

Frank Herbert

is dead but still sells by the bucketload so we searched the gutters, the dives and the Novacon bar for authors who would debase themselves for peanuts and lager to bring you...



DUNE: Journey Planet

A Nadir Books Publication

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Editorial - Chris Garcia

I will confess that this is the issue of Journey Planet I've been waiting for. Dune. I've been a fan of the Lynch film for years, made several attempts to climb Mount St. Herbert in my youth, my post-adolescence, my adulthood, and most recently, my middle-age. It was only with the promise of this issue of Journey Planet that I completed the read (which I will talk about more in the later article Dune v. Dune). It wasn't a bad book. I can see why so many people who were in love with it really disliked the David Lynch movie; but it wasn't my story. My story was the one that I first encountered in a movie theatre in 1984 and have watched over and over again.

You could say that Dune the film changed me as a fan, in many ways into a fan. Yeah, I'd sat in line with Pops for Empire Strikes Back and had seen Star Wars and Close Encounters and Time Bandits and many of the 1950s SciFi stuff dozens of times each. But with Dune I was transformed into a new kind of fan. To use a lame metaphor Lynch's Dune was my Water of Life, because once I viewed it, I could take in anything. I could transform stories in my head, even if I didn't fully understand them. I won't pretend that Dune made much sense to me as a kid, I can say the same thing about Buckaroo Banzai, but Dune had so much there for me that I clung to it, to the images, to the acting, to the filmmaking. I became the Lil'est David Lynch Fan, ten years old and running to the video store to rent Eraserhead and Elephant Man. I started to watch things like Cyrano because it had Jose Ferrer, and Das Boot because it had Jurgen Prochnow. It was really what made me an over-all film fan instead of just an SF and Comedy fan.

So, that's half the reason, the personal half, of why I've wanted to do a Dune issue dating back more than a year. The other half is because there's so much there there.

Dune the novel is full of political intrigue, dark dealings, philosophical bendings, and world-building to a degree that has rarely been matched. In fact, as far as world-building goes, the only thing I've ever read that approaches it is The Word for World is Forrest by Ursula K. LeGuin, though there are probably a great deal more that I've just missed. Dune the film has an incredible place in cinematic history as one of the best examples of 'They Loved It In Japan', as well as early computer graphics, set, costume and art design that are among the best of their decade and some fine acting. The Miniseries proves that SyFy can't mess everything up too bad. The first mini-series was OK, the second wasn't nearly as good.

Dune is a sorta litmus test, I guess. Dune was created to test the faithful. Perhaps it was that which kept me from reading it for all those years.

So, the majority of this issue is dedicated to Dune, though there are a few other things mixed in as well, including a piece from Dave Hardy, who is becoming quite a regular! Mixing in a bit of the non-theme actually makes the theme stronger.

I was reading old issues of Energumen from the CD-ROM that Taral produced, and came upon issue 14, the issue that was dedicated to Robert Silverberg. In it, the late Mike Glicksohn talks about the dreams for a theme issue and quotes Peter Gill as saying "The art of publishing a fanzine is that of the possible versus the impossible dream." In this case, I think this issue is everything I'd have wanted it to be, short of featuring a long and detailed look at the book written by David Lynch... or an apology from Brian Herbert and Kevin J. Anderson for writing those follow-on novels. There's a look at the philosophy, at what the book and film meant to individuals, fun art, parody discussion, a slam at James Cameron, what else could I have hoped for?

Editorial - James Bacon

I am pleased we have done this issue of Journey Planet, and am very grateful to Yvonne Rowse who joins us here as a guest editor. I have always enjoyed her writing, and am impressed that we are able to harness her awesomeness in our zine. As always I am thankful for the variety of contributors we have received.

Eastercon will soon be upon us with the BSFA awards, then the Arthur C. Clarke Award and Hugo Awards will have an impact. I am excited to see which novels, and also which comics get nominated. Meanwhile, dear readers, due to some personal stuff, I am moving home, and will be for the foreseeable future living in Uxbridge. This is unfortunate, but also not as bad as it could be, as I have a great affinity with Uxbridge. I've spent many a night crashed with Stef there over the last dozen years or so. Post is still welcome at Cromwell Rd., but my address will change soon. Stealing from a number of zines, I suppose this makes me a Croydon fan in Exile. Better than a Croydonite who is unfortunately not there, I suppose. But only just. As always, we welcome your thoughts comments and letters. They make the whole process feel worthwhile.

Editorial - Yvonne Rowse

I got an email from James asking me if I would be interested in being guest editor for the next Journey Planet. Unreasonably flattered to be asked following Pete Young's lovely production I said 'yes'.

The theme, as you can see, is Frank Herbert's Dune. I hadn't read it in many years and was pleasantly surprised when I reread it. I've never, however, read past God Emperor and the new pre-Dune books hadn't even impinged on my consciousness until now. I've got a huge pile of great books waiting to be read so I decided not to bother plunging any deeper into the Herbert universe. Life is too short. So, I'm not an expert and have no intention of becoming one.

I have found it fascinating to read the contributions that arrived in my in-box. Julian Headlong's exploration of the background to Dune was particularly fascinating. I had no idea. I suppose it makes a change from alien societies being based on Japan. Chris's piece about the film versus the book was also interesting. I have a preference for books over movies but tried to watch the DVD borrowed from the Lawsons so I'd know what Chris was talking about. As he says, the sets and costumes are sumptuous; the film is a visual feast. From it I learned how to pronounce Bene Gesserit and that replacing the voice-over of Princess Irulan with a potted history made for £2.50 was not a good move. Perhaps if I'd managed to finish watching I would have learned to love it. But, as I think I've noted, life is too short.

One of the things I realised, having edited each of the contributions, was that there was no single piece that looked at the story itself. Dune has been around for so long that we tend to assume that everyone has read it/seen it, and we move on to the influences, both on it and from it. That's fine, and the articles stand very well on their own, but I think it's worth giving a brief overview of what we are dismembering.

Dune, the book, is a relatively straightforward coming of age novel. You may remember J K Rowling popularising the type recently. In Dune a boy child, Paul Atreides, realises that he is something very special and goes on to discover his destiny. In the background there are a number of conspiracies. Paul's father, Duke Leto, one of the few likable characters in the book, is persuaded to move his family from his paradise planet of Caladan to take control of Arrakis, desert planet and source of the resource, Spice, that underlies the very structure of the Empire. Once there the Baron Harkonnen, a particularly fine and flamboyant villain, works with the Emperor to destroy House Atreides and retake Arrakis. Paul and his mother escape, join with the Fremen and forge them into unstoppable fighting force. In the final battle Paul defeats the Empire's forces and becomes the new emperor. So far, so simple. The things that make this an interesting book are the background conspiracies of the Bene Gesserit, the Guild and the Planetary Ecologists, the characters and the

environment of Arrakis but it's been some weeks since I read the book and already the sands of time erode away what I remember.

That seems like too many words without even touching on the remaining books so I've borrowed some words from The Sand of Music, where Ian has elegantly compressed the plots of five books into the one minute Arrakeen Rap. These can be found later in the zine.

You will notice there is no letter of comment section in the edition. Claire is currently working stupidly long hours and really has no time left to do this essential job. It's been so many years since I did a regular fanzine that I've fallen out of practice with the whole thing but, all being well, the next issue will catch up on all your contributions.

Finally, I'd like to thank Dave Hicks for the rather fine cover, Claire for the helpful advice and Ian Sorensen for helping me work out how to use Pages to put all this together.

We hope you like this Journey Planet and find time to let us know what you thought.



Abdul-Aziz al Atreides

by Julian Headlong

"I must not fear. Fear is the mind-killer. Fear is the little-death that brings total obliteration. I will face my fear. I will permit it to pass over me and through me. And when it has gone past I will turn the inner eye to see its path. Where the fear has gone there will be nothing. Only I will remain."

Actually I don't remember fear. Perhaps I had other things on my mind. Perhaps I was busy. Perhaps I'm fooling myself.

In my memory my arm still hurts where it was flung against the crash bar, and my vision is still blurry. I'm there lying on my side, still strapped into the bucket seat of the buggy. The buggy is forever lying on its side, and I'm back at the bottom of that hole. It's a rough funnel, about ten metres across, an indentation in the sand, walls that look unclimbable, fine red sand at its angle of repose. Around the hole the Red Desert stretches out forever. In my memory I'm back there again, back in the hole, back in the desert, back in the past.

The full story of the Buggy of Dune and What I Did On My Summer Vacation is told in the *Journal of Superfluous Technology (Plokta)* Volume 7 No. 2 (Issue 26) page 5 – google is your friend.

Actually I don't think I'm ever going to be able to read Dune in the same way again.

There never was just one way to read Frank Herbert's Dune, it always was many things in one volume, a true Orange Catholic bible of a book: an original treatise on ecology, on the environment, and on economics. It spoke of religion, of the power of myth, and the reach of history. It discussed the uses of warfare, treachery, and assassination. It described the perils of feudalism, of colonialism, of Empire. It was one of the first doorstep sf books, it was big and covered big themes, it played with big and original ideas, using big and original characters. The one thing in all this it didn't have was an original plot. What it had instead was history.

And it was not alone.

Asimov had Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Galactic Empire; Anderson had Toynbee's Cyclical History for his Polestehnic League and Terran Empire; Clarke had Commodore Mathew Perry and his Black Ships for 'Childhood's End'; Heinlein had the colonial revolt for 'Between Planets' and 'The Moon is a Harsh Mistress'. And Herbert had Abdul-Aziz ibn Sa'ud for Paul Muad'Dib Atreides.

In 1323 anno Hegirae, 43 Ante Atomic, 1902 by the Common Era of the Old Strong Religion, Abdul-Aziz ibn Sa'ud, leader of the House of Sa'ud, returned from exile having forged an alliance with certain Bedouin tribesmen, he crossed the desert with his army and seized Riyadh in the Nejd from his bitter rivals, the House of Rashid.

That sounds pretty good until you realize that Abdul-Aziz ibn Sa'ud's total army numbered less than 200 and that for the actual attack on Riyadh his force was only twenty or so men. Maybe the House of Sa'ud had some strange combat skills, maybe some weird way of fighting that allowed them to overcome their rivals despite their pitiful numbers, maybe the Rashidis were really crap. Anyway, from this small event in the region's history, from this poor beginning would come a new power, a new country, and a new dynasty with more money than God.

Abdul-Aziz bin Abdul Rahman bin Faisal bin Turki bin Abdullah bin Muhammad bin Sa'ud was born in 1297 AH, 79 AA, 1876 CE, in Riyadh into the ruling clan of the Nejd, the House of Sa'ud. When he was fourteen his family was forced into exile by their enemies, the Rashidis. He and his family initially took refuge with the Al-Murrah, a Bedouin tribe in the southern desert region, later they moved north to Kuwait.

Deprived of their lands he lived with his family in a relatively simple manner. His primary occupation, and the family's sole source of income, was undertaking raids in the Nejd. So, not exactly Mahatma Gandhi then.

In the spring of 1322 AH, 1901 CE, Abdul-Aziz and some relatives set out on yet another raiding expedition into the Nejd, targeting for the most part tribes associated with the Rashidis. As the raids

proved profitable they attracted more and more participants, the raider's numbers peaking at around 200.

In the autumn, the group made camp in the Jabrin oasis in the Empty Quarter, where while observing ramadan, Abdul-Aziz decided to attack Riyadh and retake it from the Rashidis. On the night of 15 January 1323 AH, 1902 CE, he set out with a raiding party of some twenty men. Their audacious raid was more than successful - the Rashidi governor of the city was killed in front of the gate to his own fortress, and the Rashidis driven out. Riyadh was Sa'ud again.



Picture 1 Abdul-Aziz ibn Sa'ud – sorry – Paul Muad'Dib Atreides setting out for a spot of gardening

Over the next two years, Abdul-Aziz and his forces recaptured almost half of the Nejd from the Rashidis. In 1325 AH, 1904 CE, Ibn Rashid appealed to the Empire for military protection and assistance – the Ottoman Empire that is. The Ottomans responded by sending Sardaukar, sorry, by sending nizam-i jedid, Imperial Infantry, into Arabia. On 15 June 1325 AH, Abdul-Aziz's forces suffered a major defeat at the hands of the

combined Ottoman and Rashidi forces. He regrouped and began to wage guerilla warfare against the Ottomans. Over the next two years he was able to disrupt their supply lines, forcing them to retreat

In 1346 AH Abdul-Aziz captured the holy city of Mecca from Sharif Hussein bin Ali, ending 700 years of Hashemite rule. On 10 January 1347, Abdul-Aziz ibn Sa'ud proclaimed himself King of the Hejaz in the Great Mosque at Mecca. On 20 May 1348, the British Empire signed the Treaty of Jeddah which recognized the independence of the Hejaz and Nejd with Abdul-Aziz ibn Sa'ud as its ruler.



Picture 2. Ibn Rashid – sorry – Feyd-Rautha

So thirty years after the raid on Riyadh, with the political support of the Greatest Empire and the financial support of the great trading combines of that Empire, having overthrown Ottoman satraps, defeated his rival clans, and claimed the Kingdom of the Hejaz, Abdul-Aziz ibn Sa'ud founded a new country, a new nation under God, a new Kingdom under himself, and in a fashion still fairly uncommon, named it after his grandfather. Which was nice.

Later, as various political agents of the Empire, representatives of the Great Trading Combines, and especially the Ixians made very clear when they backed the House of Al Sa'ud in its ambition to claim the Nejd and the Hejaz, there was one all-important over-riding rule – the oil must flow.



Picture 3. Saud bin Abdul Aziz Rashid (yes, really, damn, but it's hard to keep all these names straight)

And as of 2011 Abdul-Aziz ibn Sa'ud's son still rules in Saudi Arabia. But then, he did live until 1953 and had 22 wives and 37 sons. One wonders if anyone ever counted the daughters. But the Empire he has to deal with has changed – it is now the American Empire he has to appease – the Ixians won after all.

So we can see that as with Gibbon or Toynbee all Herbert had to do was file off a few serial numbers and his sf epic was good to go – for the Combine Honete Ober Advancer Mercantiles, the CHOAM company, read Anglo-Persian Oil (later British Petroleum or 'BP'); for the Spacing Guild there was

the Compagnie Universelle du Canal Maritime de Suez; for the fremen we had the Ikhwan, the Wahhabist-Bedouin tribal army; the Harkonnens were the Rashids; the Empire was the Empire – the British Empire with a side order of Ottoman; spice was oil.



Picture 4. Pardot Kynes – sorry – TE Lawrence at Rabegh, north of Jidda, 1917

Spice was oil.

And there really was a slightly mad infinitely capable Bene Gesserit witch wandering around the desert, drawing lines in the sand, playing the game of Empire – a British Political Officer by the name of Gertrude Bell who was described as "one of the few representatives of His Majesty's Government remembered by the Arabs with anything resembling affection" who, with Pardot Kynes, sorry, TE Lawrence, helped establish the Hashemite Kingdom of Iraq and drew up its rather idiosyncratic borders, the consequences of which we are still living with today.

Gertrude Margaret Lowthian Bell was born in 1868 CE in County Durham. She was a polymath, fluent in many languages including the usual French, German, and Italian, but also Arabic, Turkish and Persian. She was a politically effective negotiator, at home in government circles, a good administrator.



Picture 5. Reverend Mother Gaius Helen Mohiam – sorry – Gertrude Bell in Iraq in 1909

She was also an explorer, an archaeologist, and a writer. She traveled all over the middle east, conducted archaeological digs in Carchemish, Ukhaidir, and Babylon. She worked with TE Lawrence to map the borders of Iraq, and helped set it up as a working monarchy using a displaced royal left over from Abdul-Aziz ibn Sa'ud's expansion through Arabia. They used a brother of that same displaced royal to set up the Hashemite Kingdom of Transjordan – now just Jordan, though the same family is still in charge there, unlike Iraq. At the moment the Ixians appear to be in charge of Iraq and it will probably all end in tears. But at least there is symmetry.

God only knows where the worms came from.



The next 5 books or the Arrakeen Rap

by Ian Sorensen

[From *Dune, or, The Sand of Music* as performed at the 1995 Worldcon in Glasgow. This really does summarise all the books that came after *Dune*. One or two minor characters may have been omitted...]

IAN: First we have the problem of Paul and his sister.
 JACKIE: They could see the future in a plot that's quite a twister.
 PHIL: They spread across the universe with bands of killer Fremen
 IAN: Spreading their religion and moving like a demon
 JACKIE: Paul can see what's coming, now isn't he a hero
 PHIL: It's hard to be a baddie when your plans amount to zero
 IAN: The books go on and on and our hero always wins
 JACKIE: Because his little sister, she gives birth to twins
 ALL 3: Do the rap. The Arrakeen rap. Do the rap. The Arrakeen rap.
 PHIL: Leto and Gahnima, they just don't run to form
 IAN: Gahnima dies, Leto becomes a worm
 JACKIE: The worm is getting bigger, acting like a God
 PHIL: Killing all the Duncans 'cos he's a rotten sod
 IAN: The spice disappears and then the Guild rebel
 JACKIE: Seems like the Galaxy's on its way to hell
 PHIL: When Leto dies only the sands remain
 IAN: The planet Dune has worms again
 ALL 3: Do the rap. The Arrakeen rap. Do the rap. The Arrakeen rap.
 JACKIE: Power hungry witches come back from the rim
 PHIL: Killing everybody, now isn't it a sin?
 IAN: Sheeana rides the worms and Duncan makes a comeback
 JACKIE: In the sort of plot that leaves you kinda dumbstruck
 PHIL: Duncan and Sheana are set up to be lovers
 IAN: The Bene Gesserit are all simply mothers
 JACKIE: The tale of spice dissolves as if it was wet sherbet
 PHIL: And we say farewell to the last by old Frank Herbert
 ALL 3: Do the rap. The Arrakeen rap. Do the rap. The Arrakeen rap. That's a rap.

James wanted to know what 21st century science fiction readers thought of Dune and the prequels so he asked Maura and Mira...

Dune for Today

by Miranda Ramey & Maura Taylor

We did not like the politics of Dune by Frank Herbert. It was very convoluted and, to use a 21st Century American term, screwy. They didn't really make sense. Almost everyone, with the number of exceptions being very small, had a political objective or a personal vendetta to fulfill. The only character in Dune who seemed like a decent person was Liet-Kynes. All he wanted was for Dune to be a hospitable planet for the Fremen.

Paul, one of the main characters, was mostly likable until he became the Muad'Dib. He teetered on the edge of royal snobbery, but was ultimately human. He did not have the political schemes the adults had; he did not willfully manipulate people beyond the standard teenager way. Unfortunately, he then became Muad'Dib; he started acting like the adults, in it only for himself. His real reasons were "for the greater good" but he kept this to himself.

A villain of the piece, Baron Vladimir Harkonnen, had so much potential. Torture, despicable minions, socially unacceptable quirks; but somehow he failed as a villain. It was like Frank Herbert was trying so hard to make the Baron seem evil that he lost the essence of villainy.

The Bene Gesserit were an evil cult. The breeding program and control, physically and mentally, was so precise. They seemed inhuman and distant. They were trying to be better than anyone and in control of everything.

Some themes of Dune reflect the state of the world when Frank Herbert wrote his novel. A society governed by addiction? Dune was published in 1965, less than a decade before the 1973 Oil Embargo. One sentence summary; Arab countries refused to export petroleum to the United States, causing a panic with raised prices and led to gasoline rationing, due to America's insatiable lust for oil.

There is also the negative light shed on homosexuality with the stereotype that being gay means that you are a pedophile. There were whispers of the coming gay rights movement during the 60s, and this portrayal of Baron Harkonnen may have reflected another social fear of the unfamiliar.

Another theme in Dune is sexism. It is hard to connect with the female characters because of how they are written. It is hard to like the women, even if they are not with the Bene Gesserit. Lady Helena nags her husband, obsessing over political alliances and parties with others of the nobility instead of paying attention to the needs of the people of Caladan. Freith and Chani are there only to support their husbands, serving drinks and performing other acts of affection. Lady Jessica worries constantly about her husband, Paul, and her daughter Alia. Women are there to worry, to be cardboard figures, to almost test a man's strength. It is said by Leto Atrides in Dune "Don't let a woman's fears cloud your mind. No woman wants her loved ones endangered..." Does that mean that woman are weak and men are strong? The Kwisatz Haderach is a male who can endure the spice agony. If he can, he becomes powerful, more powerful than any woman who survives it. He is the savior of the all female Bene Gesserit, the seemingly independent group of women who in the end are just as dependent on men as everyone else in the Dune universe.

When writing this summary, we were asked whether the ecological element of terraforming Dune is still pertinent in our increasingly industrial world. Of course it is! What Pardot Kynes and his son Liet wanted was for Dune to go back to its once green and hospitable form. What the modern "green" movement basically wants is to halt the changes to the Earth's ecological systems. The movement is talking about halting and reversing the changes before they reach Dune proportions. However, what these modern "Kynes" seem to be missing is the cooperation to enact the change, as well as the patience. We are not going to reach a sustainable global society for over 100 years, by which time, our planet may be halfway to looking like a giant desert. After that time, it will take another 100 or more years to reverse that process. We humans need to be patient. Terraforming does not happen overnight. It will take many generations. You will not see the

day when the Earth truly is a green planet. We will not see that day. Our children's children might see that day, but we must work small and be patient.

The life lessons Frank Herbert seems to be shoving at the reader may seem overly obvious to modern readers because the events he was alluding to have already happened. Some of it, the pedophilic homosexual, is positively ridiculous. We are from 21st Century America with a rather liberal upbringing, so we cannot speak for everyone, but that theme seems irrelevant to modern day society. The themes of society's addiction to a limited resource, gender issues and hero-worship are eternal, but please don't try to force your views down the reader's throat.

As for Dune: House of Atreides, it was published in 1999. The themes of addiction, sexism and sexuality are still there, but are less 'in your face'. It is a wonderful prequel, showing a younger Dune universe, but not having the continuity or reverse continuity errors that some prequels have.

The first surprise we got upon reading House of Atreides was that Baron Harkonnen was thin. How could this have happened? Of course we found out later. We won't spoil the surprise for those who have not read House of Atreides.

It was strange how the characters changed. The difference between younger and older personalities was startling. For example in Dune, Emperor Shaddam seemed weak because of his old age, but still a strong ruler. In House of Atreides, Prince Shaddam had a weak personality. He seemed to be a puppet prince with Hasimir Fenring calling the shots. Hasimir Fenring was very much the power behind the throne. He knows what he wants, and he will manipulate to get it. Hasimir Fenring was not a favorite character, but was fun to read about because he was well written and developed.

Also with Shaddam and Hasimir Fenring, we did not expect them to poison the Emperor Elrood. That was not the Shaddam we know from Dune, We know that he changed a lot between the books, but we still did not see that coming.

Pardot Kynes, the original Imperial Planetologist, was a wonderful character. We enjoyed reading

about him in House of Atreides as much as his son in Dune.

The Bene Gesserit still seemed evil. The breeding program seems more like a selfish endeavor, even though they give the impression that it is for the greater good of humanity. The Tleilaxu are almost the male equivalent of the Bene Gesserit. They are in it for themselves and their organization.

However, they do not claim that they are making an artificial spice for the good of all. They do it for themselves and if the rest of the world benefits, so be it. The Tleilaxu are more open that they manipulate, but do it slowly and subtly. The Bene Gesserit try not to show that they manipulate people, but when they manipulate do so in larger ways that if it were to backfire, would have consequences even more severe.

The scenes between Reverend Mother Mohiam and the Baron Harkonnen were nicely written, though the second time was a bit repetitive. Knowing Jessica's parentage and how it happened was interesting. It explains part of the dynamics in the opening of Dune between Mohiam and Jessica.

Dune by Frank Herbert is definitely one of the classic novels that everyone should read. However like with most classic novels read by a modern audience, something seems to be lost in the generation gap. Dune: House of Atreides is more accessible to a modern audience, but to truly appreciate it, one must read the original Dune.

Bios

Miranda Ramey, age 15, and Maura Taylor, age 16, live in the United States. They enjoy reading, costuming, and hanging out at conventions. Both are aspiring young writers and are co-authoring a Steampunk pirate novel. Individually, Miranda does not have any specific writing projects at the moment, but has been working on improving her ability as a photographer.

Maura is currently working on a Celtic mythology inspired novel. Miranda is learning Mandarin Chinese, American law and history. Maura is learning American Sign Language and hopes to become an interpreter for the Deaf.

They are really excited to write for Journey Planet.

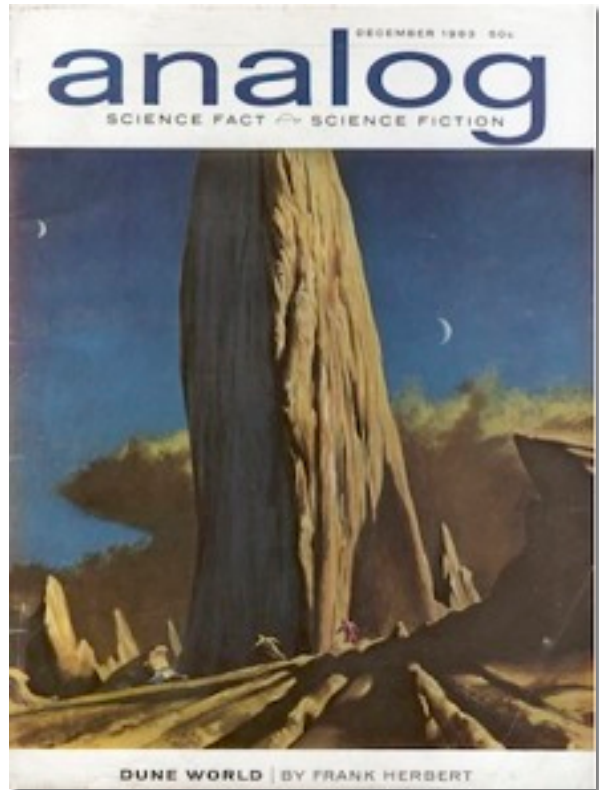
Covers of Dune

Discussed by James Bacon



I saw the cover of Dune well before I knew what the book or story was about and, to be bluntly honest, as a young teenager I found it uninspiring.

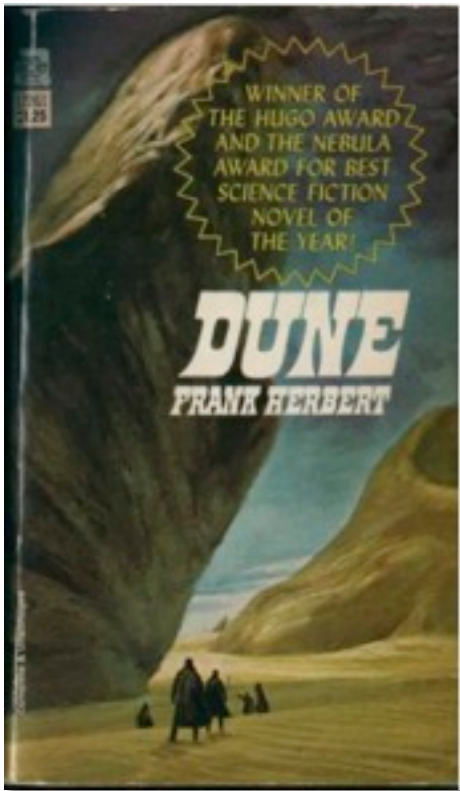
I love book covers, and it was much later that I came across the Analog covers, and realised just how nice they were. By this stage I had read a copy of Dune and loved the look that they so immediately portrayed. I realised that Dune is a great work of science fiction with depths not so easily portrayed in just one image. This is something that fascinates me about book covers, how well or badly they portray what I eventually read, but also how true the cover is to the book.



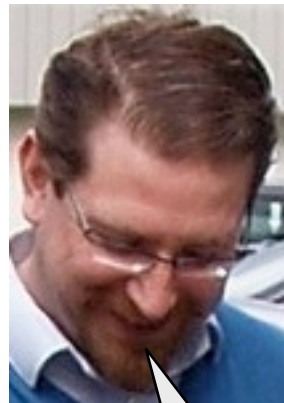
John Schoenherr is synonymous with Dune. I adored his cover to the December 1963 issue of Analog. The strength of the blue sky, the people with some urgency escaping the impending sand storm, the two moons, and importantly the Rock rising in front of us

The February edition of Analog also sported a nice Dune cover, for Dune World part 3 – a spice harvester - the sky is a darker and the harvester is nowhere near what I imagined.

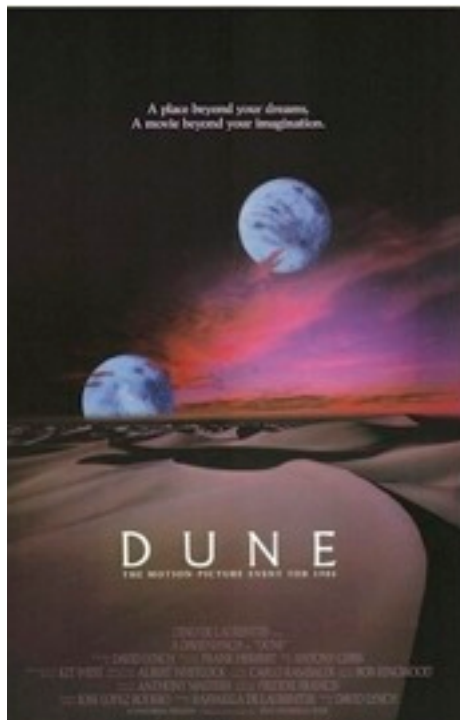




The Ace Books 1967
Illustration by John Schoenherr
portraying an unusual angle of
a rock, and men be-cloaked
holds a certain calmness about
the cover.

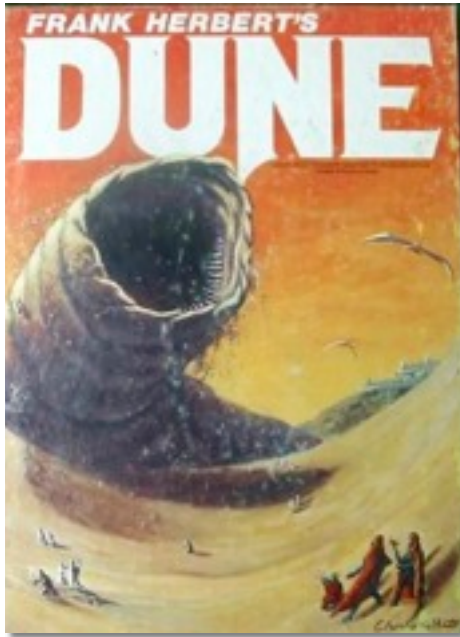


The Bruce Pennington Covers –
Sardaukar on the cover, not really
inspiring. Is it that hard to capture the
essence of these books?



I loved the Dune movie,
although I always felt that I
was watching a bootleg
version, such is the poor
quality of the effects, but as a
movie, it was very enjoyable.
The 1984 movie tie in – dark,
two moons, nice looking
cover is a favourite, and of
course I picked up the comic
and other related material, at
a later stage.

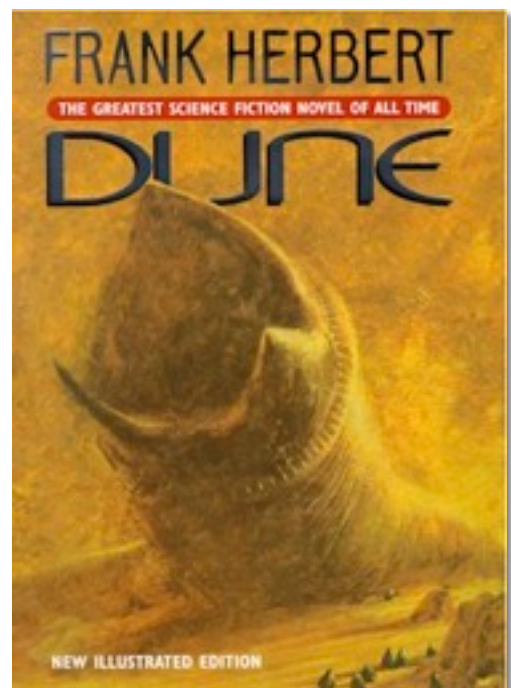




Originally from Analog and since used for the illustrated version of Dune, this encapsulates everything that I want from a cover. The vastness of the desert is apparent in the size, girth and monstrosity of the sand worm, rising mouth agape, which besuited characters, tiny in the foreground scurry past a rock outcropping,



and the overall colours, sandy and dirty yellows, a brackish feel to the sky, all feeds the brilliant image of the destructive majesty of the natural inhabitant of Arrakis.



Dune

by Steven Silver

My first exposure to Dune was not the most pleasant. I had bought God Emperor of Dune from the Science Fiction Book Club, enticed by the cover and title, with little other information. Certainly not realizing that it was the fourth book in a series, not that it would have been any better had I begun with the first book.

Being totally lost with the opening of God Emperor of Dune, I picked up the first book and was amazed at how good it was. Before I had even finished it, I rushed out to pick up Dune Messiah (good, but not as good as Dune) and Children of Dune (first half was good but than it slid downhill fast). Eventually I would get through God Emperor of Dune (the series' low point) and also read Heretics of Dune and Chapterhouse: Dune (surprisingly good, at least compared to the previous two-and-a-half books).

At the same time, I was attending a series of performances in Chicago called Dungeon Master. The basic idea was that each week, the cast would stage a different quest of some sort and audience members could enter a drawing to participate as adventurers. The show was produced by actor Bruce A. Young, who would go on to appear in several genre films, including Jurassic Park III and Phenomenon, as well as several television shows. When I knew him, Bruce's largest role had been in the film Risky Business.

Other actors who played Dungeons and Dragons (and other role-playing games) often would attend the shows, frequently being called to participate in the show as adventurers, or, sometimes, as guest stars. One of these actors was Bill Campbell, who hadn't made a name for himself, either, but would eventually star in The Rocketeer, appear in Star Trek: The Next Generation, Dracula, The Cold Equations and more.

One day, Bill brought his girlfriend to the show and introduced her around to the regulars. She was also beginning her career in films and had been working on the science fiction films Electric Dreams and

Dune, both of which were scheduled to be released in 1984. Virginia Madsen would be the female lead in Electric Dreams and play the role of Princess Irulan in Dune, a part which was much larger in the theatrical release than in the subsequent television cut.

Before the show and after it was over, we sat around talking, well, mostly we listened to what Virginia had to say about working with Dino Di Laurentiis and David Lynch in Mexico on the project. She described the exhaustive detail that went into the set and talked about the technology behind the sandworms, essentially giving all the fanboys in the audience exactly what we wanted to hear. The movie was going to be awesome, something that lived up to Dune's two-decade reputation.

And then I had to wait more than a year before Dune would hit the theatres. Knowing someone involved in the film made the movie that much more anticipated, especially after seeing Electric Dreams in the middle of the year.

When I finally did see Dune, which opened with Virginia's face taking up the screen explaining the back story, much as the writings of Princess Irulan provided the epigrams for various chapters, I left the theatre underwhelmed. The film looked great, but it was almost as if Lynch, who would go on to make Twin Peaks, had taken the story from Dune and the excitement from God Emperor of Dune to make something almost, but not entirely, unappealing.

However, it was still better than the longer version released on television, which I don't believe I've ever watched all the way through.

As I said, I read all six of Herbert's Dune novels, but never had any real desire to tackle the subsequent books by his son and Kevin Anderson. I've watched the two television miniseries, but didn't really connect with them any more than I connected with David Lynch's original film. I'd still recommend the original novel, but not necessarily the sequels.

Dune v Dune

Herbert's book vs Lynch's movie

by Chris Garcia

I had never read Dune until a few weeks ago. I know, I know, I was not complete. I saw David Lynch's film Dune two weeks before it went into regular release at a preview at the Century 22, on the screen that is still my all-time favorite. I've watched it hundreds of times since. No exaggeration, I've literally watched it at least a hundred times, probably many many more. I love the film, I really do. It's an amazing part of my life, I love the way it plays out and I love multiple versions. I've seen all the standard versions, the three versions on video, the KTVU version that showed in the 1980s, the Japanese theatrical version that was later released on video in Europe. I love them all to one extent or another.

The book, not so much.

The fact is, there is a lot of good stuff in the film that often gets over-looked because people are so attached to the book's vision. I don't share that thought, and even after reading it I don't. The book is almost a completely different animal and it has its failings as well. Neither is perfect, but for me, it's more about the movie and the vision than it is about the book and the politics.

The biggest difference is the focus of each. The book is a story of the rise of a savior and the political battles that rage beneath the surface and in the shadows. The film has some of those, mostly hints of them and the Emperor's out-right explanations, but mostly the film is about the boy Paul and his rise within a strange world, the kind that David Lynch has always specialized in presenting. When reading the book, I failed to find much in the way of setting beyond what was hammered in over and over: Arrakis is hot, it's a desert, it sucks there. In Lynch's film, every frame drips sensory delight. The Great Hall of House Corino and the Emperor of the Known Universe is a masterfully realized Baroque setting. Even Arrakis

is the kind of world that draws you in, the sietch and the city Arrakeen are beautifully done. It's really a significant series of pieces of art and set direction.

The Book's portrayal of Paul might be a little stronger to some, but the more naïve and less destiny-driven Paul of Lynch's film holds a great deal of appeal to me, as he is the one that I can identify with. He's not sure that he's the Messiah, but he knows enough not to stand in the way of destiny as it unfolds. Paul in the book is too knowing for me, too certain that he's going to be the Kwisatz Haderach. I can connect with the slightly older Paul as played by Kyle McLaughlin, and the 15 year old is far too foreign to my concept of being a fifteen year old.

The Film is slightly weaker in the portrayal of the activities and thinking of the Bene Gesserit, but the physical presentation of the look and traditions of the Witches is so amazing in the film. The book presents them looking like wild women, like forest-dwelling hags if the initial description of Reverend Mother Helen Mohiam is to be the basis for the Bene Gesserit. The film presents them as bald, angular, strange, foreign. It was a brilliant choice to break from the specifics of the book, one of many breaks that the film makes that really work. In the novel, there's a very good sense of history and tradition, but the film shows you through brilliant swatches of inner monologue and visuals how odd and powerful the Bene Gesserits are.

The other is the choice of Weirding Modules instead of just having it be The Weirding Way, a fighting style that seems to be related to krav maga. There was no good way to visualize that in the film, and adding the Weirding Modules was an easy way of putting together the idea that they brought something new. This was a great way, and the addition of Paul's name being a killing word might have been my favorite part of the entire film. It's a small change that allows for a couple of other things that make the story even stronger.

The area where the book bogs down is in the desert. Jessica and Paul wander the desert for hundreds and hundreds of pages. It's what killed me the first several times I tried to read it. In the film, this is where the combination of the beautiful cinematography, the well-rounded gravely

performance of Everett McGill as Stilgar and the compact passing of time in some very intelligent montages powers the viewer through a portion of the story where it is very easy to strand those who venture through it.

Lynch's film is a visual feast while Herbert's novel is a world-building exercise. Lynch's film builds worlds through the visuals, giving us so much. The gaping mouth of Baron Harkonnen's headquarters on Geidi Prime is an excellent example of the way in which Lynch and his crew took the personal traits of a character, in this case the grotesque Baron and his cruelty. What Lynch and co. did with the Baron was nearly perfect. In the novel, he's simply a strategic genius who has his eyes set on Universal domination. In the film, he's a massive whale of a man who is covered in pustules that he insists marks his beauty. It is an insane turn that shows just how perverted the Baron is, not only of flesh but of thought. He has forced those loyal to / afraid of him to conform to a thinking that is both unnatural and distasteful. The addition of the heartplugs in the film also adds something that the Baron can play with and it's a really good piece of brutality when they bring him a plaything and he yanks out his plug. It's so much more effective than what they give him to do in the novel.

On the other hand, Feyd is wasted in the film until the very end when he has his fight with Muad'Dib. It's a great scene, but he's so much more a part of the novel and a stronger piece of the intrigue. Sting's performance in the film is actually pretty strong, though he mostly gets to snarl and say snippy lines like "All I see is an Atreides I want to kill." He handled what he was given nicely, but none of the versions of the film come close to giving him the power that the novel did.

I also firmly believe that he needs to be a blonde.

Perhaps the finest scenes of the film are more memorable than the finest scenes of the book. The scene in the book that I keep coming back to is that of the Test of the Gom Jabar. It's well-written, especially considering it's Frank "why use ten graceful words when a dozen strident ones will do" Herbert writing it. On the other hand, the single greatest moment in the film belongs to Paul's training with Thufir Hawatt, Gurney Halleck and Dr. Wellington Yueh. It's a remarkable scene that

starts with some of the most impressive computer graphics of the day in the shield fight, followed by a training sequence against a robot that is remarkable for it's movement and for establishing everything we need to know about The Weiriding Way until we get to Arrakis. I LOVE that scene, sometimes I will simply watch Dune up until that scene and then move on. It's the single most interesting part of a film that has a dozen scenes that compare favorably. There's the wonderful scene where the 'thopter picks up the men from the mining rig before the Worm gets 'em, the scene (in two of the versions) where Paul receives the water of the man he killed in combat, the amazingly beautiful climax where Alia kills the Baron and Paul calls down the water.

And maybe that's the best part. Paul actually ends the Drought. Of all the problems with the book, the greatest was the ending. There was nothing to it. Absolutely nothing. "History will call us wives"? Really? That's all you've got? Lame. The ending where Paul is able (presumably) to transform Arrakis by making it rain is a powerful one, one that should be the ending of a book. It has finality, it is an ending which can serve as an ending instead of as a break before the next chapter. Yes, I know in the books (and in versions of the movie it is mentioned when they drown a small worm to get The Water of Life) that Shia Halud is killed by water, but here it is so final, it is an ending that makes sense, that answers the questions, that stills the mind. From there forward, Arrakis is a planet of water, not of desert.

So, I love the movie, much prefer it to the book. Say what you will, it has a sway over me that few other films have. It is the kind of film that I will watch again and again and love. The book I doubt I'll ever read again, largely because it nearly killed me to read it the first time!



Chris and his Nova Award presented at Corflu February 2011

Dune

(no 17 in the series Stories James Cameron Ripped Off)

by Andy Trembley

I love *Dune*. It's technofantasy at its best. It has politics, exploitation, monsters, magic, everything! Love it, love it, love it. Even the boring parts in the desert that Chris laments about. And then I watched this week's Goovies, the annual Cadbury Creme Egg sponsored movie parody series by Jonti "Weebl" Picking. I also love Goovies. They're the height of low-brow parody. Nothing like a pair of incomprehensible egg-like beings and a bunch of squealing goo-filled chocolate eggs to make for a fun mess.

But I digress. I watched this week's Goovies, a parody of 2009's smash hit *Avatar*. It was, not surprisingly, titled *Eggvatar*. Yes, the James Cameron blue-hippy-space-kitty story, not the lacking-in-Asians-tai-chi-inspired-martial-arts story. I laughed and laughed and laughed. And then I realized, with all the discussion of how *Avatar* had ripped off *Dances with Wolves* and *Fern Gully: The Last Rainforest* (oh, how it ripped off *Fern Gully*), I had been blind to the seminal work it had ripped off.

Yes, *Dune*. I know, I gave it away in the title. And the opening paragraph. But where *Avatar* ripped off *Dances with Wolves* and *Fern Gully* in clever, simple infographic chart levels, it ripped off *Dune* in comparative literature dissertation levels. Still, in a cursory search in Google only comes up with a measly few movie reviewers (and only slightly more SF geeks on web forums and blogs) who even noted some of the similarities.

Fortunately, I'm not planning on a dissertation to baffle a doctoral committee (because *Journey Planet* can be only so long) or an infographic (because I don't want to make our editors suffer through too much nasty layout).

Shit we're going to gloss over

- *Dune* is the original planetary ecology novel. I know this because Wikipedia tells me it's true.

Shit we're going to make fun of

- *Dune* is all about addiction to and exploitation of natural resources.
- *Dune* is all about decadent empires crashing against isolated native cultures.
- *Dune* is about a privileged noble kid who is brought low by the environment he's thrown into and becomes the savior of the noble savages who teach him their ways.

OK, *Dune* is a product of the mid-60's, it's richly built and well-written. Taking it down for being a product of its time, an incredible product of its time, a classic in any time, is kind of like writing "nigger" out of *Huckleberry Finn*. Noting the potential sketchiness of some of the content is part of the learning experience.

Taking *Avatar* down for badly ripping it off? Gold. So let's look at the rip-offs.

We might as well start with the planets

Arrakis is a desert planet, with barely enough water to support human life. Outside the cities, humans need special equipment and have developed complex social norms to survive. Pandora is a lush jungle, filled with plants and animals that are hostile to human life. Humans can't survive outside their compound without special equipment or remotely-driven native bodies, and the natives have developed complex social norms to be full players in their environment.

They are, of course, both carefully balanced systems, dangerously close to collapse. Herbert's Arrakis, though, is an agonizingly thought-out ecosystem, only a few suspensions of disbelief away from possible. Cameron's Pandora feels like the invention of a burnt-out Disney Imagineer on a bad acid trip fueled by Roger Dean album covers and too much Gaia theory.

Of course, that drives to the natives...

The Fremen, the natives of Arrakis, are earlier human colonists who adapted to their harsh world, developing technologies and practices to collect and conserve water. The Na'vi are truly native to Pandora, a way-too-integral part of their world.

But, ya know, they're still the same tropes.

The Fremen are a nomadic tribespeople, their clans are led by male chiefs who are in turn ruled by female Sayyadina. The Na'vi are, wait for it, a hunter-gatherer tribespeople led by male chiefs who are in turn ruled by a priestess. Fremen use special tools to take advantage of itty-bitty vulnerabilities in giant beasts. Na'vi plug their genitals into animals' genitals (come on, this was obvious, right?) to bond with them and gain their cooperation.

Speaking of that, we've got blue-eyed-hippy-ecologist-desert-dweller sex and blue-hippy-ecologist-kitty sex. What, did Cameron make Pandora out of so much spice it dyed everything blue? Or were some other drugs involved and blue was just a coincidence?

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So why are humans there anyway

"I'll take *Economic Exploitation* for \$1000, Alex."

Yeah, humans are just a bunch of consumers, destroying their own world through exploitation, spreading out to repeat the process over and over again. Well, in *Dune* the universe is a rich and varied place where humans integrate into their environments in different and sometimes more balanced manners.

Arrakis is the only source in the universe for *melange*, a vital chemical compound that makes space travel possible. Pandora is the richest source of *unobtainium*, a room-temperature superconductor that's the basis of Earth's current technological infrastructure. Go ahead, make connections to our

current dependence on oil (although evidence suggests that this alleged allegory is a back-formation in the case of *Dune*). It's funny, though, that in *Dune* we're talking an addictive and powerful drug (with all the attendant baggage) but in *Avatar* it's just a shiny rock. I may have missed people pulverizing and snorting unobtainium, though.

In *Dune*, it's House Corrino calling the shots, insisting that the spice must flow. Embodied by Emperor Shaddam IV, House Corrino openly manipulates the Empire to maintain the sort of economic stability it desires. In *Avatar*, the Resources Development Administration is a quasi-governmental corporation with nearly no limits led on Pandora by head administrator Parker Selfridge. The emperor has more style, fashion sense and probably sex, but Selfridge has more power.

No self-respecting administrator or emperor gets his hands dirty, though. Shaddam IV has House Harkonnen to do his dirty work, and Selfridge has the mercenary arm of the US Marine Corps. In *Dune*, the drama comes from the long-standing rivalry between House Harkonnen and House Atriedes. *Avatar* uses the betrayal by the mercenary Corps of a young Marine's ideals, a very Cameron theme (Cameron's military fetish isn't really a topic for this 'zine, at least not the way I would examine it). Baron Vladimir Harkonnen (the Machiavellian manipulator), Feyd-Rautha (the genial bastard) and "The Beast" Rabban (the genocidal butcher) are combined together in Colonel Scratchface McEarthraper, er, Miles Quarich. It all ties together quite neatly.

Help me privileged saviour, you're my only hope!

Into this mix, we throw a wise woman and a chosen one from the dominant culture.

Grace Augustine and Lady Jessica pretty much fulfil the same role for our chosen one. Both are respected members of their field, both are molded and used by their superiors for plans they really want no part of, both engage in humanitarian efforts to improve the prospects of the locals, both are their protégé's moral compass.

But let's not talk about women. They're just supporting characters. Let's talk about Paul and Jake.

Paul Atriedes, rich noble boy brought low early in the story by a vicious attack from House Harkonnen, escaped to the forbidding Arrakeen desert. Jake Sully, hot sexy young Marine brought low before the opening of the film and crippled, was offered a second chance in the forbidding Pandoran jungles.

Initially distrusted by the Fremen for being a soft outsider, Paul becomes one with the desert under the tutelage of *Naib* Stilgar and his daughter Chani and is recognized as *Lisan-al-gaib*, the Fremen messiah. Initially distrusted by the Na'vi for being a soft outsider, Jake becomes one with the forest under the tutelage of Chief Etuykan and his daughter Neytiri and is recognized by Eywa (the planetary consciousness) as some sort of, well, something.

Paul and Chani have hot blue-eyed-hippy-ecologist-desert-dweller sex. Jake and Neytiri have hot blue-hippy-ecologist-kitty sex.

Paul does something unheard of in centuries, uses family atomics to destroy the shield wall, leads the Fremen in battle, defeats his enemies and gains power over his former culture. Jake does something unheard of in centuries, tames a *Toruk*, leads the Na'vi in battle, defeats his enemies and gains power over his former culture.

And in the end?

Paul uses his power to take over the Empire. Jake? Who knows? He kicks the RDA off Pandora and becomes a chief of the Na'vi, but what happens everywhere else?

But that's not really the end.

Dune became a critically acclaimed modern classic, spawned sequels, prequels, movies, miniseries, board games (I own the board game). There's talk of another movie version in development.

Avatar pioneered new movie-making technology, made a bucket of money while confusing box-office analysts, spawned a video game, a tie-in book and a bunch of tat from The Noble Collection. It may be today's game-changing science fiction movie, this generation's *Star Wars*. Word of sequels and prequels circulates.

Will they hold up?

The ecological themes are still timely, if controversial for people who don't believe in ecology. They will probably continue to be both.

The politics, particularly racial and cultural politics, are controversial. Are the stories and tropes exploitive and racist? Do their authors hate western culture and capitalism? I'm not the kind of person who thinks that politics that offend everyone means something is good, but I will sit back and laugh at some of the offense being taken.

The craft, though, is still excellent (as long as you look at the prime craft in *Avatar* as being moviemaking and not writing). Herbert and Cameron can be proud of their work, and should be.

(...but Cameron should still be embarrassed about how derivative *Avatar* is.)



Alternate Dunes

by Chris Garcia

March 17th 2010 - Review

Klit: The Danish Version of Dune

If you were to make a list of nations that would make a big-budget film version of one of the most popular science fiction novels ever written, you probably wouldn't list Denmark alongside the US, England, Russia and maybe Germany. After Ole Bornedal, convinced legendary auteur Lars von Trier and American producer Brian Grazer to help him acquire the rights to perhaps the most famous work of speculative fiction of the twentieth century: Frank Herbert's *Dune*.

Klit, opening in New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Boston tonight before wide-release next month, went in a very different direction than the David Lynch-directed version of twenty-five years ago. Where Lynch attacked the material with a Baroque Arabesque, Bornedal instead goes for a sly series of gestures across a nearly empty stage. Using von Triers' subtle script and long takes of quiet interactions, *Klit* plays out less like a booming science fiction epic than as a passion play of political intrigue and messianic development. Running just over three hours, *Klit* is very much an actor's film despite being the first Danish film with a hundred and fifty million dollar budget.

That money turns out to be well-spent, as the film itself feels so fresh, though far more laconic than the Lynch version. Von Trier works in ever narrowing circles, dealing with the larger political issues that exist in the Known Universe first, then scratching out the outer layers to deal with the interhouse struggles between the Harkonnens and House Atreides, until finally going for a film about the individual: Paul, aka Muad'Dib, aka Usel, aka the Kwisatz Haderach.

The final hour, with a war playing out across the sands of Arrakis almost completely in the background, focuses on Paul's transformation, his attaining his God Emperor status, and his tough talk for House Corino. It is von Trier's conceit that the novel goes in too many directions and that

ultimately to understand Paul's transformation, one must first approach the greater universe.

The Cinematography is to be especially appreciated, as it borrows more from films like *Lawrence of Arabia* and *Wild Bunch* than it does *Star Wars* or *Close Encounters*. Sweeping vistas, often with the same voice-over that many believe sank Lynch's *Dune* with most of the audience, only playing so much better because of the immersion of the viewer in the great immensity of the scenery.

The battles are long, gut-wrenching affairs. The death of Duncan Idaho plays out almost anonymously in the scene, but becomes Earth-shatteringly powerful when the camera pushes in and lingers on his corpse while the sounds of war increase in the away.

The casting may have been what separated this version from both previous attempts. Ulrich Thomson's turn as Stilgar is far more raw than the gravelly portrayal of Everett McGill and certainly the role which best helps define Paul's transformation. Paprika Steen, one of Denmark's most celebrated actresses, portrays Lady Jessica with a sort of out-of-control intensity between the Bene Gesserit focused moments. Mads Mikkelsen plays Gurney Halleck as a troubador warrior with a fire that feels almost under-impassioned when compared with his turn as Mentat Piter De Vries.

While having the same actor playing two such different roles could have easily fallen into the realm of gimmickry, it ends up showing the masterful adaptation of role that Mikkelsen provides. Perhaps most surprising is the performance of Connie Nilssen as the Guildmaster. The greatest liberty taken by von Trier was to make the Guildmasters into less of a monstrous race and into a more ethereal creatures only passing through the veil of our world.

Reverend Mother Helen Mohiam, played by veteran actress Birthe Neumann, is as cold and calculating as could be imagined, a performance that was certainly informed by her work with Thomas Vinterberg as the Matriarch in the Dogme 95 film *Festen*.

Of course, von Trier's script called for a Paul who could handle the task of the last third of the film

himself and the choice of Jonas Wandschneider, who had previously appeared with Thomsen and Steen in *The Substitute*, fills that role perfectly. He is at once commanding and sensitive. He deftly handles the transformation that Paul undergoes while holding back a bit of humanity in much the same way that Steen's Lady Jessica does. He transforms from a plausible boy of 15 to eighteen over the course of the film, and does so with as much grace as could be expected of an actor who had barely reached the age of seventeen when filming began.



Director Ole Bornedal's decisions to pay homage to Lynch might be the nicest touches. The Bald Reverend Mothers, the still suits made from exact replicas of the 1984 version, the Chapman Stick being played by Gurney Halleck, Linda Hunt as the Shadout Mapes. These touches are nice reminders that this film exists in a parallel universe, in a world where what once was may end up returning in a different, more complete and complex form.

The major concern of run-time is perhaps the only failing of the film, but von Trier, by drawing you deeper and deeper into Paul, gives you a hook that pulls you along, and Bornedal keeps everything crisp and flowing. There are a few moments where the action drags, but these are often where the depth of character is found, such as Lady Jessica and Duke Leto's quiet walk around the new Arrakeen castle. It is a torturously long scene, half-made of shadows, but it also how we come to understand the gravitas of Duke Leto and the humanity of Lady Jessica and how a trained witch of her order might disobey a direct command. Steen gives a particularly powerful performance.

The film's last ten minutes cover far more ground than either the novel or the previous films do with their last third. Paul's ascension and the treachery of Alia make for a conclusion that not only folds the entire picture into a memorable shape that disquiets and answers every possible question with new questions. The fact that *Children of Dune* has already begun filming might explain the opening of new doors as the others were closed.

April 1st 2010 - A Look Back at the First Dune

Thirty years after its release, Alejandro Jodorowsky's *Dune* will be screened as a part of a Museum of Modern Art retrospective of the Spanish director's work. The film, which was widely hailed as one of the greatest financial failures of the 1970s, has not had a public screening in its entirety since 1995, when it was shown as a part of *Intersection*, the World Science Fiction Convention's Salute to Jodorowsky's oeuvre when he appeared as a Media Guest of Honor.

The famously overly-long film, nearly fourteen hours long, was one of the most expensive films of the time, and many believe that it would have been a spectacular hit had it not been released less than three weeks after *Empire Strikes Back* and was not more than half-a-day in length. Plagued by cost over-runs, casting problems and filming delays including the death of three crewmembers during the UK heatwave of 1976, *Dune* gained a following of hard core science fiction fans and film fanatics. Nominated for six Academy Awards and winner of the Hugo and the Saturn Award in 1981, has been

widely-viewed as one of the most difficult and remarkable pieces of filmmaking of the 1970s. Many directors of the last two decades have cited *Dune* as a major influence, notably David Lynch (whose *Crash* was a major hit just a few years later) and Lars von Trier (later to direct a version of Norman Spinrad's *The Iron Dream*).

Jodorowsky began working on the script in 1975, and started shooting at Shepperton Studios in early 1976. After seven months of set photography, the production moved to Tunisia, where the film was further delayed by conflicts with local government as well as financial troubles. The original 9 million dollar budget was already up to fourteen million by the time filming shifted to Paris in mid-1977, a second round of funding ballooned the budget to nearly forty-five million. Part of the expense was securing a giant cast of stars of the highest caliber.

The first three cast members announced, Orson Welles as Baron Vladimir Harkonnen, Gloria Swanson as the Bene Gesserit Reverend Mother Helen Mohiam and David Carradine as Duke Leto Atreides, each made nearly two million dollars for the picture, and each also had elements of their contracts that cost up to another million dollars a piece, including Mr. Welles having his personal chef with him at all locations and Swanson provided a special driver specifically to drive her between her trailer and the set, which was to never be more than 50 meters from one another.

The biggest problem was Salvador Dali. Jodorowsky wanted no one more than Dali, specifically to play the insane Emperor of the Known Universe, Shaddam IV. After a series of negotiations, some of which were strange even by the standards of the legendary eccentric artist, a deal was struck where Dali would play the Emperor for 100,000 dollars an hour and Dali would allow a rubber robot-like automaton to play non-close-ups and behind shots of the Emperor. After the first day shooting in Paris, Dali was so excited and enjoyed being a part of the production so much that he waived even his 100,000 dollars and completed all the Emperor's scenes himself.

There was no point in the film where Jodorowsky took a bigger risk than with the writing of Shaddam IV as an insane monarch grabbing at power that he can see slipping away. Dali's

portrayal, which garnered him his first of three Oscar nominations, was noted as the most singularly determined of all the performances. Welles, an admirer and friend of Dali, said that if he had it to do over again, he'd have had Dali play his role in *The Third Man* because he could have fully drawn the character out.

The film was released in its fourteen hour form in thirty-seven theatres around the United States and Canada, as well as another seven in the UK. The film managed to make almost a million dollars in four months or release, though theatres made a fortune on concessions during the film's three breaks. This strategy made *Dune* eligible for awards like the Golden Globe and the Oscar. It won three Golden Globes out of seven nominations, with Dali making his famous acceptance speech where he was accompanied to the dais by a bobcat on a leash.

A year later, an unauthorized version of the film was released on BETAMax and VHS. This was a six hour version, which sold very well, leading to a release in theatres of a shortened version, only five hours and twenty minutes, in theatres during the spring of 1983. A Japanese version running only two hundred and seventeen minutes was a massive hit in Japan and later when it was released in Europe. The Oakland-based television station KTVU showed a ten-hour version shown over five nights in late 1984, which it then sold to Showtime, and later to Cinemax. This led to a race between the other cable stations to claim rights to show different versions. HBO got the Japanese version, while Los Angeles' pioneering cable network Z Channel showed the complete fourteen hour version once a month for two years. Jodorowsky sold four other versions to various video distributors leading to weak sales for all but the ones which included exclusive interviews from cast or crew.

While never able to penetrate as deeply as films like *Star Wars*, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, or *Starman* had, *Dune* was widely regarded as having been an artistic masterpiece, a print being added to the collection of New York's Museum of Modern Art within a year of its release. Many point to Orson Welles, playing the Baron Harkonnen inside of a fat suit that made him look like he weighed nearly six hundred pounds, for giving one of the most impressive performances. He requested that he shoot all of his scenes in the middle of the night,

allowing him to use his own fatigue as a part of his performance, and would smoke a near-endless line of cigars between takes. Gloria Swanson's Reverend Mother was seen as one of the most influential performances of the decade and changing the careers of Sally Field, Glenn Close and Meryl Streep who all have noted the influence of her work on them. Swanson, who claimed to have never been able to stay awake through the entire film, would only appear in two other films following *Dune*.

While many critics hated *Dune*, notable among them Pauline Kael, Harlan Ellison claimed that it was the most important science fiction film of the 1970s and that it transformed what could be attempted in SF films. Then 22 year-old Leonard Maltin wrote in his fanzine *Super16 Fan*, "I don't believe that *Dune* could ever have been translated to screen more successfully." Other supporters included Isaac Asimov, President Ronald Reagan, MPAA president Jack Valente, and Ford Motor Company's head Lee Iococca.

One non-supporter was Frank Herbert. The writer had been initially pleased with the work that Jerodowsky had done, even signing off on his early changes to the characters and scenario, though he nearly scuttled the entire project after seeing a completed script that ran more than 550 pages. He was offered a greater percentage of the take from the film and allowed the filming to go forward, though he no longer offered his own support and guidance. Herbert did an interview with *Rolling Stone* shortly before the film was completed and let loose rapid-fire points of contention with the way the film was conceived and imagined.

Following Herbert's death, his son came to see the film as an area for monetary gain, and made deals to market shirts, figurines and many different video versions with material from his family's holdings. His follow-on books, co-written with Alan Dean Foster, were Best Sellers, though many noted the lack of quality with the pair of hacks at the helm. It was through Brian's support that film historians and critics re-discovered *Dune* in recent years and gained the film a place on the National Film Registry in 2000. Brian Herbert keynoted the Eaton Conference dedicated to the film and novel in 2003., which led to a series of academic papers and three PhD thesis on the film.

The showing planned for the Museum of Modern Art, a new print having been commissioned by the Estate of Frank Herbert following conservation funded by a Packard Foundation grant in 2006, will have three intermissions: two of thirty minutes and one of an hour. The screening room will also be specially outfitted with couches and every attendee will be given a small pillow and blanket, in case they feel the need for a nap between intermissions.

January 28th 1986 - Frank Herbert's Comic Strip, *Dune*, Ends Twenty-two Year Run

Science fiction author Frank Herbert's legendary comic strip *Dune* will end its critically acclaimed run next week when the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* releases the final strip. Herbert, who had written every episode of the strip with more than a dozen different artists drawing the strips over the years, announced that he was retiring due to health reasons last November, and that he would finally be ending the story of Paul Atreides and his struggle against the Emperor of the Known Universe.

Herbert, after failing to find a publisher for his novel version of *Dune*, went to Kings Syndicate which agreed to distribute the story as a comics series. The strip initially stayed very close to the storyline that he had developed as his novel. Pressure from his publisher forced him to make some significant changes, such as the toning down of the violence and political intrigue, as well as the addition of a talking Arakkeen mouse named Faisal.



Seeking Recognition, or, Parodies Lost

by Ian Sorensen, of the theatre troupe
Reductio Ad Absurdum

Parody: imitation for humorous effect, using another artist's style for comedic or satirical purposes.

I've never claimed to be original. It would be pointless because most of my performances have been based on parodies of better work than mine. So why create an unoriginal work by extracting recognizable elements from original creations and mangling them?

The simple answer is that people find it entertaining enough to laugh at the result. It is much more complicated if you ask: how does that work? In this article I hope to illustrate some of the techniques I've deployed to get laughs, focusing on our 1995 parody of *Dune*.

Parody works, I think, because the performance sets up expectations in the audience who are familiar with the original and then subverts their expectations by introducing an unexpected twist. The response is usually laughter, but occasionally, if the twist is very good, the audience will combine laughter with threats of violence towards the perpetrator. People think that they don't like being misled, but secretly they do.

An example: in a key scene in *Dune* Paul Atreides is accepted as one of the Fremen and told he must choose a name for himself. He looks at the sky and asks "what is the name of the mouse-shaped shadow on the second moon?" Stilgar replies that it is called Maud'Dib, the little mouse.

In our parody version, *Dune*, or, The Sand Of Music, we took this scene and changed Stilgar's reply from Maud'Dib to Mickey. The people in the audience familiar with the book were expecting one thing, we gave them something else. Result: laughter. Even the people who didn't know the book found the choice of name amusing, and

laughed when Paul then donned the ears and adopted a Mickey Mouse voice for his exit line.

I'm pretty sure that as you read the above paragraph you didn't laugh out loud. You probably didn't even smile, or think it was particularly clever or funny. So why did the 500 people who saw the performance at the Worldcon in 1995 laugh? In part it is due to the performance skills of the actors - Stilgar pauses for a beat before revealing the name, which helps build the tension and also declares the name in a "ta-da" sort of way signaling to the audience that this is a punchline.



At this point you rely on the relationship the performers have established with the audience. If the audience hates you, they will hate your lame jokes and not laugh. If they like you then they will allow themselves to be hoodwinked by your setup lines and can't help themselves laughing when the payoff arrives.

When you are writing the script you are therefore writing with the expectation that the audience will want to laugh, and the actors will not do anything to upset the audience. When we perform as *Reductio Ad Absurdum* we use the model pioneered by the Reduced Shakespeare Company where the actors appear first as "themselves" to introduce the show. "Themselves" is in quotes because at this stage what the actors are doing is actually creating "actor characters": I'm the officious, big-headed control freak; Phil Raines is an idiot who promises big things and fails, spectacularly, to deliver; Jackie McRobert is there to try and keep me under control and sides with Phil when I get annoyed with his antics. (In reality, Phil is the master planner who writes the bulk of the script, designs the situational jokes and makes all

the props, I'm the one who adds the stupid gags to his script while being very relaxed about the outcome, and Jackie - well, she is there to try and keep me under control and sides with Phil when I get annoyed with his antics.)

During the introduction the audience sympathises with Phil, and Jackie, and sees me as an Ernie Wise-type playwright. This sets up a dynamic that allows us to drop out of character, that is, the character we are playing in a scene, score points off one another and get laughs from seeming to break the fourth wall. We also involve the audience with some kind of audience participation - in the case of *Dune* they performed a Mexican Wave across the hall to depict a giant sand worm in action.



(Whereupon we leapt onto chairs and rode the worm to the tune of *Hawaii Five-O*.) There were also scenes where we were “ourselves” and quizzed the audience about their knowledge of *Dune* and Frank Herbert. All of these things build up the audience involvement in the show, making it much more likely that they will play along with the jokes, which makes it inevitable that we will make them laugh.

We work very hard to appear inept in order to gain the sympathy of the audience. They are essentially nice people, the poor saps.

A good parody stays close to the original, either plot, characters, style or language but changes just enough to make new connections in the audience's mind, hopefully creating something new in the process. One of the ideas in the book and film of *Dune* is that Baron Harkonnen floats about using suspensor units to support his vast bulk. To portray

that on stage would be an enormously difficult technical trick, and way beyond the skills and budget of an amateur production at a convention.

So, in the parody, how do you portray the Baron? Our solution was to use a Mr Blobby balloon (very topical at the time) which was operated by someone behind a table waving it about on a stick. Thus we remained true to the idea of the Baron floating about the room while undermining his menace by making him a pink balloon figure. Would it have worked if we'd just had a Baron Harkonnen mask (covered in boils, of course) worn by an actor? While that would also be true to the depiction of his appearance it wouldn't have got a laugh. Mr Blobby works because it takes an evil character, albeit a pretty one-dimensional one, and makes him cute and silly. Again, the role of the parodist is to undercut the audience expectations.

One of the major problems we had when scripting our *Dune* parody was that the actual plot of *Dune* is pretty lame - too lame, in fact, to be parodied: a young boy undergoes a major change in his circumstances, his father is killed, he flees and meets mysterious people who take him in, just as he discovers his special power and leads them to victory over the forces that killed his father. Sound familiar? What makes *Dune* worth parodying is the great use of place to build a convincing environment for the characters to act within. And while Baron Harkonnen may be a one-dimensional villain, all the other major characters have distinct personalities, credible motivation and spout believable dialogue. That's what makes them worthy of parody.

Paul, the serious, ultimately messianic, protagonist becomes, in our version, a child-like character who can never get the name kwizatz haderach right. Stilgar, warrior leader of the Fremen becomes a somewhat camp commando. The (literally) tortured Doctor Yueh is introduced by the lines “My most trusted adviser, Yueh.” “Yes, me-eh!” Jessica is a lush, Feyd Ruatha is played by a cardboard Sting (no change there, then...) and so on. Although it may seem an obvious thing to say, it's harder to parody something that's funny than something that's serious.

And *Dune* is very serious.

As mentioned earlier, sometimes a particularly good twist can drive the audience from laughing in appreciation of the way they were misled into a mock rage at how much they were misled. Someone has posited that the initial laughter is an acknowledgement of how clever the joke is, coupled with the thought “Oh, I see what they’ve done there. I could have done that too if I’d bothered to think about it”. However, if the joke is “too clever”, not in an intellectual way but because it makes a sideways link not directly connected to the setup, then the audience doesn’t think “Oh, I could have done that” and, instead, reacts with outrage that they could have been misled into thinking one thing was coming and getting another. Technically this is known as a double-drop.

An example: in 2001 we did *Lord of the Rings* as a spaghetti western called *A Fistful of Hobbits*. Instead of a ring of power we had a toaster of power and in the climax the main characters all circle the toaster, waiting for some toast to pop up in a parody of the music box scene from *A Fistful of Dollars*. Gollum (played as Jar-Jar Binks) reveals himself to be Sauron (the the evil overlord), who is in turn Darth Vader (do pay attention at the back!); at which point he takes Frodo (played by my good self) aside and launches into the speech from *The Empire Strikes Back* where Vader tries to persuade Luke to join him on the Dark Side. This sets up the audience who imagine they are being clever recognising the *Star Wars* dialogue and seeing the parallels between the two stories. However, Vader concludes his speech with “Together we could rule Middle Earth, father and child, Sauron and Sauron’s son”.

There is a brief silence while brains have to switch tracks, make the connection between Sorensen and Sauron’s son, before the groans and threats begin. There is also some laughter in there, but it comes later when people laugh at the audience reaction, and then there is some applause. The reaction lasts around 15 seconds, which is very gratifying. The best puns should be groaned at, not laughed at.

But earlier in the show there is a scene where Boromir tries to take the toaster of power from Frodo, promising him that with its power they could toast as many as four loaves simultaneously. When Boromir draws his sword Frodo backs away, asking what that is, to which Boromir replies “It’s my lucky

four loaf cleaver”. This is a fairly simple rearrangement of four-leaf clover but it provokes nearly 20 secs of groans, then laughs and finally booing.

Why? It’s not a pun, it’s not a smart-alec quip - it’s just a bit of silly word play, yet it gets the strongest and longest reaction in the show. Is it because the audience expects swords in fantasy epics to have names like Narsil or Anduril, and the contrast between that and the bathetic “four loaf cleaver” triggers the response? I’m not sure that bathos is a standard device in parody, but if it gets laughs I’m happy to include it.



I suppose that our whole schtick uses bathos to get laughs - we are three bad actors who attempt to do epic dramas with no sets and cardboard props. (Compare this to The National Theatre of Brent who are a duo who use no sets, few props but have superb acting ability. When I first saw them they had actually Jim Broadbent playing the simpleton. But I’d still rather have Phil...) Some would argue that burlesque is entertainment that uses bathos to parody higher forms of entertainment, but I don’t think our shows could be called burlesques.

When writing our shows we spend a lot of time throwing away lines that we aren’t confident the audience will “get”. It’s not that we think they are stupid (well...) but we need to be sure we are

making reference to something they will all know so they can appreciate the parody. In the old days, say twenty years ago, a convention audience was fairly homogeneous and could be relied upon to know their Heinlein from their Herbert. Nowadays there is too much media for everyone to share much commonality, which makes it increasingly difficult to create the laughter of recognition much less subvert it with parody.

Dune was Reductio's first show, chosen because we thought everyone would be familiar with either the book or the movie. We followed that with *Bladerunner*, then *A Complete Waste of Time* (a compendium of time travel stories from *Dr Who* through *Quantum Leap* to Bill & Ted), before tackling *Lord of the Rings*, *The Matrix/Men in Black* and finishing up with our 2005 Star Wars epic *Lucas Back In Anger*. And there it stopped, not because we had run out of ideas, but because we'd run out of shows, books and movies that we thought could work as parodies. Our audience is too widely spread across all the media for us to be confident they will all know any single work. These days I wouldn't even be confident they would know *Star Trek* if we chose to take it on. Some would know the original series, others *TNG* or *DS9* and *Voyager*, but the biggest group would probably be familiar with the new movie. In any case, *Star Trek* and *Dr Who* have been done to death by better actors and writers than us.

I guess that we could perform another successful parody at a convention large enough for there to be a sufficient number of people attending who would be interested in whatever target we chose.

But parody blends in elements from many sources, allowing the audience to see the familiar in an unfamiliar context, and finding the right blend is increasingly difficult. We lack a common culture. And that's tough when you are mostly seeking recognition.

Most recently I've done a Harry Potter musical where the Potter universe is mixed into the Whoniverse with just a smidgen of Rocky Horror. The various dramatic elements worked well, with Hogwarts acting as the school that the Doctor hides out in under an assumed name of *Family of Blood*. In this case he isn't the headmaster, John Smith, but a pupil: Harry Potter. Oh, and he's a woman. The audience seemed to get all the references to Who and Potter, but many balked at the songs, which were mostly tunes from the 60's and 70's, long before many of them were born. More than one person came up to me afterwards and asked if I'd written the songs, and I explained I only wrote the lyrics and the tunes were really, really famous (in their day). In fact, when I was recording the songs one of the singers claimed never to have heard of *Pinball Wizard!*

So why not use more modern music? Because very few songs from the last decade will be known to the majority of the audience. The longer a song has been around the more likely it is that people will have heard it. (This might also explain why I prefer really old jokes...)

The fact is that parody may be in danger of dying as an art form. Trust me on this, I know what I'm talking about: as a performer I've died many, many times.

Bonus Section

Small screen versions of some of the Reductio Ad Absurdum shows mentioned in this article can be viewed for a limited time at:

<http://dl.dropbox.com/u/1929138/Dune.m4v>
<http://dl.dropbox.com/u/1929138/AFOHobbitsQT.m4v>
<http://dl.dropbox.com/u/1929138/HarryPotter.m4v>

Please bear in mind that these are copies of pretty poor VHS recordings of pretty poor performers! Sound quality is even worse. The file format is the type of Quicktime that iTunes/iPods use but should play in most recent browsers..

Frank Encounters

by howeird

Dune had been published and won Hugo and Nebula awards in 1965, but if you had told me that in May of 1969 when I first met him, I would not have believed you. For most of 1969 and 1970 I was a photographer and reporter for the University of Washington *Daily* and since I was one of the few staffers who knew his asteroids from a black hole in the ground, they made me the Sciences Reporter.

My first major story was to cover a press conference ostensibly about a nuclear-powered home dialysis machine. The presenters were two giants in the field, Dr. Belding Scribner of the UW Medical school and Dr. Albert Baab, chairman of the Department of Nuclear Engineering. My article turned out to be a short history of their work leading to a working machine in 1964, a plug for funding and a plug for a TV program. Also in the audience was a portly middle-aged man in a white shirt a size or two bigger than he was, with wind-blown grey hair and a full beard which would have made any Santa proud. Someone told me this was Frank Herbert, the sciences reporter for the P-I.

The Seattle Post-Intelligencer at the time was the city's Hearst paper, very right-wing. They had an agenda, and knew how to use it. Frank was officially listed as their education editor (odd, since he had never graduated college), but I only knew him as a campus sciences reporter.

When I looked up his article on the dialysis machine, it was as if we had attended different press conferences. As I remember it, he focused on "nuclear" as a Bad Thing. I'll leave it at that, because unfortunately the P-I's online archive only goes back 10 years, and I would need to be in Seattle's main library to look at microfiche for the article.

I would see Frank on campus from time to time, always looking neat but slightly frazzled. My next major sciences article where he was also in attendance was not until April 21, 1970. UW Aerospace Research Lab director Dr. Abraham Hertzberg had called a press conference in response

to an article in *Aviation Week and Space Technology* which basically accused his department of doing illegal classified laser weapons research.

Hertzberg issued a strong statement denying any such research, described in detail what kind of laser research was being done and gave a mini-class in what it took to make a device for "Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation".

Once again, reading Frank's article and mine would give the impression we had been at different meetings. Our headline writers did both grab the "Death Ray" line, but that's about the only parallel I remember. I wish I could look it up, because I would love to see if Frank used the quoted from Hertzberg which capped off my article: "...military research is goddamn stupid. And it's also very dull. Have you ever stood in front of a machine gun? That's a death ray. A canon is an even better death ray – it can shoot over the horizon.

"That Chinese philosopher who first took some saltpeter, sulphur, and charcoal and mixed them together, then took this mixture, put it in a bamboo rod with a little metal ball in front of it, and lit the mixture; he was the man who invented the death ray."

I don't remember seeing Frank as a campus reporter after that, but I did go to a lecture he gave in which he said we were wasting too much land by burying people, and suggested it would make more sense to launch bodies into the sun. He did not have this done for himself, though. The inscription on his gravestone says:

I must not fear. Fear is the mind-killer. Fear is the little-death that brings total obliteration. I will face my fear. I will permit it to pass over me and through me. And when it has gone past I will turn the inner eye to see its path. Where the fear has gone there will be nothing. Only I will remain.

Officially, he died in Madison, Wisconsin February 11, 1986, but I wrote him off years earlier when I saw him on TV, clean-shaven, wearing a grey suit, doing an AT&T commercial.



Advance Apologies by Yvonne Rowse

It is well known among fanzine fans that there is no misfortune that can't be mitigated by turning it into a fanzine article.

Just to give a bit of background; for a long time I had my overdraft with Midland Bank (since scarfed up by HSBC). I was absurdly loyal to them, wanting to support their business by paying interest to only them. When I got married my husband pointed out that he had had an account with Barclays for years and had never gone overdrawn. If we ever needed a loan it would be better to be with a bank where we had a good track record. I acknowledged his point and moved my paltry sum into a joint account with him at Barclays. Twenty three years later, some four years after the marriage ended, I still have my current account with Barclays. In this case no loyalty is implied at all, just inertia and a reluctance to have my various direct debits messed up.

So, as I say, inertia has kept me banking with Barclays, even though banks are now set up in such a way that loyalty is never inspired. I no longer know any of the people I deal with and if I ever have cause to contact them I am incensed by their insistence on trying to sell me something. Anything. In the last year they have even called me to just verify all my automatic payments and, oh, by the way, we could provide you with home insurance for less. Thanks guys. Half an hour of my life wasted whilst you worked round to trying to sell me insurance.

I am inherently lazy though, and these various irritations have failed to get me off my arse. I don't trust Barclays but I wouldn't trust any of our high street banks. Their business model is inherently corrupt and requires them to lure people into loans and other products that they either don't need or will cause them harm. Lately, though, as I watch us all struggle in the aftermath of a financial disaster caused, in part, by the banks' greed I have thought it might be time to take action and take my small amount of money out of a location where it supports Barclays.

What finally moved me was the news that Bob Diamond, the new chief executive, will receive a bonus of £6.5m for 2010 on top of his paltry £250,000 salary. This is lower than his entitlement as he is aware that excessive bonuses are causing public unhappiness. Well done Bob! I feel very reassured that he is so sensitive to public feeling, despite saying recently that the time for remorse and apology from the banks was over. Who am I to dispute this viewpoint? However, without disputing anything my personal view is that I should stop supporting an organisation that can say this. So I've set divorce proceedings in process.

Last week I called up Nationwide, a Building Society and still mutual. I looked up what it means to be mutual. The Newcastle Building Society defines it clearly. They say:

'A mutual society is run in the interests of its members, the savers and borrowers - and is not listed on the stock market or owned externally.'

The key advantage of this over a stock market listed or PLC bank is that a mutual does not have to pay dividends to its shareholders. This means that the surplus or profit a Society makes can be put back into the organisation to benefit its members through interest rates which are higher for savers and lower for borrowers, and through better services.'

And continue:

'One way of looking at how much value a customer is getting from a financial organisation is to look at the difference between interest rate a customer receives for their savings and the interest rate they pay on their mortgage. The narrower the margin between the two, gained by high savings rates and low mortgage rates, the better the value.'

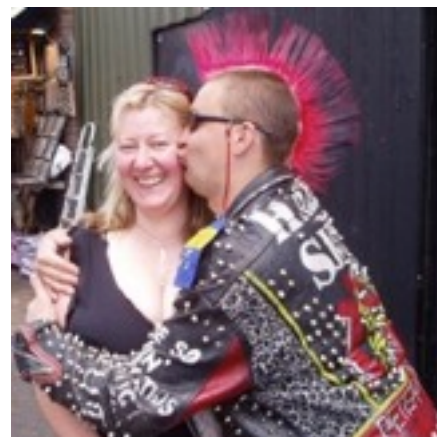
Generally Building Societies operate on lower margins than the banks that used to be building societies. Many building societies operate on margins of less than 1.5%, whereas the converted institutions tend to have margins above 2%.'

So, I decided to transfer my current account to a building society and because I already have an account with Nationwide, I turned to them. I called them and they assured me that they would

handle the whole matter. All I had to do was to give them the authority and they would do the rest, transferring all my standing orders and direct debits. These days it is much, much more important that none of these are lost. The charities that remain are important to me and I want to continue to donate but I also use direct debits to pay my council tax, my gas and electricity bills, my water and phone bills and all my debts to Orange, another organisation that inertia ties me to. I can't afford to lose any of these payments. I started the process last week and crossed my fingers that stuff wouldn't go horribly wrong.

This morning I looked at my iPhone just to check the time. In the middle of the screen there was a little box that told me there was no SIM card in the phone. We had a look inside. Nope. There it was, tiny but obviously present. We turned the phone off and on again. No. Still not seeing the SIM. Filled with a terrible suspicion I looked at when the direct debit should be paid. Yes, indeed. The day I divorced Barclays. I wasn't quite distraught but I was certainly heading in that direction.

I called up Nationwide and spoke to a very nice lady called Deborah. She said, very forthrightly, that they had correctly set up all the payment details and suggested I visit the Orange store. At Orange the woman (whose name badge declared her to be "Hello") said that I should have known Orange would never take an action like cutting off my phone without warning, it was a obviously a fault in the SIM. So thanks to Deborah at Nationwide and Hello at Orange we can confirm that it was not a direct Debbie fault, it was no SIM but ignorance.



Apologies to Claire - you've been punked!

Mailorderfandombride.com or Fandom 101

by Sian K. Martin

Settling down with a boyfriend who has been Chair of the Science Fiction Foundation and a life long science fiction fan has been an interesting journey. Before moving in with said Boy I enjoyed the more accessible and distinctly less high brow edges of sci-fi and fantasy - Pratchett, Buffy, Middleman, Stargate, B5 etc. But jumping into the centre of the deep pool of serious sci-fi was not something I was too comfortable with. I imagined very in-depth conversations about the gaseous make up of the atmosphere of Ganymede and why the death star would not in principle carry plasma/disruptor/phaser weapons. I foresaw myself bored in a circle of be-jumpered pipe smoking serious academics while they thrashed out the thorny issues of EMP resistant robots. I was wrong.

I was intimidated by the concept of a Convention. Visions of Galaxy Quest and the possibility that I was going to end up forcibly socialising with some 'very special' people conspired together to scare the bejesus out of me. Again I was wrong. In my time so far, I have come across a lot of very funny, decent people. I have also come across some vastly different viewpoints to mine - the great majority of which were refreshing with one or two verging on bracing. And there is a small minority that lack social skills. Now, if fandom has a fault, it is that it is accepting of everything that can be socially defined as 'other'. This leads to an assumption that all under the fandom umbrella should get on jolly well. It isn't quite that utopian, but on the whole it's a friendly sub-culture and I'm happy to have shoehorned my way in.

My first Convention was Newcon in Northampton. The highlight was rather nommy hot chocolate in the bar chatting with the erudite Paul Cornell. It was then I had realised that I had 'done' KafeKlatsch without realising. The only downside was that the venue was absolutely freezing. So I came away believing that Conventions were places where you ate and drank in the bar and spent all the time making friends and spending time with friends. Very occasionally if you were radical you might just end up going to a programme item. And there was always the dealers room where you are tempted to buy things you never even knew you wanted/existed. As an ex Goth I was transitioning to brown with brass accessories and Steampunk seemed the genre for me. But I was about fifteen years too late for the zenith of steampunk as a genre.

Next came Novacon where I learned that the best place to stay at a Convention truly is in the event hotel and that when the fire alarm goes off - grab your coffee and your coat. Am I right in understanding that the fire alarm is such a regular thing at a Novacon that it might just end up on the programme?

Picocon taught me that students have a lot of energy and Picocon is the Con running sand pit. It is also acceptable to make snarky remarks about male students flashing the arse of their pants on the grounds of fashion. Now if only the law would allow a defence of wedgie on the grounds of public decency. So my learning point from Picocon was - bag a good seat in the warm bar and don't move because most of the world comes to you.

I thought that I would spend a lot of time with Boy's friends being baffled by obscure references in conversations and that I would spend a lot of time working my way through a long reading list and taking notes and perhaps after about six months I might just be able to say something relevant. And I was more wrong. Most of the discussion is about this large loose-knit social grouping - who did what to whom, where and when and occasionally an author or book is mentioned.

Moving in with Boy into the flat in London, which is not oversized, and discovering about 1200 books came with my mate as part of the package was a bit of a surprise. Although the free library certainly is a benefit. Apparently there are some people who will buy a new house in order to avoid getting rid of books - and end up with the 'book that cost £50,000'. But as Boy and I agreed - the winner is not the one with the most books. I did also point out that Girlfriend 2.0 was a program that needed considerable space to run. A light culling and the purchase of a KIndle allowed us to have a entire new shelf which remains empty and stand testament to joint restraint.

So far almost all of my preconceptions have been shattered and here I remain on the edge of fandom. Oh, and why did no-one warn me about the statutory requirement to love cats? I do love cats but my immune system doesn't.



Influences: Full Circle

by David A. Hardy

In 2001 – an appropriate year, perhaps – I was reading *The Light of Other Days* by Arthur C. Clarke and Stephen Baxter (no connection with the book with the same title by Bob Shaw). Arthur's books were amongst the first SF that I read (his non-fiction books also influenced me greatly), and Stephen is a worthy successor and one of my 'modern' favourites. About halfway through, on page 137, I came to this passage:

He said. 'First impressions? A beach at sunset . . . But that's no sun I ever saw.'

The 'sun' was a ball of red light, fading to a yellow-orange at its centre. It was sitting on the sharp, mist-free horizon, and was flattened to a lens shape, presumably by refraction. But it was immense: much bigger than the sun of Earth, a red-glowing dome covering perhaps a tenth of the sky. Perhaps it was a giant, he mused, a bloated, ageing star.

The sky was deeper than a sunset sky, too: intense crimson overhead, scarlet around that hulking sun, black beyond. But even around the sun the stars shone – in fact, he realized, he could make out glimmering stars *through* the diffuse limb of the sun itself.

Just to the right of the sun was a compact constellation that was hauntingly familiar: that W shape was surely Cassiopeia, one of the most easily recognizable star figures – but there was an extra star to the left of the pattern, turning the constellation into a crude zigzag.

The character works out that he is ‘on’ (he’s in VR) a planet of Proxima Centauri. The extra star in Cassiopeia is our own Sun, and behind him is a double star – Alpha Centauri A and B. Water is liquid only because the planet is so close to its star; its ‘year’ would be only about nine days. He picks up a rock, which he identifies as basalt.

I recognised this scene – it seemed oh, so familiar! It should be, because I remembered painting it in 1972, for my major book with Patrick Moore, *The Challenge of the Stars*. You can see it opposite (view it online in glorious Technicolor!), and here is the caption from the book:

Planet of Proxima Centauri

The scene from a hypothetical planet orbiting Proxima Centauri. The landscape is desolate; in the dark sky the stars shine down, with the constellation patterns very similar to those we know. To the right of the black disc betraying the transit of a moon we see the W of Cassiopeia, but there is an extra star: this is the Sun, which from Proxima will be conspicuous but not glaringly so. It will convert the W into a constellation which inhabitants or future interstellar travellers may well nickname ‘The Switchback’. The Southern Cross, below the horizon in this painting, will lack one of its two ‘pointers’ – Alpha Centauri itself, which will appear as a pair of distant suns casting light on to the bleak rocks of the orbiting planet.

And in the text we read:

The planet is relatively near its weak sun, around which (it is calculated) it orbits in 10–12 days; the limb of Proxima is not sharp, but is clearly diffuse. The landscape is completely hypothetical; we see eroded black, basaltic rocks, as lonely and desolate as anything on our Moon, though the planet retains a thin atmosphere which is replenished by occasional feeble bursts of gas from volcanic vents. No sedimentary rocks hint at past life, though water survives in a lake fringed by glittering ice-crystals.

There seemed little doubt that the writers – most probably Stephen – had been influenced by my painting, and this gave me a jolt of pleasure, as I told Stephen when I e-mailed him to ask if he could confirm this. His reply:

Actually I thought I was inventing that scene, especially the detail about Cassiopeia, a factoid that has always stuck in my mind, but then I remembered Challenge, and looked at it again, and there it was - I'd reconstructed the scene unconsciously - so in the later drafts we made it more explicit... yes it was that painting!

However. . . what neither writer knew (and neither did I ever tell them, as far as I can recall) is that *I* had been influenced by something I read, many years before. It is no surprise that both authors admired H. G. Wells, and certainly his books and stories were some of the first science fiction that I read, even before Clarke; though of course they weren't SF when they were written, since the term hadn't been invented. And in *The Time Machine*, as the Time Traveller nears the end of his journeys, we read:

“At last, some time before I stopped, the sun, red and very large, halted motionless upon the horizon, a vast dome glowing with a dull heat, and now and then suffering a momentary extinction.”
“. . . Still slower, until the dim outlines of a desolated beach grew visible.”

“I stopped very gently and sat upon the Time Machine, looking round. The sky was no longer blue. North-eastward it was inky black, and out of the blackness shone brightly and steadily the pale white stars. Overhead it was a deep Indian red and starless, and south-eastward it grew brighter to a glowing scarlet where, cut by the horizon, lay the huge hull of the sun, red and motionless.”

“There were no breakers and no waves, for not a breath of wind was stirring. Only a slight oily swell rose and fell like a gentle breathing, and showed that the eternal sea was still moving and living. And along the margin where the water sometimes broke was a thick incrustation of salt – pink under the lurid sky.”

So there we have it – full circle. I had been influenced by Wells, and had painted my version of his desolate, red-lit scene as a planet of our nearest stellar neighbour, and in turn Clarke and Baxter had drawn upon my painting for their own scene on red dwarf Proxima Centauri. What can I say, except that it makes me feel proud and humble! And thank goodness for influences, because where would we be without them?

Years later, in 1989, I produced a new painting of Proxima Centauri, which, as ‘Proxima’s Planet’, became a best-selling print for the Novagraphics Gallery in Arizona (I went there after an IAAA workshop in Canyonlands, Utah, to sign 500 copies!) This painting also appears in *Hardyware: The Art of David A. Hardy* (2001), and you can see it here. We look in the opposite direction to the original piece, and see the double-star system of Alpha Centauri.

