julius Rosenberg (LIBERAL). As in the case presented in *Alger Hiss's Looking-Glass Wars* (2004) we find that the argument is treated as settled; there's no longer any question of guilt, the question then becomes how and why. Beyond that, he mentions a cascade of various lesser spies, such people as Melita Norwood (Agent TINA), one of those people exposed in the Mitrokhin Archives, and David Greenglass (Agent CALIBER), whose career has been exposed in Sam Roberts's *The Brother* (2001).

A number of the identifications took some time to establish, and sometimes there were high-comical mis-steps along the way. For example, at one point the FBI interrogated this suspicious fellow who, their reports said, had been teaching Political Economy and Marxism and Leninism at the Communist Workers School. He was able to convince them that he wasn't the Edward Teller they were looking for (Page 247).

In the final chapter, West discusses the Canadian Connection, the one that began at the end with the revelations by Igor Gouzenko. From this, the various security

services finally had the corroborative evidence needed to unravel this tangled skein of espionage, and arrest one man named, Allan Nunn May (Agent ALEK). (West gives a recounting of the Gouzenko defection that calls into question the lurid recounting in *Intrepid's Last Case* by William Stevenson (1983), or at least who did it.)

One problem, that we are still seeing today, is the lack of communication. It has been observed that the FBI only found out about the Manhattan Project because of a Soviet defector. In other connections, OSS director William J. Donovan worked well with a man he did not know was NKGB officer Gaik Ovakimyan, who was also engaged in overseeing the penetration of the Manhattan Project, after his expulsion from the U.S. — based on FBI reports! And in general the FBI reacted slowly to the new enemy. Perhaps they were waiting for Soviet agents to report to a double agent of theirs.

One clarification: speaking of one particular chekist case officer West says: "[Roland] Abbiate was an impressive, sophisticated operator and handled some high level sources, among them Isadore Stone of *The Nation*, who was also the Washington correspondent for *PM*." (Page 215) "Isadore Stone" is better known as I. F. Stone. The revelation of his work for the Soviets (Agent PANCAKE ["BLIN"]) is one that people don't seem to have confronted.

Similarly they really haven't come to terms with the work of J. B. S. Haldane for the Soviets (Agent INTELLIGENSIA; see Page 52) — I call to mind the essay by Martin Gardner excoriating Haldane's fellow-travelling. Gardner ended the article with what now seems to be an astonishing piece of psychic insight. In his later years Haldane had adopted Hindu customs; Gardner ended the article with a drawing of him with a hammer and sickle caste mark. Perhaps he should put in for the Randi Million Dollar Prize.

What exactly was the point of it all? If a man who failed a chemistry degree could sit in an office surrounded by printing presses and describe the means so well, why was this enormous effort put forth to obtain the Secret of the Atom Bomb?

In Cyril Kornbluth's "Two Dooms" (1958) Manhattan Engineering District researcher Edward Royland is satisfied to find that his method of initiating a chain reaction works.

He is working on one of five proposed methods.

The Manhattan Project was like that; the researchers explored every possible means searching for one (or more) that worked. It was expensive and wasteful, but extremely expedient and effective.

The material passed on to the Soviets by Hall, Fuchs, and the others was classified on the level of "Top Secret Restricted" (probably "To Be Preserved Forever" (*Khranit' Vechno*, [Хранять Вечно] the Soviet version I have heard of) and the only person allowed to see it was their Chief Designer, Igor Kurchatov. But because of the espionage effort, he knew what worked, and was spared the dozens of blind alleys that the Anglo-Americans had to explore.

Small wonder that the Soviet atom bomb was three years early. If they had not been so secret among themselves, it might have been even earlier.

This is not the end of the speculation, discussion, and investigation of the part of the history of the Manhattan Engineering District that was to be preserved forever. But it should be at least the end of the beginning.

### BLOODLINE OF THE HOLY GRAIL?

Review by Joseph T Major of  
*THE DA VINCI HOAX:*

*Exposing the Errors in The Da Vinci Code*  
by Carl E. Olson and Sandra Miesel  
(Ignatius Press; 2004;  
ISBN 1-58617-034-1; \$15.95)

The last verse of the Gospel of Thomas, beloved of progressive moderns for its enlightened, egalitarian, feminist views, is:

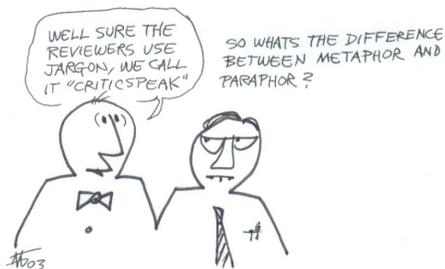
Simon Peter said to them, "Let Mary leave us, for women are not worthy of life." Jesus said, "I myself shall lead her in order to make her male, so that she too may become a living spirit resembling you males. For every woman who will make herself male will enter the kingdom of heaven."

This is one of the more annoying matters this annoying book cites (see Page 58).

Dan Brown's work *The Da Vinci Code* (2003) has stirred up a new interest in spirituality, tapping a deep well of longing for higher things. If only it had been *worthwhile*

interest . . .

Sandra Miesel, whose name should not be unfamiliar to you, has turned her vast intellectual powers to debunking. Writing in conjunction with Carl E. Olson, editor of *Envoy* magazine and a contributor to Richard Neuhaus's *First Things*, as well as author of the critique of Tim LaHaye, *Will Catholics Be "Left Behind"?* (2003), she has produced a critique of the pop religion of the elite.



Brown has chosen a commonplace, tricky method by which he can assert and disavow his ideas at the same time; on the one hand, he says he is only writing a novel, on the other, that his work is strictly fact-based. As a result, I have seen reviews of this work complaining, "Hey, it's only a *novel!*" or words to that effect. The authors don't let him off. (In *Stolen Valor* (1998), B. G. Burkett and Glenna Whitley discuss this method when used to deal with Vietnam veterans' stories, as does "Nigel West" in *Counterfeit Spies* (1998) about World War Two tale-tellers.)

*The Da Vinci Code* is written from a very specific point of view. For example, Brown denounces Opus Dei. Which would be fine except he manages to mis-characterize it and make it sound even more closed and covert than it is (Pages 34-35).

Indeed, Brown seems to divide Christianity into Good Guys — gnostic feminists — and Bad Guys — Catholics. The Orthodox don't exist at all in his story, or evidently his world-view (Page 25). (One frequently sees a similar, if not identical, division of the world into Catholics and unbelievers in SF; i.e., James Blish's *A Case of Conscience* (1953, 1958) and Mary Doria Russell's *The Sparrow* (1996) and its sequel *Children of God* (1998).) Moreover, he seems to be too focused on the Catholic hierarchy and identifies it exclusively with the

Church. (Olson & Miesel criticize him for using "Vatican" inappropriately, such as in a fourth century context; to the extent that he is using "Vatican" as shorthand for "the Catholic hierarchy", this is a sloppy and misleading usage, but not totally erroneous.)

The gnostic feminist issue is also dubious. The final verse of the Gospel of Thomas quoted above is one that most of the writers Brown approves of ignore, and the ones who do notice it interpret out of existence. But Gnostic theology — if you can call it that — was rather amorphous. If you recall the prophets in *Monty Python's Life of Brian* (1979) with their highly symbolic, bizarrely interpreted speeches, that was the style of Gnosticism. Modern interpreters have projected contemporary attitudes on to these. (Pages 45-72)

Brown tags on to other fads. The Templars, for example, and the authors do their fellow writers a disservice by debunking the many Templar myths. (Whatever will Katherine Kurtz, for example, do if the Templars *didn't* continue their covert occult existence in Scotland (Page 222)?) The history of the Templars was gritty, grim, and all too mundane (Pages 194-239). Another fad Brown takes up is the "feminist Holocaust" of the "Burning Times", along with the usual gross exaggerations as to breadth, targets, and scope of the witch hunts (Pages 281-286). (So much for Leo Frankowski having roving inquisitors burning witches in thirteenth-century Poland.)

Equally, Brown distorts historical matters not related to religion. Just to consider its title, the authors cite a number of assertions he makes about Leonardo da Vinci which are at best dubious and mostly flat-out wrong (Pages 244-251). Leonardo may have been homosexual, but he was not *flagrantly* so. And Constantine the Great is poorly treated, too. (See Pages 132-177)

Even tangential issues come up. For example, the authors discuss the theory that ancient Judaism had a female consort to JHWH (cited in Stirling's *Island in the Sea of Time* (1998)) and demonstrate its falsity (Pages 291-294). Like most such items (i.e., the silly and erroneous linguistic derivations given in Victor Koman's *The Jehovah Contract* (1987)) this stems from a disdain for what is seen as the oppressive religious entity which seeks any method, no matter how unsound, to oppose it. And most of them are very much unsound.

Thus far, Brown, like Katherine Kurtz, has seemingly not encountered Michel Lafosse, the Stuart faker called "Prince Michael of Albany". One wonders why, since Lafosse's research style is as flimsy as theirs. One thinks of the line from *Bored of the Rings* (1969) pointing out that the boggies' "elaborately forged family trees had roots about as sturdy as Birnham [sic] Wood." (*Bored of the Rings*, Page xvii). The authors cite Pierre Plantard's insertion, James Reavis style, of forged proofs of his Merovingian ancestry into French records; Lafosse puts his up on the Net! (Maybe Brown & c. could fix on the actor Ned Stuart, the heir and descendant of Henry Cardinal York — that's his story and he's sticking to it.)

The late Pierre Plantard "de St. Clair" is relevant as being the principal source for *Holy Blood, Holy Grail* (1982) by Michael Baigent, Henry Lincoln, and Richard Leigh. Which in turn is a primary source for *The Da Vinci Code*. In fact, the lead Good Guy Leigh Teabing is named after two of the writers — "Teabing" being an anagram of "Baigent". *Holy Blood, Holy Grail* is written on the von Däniken pattern; make a supposition on one page and on the next treat it as a fact to be the basis of further suppositions. *The Da Vinci Code* is true to its source.

Brown taps into a hostile view popular among those who will take any means to reject religious culture. In his way, he is as simplistic and distorted as Tim LaHaye, for all that he is writing for the people who reject LaHaye's simplistic, distorted views.

Science fiction and fantasy writers so often adhere to a sketchy, trivial, and incorrect view of a culture. We should know better. This book is one of those aimed at getting us to know better.

## HYBRIDS

by Joe

The Louisville Metro Air Pollution Control District, where I work, wishes to be, or at least appear, "green". This desire evinces itself in divers sundry ways.

For example, using hybrid cars. The District owns a Toyota hybrid electric Prius. Which I drove down to the Metro garage one day, to pick up one of our other cars.

The "hybrid" factor is that there are both gasoline and electric motors in the vehicle. Just what we need, two motors to break down. The electric motor does most of the work but

the gas engine kicks in when the car needs speed. The battery charges when the driver hits the brake and when the car is stopped at a light.

All this important information is imparted to the driver through a paperback-sized screen in the dashboard. It's a nice diagram, and for lagniappe it has the outside temperature. For those (like myself) who can't be satisfied by merely noting that it's damn hot or icy cold out there, this is a boon.

The car handles okay, once you get used (I get used) to the shift. The shift lever is on the dashboard, beside the steering column. I suppose they had to put it there because it won a design competition.

It's a little too small for me; I had the seat as far back as it would go and was still cramped. This isn't the sort of car we would be driving to cons anyhow, not enough luggage space. The amount of luggage we take even for a weekend trip is staggering, and when we go to Worldcons, the bellboys are staggering under it. It's more a go around town car.

It handles nicely and that rather elaborate driving system didn't give any problems while I was driving. I do wonder about the maintenance and upkeep.

Grant McCormick once owned a Toyota. As he put it, "I have a toy Ota and someday I'll have a real one." The Prius is definitely a toy Ota.

## TO THE PERSON SITTING IN DARKNESS

I wanted to get my family newsletter out early, because we were thinking of going to Lisa's father's for the weekend. So on Tuesday night (July 13), along about eight in the evening, we set out with the proofs to go to Office Depot (we also get *Alexiad* copied there).

It was blowing up a storm, so I turned back and got my big red rain jacket. (It's XXL, so I rattle around comfortably in it.) Then we went on up towards I-64.

The rain broke about the time we got to the last interchange before getting on the expressway, and looking at the clouds and the downpour, Lisa said we had better go home. Which I came to agree was a good idea, so we turned and made our way through the streets back to our humble abode.

There were a lot of streetlights out, not surprisingly. However, as we drove down

Christy Avenue, it looked awfully dark. It was. The power was out.

We scouted in the house and finally found a flashlight, then sat in the bedroom for a couple of hours reflecting the light off the ceiling to get a decent distribution. When it became clear that there might not be power for a while, we decided to go to bed.

I couldn't sleep. I went outside a couple of times and even went up to the upper deck. The city looked different . . . there was enough light reflecting off the clouds from the parts of the city that still had light that I could see, but the houses looked calm in the dark.

A little after midnight I was still wired enough to want to do something, so I went for a drive while Lisa slept. There were enough branches blown down on the inner streets to make turning down them an interesting adventure. I drove past the Air Pollution Control District office and the floodlights were on, so I presumed I had better go in that coming morning.

After my drive, I went upstairs and managed to get some sleep. The bedroom gets pretty hot (that's why we bought the window air conditioner) so I didn't sleep very well.

I had a sketchy breakfast in the morning — we had been about out of milk and I had intended to get more last night, which plan was gone with the wind. As God is my witness . . . never mind. The office was cool and I managed to survive.

The newspaper had the bad news; over eighty thousand people without power. Some would not have it back for over a week.

At noon, when I went home for lunch, the clocks were all flashing. Power had just come on again. I spent some time resetting them before going back to work.

We ate out that night at Imperial Palace Mongolian BBQ Buffet. I got some more milk and other items before we got home.

Bad as it was, there was more bad news to come. Salem Church in Christian County, a church founded by among others Elizabeth Garrott's and my ancestor Isaac Garrott, had been hit by lightning during the storm. A fire had started and the building was burned to the ground.

Louisville Gas & Electric was still repairing lines Friday. In fact, while we were out to dinner that night, the power went off and we found a truck in front of our house, with linesmen restringing the lines.

Of course we lost the cable and it took a

while to get it back. I hope the bill reflects this.

Then, right before this issue came due, there was yet another storm. This is getting pretty tiring, isn't it? Worse yet, we had to drive into it; we were going from Louisville to Lexington that day and of course the storm was over here, but we had to go into it.

Checking with cousins in the farm business makes it clear this has been a pretty wet year. And cool. One wonders about the received wisdom . . .

— JTM

I came home Wednesday afternoon and set about emptying the freezer. Out with the two pizzas. Out with (and this really hurt) the spanakopita, a Greek dish consisting of spinach and feta cheese. I dumped out what was left of the milk and Joe's chicken cold cuts. Out went everything but the bread in the freezer. That left me with a boxful of Vienna Sausage, tuna and other assorted canned items. I can't afford not to eat red meat now. When payday comes, I will try to find vegetarian equivalents to these things. They may not exist. I can, however, at least vary my diet somewhat between tuna, Vienna sausages and whatever canned fruits I find. I have learned my lesson. Next time a power outage will not find me this short of canned goods.

— LTM

### LOOK OF EAGLES

by John Taintor Foote  
Commentary by Lisa Major

This is a very short little book, only 72 pages long. It sticks in the mind. No one with any appreciation of horses can read this book and not want to own it. I was lucky enough to find a copy in a used book store for only four dollars.

Like the heroine in *Rebecca*, we never learn the name of the viewpoint character but it does not matter. Mr. Viewpoint is not telling his own story but the story of an old man and a young horse.

The book begins with Mr. Viewpoint, as I will call him in lack of a better name. He is visiting a friend of his, Judge Dillon, who breeds racehorses and has a potential Derby horse. The two men arrive at the stable where they encounter the head stableman, Blister. Blister regretfully tells him the prize bay colt doesn't have the class to be in the Derby.

After a noticeable silence Dillon orders the colt sent home. He and Blister then discuss their favorite bloodlines, Dillon liking Fire Fly, Blister liking Torch Bearer.

I found a chair and became busy with my own thoughts. I wondered if, after all, the breeding of speed horses was not too cruelly disappointing to those whose heart and soul were in it. The moments of triumph were wonderful, of course. The thrill of any other game was feeble in comparison; but oh, the many and bitter disappointments!

[As all who eagerly watched the Belmont Smarty lost know.]

He then sees an old man coming towards him.

His clothes were quite shabby; but he walked with a crisp erectness, with something of an air. . . the courteous tilt of his head was vaguely familiar.

Mr. Viewpoint asks Blister who the man is. Blister looks and identifies the man as "Old Man Sanford." Dillon now inquires and Viewpoint tells him that Blister had trained for Sanford and given one of his horses illegal stimulants. Sanford had learned and torn up his winning tickets, "all he had in the world."

Blister expects a furious tirade but gets instead an outstretched hand and a smile. The talk inevitably turns to horses. Blister has the horses shown to Sanford.

He passed loving judgment on one and all, his face keen and lighted.

He sees instantly that the previously mentioned colt lacks courage. Learning it is Dillon's colt he apologizes.

"No sportsman," he [Dillon] said, "is hurt by the truth. . . But how did you know it? . . ."

"I may say that I missed a certain look about his head, and moh particularly in his eyes, that is the hallmark . . . of a really great hawse."

"What kind of a look?" I asked. . .

"It is hard to define, suh," he explained. . . He sought for words. "Well, suh, about the head of a truly great hawse there is an air of freedom

inconquerable. The eyes seem to look on heights beyond our gaze. It is the look of a spirit that can soar. It is not confined to hawses; even in his pictures you can see it in the eyes of the Bonaparte. It is the birthright of eagles. . ."

I had heard of a power — psychic perhaps — which comes to a few, a very few, who give their lives and their hearts to horses. I looked curiously at the little old man beside me. Did those faded watery eyes see something hidden from the rest of us?

Blister tells Sanford he knows of a cheap horse for sale and offers to train for free if the horse doesn't prove profitable. Sanford refuses. He has only six hundred dollars and doesn't care to see his colors on a cheap horse. Blister tries to change his mind and refers to the cheap horse as a "goat." Sanford gets angry at the use of the word goat "applied to a thoroughbred race hawse." Blister backs down:

"Never mind, my boy. If man breeds one genius to a decade it is enough. And so it goes with hawses.

Foh thirty years, with love, with reverence, I tried to breed great hawses. . . ninety colts were foaled each spring at Sanford Hall. I have spent twenty thousand dollahs for a single matron. How many hawses — truly great hawses — did such brood mayehs as that produce?

Blister thinks of the Derby winning filly. Sanford agrees and mentions another one.

"I never hear you mention but the one," said Blister.

"The other never raced," explained Mr. Sanford. "I'll tell you why." He lapsed into silence . . . while we waited. When he spoke it was totally without emotion. . . It seemed somehow as though speech had been given to the dead past.

He tells how his wife would call the colts and give them sugar.

One year a blood bay colt, black to the hocks and knees, was foaled in January. . . In August he was first to

the sugar by several lengths.

The colt is nursed through distemper at two and next spring is ready to race. One night Sanford's wife is desperately ill and needs a doctor. He has the colt saddled.

"There was a moon. . . the white road to Gawgetown, and a great fear in my heart. I did not know what was under me until I gave him his head. . . Then I knew. . . the colt ran the last mile as stanchly as the first and one hour later he could barely walk. His terrific pace. . . destroyed his tendons and broke the small bones in his legs. He gave his racin' life foh his lady, like the honest gentleman he was. His sacrifice . . . was in vain . . . Death had the heels of him that night."

Blister asks the colt's eventual fate.

"When the place was sold he went with the rest. You have seen his descendants race on until his name has become a glory. The colt I rode that night was 'Torch Bearer.'"

There is discussion and then silence. Judge Dillon tells Sanford to go to his farm and if there's a colt good enough for his colors he can have him. Sanford insists on paying five hundred dollars and a promise to pay more. Mr. Viewpoint naturally goes along on Sanford's trip to Dillon's farm.

The chief stableman, Wesley Washington, receives them very less than graciously and colts are offered for inspection. Blister gets tired and asks just to see two-year-olds. Sanford rejects a well-made chestnut colt which Blister likes. Mr. Viewpoint catches terror in Washington's eyes. Blister rejects a long-legged sorrel and is assured by Washington that this is all the colts he has. Then a betraying voice sings of a fast bay colt. Blister sings back and eventually learns where the bay colt is. They find four two-year-olds: "There appeared the most perfect living creature I had ever seen. He was a rich bay. " He pleases even Sanford but not as much as he pleases Blister. Blister announces his intention of taking the bay colt but Sanford counters this. He wants instead a small black two-year-old. Blister throws a proper fit but Sanford ignores him. Eventually Blister resigns himself to the

inevitable.

A few months later Viewpoint reads accounts of the grand victories of the rejected bay masterpiece. Sometime later Viewpoint visits Blister.

He finds Blister in surprisingly good spirits. He asks about the black colt and is rewarded with laughter and silly jokes. Blister shows him the colt. "You just looked at the best two-year-old God ever put breath in." He tells Viewpoint the colt is to make his first start the next day.

Rain threatens that day and Sanford tells Viewpoint the colt needs a fast track. The race begins and Viewpoint sees the bay colt, Postman, out in front, the others struggling far behind.

The bay colt had rounded the curve into the stretch. . . It was plain that he was not alone. And then I went mad: for this other, unsuspected in the darkness until now, commenced to creep. . . into the lead. Above his stretching neck his colors nestled proudly. He was bringing the purple and white [Sanford's colors] safe home to gold and glory.

The black colt wins and in his win sets a world record.

"And now there came mincing back to us on slender, nervous legs, something wet and black and wonderful." Blister blankets the colt.

The colt grew quiet. . . He raised his head . . . and stared . . . far beyond our gaze . . . straight into Valhalla . . .

"The look of eagles, suh!" said Old Man Sanford.

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### **PublishAmerica**

by Lisa Major

I have spent a lot of time thinking about the negative review I did on *Curse of the Vampire*. It was the first negative review I've ever done. The book raised questions in my mind about the publisher, PublishAmerica, also called PA for short. After reading the pages upon pages of author testimonials I have no doubt they do provide a valuable service to those with deep personal issues, such as the Korean vet and the woman who finally got her mother's poetry published after many years. They, at least, got a good deal, I

think. However, those who think their books are going to be bestsellers have been sadly misled. I don't think any publishing company can guarantee a bestseller. That is up to the reading public.

I found PA's website and spent a fair amount of time looking over it. One PA author felt it was good not to have books at physical bookstores because the books there were so poorly written. But how is the reading public to become aware of a book if the book cannot be seen at a physical bookstore? I realize online bookstores do a tremendous business these days but how many people buy books they've never seen or heard of? I almost never buy fiction like that unless it's considerably cheaper than PA books are.

It may be that there are indeed some well-written PA books. I have seen only one complete novel and the ending of another. Quite frankly, I found that ending so awful I believe I would rather read cereal labels as the whole novel. At least the cereal labels provide useful information.

I contacted SFWA and received the following e-mail in exchange:

Dear Lisa--

PublishAmerica, a.k.a. AmErica House, is a print-on-demand-based (POD) publisher (note that POD has various built-in challenges that many writers don't know about; please see the Print on Demand page of Writer Beware for a discussion of these: <http://www.sfwaweb.org/beware/printondemand.html>). It actively attempts to deflect attention from this fact, however, since POD is associated in so many people's minds with vanity publishing.

PublishAmerica actually does have its roots in vanity publishing: it's an offshoot of Erica House, a vanity publisher that has charged authors as much as \$8,000 to publish their books.

These days PA doesn't charge a fee, but in other respects it functions much like a vanity publisher, in that its business model is built around author volume (selling a small number of books from a large number of authors) rather than book volume (selling a large number of books from a limited number of authors, as commercial

publishers do). PA currently claims to publish around 4,000 authors, most of them first-timers. Because of the need for high author volume, it is not terribly selective — it does claim to reject "the majority" of what's submitted, but even if the claimed rejection rate (80%) is accurate, it's still not rigorous enough to ensure high quality overall.

Also like a vanity publisher, PA provides very little marketing support for its books. What marketing efforts do exist are aimed at "pocket" markets surrounding the author — friends, family, and the authors themselves, who are encouraged to buy their own books for re-sale. And while PA books can be ordered at most bookstores, nonstandard business practices (very high book prices, non-returnability) make booksellers reluctant to stock them. Many PA authors have been able to get at least some stores to put their books on the shelves, but to accomplish this they literally have to go door to door and beg bookstore managers to place an order (it's not an author's job to get books into stores, though companies like PA often try to persuade them that it is). As a result, a typical PA book will sell at most only a few hundred copies, even for the most vigorous self-promoters.

Recent changes have made PA's contract more author-friendly than it was. But there are still some nonstandard aspects, including royalties paid on net revenue rather than on the retail price of the book (also, PA's royalties, at 8% of net, are much lower than those from other non-fee-charging POD-based publishers, at 20-40% of net, or even many POD self-publishing services, at around 20% of net), poor author discounts (this is an important consideration, as many PA authors choose to purchase their own books for resale), and rights reversion tied to the purchase of various items, including overstocked books. Also, the grant of rights — which gives PA all foreign and translation rights for seven years — is more sweeping than is ideal.

There also appear to be problems with the services PA provides after books are accepted. Writer Beware has seen and received complaints about inadequate pre-publication editing (PA seems to provide only light copyediting of variable quality, and no substantive or content editing), page proofs and finished books full of errors and typos, books bound in the wrong covers, books with chapters from other books interpolated, books that fall apart as you're reading them (these problems do seem to be improving as the company gains experience). Also, as with most POD-based publishers, the prices for the books are much higher than the prices for comparable books from traditional publishers, which may provide a disincentive for readers. At longer page lengths, PA's books are the most expensive of any POD-based publisher I've come across.

Because of the nonstandard practices detailed above, as well as the inadequate quality screening and lack of editing, a PA-published book isn't likely to count as a professional credit.

Any questions, please let me know.

- Victoria

Victoria Strauss

*The Burning Land* (HarperCollins/Eos)

Victoria Strauss is the Vice-Chair of SFWA's Committee on Writing Scams, and the webmistress of the Writer Beware website, which she also created. . . .

<http://www.sfw.org/beware/about.html>

After spending a fair amount of time looking at the PA website and messages from their authors I have no doubt her information is correct, except for one minor detail. PA now claims to represent 6,000 authors, not 4,000. Of those 6,000 authors and their books, Books-A-Million stocks two, according to the e-mail I got back in answer to my question. Joseph-Beth in Lexington does not stock them, according to Angie Coleman, Senior Marketing Manager. She also said, "While PublishAmerica states that they are not a print-on-demand publisher, we treat them as such. They have not been the easiest publisher to work with."

Barnes and Noble carries 12 titles. 6,000 authors and all Barnes and Noble carries are 12 titles? Five independents said they did not stock PA books. Octavia Books of New Orleans does carry one by a local author. Borders lists them in their inventory database.

On the PA website I found some postings by PA authors themselves having problems getting bookstores to stock their books. I also noticed a tendency to believe that the negative comments about PA are designed to keep new authors from getting into print. I don't work in the publishing industry, so there may very well be a conspiracy among agents in league to destroy PublishAmerica that I don't know about. However, I'm not really clear on just why supposedly sane, rational human beings would waste much time defending their turf against the competition I found on the PA website. Incidentally, the horrible ending received high praise from two other PA authors.



No favorable review of any PA book will appear in *Alexiad* unless it comes from someone we have reason to trust. Any PA authors who write to us again will be told that if they wish to send their book for a review

they may but the odds are that the book will be given a very bad review. I will try to keep an open mind. And for the record, this decision does not come from Ms. Strauss or anyone else involved in the mainstream publishing industry. All Ms. Strauss has done is to generously provide me with information I asked for. The decision is based on a posting by a PA author I found on a PA author message board.

The posting author seemed to believe that no PA author should ever unfavorably review the work of another PA author and that this practice was not in the least dishonest. I can understand that these authors are only being true capitalists and trying to market their books but I will not trust their reviews. If we are sent a PA book and the first page is very poorly written my review will say simply that this is not worth paying anything to read.

Those who wish to see what PA has to say for itself may visit their website:

[www.publishamerica.com](http://www.publishamerica.com).

### ***Thomas the Rhymer: A Romance***

by Ellen Kushner

New York: Bantam, 2004

A review by

Colleen R. Cahill

When Ellen Kushner's *Thomas the Rhymer* was recently reissued, across the top of the book was the banner "winner of the World Fantasy Award." Awards don't make me read a book: it takes more than that to tickle my interest. But when I see an author whose other works I enjoy, writing on an intriguing theme AND the book won a major award, then I sit up and take notice.

The ballad of Thomas the Rhymer is familiar to me through listening to the Steeleye Span\* version. Thomas is a bard who travels to fairyland with the Queen of the Fair Folk. After serving her seven years, he is returned to the human realms and left the gift of always telling the truth. Not actually a great thing for a bard, who usually uses flattery just to get a job, besides which many minstrels tales are fiction from the ground up. Kushner has taken this base, interpreting it beautifully and making Thomas a real man with real motivations, desires and dreams.

The book opens with the narration of Gavin, an old shepherd who meets Thomas before his trip to the fairies. Gavin and his wife Meg enjoy Thomas's company, but are not sure of how much he is embellishing of

his adventures at the King's court. When Thomas's wandering eye fixes on Elspeth, a local lass, both the husband and wife are concerned the girl will be hurt, as a minstrel is not good husband material. The next section of the book is related by Thomas, who is the only human who could say what happened to him in elf land. The magic here is wonderful, with Thomas adjusting to this new world, but not quite fitting in. Little by little, he learns his role is more than just bard and plaything for the Queen, as the undercurrents of the court hint that there is a task for him. The last two sections of the book related to Thomas's time after he returns home. Not only does he now have the gift of "the tongue that cannot lie," which means a big adjustment in his dealings with men, but he has to win back the trust of those he really cares about: Gavin, Meg and Elspeth.

*Thomas the Rhymer* is a great read: the story moves, the characters are real and the magic is wondrous. It was no work at all for me to drop into the book and get lost in the plot. Even though I knew the ballad, Kushner fleshed out these bones, giving life and color to an already interesting tale. Not an easy task, especially as I already had a version of the story in my head. The next I listen to the song, it will have new meaning and depth.

Yes, this work did deserve its award. Its elements of magic, romance and adventure are coupled with elegant writing makes this a work of note and one any fantasy fan should have in their collection. Take a trip with Thomas the Rhymer and you will find enchantment.

\* Appears on Now We are Six (Shanachie, 79060)

### **FANZINES**

*Argentus* #4 2004

Steven H Silver, 707 Sapling Lane,  
Deerfield, IL 60015-3969 USA

[shsilver@sfsite.com](mailto:shsilver@sfsite.com)

<http://www.efanzines.com>

*Beyond Bree* June 2004, July 2004

Nancy Martsch, Post Office Box 55372,  
Sherman Oaks, CA 91413-5372 USA

[beyondbree@yahoo.com](mailto:beyondbree@yahoo.com)

Not available for The Usual; \$12/year,  
\$15 in envelope or overseas.

*Challenger* #20 Summer 2004

Guy H. Lillian III, Post Office Box 53092,

New Orleans LA 70153-3092 USA  
[ghliii@yahoo.com](mailto:ghliii@yahoo.com)  
<http://www.challzine.net>

*Das Fangold* #7 June 27, 2004  
 Alezis A. Gilliland, 4030 8<sup>th</sup> Street South,  
 Arlington, VA 22204-1552 USA

*Fantasy Amateur* V. 67 #3 WN 267 May  
 2004

Fantasy Amateur Press Association, Milt  
 Stevens Official Editor.  
 Those in the know could say "FAPA, Milt  
 Stevens OE". The official organ of the  
 first SF amateur press association. For  
 those uninvolved, it's like a newsgroup,  
 but with paper. Thanks to Dale Speirs  
 and I note a lot of familiar faces there. Hi.

*Halcyon Days* #99, April 2004  
 Robert Michael Sabella, 24 Cedar Manor  
 Court, Budd Lake, NJ 08728-1023 USA  
[bsabella@optonline.net](mailto:bsabella@optonline.net)

<http://adamosf.blogspot.com>  
<http://visionsofparadise.blogspot.com>

*The Knarley Knews* # 106, June 2004  
 Henry & Letha Welch, 1525 16th Avenue,  
 Grafton, WI 53024-2017 USA  
[welch@msoe.edu](mailto:welch@msoe.edu)  
<http://www.msoe.edu/~welch/tkk.html>

*MT Void* V.22 #49 June 4, 2004 — V. 23 # 5  
 July 30, 2004  
 Mark and Evelyn Leeper, 80 Lakeridge  
 Drive, Matawan, NJ 07747-3839 USA  
[eleeper@optonline.net](mailto:eleeper@optonline.net)  
[mleeper@optonline.net](mailto:mleeper@optonline.net)  
<http://www.geocities.com/evelynleeper>

*The New Port News* #216 July 2004  
 Cuyler "Ned" Brooks, 4817 Dean Lane,  
 Lilburn, GA 30047-4720 USA  
[nedbrooks@sprynet.com](mailto:nedbrooks@sprynet.com)

*Nice Distinctions* #6 June 2004

Arthur D. Hlavaty, 206 Valentine Street,  
 Yonkers, NY 10704-1814 USA  
[hlavaty@panix.com](mailto:hlavaty@panix.com)  
<http://www.efanzines.com>

*Opuntia* # 54.3 June 2004  
 Dale Speirs, Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta  
 T2P 2E7 CANADA  
 Despairing bibliographers can note a new  
 division. Our Heroic Editor announces  
 that "x.3 issues are apazines".

*Pablo Lennis* #200 July 2004  
 John Thiel, 30 N. 19th Street, Lafayette,  
 IN 47904-2950 USA

*Rodney's Messy Zine-Like Thing* #3, #4  
 Rodney Leighton, #11 Branch Road, R. R.  
 #3, Tatamagouche, NS B0K 1V0  
 CANADA  
 Number Five will be the last, he says.  
 Write and get it soon!

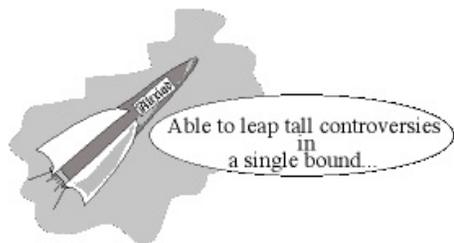
*The Royal Swiss Navy Gazette* #12 June 2004  
 Garth Spencer, P. O. Box 15335, VMPO,  
 Vancouver, B.C CANADA V6B 5B1  
[hrothgar@vcn.bc.ca](mailto:hrothgar@vcn.bc.ca)  
<http://www.efanzines.com>

*Taboo Opinions* # 9, # 10, # 11, # 12, #13,  
 #14, #15, #16, #17  
 Richard E. Geis  
[rerwingeis@cs.com](mailto:rerwingeis@cs.com)  
<http://www.efanzines.com>

*Vanamonde* # 543-547  
 John Hertz, 236 S. Coronado Street, No.  
 409, Los Angeles, CA 90057-1456 USA

*Visions of Paradise* #99, April 2004  
 Robert Michael Sabella, 24 Cedar Manor  
 Court, Budd Lake, NJ 08728-1023 USA  
[bsabella@optonline.net](mailto:bsabella@optonline.net)  
<http://adamosf.blogspot.com>  
<http://visionsofparadise.blogspot.com>

## Letters, we get letters



Able to leap tall controversies  
in  
a single bound...

From: **John Hertz** June 4, 2004  
236 S. Coronado Street, No. 409, Los  
Angeles, CA 90057-1456 USA

Thanks for *Alexiad* 3/2 with reviews of  
candy, even.

I'm for the Retro-Hugos. As Greg Bear  
said at Millennium Philcon, you don't see  
retro-Nobels. The 1953 pro writing puts 2003  
to shame. We're imagining more wildly and  
writing worse.

Look for me in the June *Chronicle*.

From: **Henry L. Welch** June 8, 2004  
1525 16th Avenue, Grafton, WI  
53024-2017 USA  
[welch@msoe.edu](mailto:welch@msoe.edu)  
[http://people.msoe.edu/~welch/tkk.ht  
ml](http://people.msoe.edu/~welch/tkk.html)

Thanks for the latest *Alexiad* and my  
VERY overdue LOC.

I have no interest in either reading or  
writing blogs. And that is even before we  
factor in the time it would take.

Trinlay Khadro should know that most of  
the serious pollution/runoff in Milwaukee is  
local and does not flow up from Chicago. In  
May alone the sewage district dumped 4.6  
billion gallons of blended sewage (partially  
treated and diluted) due to slightly excessive  
rainfall. Despite having spent the GNP of a  
small country digging giant tunnels under the  
city that were supposed to handle up to 100  
year rain storms this has become a regular  
occurrence. The ultimate problem is that the  
sanitary and storm sewer systems have never  
been decoupled.

Chicago long ago reversed the flow  
direction of the Illinois river so that they  
pollute in the direction of the Mississippi

rather than from Lake Michigan which is their  
primary water supply.

June 24, 2004

Thanks for the latest *Alexiad*. Hopefully  
this LOC is a bit more timely than the last.

I first read *Misty of Chincoteague* after I  
moved to Virginia and had a chance to tour  
the eastern shore. Being male I preferred the  
*Black Stallion*.

I suppose I could say something  
about your preferring the Black  
Stallion but Joe would remind me  
that I am the John Wayne and Louis  
L'Amour fan here at 1409 Christy.

— LTM

I've long advocated a professional  
manager for Worldcon. I work with  
educational conferences all the time and a  
good professional conference organizer is  
worth their weight in gold.

RE: Frohvet and Birkhead on insurance.  
The last time I looked carefully my carrier set  
rates by zip code. It is less discriminatory  
than municipality since the zip code  
boundaries in large cities tend to cross most  
such boundaries. They claim it is based on  
crime and accident statistics for the area.

Consequently when I moved from a near  
Milwaukee suburb (zip 53209 which is  
mostly Milwaukee) to Grafton and tripled my  
daily commute distance my insurance actually  
went way down since thefts, etc. are much  
lower in Grafton's 53024.

From: **Trinlay Khadro** June 4, 2004  
Post Office Box 240934, Brown Deer,  
WI 53224-0934 USA  
[trin63@dias.net](mailto:trin63@dias.net)

On *Crossfire*, which I don't usually watch,  
I was tickled to see both sides were against  
the ban on "Ladies Night". The red side says  
"It's against Romance . . . a single girl goes in  
for the free drinks, gets a little high, and a  
guy's got a chance to talk to her . . ." I  
wonder if a loophole might be "if Wednesday  
is Ladies Night (pro Romance) Sunday or  
Monday is Gentlemen's Night (sports on Big  
Screen TV)." That's what I've always  
imagined would be a great marketing concept.  
I don't think I've been to a "club" for . . . um  
. . . maybe 20+ years, and only rarely even  
been in a bar. Usually meeting a friend for  
dinner at the attached restaurant.

TV news coverage of your flooding seems  
that the worst of it in your area is much worse  
than the worst of it in my area. Though I  
think our terrain is hillier than yours and the  
rivers and creeks here tend to be down in  
gullies and ravines. All the rain has been  
good news for Lake Michigan, though.

On the sixth, when we went  
through Henderson on the way to  
Madisonville, I noticed that the  
Ohio was up and flooded halfway  
to Ellis Park. By the eighteenth,  
when we went by again, the Ohio  
was back in its banks but still  
very muddy.

Recently I caught something on TV  
probably History Channel . . . where in a  
passing comment it was suggested that the  
documentation used to show Tokugawa  
Ieyasu was descended from the Minamoto  
clan, and eligible to be Shogun, was a  
forgery. But again, "just a passing comment"  
— something I'd **never** heard before and  
suspect that it might be a historical rumor in  
much the same way "The Dauphin was  
smuggled out of the prison . . ." or "Anastasia  
wasn't assassinated . . ."

Now I wonder if Ieyasu's DNA might be  
available. He's got plenty of descendants  
around **now**, I'm sure there's also a fairly  
good number of unquestionably Minamoto  
around . . . or maybe there's too many  
generations involved? Then again there's the  
guy who's found an apparent marker for  
*kohen* and found it not only in the European  
Jewish population but in Ethiopia and among  
the Lemba; and even further afield.

Took KT to Children's Hospital for  
testing. While in the waiting room we caught  
an episode of "The Fairly Odd Parents" —  
Cosmo-con . . . and later a fairy boat show.  
In any case I'd always thought a fairy  
godfather would involve shades, a dark suit,  
and a businesslike hat.

Wouldn't a fairy godfather  
say something like, "I'm going to  
make you an offer you can't  
refuse. In one minute, either  
your signature will be on that  
sheet of paper or you will be, as  
a bookworm trying to eat it."?

Those who read Bob Asprin's  
M\*Y\*T\*H series while it was still  
good will remember Don Bruce,

the fairy godfather. He wore  
purple.

June 21, 2004  
Happy Solstice!

[www.geocities.com/trinkayk/megumi\\_elric.  
html](http://www.geocities.com/trinkayk/megumi_elric.html)

Last photo on each page will take you to  
the next page, and **please**, sign the guestbook.  
Megumi & Elric have been being photogenic  
and funny.

*Underdog*, I loved that show, *Mighty  
Mouse* and *Batman* when I was 3 — 6 years  
old.

"Reality" TV tends to have a subtext of  
meanness I just don't like. The latest twist is  
*Superstar* which was downright and outright  
cruel. Can't stand those shows — with the  
exception of *Last Comic Standing*. Yeah, "no  
one goes home broke" but what price can you  
put on public humiliation? There's a huge  
gap between "laughed at" and "laughed  
with". Our civilization is doomed indeed.

As animé fans we've observed English  
incorporated into Japanese slang and among  
teenaged fans Japanese "catch phrases" have  
quickly become part of their vocabulary:  
"kawaiiee" and "Bishonen" and "Otaku"  
(FAN!) . . . and that's just the top of the  
barrel.

Dainis — condolences on your loss.

Indeed, even the new "plastic polymer"  
bands get "crispy" after about a year. They're  
really nice for hair ties as they don't eat hair  
like the rubber ones.

Remember the scent — just the phrase is  
evocative for me — a trip to the spice area at  
the "Health Food" grocery evokes vivid  
memories of a long ago boyfriend. Maybe it  
was his tendency to cook with fresh herbs, or  
maybe it was homemade soap; but the scent  
of certain spices smells just like him.

I hope you got the recent art packet all  
right.

*X-treme Latin* — Everything sounds better  
in Latin @, or Gaelic, or Elvish, or . . .

I haven't been able to get to any cons yet  
this year. No \$, no strength . . . SSD claim in  
step 1 appeals (with lawyer). Hopefully I'll  
soon be approved and maybe I can get to a  
few cons and maybe vendor some of my  
crafts. (Prayers and well wishings  
appreciated.)

Lisa — I enjoy the horse book reviews. I  
must have read all of the horse stories,

multiple times in grade and middle school. At least all I could get my hands on.

Johnny "Chocolate Man" Carruthers — I think the "Cookies & Cream" was my first taste of white chocolate. The Piña Colada bars can be labeled like they do that flavor yogurt (yummy); label says "Piña Colada" and pictures the fruits involved, and someday kids grow up and discover "there's a Piña Colada flavored mixed drink . . ." ©

Spanish Royal Wedding — A lovely rainy day in sunny Spain. Instigated a controversy in Japan, crown prince went and then implied crown princess "imprisoned" at the palace with the hope of a male heir. How is she gonna do that without the *prince*?! neh?!

Ask dom Manuel de Poictesme. (Who, according to James Branch Cabell, "comforted" the Princess Isabelle of France, with the result that nine months later Edward Prince of Wales was born.)

While it indeed seems unlikely that Bush has a 91 IQ, one might be surprised what a person with a 90 IQ can do with adequate instruction and effective support systems. A kid I used to baby-sit is in that range and doing better in many ways than a beloved friend with a genius IQ, but also afflicted with illness and emotional problems. I sometimes wonder if the basis of his depression and agony comes from "I'm so intelligent and I *still* can't fix the world."

Adventures in Broken Eyeglasses — I need high-powered "high index" lenses, so years ago I broke my plastic frames and desperately hunted for a place where I could get the fix "NOW". I've now got wire rimmed "Wild Wild West" frames and have been fortunate to just replace the lenses over the past half-dozen years as necessary.

Yet again The Samurai — Meiji era and Taisho era were full of turmoil: a great setting for angst-driven characters, with heros and patriots **on both sides**. Film makers and story tellers **love** transitional periods.

Martin: Coming soon, Quentin Tarantino's *The Bible*? :-|

E.B. — well as improbable as Mendelian genetics suggests it is, odd unexpected things sometimes happen. About once per generation there's a **blonde** in my generally olive-skinned, dark-brown eyed, black, brown, auburn haired family. A great-

grandma on one side and a grandma on the other. My parents have black hair, dark brown eyes. My hair is dark chestnut brown (when uncolored) and my eyes greyish green. My daughter was blond till about 15 years old and has blue-gray eyes. Go figures. Improbable is not Impossible.

My close friend, Nana and I have joked that "If we weren't straight chicks, we'd be a great couple." Possibly Merry & Pippin could be by — and marry as "familial duty:" . . . not likely, but possible.

Robert Lichtman — IMHO the Dove chocolate has more "bang" than the same size piece of Hershey's. I've also occasionally laughed out loud at a saying printed inside the Dove foil wrappers.

Lisa — "I largely avoid red meat now because I feel better when I do." Same here, but at one point I was still blindsided by my cholesterol count and now take fish oil and CQ10 and snack on Cheerios to keep it down. (I still eat a fair amount of seafood. I've been eating Vienna sausages lately because they are what I have to eat now. But come payday I'm going to buy healthier replacements for when I eat up the meat.LTM)

Colleen: Meow! (I'm not ready for you humans to go to bed!) Meow! Megumi tends to try waking me at 5 am; her dish is usually still mostly full but she wants me up. On the weekend I can say "It's Saturday!" and be allowed to sleep till 8 — when *Shaman King* comes on. ©

She's getting Cat food now, Elric ferret still gets kitten chow (Hyper that ferrets are — need the calories), and sometimes she steals some from his dish.

This Saturday was the MILWAPA collation, we swam in Todd's pool, collated, ate and snacked and went to see the *Harry Potter* movie. High point of the day was when KT was presented "The World on a Silver Platter", a cake globe constructed by Georgie Snobrich. KT lit up with surprise and joy to this morale boost after all her medical tests (gut irritation but no ulcers thank heavens — I think this used to be called "preulcerous conditions" and she now takes Prilosec). Her delight was amazing and a great gift to me; I haven't seen her face light up like that for a long long time.

I took Prilosec for a while. There's a more advanced version, or is KT taking the over-the-counter type? Warning: don't

confuse it with thionite. QX.

— JTM

I overdid it Saturday, paid for it with a bad fibro "attack" over the day Sunday and am still weary today. I managed to get the grocery run done and picked up my mail but pretty much spent the day as a divan tuber. ©

I'll be in bed soon, hopefully sleeping well. KT has summer school for the next five weeks. Catching up on a missing English credit and taking Creative Writing. Lots of anxiety about something she doesn't need to worry about. (Sigh!)

Well I better get some sleep.

From: **George W. Price** June 9, 2004  
P.O. Box A3228, Chicago, IL  
60690-3228 USA  
[grgpric@aol.com](mailto:grgpric@aol.com)

Alexis Gilliland's Morrie the Critic says that "The Passion of the Christ" (which I haven't seen and don't intend to see — I'm not religious and my wife doesn't like bloody movies) depicts Pilate "as a sensitive, troubled soul, fearful of the Jews — a Woody Allen sort of guy — whom the sinister Caiaphas manipulates to condemn an innocent man. Historically, Pilate was more like Marlon Brando's Don Corleone, with poor old Caiaphas doing Pilate's dirty work because he had no choice." I am no expert on this period, but I have been under the impression that the New Testament is practically our only source of information. So what is the historical justification for Morrie's position? What histories are available independent of the Gospels, and are they in enough detail to support this interpretation? Morrie may very well be right, but I am curious to know how he found out.

Trinlay Khadro comments that "Many springs the Milwaukee lakefront is unusable — because of sewage washing up from Chicago that was frozen over the winter." This sounds extremely unlikely. Chicago sends its sewage (after treatment) down river toward the Gulf of Mexico. More than a century ago a major engineering project reversed the Chicago River's flow so that instead of draining into Lake Michigan, the city's wastewater runs into the Sanitary Canal and eventually reaches the Mississippi. The only time water goes into the lake is when a really big rainstorm overloads the Deep

Tunnel drainage system and the overflow backs up. And that generally doesn't happen during the winter. What Milwaukee may get from us is some trash and maybe a little sewage thrown into Lake Michigan by beach users and boaters and carried north by currents. Ironically, just a few days ago Chicago's city fathers were loudly complaining about raw sewage coming down the lake from Milwaukee. I guess those currents run both ways.

I suppose the noncanonical Gospels might have some useful information, but most of them were written too long after the fact to be of any use. I believe, for example, that the Gospel of Thomas, beloved of religious revisionists (one proposed Bible I've read about would have for Gospels merely "Q" and Thomas), dates from the second century.

June 30, 2004

Lisa's review of David Wilson's *Curse of the Vampire* says she "noted the use of some words I'm sure were not in use during the Civil War, such as yeah."

This reminds me: A few months ago my wife urged me to read a paperback romance (Harlequin, I think) laid in England during the Napoleonic Wars. She liked it and thought I would too. I don't remember the title and author, which is perhaps just as well. The story was interesting enough, and fairly humorous in places. But the language! The author — who must never have heard of Georgette Heyer — made no serious attempt to use Regency expressions and — much worse — sprinkled in several completely anachronistic modernisms. The worst was when one English gentleman asks another what he thinks of a certain person "on a scale of one to ten"! And gets an answer instead of a blank stare.

I say, pip pip, what the devil? The language is bad but what's worse is the anachronistic characterization — having the kind of man who would rate others "on a scale of one to ten" in that era.

I save almost all the books I read — the

attic is stuffed — but that one went into the box for donation to charity. Let it be quietly laid to rest.

Coleen R. Cahill reviews Robert Jordan's *New Spring*. She mentions having listened to the audio version. Presumably this accounts for her reference to "the now retreating hoards of Aiel." Unless maybe the hordes were looting hoards of money?

In Joe's response to Dainis Bisenieks he says he read that during the Korean War, soldiers (presumably American) "staged a raid wearing SS camouflage uniforms they found in a warehouse. I believe this sort of deception is against the Geneva Convention, however." Damn right it is. If captured, they could have been lawfully shot as spies. Although, the story sounds a bit fishy; for one thing, how did the uniforms get from Germany to Korea? Was this an official operation?

This seems to have been an impromptu mission. See *Darkmoon: Eighth Army Special Operations in the Korean War* by Ed Evanhoe (Naval Institute Press; 1995) for the details. The notes indicate that the basis for this is "anecdotal".

And speaking of the Geneva Convention: Nasty as the Abu Ghraib revelations are, we can put them in perspective by asking what would happen if captured jihadist suspects were given the choice of (1) going to Abu Ghraib for rigorous interrogation, including physical abuse and sexual humiliation, or (2) receiving strict Geneva Convention treatment. You can bet that all but those eager for martyrdom would choose Abu Ghraib, because the Geneva Convention specifies that fighters captured out of uniform — that is, fighters masquerading as civilians — may be given a summary court-martial and then shot. (Anybody ever hear of an al-Qaeda uniform?)

This seems to be one of those situations that only works one way — al-Qaeda and other jihadist organizations don't have to obey the Geneva Conventions — i.e., since it is illegal to humiliate prisoners publicly, beheading them for video is even more so, but since they are an authentic indigenous Third World

Liberation Movement, that's all right — but we have to obey the Geneva Conventions, U.S. laws, U.N. treaties, whichever is most advantageous to the other side.

— JTM

From: **Janine Stinson** June 13, 2004  
Post Office Box 248, Eastlake, MI  
49626-0248 USA  
[tropicsf@earthlink.net](mailto:tropicsf@earthlink.net)

Yes, I know this LOC is two months late, but I've been busy. Just finished the second of two manuscript proofing jobs (on spec, in hope of bringing in more), one a novel, the other the author study in which I have an article. As soon as I get a publication date, I'll be sending out a notice to fanzines far and wide, including yours. Am looking forward to seeing my name in a book for the first time with unalloyed glee.

Martin M. Wooster said he hasn't seen a Fanthology for a while. Question to the audience: Is there an Authority to whom one must apply to edit or make suggestions for a Fanthology, or can one announce intent and then ask for suggestions from fandom at large? I am also presuming the editor would get to choose a few items.

A Fanthology is done by an editor chosen at Corflu, as I recall. At least every Fanthology I have heard about was done by a people connected with a Corflu.

— JTM

I have another question specifically for Martin M. Wooster and Darrell Schweitzer: In their opinion, are there any fanzines currently being pubbed that "are actually about sf and ideas"? If so, which ones? I will add both gentlemen to the *Peregrine Nations* mailing list for a sample, and ask that they let me know whether they consider PN to be a fanzine that is about sf and ideas.

From: **Rod E. Smith** June 16, 2004  
730 Cline Street, Frankfort, KY  
40601-1034 USA  
[RodE.Smith@mail.state.ky.us](mailto:RodE.Smith@mail.state.ky.us)

You wrote: "We went to Frankfort in April and saw the State Office Building and the new building. It used to be a nice neighborhood."

Yeah. It used to be the state pen. :-)

From: **Alexis A. Gilliland** June 15, 2004  
4030 8<sup>th</sup> Street South, Arlington, VA  
22204-1552 USA

Thank you for *Alexiad* #3.3 which arrived one bright Monday afternoon. Condolences to Dainis Bisenieks on the loss of his wife Betsy.

Joe's review of *Paladin of Souls* reminded me: A couple of weeks previously we had gone to Balticon, where Lois McMaster Bujold was Goh, and Friday night Lee and I were standing outside the Capclave table and chatting with some friends, when Lois came over and explained how I had helped her make her first sale.

Basically, I was the SFWA Griefcom at the time, and one evening I got a call from a lady in a state of high excitement who had just got an offer from Baen Books. What I remember was that she had submitted her first three books (of what turned out to be the Miles Vorkosigan series) and Jim Baen was offering to buy all three of them. And what I told her was that Baen was a good editor and a reputable publisher and that she should take his offer. To the question "Do I need an agent?" my answer was no, as for an unpublished author an agent would mainly be helpful getting your MS read, and maybe getting an offer on it, and here Baen is already making you an offer. We talked about agents for a little, and I explained that since she didn't have a track record, an agent probably won't be able to get her moer money, but that if the books sell well she could have her pick of agents. She calmed down and sold the books, and to this day does not have an agent. It's nice that she remembers me kindly.

Having seen "The Passion of the Christ" Taras Wolansky agrees with me that it is excessively bloody, but he doesn't find it anti-Semitic, citing those parts of the curate's egg which he finds excellent. On the question of whether Christ was associated with the revolt that took place against the Romans shortly after his arrival in Jerusalem, I answer with the question: Why did the Romans arrest him? The Christian claim that the Jews killed Christ rests on the assumption that the Pharisees took advantage of the confusion to eliminate a theological competitor, casting the Romans in the role of thuggish but easily manipulated (and therefore innocent by lack

of interest) bystanders. By way of contrast, I think that the Romans — experienced Imperialists though they were — knew what they were doing, and I offer a plausible surmise of what the Romans thought they knew. No text is cited in support, but this should make little difference. Taras says: "True, Pilate-as-Hamlet seems to contradict what Jewish historians wrote about him later, but it is consistent with the Gospel account." Noting the existence of conflicts in the existing texts, he goes with the Gospels (which were also written later) but also finds nothing wrong with Gibson impurgating his movie with the visions of a nineteenth-century nun.

The Zealots' revolt was twenty-six years after the generally accepted date for the Crucifixion. There are references in the so-called Slavonic Josephus to Jesus, and some people are inclined to credit them since they follow in Josephus's style of Texas-sized brags.

— JTM

From: **Joy V. Smith** June 19, 2004  
8925 Selph Road, Lakeland, FL  
33810-0341 USA  
[Pagadan@aol.com](mailto:Pagadan@aol.com)

I learn a lot in *Alexiad* about all kinds of things, especially history. Interesting about the New Wave (whatever) book by the director and writer of *Underdog*. I think it's easier to learn about people online. I mentioned the Eric Fleming vampire western movie in a chat room last night and couldn't recall the title, but found it quickly with a simple AOL search.

And because I read about the Derby in *Alexiad* and also in a Mystery folder, I saw all three races (the first two times accidentally while waiting for the weather report) and knew more about what was happening. Rock Hard Ten doesn't like going into the starting gate (is this every time?) and a fresh horse can defeat a horse that's won the first two races. I still don't understand why though.

I understand RockHard Ten is noted for his tantrums at the gate. The reason fresh horses usually spoil Triple Crown bids is that they are

fresh and rested. They have let the other poor dumb horse slog it out on the hard Triple Crown campaign trail.

Thanks for all the news tidbits and book reviews. I don't think I've read of any of this issue's books. I admire you for reading *A Clockwork Orange*. . . I'm not sure I admire all those explorers...

Thanks, Lisa, for the look at *Misty of Chincoteague*, which I read a long time ago and remember fondly. And I liked your comment at the end of your Triple Crown column — "If it were easy it wouldn't be the Triple Crown."

Glad you enjoyed my comment.

I enjoyed the snack and candy bar reviews. (I've never eaten a crispy pork rind; I think I'd have had to be raised on them.) Btw, I had a Hershey's kisses taste test myself recently. I much prefer the caramel filled kisses to the dark chocolate ones, even though I usually love dark chocolate. And I loved Sue Burke's Spain's royal wedding report. I wonder if any of the souvenirs will make it here. British royal souvenirs do.

Another taste you have to be raised on is horehound candy. My grandparents always had it so I grew up with it. It seems to be strictly a redneck thing.

Re: Letters: Good background on "The Passion of Christ". I was unaware of those nuts' visions and that Mel Gibson used them.

Sheryl: Nelliebelle was the jeep.

Lisa: They stuffed Misty!! I've been aware of Trigger being stuffed for a long time and have acclimated myself to that even though I don't like it. But Misty!! (Let them go.)

I agree. I would much rather remember Misty as she was in the books. I only hope they didn't stuff Phantom as well. Bad enough to stuff Misty but to stuff that free wild thing and put her in a case!!!! And I have no plans to stuff the cats. I think the money would be better spent to rescue a living cat from a shelter.

— LTM

Trin: Take care and give Megumi some huggles from me. Re: blogs: There are some good ones out there, and people chat and discuss and recommend books, etc. It's just another way of visiting. Speaking of which, the Zits comic strip yesterday was good. I'll send it to you.

Dale Speirs: I enjoyed your account of the anniversary celebration in Eckville.

Robert Lichtman: I'm not going to do the Dove chocolate taste test. My taste test list is already too long. (Next is a peanut butter and olive sandwich.) But I wouldn't be surprised that the Dove Promises is better than the Hershey's dark chocolate kisses. As I mentioned earlier, I found them very disappointing.

AL du Pisani: Very interesting report from South Africa.

I also enjoyed The Lion King Sleeps Tonight and the Alternate History versions of the Civil War, with troops that included Sojourner Truth's Dahomeyan Bodyguard Warrior Corps and the tribes led by Crazy Mare. . .

From: **Darrell Schweitzer** June 19, 2004  
6644 Rutland Street, Philadelphia, PA 19149-2128 USA  
[darrells@comcast.net](mailto:darrells@comcast.net)

A couple quick historical comments on the new *Alexiad*.

Orestes, the father of the last Western emperor Romulus Augustulus, was a Roman. He had been a Hunnish subject since his native province of Pannonia was ceded to Attila by Theodosius II, and had in fact served as Attila's Latin secretary. But he was a Roman, as was his son, which is why little Romulus was minimally acceptable as emperor in the way no German could be. There had been a little Germanic mixing into the imperial lines ever since Arcadius married Eudoxia, the daughter of Bauto the Frank, early in the 5th century. The product of this union was the above Theodosius II, a notably craven coward. Arcadius's brother Honorius also married (in turn) both daughters of the half-Vandal Stilicho, but there was no issue. So Germans could influence the government by marrying their daughters to weak emperors. Presumably the ladies had to convert to Orthodoxy, if that was a problem. (Not for Stilicho, who was a Catholic.)

Sounds rather like Japan

during the Fujiwara-era Shogunate where the Tenno would marry a Fujiwara lady and not long after a son was born, abdicate and leave his wife as Regent and her kinsman as Shogun. The last Fujiwara to serve so high was Prince Konoye Fumimaro, who lacked that coverage; also the gaijin were more intrusive then.

But that was as far as it got. In any case, the position of Master of Soldiers was more powerful than that of emperor. The anti-German reaction after the death of Stilicho insured that no German would hold that position again until the days of Ricimer, who came to prominence after the second sack of Rome in 455, at which time the Roman people (or Senate) ceased to have much influence over affairs. Ricimer made and broke (and murdered) emperors. He made his position clear by putting his personal monogram on the backs of coins of this period. He was succeeded by his nephew Gundobad (who, following in Ricimer's footsteps, deposed and murdered Emperor Anthemius) but Gundobad thought it more promising to become king of the Burgundians than to rule what was left of the Roman Empire, so he left. Orestes tried to fill this vacuum. But it was a bit too vacuous by then.

I haven't seen Mel Gibson's s&m porno epic, but as for the flaying of Christ, well, I should point out that according to the gospels, he *couldn't* carry the cross, which is why the soldiers grabbed somebody out of the crowd (Simon of Cyrene) to help. Christ then died after a mere three hours, which, we are told, surprised Pilate. Crucifixion victims usually lasted a lot longer. So maybe the soldiers did get carried away.

I don't believe the gospel stories of Pilate hesitating and washing his hands etc. (Where else in ancient literature is this custom mentioned?) I suspect the gospels were written or doctored to blame the Jews and exonerate the Romans. The Pilate we know from the historian Josephus was a resolute and brutal man, who would have crucified first and asked questions later. He probably would have slaughtered the crowd, rather than yielded to it, if he thought a riot was breaking out. Some years later, the Samaritans held an illegal religious rally of some sort. Pilate slaughtered them. This was too much, and he

was recalled to Rome. He may have been ordered to die. He may have been a partisan of Sejanus and destroyed in the purge after the prefect's fall.

He didn't have the option Vladimir Petrov had. Petrov, a Beria man, was MVD/MGB Resident in Canberra when Beria was removed from office, shot, and tried. He was recalled to Moscow Center, and instead defected to the Australians. The Australians kept them from taking his wife Evdokia.

— JTM

From: **Brad W. Foster** June 19, 2004  
P.O. Box 165246, Irving, TX 75016-5246 USA  
[bwfoster@juno.com](mailto:bwfoster@juno.com)

Another batch of good, meaty reading in the new issue.

I kind of identified with your opening comments in "Reviewer's Notes" regarding a family member having a general idea of your likes, and trying to get you a gift in that vein. Aside from the occasional misfire like getting me copies of a collection of "Garfield" comic strips ("I know you like that comic stuff.") or a Star Wars novelization ("I know you like that wacky science fiction stuff.") my mom has a real knack at somehow stumbling across a book or collection by some artist in all my years in the field I've never run across, and just picking it up for me because she felt it looked "odd", and thus something I might like!

I'll have to remember that response to the friendly waiter "My name is Sir, I'll be your customer tonight." though doubt I'll be trying it in the Latin.

Oh, and I'm not asking this because I am personally involved in any way (which I am), but just curiosity why, since there are only the three fan award categories in the Hugos, you choose not to handicap the Fan Artist category, when you did so with both Writer and Fanzine.

I'm not as acquainted with Fan Artist nominees. More and more, the way to go there has been through art shows, and I don't go to enough cons to be able to judge.

— JTM

Keeping this super-short, as we are in midst of some major change around here. Negotiating costs and schedules with both insurance and roofers to get entire roof replaced, then busy getting things ready to move my father-in-law into our house from the nursing home he has been living in since last fall. All this in midst of the most road-time I've had to do all year, several road trips to different festivals that run around 1,600 miles each and eat up five or more days away from home each time. I am really looking forward to the end of July!

From: **David A. Wilson** June 17, 2004  
P.O. Box 85, Grantville, GA 30220-0085 USA  
[Gvilledave@yahoo.com](mailto:Gvilledave@yahoo.com)  
[DavidAWilson@publishedauthors.net](mailto:DavidAWilson@publishedauthors.net)  
<http://www.david-a-wilson.com>  
<http://www.publishedauthors.net>

Thanks for the terrible review you gave my Civil War/vampire novel, *Curse of the Vampire*.

How can you give my book a fair review when you admitted you didn't read all of it?

I was truly sorry to have to write such a bad review but I can't lie and say I like something when I didn't. I struggled through as much of the book as I could and I made sure our readers knew that I did not finish the book. I am not going to recommend that people spend twenty dollars for something I had to struggle at reading. It is my belief that fiction should be entertaining. It did not give me any pleasure to write the bad review.

I'm well aware that the book means a lot to Mr. Wilson and that he doubtless spent a lot of time writing it. But if you send someone a review copy, you run the risk that the reviewer won't like the book. I don't think you can expect the reviewer to lie about liking the book. I tried hard to finish it but I just couldn't.

Sometimes libraries can be persuaded to buy books for their collections if patrons request them and then that patron usually gets

first turn at the book. Those of our readers who think I may have acted unfairly and would like to judge the book for themselves might try getting the book that way and deciding for themselves if I was wrong. If they like it they can then buy copies for themselves and write favorable reviews to counter mine. We will print favorable reviews from people we know. There is not much else I can suggest.

I hope Mr. Wilson will keep in mind that sales to the library are still sales and will also have the effect of putting his book within reach of people who might just like it more than I did.

— LTM

A review that says "I could not finish this book" says something about the book too. I read the first page and could not force myself to go on — and I wanted to like the book. It was an interesting-sounding combination of ideas and certainly not one that was overused. I'm tired of vampires who are wise, sensuous, and misunderstood.

We're not alone; I asked a couple of people who have been reviewing for money to comment:

— JTM

From: **Darrell Schweitzer** June 29, 2004  
(address above)

My opinion is that Lisa is entirely in the right. You do not have to eat the whole sandwich to know that it is rotten. Similarly, if a book is bad enough, you do not have to read more than a few pages to know that. Publish America is a vanity press. Print-on-demand can be used by legitimate publishers. Don't confuse the two. One is a technology, the other a publishing strategy. POD is often used by vanity publishers, because it allows very low print-runs. Vanity publishing means the author paid to be published. It implies no more critical discernment than a photocopy machine. Everybody knows this.

This being so, he should content himself to peddling copies to a few friends. His worst

nightmare is that a competent critic might actually review his book. Let me suggest he read my last column in *Flesh & Blood* magazine, wherein I dealt with these matters, and reviewed a particular vanity press book (an iUniverse title) because my friends found it so howlingly funny after opening it at random. All I had to do was quote and show that, yes, the sandwich was rotten.

My advice to the author was threefold. 1) Burn this, or at least pretend it never existed. 2) Change your byline. 3) Work harder until you can write at a professional level.

Now I haven't seen the David Wilson book. Probably like most vanity books it is a bit below publishable quality, not totally awful, but lacking in polish and discipline, something a few more years and a couple more drafts might rectify. One of the saddest things agents see is books like this coming in with a note from the author, "Now that it is published, can you help me get it reprinted by a big publisher?" The answer is no. There is nothing anyone can do. But it might be possible after a few years, if the vanity edition is allowed to die quietly, to rewrite the book substantially, change the title, change the byline, and circulate it as an unpublished manuscript. Right now the author is one step below unpublished.

From: **Martin Morse Wooster** July 21, 2004  
(address below)

PublishAmerica writers may be happy that they have a book published. But they won't have careers. Most bookstores will not carry print-on-demand books, since they aren't carried by the major distribution chains. (Even Wildside, which is a professional operation, has a hard time getting its books into stores.) PublishAmerica books won't for the most part get reviewed, since review outlets are cutting back on space and will not review books that can't be bought in stores.

Will PublishAmerica authors have sales? Sure. But as a reader, I'd prefer to buy a book that someone thought well enough of to provide an advance. And while editing standards at major companies are slipping, I know that a book from Tor or DAW or Baen has had someone edit it. I can't know that with a PublishAmerica book.

There are of course more and more print-on-demand books out there. And as a reader with limited time, I ignore nearly all of them.

From: **Eric Lindsay** June 22, 2004  
Post Office Box 640, Airlie Beach,  
Queensland 4802 AUSTRALIA  
[fijagh@ericlindsay.com](mailto:fijagh@ericlindsay.com)  
<http://www.ericlindsay.com>

I was delighted to discover some time ago that "The Prisoner" was available complete on DVD in Australia. I've never seen "Friends" so I have no idea whether I'd have liked it. Having seen some reality TV shows while visiting friends, I have no desire to ever encounter another. When my TV set breaks, I suspect I won't replace it. The government here has mandated a change to high definition TV, however hardly anyone (about 300,000 viewers) has changed over. I wouldn't bother.

After clearing my mother's estate, I started getting rid of my accumulated junk. I'm now down to what will fit in one room, and hope to eventually reduce the non-consumer durables and furniture to what will fit in a few suitcases (and a lot of disk drive space).

Rodney Leighton says, "These are called Southern Chef Gourmet Pork Rinds . . . These things are nothing but fat and salt." You could probably organise cheaper sources of fat and salt, if you just want to eat unhealthy food.

I'm glad that fans have taken me to various decent chocolate manufacturers, like Schaftenberger, otherwise I'd be forced to conclude America has no idea what real chocolate tastes like. At least I'm not exposed to Hershey in Australia.

I broke my prescription sunglasses frames (my driving glasses) the day before we started driving around Australia (on day 16 at the moment, now at Kununurra, Western Australia, in the tropical north). Repaired the glasses frame with Araldite (a two component epoxy glue). So far they have lasted just fine.

**You're lucky. I dropped my glasses, broke the frame, and when I glued it together again the glue got on the lens. So I had to get new glasses.**

I didn't see Gibson's "The Passion . . ." No belief, and no desire to support any activity that may potentially raise any interest in a religion (any religion) I wish would die out. I'd rather subscribe something that promotes a more sceptical attitude. Mind you, I probably wouldn't go see a movie regardless

of subject.

Johnny Carruthers recommends getting "Dove Promises (dark), and sample one adjacent to sampling a Hershey's Dark Kiss." Yes, Dove was clearly superior. Wonder who else has compared them? Mind you, the version of Dove that appears in Australia is totally inferior.

I was under the impression that Disney wasn't making any more 2D animated movie features at all, and that future animations will be 3D only. I heard the Sydney office (last one doing 2D from what I heard) has about 5 years of 2D work on stuff for video release, and after that it also moves. The 2D stuff seems to have been artist drawn outlines on paper, scanned to computer, and the coloring done by computer. I understood the artists are now drawing on computer, not paper.

A big thing a few years ago was cels; frames from the original negative of an animated cartoon. They sold for big bucks. Now they are selling "cels" from these computer animated cartoons. And people are buying them!

— JTM

From: **Cuyler "Ned" Brooks** June 17, 2004  
4817 Dean Lane, Lilburn, GA 30047-4720 USA  
[nedbrooks@sprynet.com](mailto:nedbrooks@sprynet.com)

Much thanks for the June issue of *Alexiad*. A great variety of reviews! I must be getting old, I don't feel any great urge to read any of those books. I had *Misty of Chincoteague* as a child in Chile, and when I went to work in Virginia the Newport News paper would always carry stories about the island horses and the annual swimming — and sale, as the herd grew too large and had to be thinned.

More than I had seen elsewhere about the carbon nanotubes that would supposedly be strong enough to allow Arthur C. Clarke's space elevator to be built. Other conceivably revolutionary advances I have heard of recently are Thermal Depolymerization, which would reduce the load on the landfills while producing fuel oil and fertilizer; and a new multi-spectrum solar cell that would run at over 50% efficiency.

From: **E. B. Frohvet** June 18, 2004  
4716 Dorsey Hall Drive #506, Ellicott

City, MD 21042-5988 USA

Obscure royal facts department: In his 2002 book, *Big Game, Small World*, Alexander Wolff travelled to obscure corners of the world to research why people love basketball. One trip took him to the obscure Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan; where His Royal Majesty, King Jigme Singye Wangchuck, is accounted both a serious fan of the game, and an accomplished player. Wolff wanted to go one-on-one with His Majesty; however his request to shoot some hoops with the King was politely turned down.

In the week prior to the Preakness, a jockey was seriously injured at Pimlico. His horse stumbled out of the gate, pitched the jock headfirst, and then inadvertently kicked him while he was down. The man was air-evac'ed to the Shock Trauma Center at University of Maryland Hospital, where at last report his condition was improved but still serious. Outriders and course marshals had flagged down the other competitors; the race was declared "no contest" and all wagers were refunded.

Well, I've finished ridding myself of back fanzines that were cluttering up needed storage space at Chateau de Frohvet. Some of them went to a fellow in Seattle, a well-known collector whose address I got from Robert Lichtman; Rodney Leighton asked for some specific material; the remainder went to a collection at Temple University, of which I was informed by Janine Stinson. Should anyone have material they wish to donate:

The Paskow Collection, PaleyLibrary  
Atten: Thomas M. Whitehead  
TempleUniversity Libraries  
1210 W, Berks Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19122  
<mailto:whitetm@astro.ocis.temple.edu>

At this time, I count at least nine nominally "active" fanzines which have not published in over a year. And at least three more that could easily be called "overdue". On a related topic, I agree entirely that if I were voting (which I'm not) I could not in good conscience vote for *File 770*; also that *Challenger* should receive the Hugo. Which it won't. This thought will not see print until too late, but I'd like to encourage voters to vote a "Fan Artist" Hugo to Steve Stiles.

Which probably will not happen either, more's the pity.

Lisa: I take your point about the Triple Crown; but it's within the rules to enter a new horse in the Belmont which is fresher, not having run the previous races. I suppose it would be up to the New York Jockey Club to amend the entry rules for the Belmont if they wanted.

You are quite right. Zito had a right to enter his fresh horse in the Belmont. And if the sight of his fresh horse powering past Smarty makes me sick to my stomach I have every right to start following a sport I perceive as being fairer. Thanks for the suggestions. I'll have to plan a trip to see the Louisville Bats. For *M\*A\*S\*H* fans, I did note one game where they played the Toledo Mudhens.

— LTM

The library probably has numerous books which will explain to you the basic rules of baseball. Alternately, go to local high school or rec-league games, sit among the spectators, and ask some guy to explain it to you. Guys love explaining sports to women.

Joseph: Sorry, I liked "Friends". It was silly, and went on a couple years too long, but there's a place for mindless light entertainment — see Laurel & Hardy. (My lusting after Jennifer Aniston was a factor also...)

I have not read *Paladin of Souls*, but seem to recall that on reviewing *The Curse of Chalion* I credited Bujold for doing something out of her comfort zone, even if unsuccessfully. (*The Spirit Ring* was out of her comfort zone but successful.) I tried to read Sawyer's *Hominids*, but it bored me and I never got to the sequel. By the time I noticed Jordan's Wheel of Time series it was already about six thick volumes, and I was just not willing to put in the effort to read it.

Taras Wolansky: I will stand by my view that the amounts being spent on "homeland security" are vastly disproportionate to the actual risk, and in many cases do nothing to advance safety — e.g., asking every postal patron mailing a parcel whether there is anything hazardous therein.

Alexis Gilliland: I am perfectly willing to go along with your distinction between events of importance, versus events of interest. (The

only hero worthy of the name in the *Titanic* story was the captain of *Carpathia*, who bravely flogged his ship through the same dangerous ice fields at flank speed to assist.)

The captain of the *Carpathia* was Arthur Henry Rostron (1869-1940).  
<http://www.encyclopedia-titanica.org>  
From the British Wreck Commission Inquiry into the loss of R.M.S. Titanic:  
Day 26  
The Commissioner (Charles Bigham, Lord Mersey of Toxteth):  
"You have had a large experience of ice?"  
The Witness (Sir Ernest Shackleton):  
"Yes."

Later on his Lordship asked about slowing down in ice, which Shackleton said he did in such circumstances:

Q: "Do you mean that you slowed down a vessel of six knots?"  
A: "Yes, I always did."  
Q: "Then what did you get to?"  
A: "We got very near the South Pole, my Lord."  
<http://www.titanicinquiry.org>

Trinlay Khadro: Observation in the bookstore the other day, apparently there is gay manga (Japanese style digest comics) under such titles as *Eerie Queerie*. *The Seven Samurai* has been copied as a western, as bad sci-fi, etc.

Robert Kennedy: There's a reason why I have called the Fan Hugos a "lost cause", publicly and often.

Colleen Cahill: You really should get in touch with Henry Welch (address in Joseph's fanzine listings), who has written extensively about home remodeling — and also publishes a fine fanzine. Most faneds will send you a copy of their zine "on spec" if asked, and letterhacking is cheap.

I recently came across the interesting word "proof texting", defines as, citing a textual passage (usually from the Bible) as the clinching proof of one's argument. As for Leviticus, by the way, apparently there are passages in the Epistles of Saint Paul making the point that gentiles did not have to observe the Jewish law in order to follow the

teachings of Jesus. Which probably explains why believers in the perfect inerrancy of the Bible can still have that bacon-and-eggs breakfast.

**Proof texting is the usage of single lines, usually out of context, to defend a particular tenet. The Children of God, for example, were very fond of proof texting, and managed to discover a Biblical rationale for religious prostitution that way.**

— JTM

From: **Bill Bowers** June 24, 2004  
6000 Townevista Drive Apt 114,  
Cincinnati OH 45224-1762 USA  
[BBowers@one.net](mailto:BBowers@one.net)

I am (wisely) not making any Date-Certain promises, but don't give up on a revived *Outworlds*!

In the meantime I really do appreciate your patience with me; I enjoy getting *Alexiad* — and read a larger percentage of each issue than I do most fanzines, these days.

**Thank you for the kind words.  
I always liked Outworlds.**

— JTM

From: **Lloyd Penney** June 28, 2004  
1706-24 Eva Road, Etobicoke, ON  
CANADA M9C 2B2  
[penneys@allstream.net](mailto:penneys@allstream.net)

Many thanks for *Alexiad* V3#3, WN15. I may have to make this rather fast, tomorrow is the national general election, and I am working as a poll clerk at a public school elsewhere in Etobicoke. Gotta make a few bucks where you can. (That wonderful job I mentioned in my last loc . . . I was laid off after 7 weeks for lack of work. Actually, I think they decided to bypass the proofreading stage, and fire off the work of the operators direct to Wal-Mart for their own vetting. Such is the publishing industry in Canada these days.)

The analogy of seeing Smarty Jones lose the Triple Crown to another horse might have applied to the NHL Stanley Cup finals. The Tampa Bay Lightning, one of the top clubs of the season, looked like they might lose to the Calgary Flames, a Cinderella team that defeated several division champions before

landing in the finals. Of course, we cheered for Calgary, but in the long run, the better of the two teams did win, and the Stanley Cup is spending a year in Florida. (I wish Smarty Jones had won — his jockey is from Toronto.)

I cannot watch "reality TV" because it is so unreal. It is staged in front of cameras, plotted like a soap opera, and drawn out to include recap shows and reunion shows. I am pragmatic about reality; if I want reality television, I will watch documentaries, and the news at 9pm.

The Hugos are due soon . . . I must get our ballots out and vote. I daresay I'd better make it count . . . as I said last loc, we've decided that Torcon 3, for all its warts and lumps, was our last Worldcon. We can't afford it, given that my own work status is always changing, and to be honest, even if we could afford it, we think we'd choose not to. We'll miss all our old friends there, and we will miss a Boston Worldcon, which usually shows the high standards of organization and innovation, but miss it we will. We plan to cut back, gradually make our way out of organizing and running conventions, and just become everyday local fans. We've been burned just too much by too many people, wielding the worst political motives, and we've had our fill.

Speaking of the Hugos . . . I would definitely support *Challenger* and Cheryl Morgan for their respective fan categories. But, I have to sit down with the ballots and make some hard decisions.

Yvonne and I had a discussion the other night about the future of Worldcon. We are living in a science fictional world, with the Internet, gene splicing, same-sex marriages and many now-everyday things that were probably mentioned in SF novels purporting to describe the intriguing far future. I still think we need science fiction, but literacy is dropping, book prices are rising, travel costs are rising . . . will cons survive? Will Worldcons fall away and die before 2025? We can see it happening. The Internet could help a community survive, but with the current abuses of the Net, something that has turned me off it, who will want to participate? Will fandom revert to being The Proud, The Few, The Lonely?

**Worse; since every other  
form of communication will have  
died out, there will be no fan**

**community at all.**

The discussions on pork rinds . . . I've never eaten them, either. I've probably mentioned in a loc somewhere about going to a Michigan convention about 15 years ago, and finding a single-serving can of pork brains in the con suite. Who sang that oldies song, "Only in America"? That's what I was thinking of when I found that can . . .

You comment to EB Frohvet about how apazines are sent out to non-apans . . . I guess I would refer to myself as a former apant, and it is convenient in this expensive age to use your apazine as your perzine, and have it contain not only mailing comments, but also a letter column. Dale Speirs has been on the Aurora ballot before several times, and I have voted for him . . . fanzine writing has an interesting past in Canfandom, but not much of a present. I could whip up a couple of issues of a zine, .pdf it, send it to a handful of Canadian fans, and it very possibly might get on the Aurora ballot the next year. It would be that easy, I'm afraid.

It is getting late, so off in the e-mail it goes. It is possible we might elect a Conservative minority government tomorrow, which would make the Bush regime pretty happy. However, the Conservatives have already alienated all the other parties, so if Stephen Harper becomes PM tomorrow, we'd probably have another election in six months. What fun. (We've already made all the usual wisecracks about None of the Above, No Award and Hold Over Funds winning if they were on the ballot. . .) Wish me luck as I prepare to spend about 14 hours tomorrow being a poll clerk and doing all the paperwork required to conduct the poll and legally count the results. Take care, and see you next issue.

**Read The Coming of the Third Reich by Richard J. Evans (2003), the guy who vaporized any pretensions David Irving had to being a historian. In 1932, not only could no one in Germany form a non-minority government but all the parties had given up on democracy.**

— JTM

From: **Martin Morse Wooster** June 26, 2004  
Post Office Box 8093, Silver Spring,  
MD 20907-8093  
[mmwooster@yahoo.com](mailto:mmwooster@yahoo.com)

Many thanks for *Alexiad* 15.

**Robert Lichtman** mentions Victor Gonzalez. Let me relate my one encounter with this great fan. At the 2000 Chicon, I was lounging in the fan lounge, as I like to do at Worldcons. Gonzalez walked up to me and said, "I don't like you and I don't want to have anything to do with you." He then walked off. Now the only contact I have ever had with Gonzalez is that I subscribed to *Apparatchik*. I never have written about him or criticized him before. But Gonzalez felt he had to show his superiority over me.

**I've heard of that attitude elsewhere: Sheldon Teitlebaum was a little bewildered reading the introduction of the Harlan Ellison® script of I, Robot to find that, after a grand total of two (2) references to Harlan Ellison® in his entire critical oeuvre, Harlan Ellison® had found it necessary to denounce him as an untalented kvetcher always complaining that he, Harlan Ellison®, had not written a novel.**

**(Note: Harlan Ellison® has trademarked his name. Consider yourselves informed.)**

Gonzalez's attitude expresses the problems I have with faanish fanzine fandom. Of course there should be variety among fanzines. I think the only fanzine I get that is approved by the Faanish Fanzine Control Board is *Plokta*, a funny and entertaining zine. But what I dislike is the notion that faanish fanzine fandom is an elite; superior not only to sercon fanzine fans, but all other fans. The notion that Andrew Hooper and Victor Gonzalez are the greatest fans of our time is ludicrous.

And while I'm venting — all right, I feel better now — let me say that while I enjoyed the three Corflus I have attended, most of the American attendees of Corflu do not publish fanzines, but used to, once upon a time, long ago? At the 2002 Corflu, the Guest of Honor was Moshe Feder, who last published a zine in 1978. He did promise to publish another Real Soon Now.

Like **Joe Major**, I'd like to see an end to the Retro-Hugoes. But this is the last year for them, right? I can't imagine the Scottish Convention wanting to install Retro-Hugoes

for 1945. Or are there plans to hold Retro-Hugoes for years in which Hugoes were awarded? (If there are, they should be stopped.)

They could award Retro-Hugoes for 1929 or for 1904. Let's see: "Best Pro Editor: Hugo Gernsback and . . . and . . . and . . . uh."

— JTM

Following up on E. B. Frohvet's letter, the effort to build a new racetrack to replace Pimlico was stopped, in part because even the Maryland Stadium Authority, which has build Camden Yards, M&T Bank Stadium, and several minor-league stadiums, thought a new racetrack was too much of a boondoggle. But on the subject of horseracing, I did see most of the Belmont. I learned that Smarty Jones's meals before the race consisted of six pails of oats and vitamins, eight hours of sleep, two pails of oats and vitamins, and four hours of sleep. Smarty Jones, we were then told, had to Put on His Game Face. I didn't know horses did that! But I didn't realize that Birdstone hadn't entered the Preakness or the Derby. I agree with Lisa that that isn't fair.

From: **Dainis Bisenieks** June 17, 2004  
921 S. St. Bernard Street,  
Philadelphia, PA 19143-3310 USA  
[dainisbets@juno.com](mailto:dainisbets@juno.com)

The great horse story of the year has come and gone. To me an odds-on bet is no bet at all — neither winning nor losing it has any poignancy. Were I a betting man, I would bet the long shot and hedge with some 5-to-1 horse or other. How would I have done on the Belmont?

Lloyd Penney confirms my view of Canada as a bad place for found money; if he lived in the U.S. he would be a Lloyd Dime, as my take is an order of magnitude greater. When I lived in more northerly climes, the paper money, especially the larger bills, tended to be frozen assets in snow banks; in melting ones I have actually found a silver dollar and an Eisenhower dollar. I can individually recall the half dozen or so half dollars, as well as the two Sacagawea dollars (which I've never received in change). Patches of rain-washed soil have yielded the occasional oldie. I have a collection (kept in a typewriter-ribbon tin) of different date

wheat-ear cents, entirely from finds or from circulation.

Fifty years ago, a coin half a century old would be worn *flat* (and of course silver is relatively soft); this no longer happens as credit transactions come to outnumber cash; and there's idle time in vending machines and parking meters. Has it been noted that relief on the nickel is lower than formerly? Extends the life of dies.

I remember, when a boy in Frankfort, finding a Standing Liberty quarter, worn almost flat. That coin would have been nearly thirty-five years old at least and perhaps closer to fifty.

Hey, must remember to vote on retro Hugos, though in some cases I must rely on recollection of what I read and how I liked it in actual 1953. How much of my reading is utterly forgotten! I may well have read (in hardcover) *Renaissance* by Raymond F. Jones, which was pretty hot stuff when serialized in *Astounding* in 1944. I have it here in an old Pyramid pb (as *Man of Two Worlds*), destined for the Eastern Hemisphere . . . which will, however, be spared the likes of Ray Cummings — the kind of stuff Don Wollheim was fond of reprinting when editor at Avon in the late 1940s. (But he did bring *Out of the Silent Planet* and *Perelandra* to a broader public.)

To alternate Civil War History I vastly prefer the real thing. On the Battle of Gettysburg alone I have more books than I really require; though in this matter I have shied at buying new or even remaindered books. My imagination is captured by the names a great many warships had, viz., geographic names often of Indian etymology. I could name for you all the "Pook turtles." . . . But my hero of that time is Herman Haupt, the railroad man.

There are signs that the books of Jasper Fforde — *The Eyre Affair* and sequels — are catching on; I myself have contributed effectively to the word of mouth. A good sign is that the U.S. edition of the fourth, *Something Rotten*, is to come only a month after the British one. When will that gap close for Marcus Didius Falco? Meanwhile, I have my eye on another new British writer, Malcolm Pryce, whose work was persuasively reviewed in the *Times Literary Supplement* last year. The titles alone have their charm:

*Aberystwyth Mon Amour* and *Last Tango in Aberystwyth*. One of my correspondents-in-places-ending-in-K will do some book shopping in Britain next month. I've asked her to try and get at least one for me — but to read it first! This by way of reimbursement for books got cheaply and sent from here. The Falco books were a great hit, and so was *The Tokaido Road* by Lucia St. Clair Robson. Escape and pursuit on that road is the thread of the story: "Lady Asano had turned her flight into *musha-shugyo*, training that took the form of a journey." In one of my favorite scenes, the male lead, Hanshiro (picture him as being *exactly* Toshiro Mifune in one of his wandering swordsman roles) is at an inn, and hears the approach of a band of toughs intent on robbing him of his valuable swords:

As he sat, Hanshiro wove his hands through the intricacies of the nine-symbols-cutting, the esoteric hand signs affected by *ninja*, or "warrior-wizards". He knew it would impress them. Then he picked up the three slender skewers that had held the grilled eel and tossed them into the air. With a move too fast for the eye to follow, he drew the short-sword from the scabbard in his sash and struck. The skewers dropped to the *tatami*, each in two pieces, sliced lengthwise. He gathered the six pieces, threw them up, and cut each one in half as they fell.

He solemnly replaced his sword in the sheath. He rested his hands on his thighs with his elbows out and continued staring straight ahead while the men next door left quietly and quickly.

As I have remarked before, this book plays in the theater of the mind like a Japanese movie. Indeed, no few novelists must have been influenced — and I think mainly to the good — by cinematic art in its maturity. Writing in sharply defined scenes rather than in chapters, even when there are chapter divisions.

Of Brass Braed Babes, a feature of the 1940s, I can claim to have *seen them all*: in the 1950s I amassed a collection of zines that lacked only *Unknown* and *Weird Tales*. The 1930s featured more machinery and Highly Magnified Insects like the one that gave us "bug-eyed monster"; on the cover that

inspired it (*Thrilling Wonder Stories*, if memory serves) it was a gigantic wasp.

I never could bring myself to read the stories in the pulps (apart from *Astounding*) but I did read the lettercols, noteworthy for their playfulness. When these were written, I was a child in far-off Latvia, and subsequently Germany; but still I have the feeling of having shared in those years, if not actively participated.

Um, I should note that my holdings before 1937 were very sparse.

I have already remarked somewhere that many BBB scenes could be thought of as depicting a space ballet.

Someone should have told that to Spider Robinson for "Stardance". Of course, someone should have told him not to expand the story into a novel, either.

— JTM

From: **Bill Breuer** July 1, 2004  
[sciwriter1@juno.com](mailto:sciwriter1@juno.com)

As a follow-up to the quest for information on Mr. De Pinna, the early rocketeer, here is a website that claims to have the most complete information:  
<http://www.angelfire.com/moon2/depinna>

This should permanently answer the mystery for the truly insightful!

Fabulous Spaceship One Photos: If you haven't seen this nice presentation, check out the video on the last page of the photo gallery.

[http://www.rokits.org/gallery/slideshow.php?set\\_albumName=x-prize](http://www.rokits.org/gallery/slideshow.php?set_albumName=x-prize)

From: **Sheryl Birkhead** July 2, 2004  
22509 Jonnie Court, Gaithersburg,  
MD 20882-3422 USA  
[catsmeouch@yahoo.com](mailto:catsmeouch@yahoo.com)

Drat — I'd have sworn I reponded to *Alexiad*, but no note to that effect, so, I'll cruise through again.

My sister's idea of SF is STAR TREK and Star Wars — so birthday and Christmas see books/toys of those two to the inclusion of all else. I did, actually, take her to one con, years ago, when she met Asimov and got an autograph, so I imagine she'll comment on I,

*Robot* eventually.

Like the Foster illo on pg. 8! (Pg 10's not bad either.)

Ah — now I *know* I already wrote in that I see the Candy Bar Review — I *know* I expounded on the verities (or lack thereof) of the various/varied kisses.

From: **Jason K. Burnett** July 8, 2004  
3204 Cypress Street, Metairie LA  
70001-5222 USA  
[BritHistorian@aol.com](mailto:BritHistorian@aol.com)

I had had every intention of writing you a complete LOC after receiving 3.2, which was then intensified after receiving 3.3, but life, as it will do, stepped squarely in that way of that. On May 21, my wife gave birth to Logan Connor Rhys Burnett, our second son. While this event was in no way unexpected, its consequences did somewhat catch me off guard — it had been nine years since we had had an infant in the house, so I had forgotten how time-consuming they are. So as things stand now, I've read about 3/4 of 3.2 and skimmed through 3.3, and am just now getting to the point where given a choice between "sleep" and "X," where X represents "anything other than sleep," I have to stop to think before I choose "sleep." But in another six weeks his self-comforting mechanism will kick in, and eventually he'll sleep through the night, and eventually life will return to a more normal, if somewhat fuller, rhythm.

### Congratulations on your new issue.

Anyway, that being said, I am **very** impressed with *Alexiad*. It's an interesting, readable, info-dense zine, yet not so sercon as to be unenjoyable. And based on the quality of your lettercol, I can think of any number of high-end/high-brow advertisers who would kill for a copy of your mailing list.

A couple of particular comments:

E. B. Frohvet's letter in 3.2: I wasn't around to see the result when you tried producing a zine to "get back to our SF roots." What happened?

To Alexis A. Gilliland's letter in 3.3: Re Joe's comment in 3.2 about Larry Niven never being pubbed in *Analog*. Not to pick nits here, but I think that what you both mean to say is that Niven was never published in *Analog* under **John W. Campbell**, as both *The Integral Trees* and *The Smoke Ring* were

serialized in *Analog* (10/83-1/84 and 1/87-4/87, respectively), but that was under Stanley Schmidt. I wouldn't have known this, except that the 10/83 *Analog* was the first science fiction magazine I ever bought.

Quite. You'd think Niven was a perfect Campbell author, and The Campbell Letters has a letter to him from JWC, but he sold exclusively to Pohl for the longest time — his first sale to *Analog* was "Cloak of Anarchy" and that was in the March 1972 issue, one of Bova's first.

— JTM

In my (fairly limited) free time, I've been reading Doris Kearns Goodwin's *No Ordinary Time: Franklin & Eleanor Roosevelt: The Home Front in World War II* and enjoying it much more than I'd expected to. I'll send you a review of it once I finish.

Take care, and keep up the great work.

From: **Milt Stevens** July 10, 2004  
6325 Keystone Street, mi Valley, CA  
93063-3834 USA  
[miltstevens@earthlink.net](mailto:miltstevens@earthlink.net)

In *Alexiad* V3#3, Joseph mentions the show *Joe Millionaire* (which I never watched either). I never thought about the motivation of the women who might enter such a contest. Now that I think about it, I know many people reach points in their lives when they are willing to try drastic action to change their situation. Life seems so bleak, that the prospect of any change at all seems positive. I suspect at least some of the women on the show might be in that condition. Even at that, the women might have noticed something about *Joe Millionaire* which might have disturbed them more than the fact he wasn't really a millionaire. The way the network showed him in ads, he looked like a bun boy and not even a particularly bright bun boy.

By now, you've seen my take on this year's fiction Hugos in *Knarley Knews*. I notice in the novel category the only difference between my choices and Joseph's choices was that we reversed fourth and fifth positions. I also noticed *Ilium* finished first for best science fiction novel in the *Locus* poll. Oh well.

In the Retro Hugos, I finally decided to

vote for *Mission of Gravity* as best novel. I really admire world building in science fiction, and Clement did one of the best jobs of it ever. The plot was adequate to the subject matter. Back in those days, we thankfully didn't have to worry about the sex lives of the aliens. In the editor category, I voted for Frederik Pohl in first place on the strength of the Star anthologies. They weren't the first new material anthologies, but they remain among the best.

I should thank Brad Foster for recommending Teddy Harvia's Hugo nominees site. It displays the data in a very convenient manner. I've printed it out and put it in the binder with the *Locus* pages on Hugo nominees. I find myself considering past Hugos often enough to make it reasonable to keep the information in a reference binder. However, that wasn't what I was wondering about. When I see there were nominations for 90 different fanzines in the best fanzine category I wonder what some of the people making those nominations were thinking of. I get quite a few fanzines and know of others, but I don't know of there being anything like 90 fanzines currently being published. What are these other fanzines that are beyond my ken?

I suspect that a bunch of them are **Trekzines, fictionzines, and just plain 'zines without any of that sci-fi crap in them.**

I didn't know that *A Clockwork Orange* had more than one ending. The edition I have is Ballantine, fourth printing, November 1970. It has six chapters. At the end, it appears Alex is going to join the establishment but will continue being just as rotten a character as he ever was.

You have the American twenty-chapter edition. The twenty-first chapter makes quite a change in Alex.

— JTM

From: **Robert Kennedy** July 10, 2004  
1779 Ciprian Avenue, Camarillo, CA  
93010-2451 USA  
[robertk@cipcug.org](mailto:robertk@cipcug.org)

Friday, July 2 was a very bad day. In the morning, I had to put my cat, Reba, down. She was 17 years old and I had her for 16 of

those years. (That's longer than I was married.) For over 30 years, I've had one or more cats around. That's not counting childhood with a cat and dog or for a cat for a short time in my 20's. I guess that makes it over 40 years. That's it, no more cats or any other animal. In the afternoon, the back yard was full of birds, including three parakeets (they must have escaped from somewhere). The birds must know that there is no longer a cat here. What the heck? Now I can hang a hummingbird feeder.

Our condolences on your loss.  
Elfing, C'Mell, Delenn, Gemellus,  
Red Wull, and Sarang send theirs.

Thank you for "Handicapping the HUGOS" and the reviews of the nominations for *Best Novel*. They were a big help. Interesting that you got a plug in for *The Seven Daughters of Eve* in your review of *Humans*. Not a number of great choices for *Best Novel*. Now, if John Varley's *Red Thunder* had been nominated. (I had a smile on my face throughout the book.) There was only one problem. Varley has one of his characters indicate that Werner von Braun was captured (p. 161). That's not exactly correct. Von Braun and several of his associates surrendered to American forces so as not to be captured by the Soviets. Then there's Michael Flynn's *The Wreck of the River of Stars* that should have made the cut.

Let me here throw in a plug for the book *Eats, Shoots & Leaves: The Zero Tolerance Approach to Punctuation* by Lynne Truss. I don't promise that it will make my punctuation perfect. But the book is great. Over 500,000 copies in England and now on the Best Seller list here in the United States. The author is an excellent writer and has a great sense of humor.

As Arthur Hlavaty once quoted in DR, "I would like to thank my parents, Ayn Rand and God." And they disdain the serial comma.

Here's another plug, this time for the movie *The Lost Skeleton of Cadavra*. It's not as good as a review I read. However, it's now available for rental and it is worth watching. It's a spoof of late night SF movies of the '50s.

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0307109/>

What can I say about *Spider-Man 2* other than it's even better than the first movie. *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* was also outstanding, although I'm not sure I'd rate it better than the first two.

I think that the *HUGO*, Best Dramatic Presentation, Short Form should be changed to Best Dramatic Presentation, Series or Mini-Series. Obviously, this would be TV; but that's what it is now. No having to pick episodes. Choose a series or mini-series as a whole. A chance for *Farscape*? That *Farscape* never won a *HUGO* (let alone never even nominated) is disgusting. Well now, according to TV Guide, *Farscape: The Peacekeeper Wars* is a four-hour miniseries scheduled for October on the *SciFi Channel*. I hope that it isn't scheduled for while I'm in Mobile, Alabama for my Navy ship reunion.

So, May 26, 2004, saw the Season Finale of *Star Trek: Enterprise—Zero Hour*. That was the end of *Star Trek: Enterprise*? That's a horrible thing to do to fans of the show. Oh, after writing that I read somewhere that *Star Trek: Enterprise* will return, but on Friday nights. We'll see, because too many TV shows have ended leaving viewers hanging.

I read *Freehold* (2004) by Michael Z. Williamson because it looked interesting. It was hard to tell which was more important to the author, the basically Libertarian philosophy or the sex. It was a good read. But, the sex was a bit gratuitous, especially the last scene p. 658). (Can we be sure that it wasn't really Dick Geis who wrote this novel? I guess not or there would have been even more explicit sex.) He used the word "gender" instead of "sex" (p. 243), which always bugs me. One interesting item was giving several recruits rocks to hold in their left hand while marching, for what should be an obvious reason (p. 242). This brought back a memory from when I was first in the Navy. Being a very poor marcher, I was handed a rock to hold in my left hand. After a considerable period of time, I dropped the rock. At the end of our marching exercise, I was requested to return the rock. The result was extensive individual marching on my part.

If Geis had written the novel, not only would the sex have been far more explicit but there'd

have been abundant conspiratorialism.

Then, I read *The Far Side of the Stars* (2003) by David Drake. More Leary — more — more! When are we going to see Commander Leary, Captain Leary, Admiral Leary? He can't stay a Lieutenant forever.

I taped and watched *5 Days to Midnight* on the *SciFi Channel*, despite the fact that their made for TV movies haven't been very good and I hadn't planned to watch any more of them. The concept was good. The protagonist received documentation from the future that he would be killed in 5 days. The movie was about his actions to stop it from happening. Who sent the documentation was a big question; but it should be obvious to any SF fan. The action was rather slow at times and the acting not that good. Actually, it was sometimes over acted. The music sucked. The ending was supposed to be a surprise; but, it wasn't much of a surprise. On my scale of 1-5, I gave it a 2.5. So, hopefully in the future I'll keep to my plan to not watch any of their made for TV movies.

**Darrell Schweitzer:** My statement in Vol. 3, No. 2, about subscribing to *Astounding* since the early 1960's, while factually correct, was not completely accurate. I started reading *Astounding* in 1946 or 1947 (John W. Campbell, Jr. being the editor) after having been introduced to it by my friend, Ralph F. Miles, Jr. (a future Caltech Ph.D.). My memory says that there were other SF pulps read as well as SF books. My memory is not that clear concerning what other magazines were read. Please do not ask me about what happened to the magazines.

**Martin Morse Wooster:** Because you indicated that you wrote Chapter 6 of *The Ruling Class*, I obtained a copy from Interlibrary Loan. An interesting work and your chapter was excellent. Although the book is now 11 years old, nothing much has changed. Maybe things are even worse.

**Trinlay Khadro:** My friend says that the photo is lost. Probably ruined (water damage) along with a bunch of other photos and tossed out.

**Sue Burke:** Excellent article about the Spanish wedding.

**Taras Wolansky:** I commented on Michelle Trachtenberg and *Eurotrip* in the previous issue along with my other comments. She is the only reason I watched the movie.

**Sheryl Birkhead:** For the past several years, I have nominated you for both Best Fan Artist and Best Fan Writer. You did make the cut once. I've been nominating Joe for Best Fan Writer even longer. I believe that he made the cut once about 1996 or so.

Twice: 1996 and 1998.

— JTM

**Joseph T Major:** Trigger is definitely at the Roy Rogers Museum in Branson, Missouri. I toured the museum after my Navy ship reunion last year. It's a magnificent museum and I recommend it highly. I have Elizabeth Garrott's *LoneStarCon* masquerade appearance on the videotapes of the convention.

From: **Colleen R. Cahill** July 11, 2004  
5112 Huron Street, College Park, MD  
20740-1725 USA  
[ccah@earthlink.net](mailto:ccah@earthlink.net)

Once more I am way behind on my reading, so I just finished *Alexiad* Vol. 3, no. 3.

I was so glad to read Trinlay's rescue by Megumi: next time someone tells me a cat is just a furry food bucket, I will let them know about this hero!

It is always a great sympathy-getter when I tell any fan that I cannot eat chocolate (bad skin reaction). Since my husband is allergic to chocolate, we get along just fine and miss it only rarely. The candy reviews kind of make me wistful for my days before I had such problems. Then I could enjoy a Milky Way Dark with great relish. Ah, for youth!

Just two days ago, I started a Live Journal (LJ), which I think is like a blog. This was mostly to be able to put comments on a friend's LJ. So far, it is kind of fun, but I bet I will let it slide in a few weeks. Just too much else to do.

Ah for the choco of yesteryear . . . did you ever try a Klondike double chocolate ice cream bar?

— JTM

From: **Taras Wolansky** July 20, 2004  
100 Montgomery Street., #24-H,  
Jersey City, NJ 07302-3787 USA  
[wolansky@email.com](mailto:wolansky@email.com)

I've already put the date and time of the Heinlein Dinner at Noreascon on my external memory — my wristwatch. You didn't say if you would be there, however.

**"Kornbluth's point about characters in fantastic fiction [rightly] being rather commonplace"**. Was Kornbluth paraphrasing C.S. Lewis, "To tell how odd things strike odd people is to have an oddity too much; he who is to see strange sights must not himself be strange." (The joys of googling.)

(Review of Robert Sawyer's *Humans*;) **"Ponter's visit to the Vietnam Memorial Wall . . . the U.S. was propping up a corrupt regime"**. It's not good SF writing to have an alien — and a Neanderthal is an alien — to display cliched, human thinking on any issue. Good SF writing would be to have him approach the issue at right angles to our ways of thinking; e.g., regretting that far too few people were killed to reduce populations to a proper level.

**"A recent multicultural children's story . . . involved a desperate battle between two groups of Native Americans . . . where the winner would get the women and children of the loser."** If this is about the Anasazi, then the victory would be followed by a great banquet, in which the women and children of the loser would be eaten. (Why cliff dwellings were built.) Seriously, aren't there any Europeans around? Don't you know Native Americans were peace-loving and never fought, unless nefarious Europeans somehow forced them to?

(Review of Charles Stross' *Singularity Sky*;) **"has anyone ever drawn the parallel between Vinge's Singularity and the Rapture, as in Left Behind?"** In my unused notes for last year's Hugo Award ceremony, I have the following unsourced quote: "No, not via the Rapture. We're a science fiction convention: via the Singularity!"

(Trip report on *Xanadu 7*;) **"The towel racks in the hotel were quite sturdy."** I'm not sure if this is a line of absurdist poetry, or a veiled reference to activities that might have you removed from a Republican primary.

As compared to the towel racks in the hotel where Kubla Khan 30 was held.

"Murray Rothbard was (both)" a militant atheist and a Pat Buchanan supporter. Uh-uh. He was very respectful of his wife's Catholic

faith.

(Review of David A. Wilson's *Curse of the Vampire*;) "I have an obligation to give my honest opinion of the book." Then again, Lisa, you don't have an obligation to review the book in the first place.

**Rodney Leighton:** "nothing but fat and salt". Actually pork rinds often have almost twice as much protein as fat, it sez here. I've never had any.

**Sue Burke:** Great story about the Spanish royal wedding. Good advertising for Spanish tourism? Maybe: until I read your article, I never knew it had happened.

**Brad W. Foster:** "Nowhere could I find just what the list of possible SF authors is." Click on "View", and then on "Source".

I've been a subscriber to *The Skeptical Inquirer* since the first issue, in 1976 or 1977, when it was called *The Zetetic*. For many years I would gobble up every issue the same day it arrived: it was real-life sleuthing, of the kind the police don't actually allow the Poirots and Marples of this world. Unfortunately they had to get more cautious in recent years, due to the John Edwardses of this country: the danger that a fake psychic would sue and win before a moron jury, like the one that gave a psychic \$500,000 for the loss of her nonexistent powers due to a brain operation.

For example, James Randi had to part company with CSICOP because he was getting sued by Uri Geller.  
<http://www.randi.org>

**Joy V. Smith:** "*Firefly* . . . Great show and characters." Having seen the DVD, I have some mixed feelings. The trouble is, the protagonists are not just a little outside the law, they are a gang of criminals. Some viewers in the heartland may have found this off-putting. It also causes story problems: they simply could not carry passengers who are not part of the gang, because each and every one is a potential witness against them. So it's a wonderful bunch of actors — Whedon's uncanny skill in casting, again — and mostly good writing, but problems exist. I'm certainly looking forward to the movie, in any case.

**E.B. Frohvet:** "There is an obvious gaping void for a North American newzine -- *Locus* is a professional trade journal." What about *Science Fiction*

*Chronicle*?

It's a low-rent *Locus* now. And the title is now just *Chronicle*.. See John Hertz's letter above.

— JTM

**Milt Stevens:** "By the time I was a teenager, I'd read lots of science fiction that was published before I was born." We were both lucky to start out at times when there was so little money in SF that publishers had to reprint all the time. To this day, my personal Golden Age is the 1940s.

**Lloyd Penney:** To my chagrin, I discovered last winter that AAA won't pull you out of a snow bank!

**Robert Kennedy:** Having read the books, I was (almost inevitably) disappointed by *Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World*. In the books, Capt. Aubrey is sort of a big oaf, everywhere except at sea — and Dr. Maturin is an assassin, not a sensitive, Hollywood liberal! SF fans should, perhaps, think of Fritz Leiber's *Fafhrd* and *The Grey Mouser*.

What I've heard about *The Da Vinci Code* leads me to think of it as preposterous nonsense.

**Ben Böst:** I understand that *Home on the Range* is the last non-computer animation that Disney plans to do. Thus the demise of its Florida animation studio.

From: **Marty Helgesen** July 31, 2004  
11 Lawrence Avenue, Malverne, New York 11565-1406 USA  
[mnhcc@sunysvm.cuny.edu](mailto:mnhcc@sunysvm.cuny.edu)

I have found the April issue, which I had replaced, so I can comment on it.

I agree with much of what Joe says about blogs. I read one Catholic blog regularly and look at some others fairly often. There's too much to keep up with, but that's also true of some lists, newsgroups, etc. One thing I dislike about blogs is that the comments boxes, where discussions among readers take place, are attached to specific items and scroll out of sight as the blogged items scroll out of sight. That means that discussions are effectively cut off quickly because very few people will scroll down to find them and read recent comments.

In discussing *A Clockwork Orange* Joe suggests the invented slang term "droog"

comes from the Russian *druzhina* — a noble's retinue. A more direct source seems to be the contemporary Russian word *drug*, which means "friend", although even someone whose Russian is as fragmentary as mine can see a connection between the words.

Joe's mention that Conan novels written in the seventies by various authors were really about those authors' own characters calling themselves Conan. I was reminded of the "Man From Uncle" novels, of which I read only the ones by people connected with science fiction and fandom. Depending on the author, Napoleon and Illya had different interests. One author, as I recall, had at least one of them doing crossword puzzles while another had them playing *Botticelli*.

That's the problem of "allowing others to play in your universe" — coherence and consistency go down the drain.

Joe says, "*Martianthology* evokes the sfnal — oh, all right, sci-fin-nal — image ..." I still say "stfnal".

Alexis Gilliland puts a remarkable amount of nonsense in his review of Mel Gibson's "The Passion of the Christ". It would take too much space to do a complete analysis, but I'll mention a few points. He says, "In real life it was the Romans who killed Christ, but for going on two thousand years the Roman Catholic Church has held it was the Jews" giving the explanation, "Hey, you don't suppose the Pope of Rome is going to admit the Romans killed Christ, do you?" The Apostles Creed, which dates from the early centuries of the Church, says Jesus was, ". . . conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, was buried." The Nicene Creed, from the Council of Nicea (A.D. 325), which is prayed as part of the Mass, says, "He was crucified also for us, suffered under Pontius Pilate, and was buried." No mention of Jews, just of the Roman Procurator. It is true that many Catholics, including some prominent ones, exaggerated the responsibility of the Jewish people for the fact that Jesus was turned over to Pilate to be crucified, but while that was widely believed it was not official Church doctrine. And the Romans who killed Jesus were pagans, the same pagan Romans who persecuted Christians for several hundred years. Christians, even those living in Rome, had no

reason to whitewash the evils of pagan Rome.

After a passing mention of the false claim that Pope Pius XII ignored the Holocaust, he says, Vatican II "cautiously allowed as how mistakes had been made, and that the faithful should interpret the crucifixion with great care before condemning the Jewish people as Christ killers." On the contrary, it explicitly rejected the claim that the Jewish people are Christ killers. The statement on the Jews in Vatican II's "Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions" is too long to quote. It can be read at:

<http://www.ewtn.com/library/COUNCILS/V2NON.HTM>

After discussing the Jewish roots of Christianity and related matters, it says, "True, the Jewish authorities and those who followed their lead pressed for the death of Christ (Cf. John 19:6); still, what happened in His passion cannot be charged against all the Jews, without distinction, then alive, nor against the Jews of today. Although the Church is the new people of God, the Jews should not be presented as rejected or accursed by God, as if this followed from the Holy Scriptures. All should see to it, then, that in catechetical work or in the preaching of the word of God they do not teach anything that does not conform to the truth of the Gospel and the spirit of Christ.

"Furthermore, in her rejection of every persecution against any man, the Church, mindful of the patrimony she shares with the Jews and moved not by political reasons but by the Gospel's spiritual love, decries hatred, persecutions, displays of anti-Semitism, directed against Jews at any time and by anyone.

"Besides, as the Church has always held and holds now, Christ underwent His passion and death freely, because of the sins of men and out of infinite love, in order that all may reach salvation. It is, therefore, the burden of the Church's preaching to proclaim the cross of Christ as the sign of God's all-embracing love and as the fountain from which every grace flows."

I decided to wait for the video and have not yet seen the movie, but comments I've read by Catholics who have seen it have included statements along the lines of, "It made me realize what my sins had done to Jesus. I shared the responsibility for all that He suffered. I did that to Him." No one said

anything about Jews, except to say that after seeing the movie they did not think it was anti-Semitic.

See also:

[http://www.adl.org/interfaith/gibson\\_qa.asp](http://www.adl.org/interfaith/gibson_qa.asp)

Alexis also says, "Judea was under Roman occupation, and Jesus had promised the Jews that if they rose up in Rebellion, God would come to their aid and throw the Romans out." I wonder where he got that bizarre idea. It's not in the Bible.

E. B. Frohvet writes, "The other day it occurred to me to wonder how believers in Biblical inerrancy can fail to observe the laws of Leviticus." "Inerrancy" is a technical term. It would be better to say "Biblical authority". That aside, the answer, briefly, is that those laws were part of the Old Covenant. Jesus instituted a New Covenant under which we live.

Rod Smith mentions Japanese firearms. Some years ago I read *Giving Up the Gun: Japan's Reversion to the Sword, 1543-1879* by Noel Perrin (1979). I no longer remember the details but Perrin said that the Japanese deliberately excluded guns from their warfare. Two of the reasons he gave were that the body positions used by men shooting guns were ugly while the positions used by swordsmen were aesthetically pleasing and that firearms gave too much influence to peasant soldiers rather than samurai.

Dainis Bisenieks, in connection with reporting appalling ignorance on the part of some store clerks, mentions that he recycles pennies by spending them. I keep a few pennies in my pocket for paying with exact change, but most of the pennies I get in change or pick up off the street I put into a small bank I had as a kid which I empty from time to time into a poorbox in my church. They help the poor and they are recycled by being passed on by the bank in which they're deposited to businesses that need them for making change.

Moving on to the June issue I see that Joe mentions "reality" tv. I have seen bits of "Survivor" and one or two other programs. I can't understand why people enjoy watching obnoxious people being obnoxious in contrived situations. I don't think I ever lasted though a whole episode. Mike Van Pelt sometimes uses the e-mail signature tag, "The ultimate oxymoron: 'Reality TV'"

My sympathy to Dainis Bisenieks on the

death of his wife.

Lisa wonders whether the word "yeah" was in use during the Civil War. The OED2 says the earliest recorded use it could find was in a 1905 issue of a publication called Dialect Notes. That suggests that it was around for a while before it was recorded, but doesn't tell us how long before.

Sue Burke's remark, in her account of the marriage of the heir to the Spanish throne, that the bride "was divorced, but the Spanish Catholic Church hierarchy determined that since the first wedding had been a civil marriage, not religious, it had merely been fornication, so it could be washed away with confession," seems misleading. With some exceptions Catholics can marry validly only in a Catholic ceremony. Since this is Church law it does not apply to non-Catholics, whose marriages in their own religions' ceremonies or in civil ceremonies are recognized as valid. While there probably was some paperwork to confirm that she had never been married, her confession had nothing to do with that. When she went to confession her sins related to that putative marriage were forgiven along with all her other sins.

Sue also refers to "Our Lady of Acocha, the divine protectress of the royal family", but Mary is not divine. She is only human, although "blessed among women" (Luke 1:42). Only God is divine. It would be more accurate to say that Mary is the patron saint of the royal family under the title, "Our Lady of Acocha".

Taras Wolansky reports that AT&T is being eliminated from the Dow-Jones index. I recently read that it will no longer seek new residential customers, although it's not dropping the ones it has.

Taras makes some good points about "The Passion of the Christ". However, he refers to "some dubious visions of a 19th century French nun". The dubious visions are attributed to Anne Catherine Emmerich (1774-1824), a Westphalian mystic who had been in a convent for a few years. She told her visions to the Romantic poet Clemens Brentano in the Westphalian dialect and he wrote them down in High German. He seems to have polished and embellished them considerably. They are considered unreliable, but even visions regarded as reliable are not sources of doctrine. Public revelation ended with the death of the St. John the Apostle. Private revelation has no doctrinal authority.

I remember the idiotic Doonesbury

cartoon Taras mentioned. I wondered whether Trudeau really doesn't know what "strict constructionism" means or does know but was deliberately misrepresenting it.

I remembered that Nellybelle, which Sheryl Birkhead asked about, was a jeep on a TV western series. That made it easy to Google to the information that it was driven by Roy Rogers' sidekick Pat Brady.

Trinlay Khadro mentions concern about "The Passion of the Christ" inciting anti-Semitism. As I said above, nothing I read by Christians who saw it said anything about the Jews being responsible for the Crucifixion. While the movie was in theaters one Catholic mentioned from time to time on his blog that "the number of Jews killed in pogroms inspired by the movie has soared to a staggering total of zero, and it's doubling every day".

I was very glad to read that her cat saved her life.

Joe says that apazines can be mailed to nonapans. I used to mail my MINNEAPA zines to some outsiders, including some mundanes, mostly people at work to whom I handed them. I could send copies of my APA-L zines and FLAP zines to others who requested them if anyone were to do so. I try to keep to a minimum comments that make no sense to someone who had not seen the mailing (or distribution) I am commenting on.

While seeing the artwork Lloyd Penney mentioned that showed Snoopy saying, "Curse you, Red Planet!" would have made it better, his description was enough to amuse me. I thank him for it.

From: **AL du Pisani** July 31, 2004  
945 Grand Prix Street,  
Weltevredenpark 1709, Republic of  
South Africa  
[akaine@intekom.co.za](mailto:akaine@intekom.co.za)

I should have reread the last issue of *Alexiad* in more detail before responding, but life intervened. I had a partial computer failure and a long delayed holiday in the past two months, so things have been a bit rushed.

It was wonderful to visit my family, and get a time to rest. I sometimes feel that I am getting old: It no longer is fun to drive for more than 500 km in one stretch, in one day. And most of my family is 750 to 900 km away from me. Luckily then that I have realised that I can go in visit the not so close family that are living approximately half way,

and catch up with what have been happening with the extended family and relatives.

Not that the message is always pleasant: One of my relatives finished dying of muscular dystrophy shortly after I came back from my holiday. He was about 30. The worst part of it was that his mother apparently did not realise that this disease that had over a period of years first put him in a wheelchair, and later permanently into bed, is a terminal disease. This only penetrated to her the day before he died.

But there were other news. I got to spend some quiet time with my sisters and my mother. My brother popped in after a serious driving holiday: 8 000 km in two weeks, and still another 500 or so km to go.

And I took some photographs of the farm, and of some places and normal activities. Not shearing: That is too time intensive to be done if you are expecting guests, and is usually not done in the dead of winter, anyway. Not that the winter was as cold as it usually gets: Normally, after a visit to the Northern Cape in Winter, I know that I have been to a cold place. This time I had to wait for the cold until I got back to Johannesburg.

Every time I get really hopeful about the future of my country, things intervene. Usually something the government does. They keep on having these grandiose dreams that they cannot afford, and do not have the skills to implement.

Take the Soccer World Cup: No sooner have it been announced that South Africa got the rights to hold it in 2010, that the SA Police and the Scorpions start arresting soccer officials for crimes like match fixing. Last I heard about 40 people, mostly management types and referees, have been arrested.

This is the fun face of SA life. Others are more grim and less pleasant.

This year I took off from the SFSA committee to rest and to see if I cannot get my life in order in other aspects of living. Some of the other aspects have turned interesting: I got elected to my congregation's management structure. But the one aspect where I am desperate for change, namely my work life, I have not been so fortunate. Yet I am still hoping.

There are times where I think I am living in some demented sitcom. I am on my third manager for the year. I hope that this one means something, as the two previous ones was wastes of oxygen.

I managed to catch up on some reading

while I was on holiday. The only Hugo nominated book I have read this year was *Paladin of Souls*, and I have to agree with Joseph that it was tepid. It was only while mulling over why I was no longer comfortable reading Bujold, that I realised that this has been the third Bujold book in a row where I looked forward to getting the book, but once I got it in my grubby little paws, I was reluctant to open it and read. The only reason why, I now realise, is because *A Civil Campaign* deeply disappointed me. And that I had not realised that at the time, nor for a long time afterwards. Yet when it came to reading a new Bujold book, I am still afraid of disappointment.

I do not know how much of it is because I have read every book of Bujold's I know about, and are too familiar with her writing style and tricks of story telling. Where a couple of year of not reading her will improve my opinion. Or because I have come to the conclusion that she had already written her best book (*Mirror Dance* in my opinion), and that every book that will follow will be less than her best, and one day I will open up a book and find that this is the book where she has lost it completely.

Sorry, these are grim thoughts, in a letter that I have hoped to be light hearted and

interesting. I think too many grim thoughts these days. I need a change of circumstance.

Once upon a time, I wished that I was wealthy enough to attend Worldcon every year. As I am not, I have to make do with news from afar. I thank you for providing the news, about books, about what is going on in the world of the Worldcon. It is perhaps unfortunate that I have not yet felt the urge to come a visit an announced or planned Worldcon, again.

**You will be closer to the 2010 Worldcon; there's only one bid, Australia. It started out as a joke but enough people wanted to join that it quickly became for real.**

Loved the person on the ground's eye view of the Spanish Royal Wedding. I was not even aware that there was a Spanish Royal wedding, recently. There probably being no way the local news media could get a South African handle on the story, nor an anti-American one.

Speaking of a South African angle on a story: The recent first flight to space of Spaceship One got a lot of media play in South Africa. Because the pilot was born in

South Africa. The day it happened I watched the local news, and nothing was said. But by the next morning somebody had discovered the SA angle, and suddenly it was everywhere.

Regarding Joseph's comments on my LOC: It is always the little things that are strange. The major things are big enough to travel: You hear about a shop like Walmart, and you try to fit it into your mental landscape. Then you visit one. And it still sort of fits, but have changed somewhat from your preconception. And then you hear about the aspects of it that you have not seen or been told of.

I managed to see bits of the Transit of Venus from work. I only had some eclipse viewers I had saved from 2001 to look through, and it was with some difficulty that I saw Venus moving in front of the Sun. But I did see it. Strangely enough, in none of the previewed animations, not of the written material was it mentioned that from the Southern hemisphere the transit would happen at the top of the Sun, and not at the bottom of the Sun, as seen in the Northern hemisphere. So it took me some time to find the planet in front of the Sun, since I was looking at the wrong place.

Only later did I find out about the nice big telescope set up for people to come and have a look through. A friend of mine almost got to monopolise the telescope, and took some interesting pictures with his digital camera. Me, I saw a small dot.

**I hope they didn't look through it directly; that's a good way to go blind!**

— JTM

#### **WAHF:**

**Lloyd Daub**, with various items of interest.  
**The Wesleyan Press**, announcing new books.

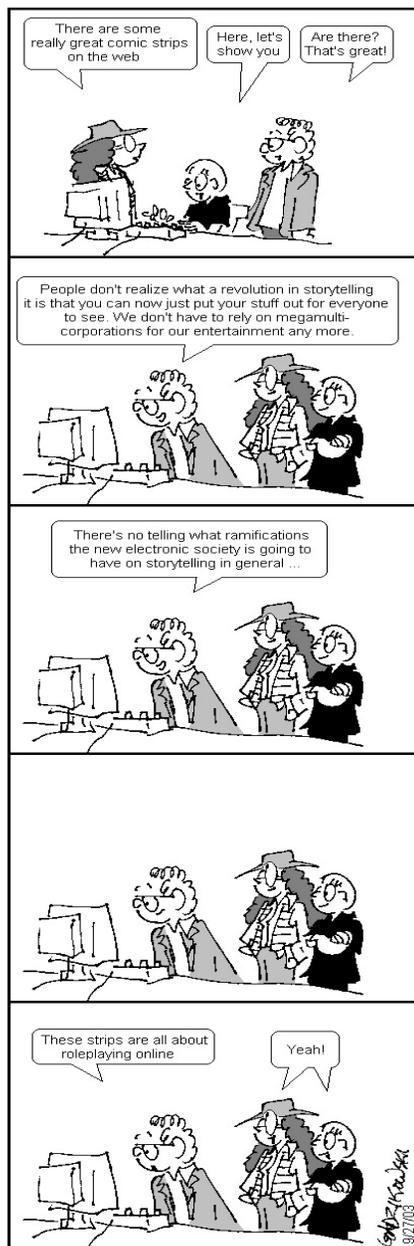
**It is dispiriting how many faneds can't or aren't coming to the WorldCon this year. Is the WorldCon becoming uninviting? Or just too expensive?**

**Please tell me I mis-read the editorial**



## ARTWORK ON LINE

by Paul Gadzikowski



## TINKER TAILOR SOLDIER JEDI

Since the *Enterprise*'s transition into this alternative universe, Picard had been at somewhat of a loss. Geordi, for example, was busied with learning the new technologies now available to him. Data was now strangely relieved to be *normal*, or at least have a place where he was normal. The most confusing part of Worf's new life, for him, was being able to go down the street *without* being stared at — Klingons were by comparison far less exotic than many of the peoples one saw on even the most ordinary of streets on Coruscant. Doctors, moreover, were the same everywhere, it seemed. Even Councillor Troi . . . but so far he himself had no place and no purpose.

And now he was being summoned to meet the Chancellor himself, the ruler of this star-spanning Federation. There was a musical chime, and the automatic receptionist said in a very un-mechanical voice, "Captain Picard? The Chancellor will see you now."

The door opened as Picard approached it, and revealed Chancellor Palpatine standing near the entry, welcoming. "So you are the commander of this strange vessel! Welcome, Captain Picard. I have wanted to meet you for some time, but the press of government . . ."

Picard found himself ensconced in a perfectly accommodating chair that showed itself capable of anticipating his every movement, it seemed. A very familiar smell reached his nose, and much to his astonishment he found a cup of tea, Earl Grey, hot, at his elbow. "The technologies you have brought us will prove of great advantage and gain to the Republic," the Chancellor said as he took his seat. "You shouldn't do badly by them, yourselves. How do you find this new, well, Galaxy?"

They engaged in small talk for a while and then, as if on some signal, the genial host transformed into the serious statesman. "Captain Picard, much as I have been enlightened by this conversation, I haven't allocated my valuable time for mere chit-chat. I can see that you agree with me on this."

He stood up and began to pace back and forth. "The Republic is fortunate — I am fortunate — in that your odd accident has placed in our, my hands a valuable resource, one far more valuable than mere tools and toys. The Republic has in you a unique resource — you have a different approach, a different intellectual background. You are uniquely disinterested in this matter, and this combined with your other demonstrated skills makes you uniquely suited to resolving it."

He began to explain how the Republic's version of Bureau 13 had become subtly corrupted, but was far too entrenched to be reformed directly . . .

The isolated cave in the wilds of Tatooine was the sort of place a Jedi would retire to for meditation. Or something. Be-Ton Chay had come a long way nevertheless, and was willing to wait. Entering the cave had been easy, in the absence of its inhabitant, and now he sat and waited until Kenobi returned from whatever errand had taken him away.

He was appalled to see how much Kenobi had aged since the . . . events. His hair was white and he had grown a scruffy beard. Nevertheless, the kindly eyes were welcoming. "So, you visit my humble abode. A personal call? Since the Council of the Jedi is no longer concerned with me."

"Not exactly. Bail Organa sent me."

Kenobi seated himself on a box while his guest began to explain: "Since Mace Windu's, well, removal, you know, there's been a council of four running the Jedi. There's a reason our missions have been going bad: One of them is secretly working for this new security advisor to Chancellor Palpatine, this Picard, and he is digging away like a sandworm at the foundations of the Jedi. We have to find out which one of them is the sandworm, the man who engineered your exile. You're our only hope."

— Not created by George Lucas, Gene Roddenberry, or John le Carré

Co-Editors: Lisa & Joseph Major  
Co-Publishers: Joseph & Lisa Major  
Writers, Staff: Major, Joseph & Major, Lisa

**Art:** What we are mainly looking for is small fillos. Your fillo will probably be scanned in and may be reused, unless you object to its reuse.

**Contributions:** This is not a fictionzine. It is intended to be our fanzine, so be interesting.

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**ALEXIAD**

c/o Lisa &amp; Joseph Major

1409 Christy Avenue

Louisville, KY 40204-2040 USA

[jtmajor@iglou.com](mailto:jtmajor@iglou.com)