

Editorial – Things are back on track with Atlantean Publishing with a second **Monomyth** and the eighth volume of **The Dark Tower** now available. The third **Monomyth** of the year should be out soon and there will be an **Xmas Bard**, and I hope to release another issue of **Bard** before things shut down for Christmas.

Hopefully, next year, things will be smoother.

And, remember, online issues of **View From Atlantis** have been appearing regularly and haiku continue to be added to **The 5-7-5 Haiku Journal**. So, why not send your haiku my way and check out what the next theme for **View** is...

Best,

DJ Tyrer,
Editor

The **Atlantean Publishing Blog** (including PDFs, prices and guidelines) is at :

<https://atlanteanpublishing.wordpress.com>

Visit the **wiki** at

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29 issues are available for free download with another due shortly.

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DJ Tyrer's **One Vision** remains available!

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From Atlantean Publishing

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Enjoy the continuing adventures of *Hengist and Horsa*, plus fiction from Harris Coverley and Cardinal Cox, and poetry from Frank Coffman, Aeronwy Dafies, and DS Davidson.

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5-7-5 Haiku Journal

The new webzine from Atlantean Publishing, which celebrates the 5-7-5 syllable form of haiku. Submissions are welcome via the editorial address with 5-7-5 Submission in the subject line.

<https://575haikujournal.wordpress.com/>

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Copies of **The Supplement** are available for a SAE in the UK and £2/€4 in Europe and £2.50/\$5 RoW.

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Available Now

From Atlantean Publishing

The Dark Tower Volume 8: Doomfall

Dominated by a wonderful, macabre fantasy poem by Harris Coverley, this volume features the title poem by Christopher Catt James, and other poems by Aeronwy Dafies, DS Davidson, AC Evans, and DJ Tyrer.

Just £1.50 (UK) / £3 (RoW)
(part of the three-for-two offer).

Atlantean Publishing is **closed** to submissions during **December and January**. Please do not submit anything during this period (with the exceptions of news and letters of comment).

The press should **reopen** to submissions in **February 2022**.

When the press reopens, poems for the next volume of **The Dark Tower** and short poems suitable for **Bard** will be especially sought.

Sophie Taeuber-Arp

at the Tate Modern (8th August 2021)

Several years ago, the Tate Modern attempted to shed light on Picasso's muse Dora Maar. This time it is the turn of Sophie Taeuber, formerly the wife of artist Hans Arp. That is how she has been known, if at all. Taeuber was born in Davos, Switzerland in 1889 and brought up by her mother, a widow. Her artistic education was more eclectic than some, crossing over to applied art disciplines such as woodwork and textiles, insisting on the inter-relationship between fine art and applied art.

The Tate Modern's exhibition hardly attempts to join up the dots for us. It presents Sophie Taeuber as if she is a newly discovered artist who is 'very interesting'. In fact, she was married to Jean (Hans) Arp, a much more famous and recognised artist. Jean Arp's work is not mentioned, simply the fact of her marriage to him and life in Zurich during the First World War.

Sophie Taeuber's family left Davos and lived in Germany until the outbreak of the Great War when many artists and writers retreated into Switzerland to enjoy its famed neutrality. It was in Zurich that the art movement known as Dada was created, apparently by Tristan Tzara, a Romanian French poet, in the Café de la Terrasse in Zurich in 1916. No one knows for sure what Dada means but it sounds like a child's nonsense word.

The work of the Dadaists seemed like an indirect response to the insanity going on in Europe at the time. The Dadaists were organised and did public gatherings, demonstrations, and publication of avante garde literature. Dadaists included Andre Breton, Max Ernst, and Hans Richter. The Dada movement seems to have been a precursor to Surrealism and other European avante-garde movements in the post-war ferment.

Sophie Taeuber was successively a performer, dancing to Hugo Ball's sound poems at the Galerie Dada in 1917, creator of the *Dada Head*, featured in Tristan Tzara's anthology *Dadaglobe*, and the creator of marionettes for an adaptation of Carlo Gozzi's 18th century play *King Stag*. Gozzi was a Venetian playwright living in the 18th century who attempted to revive interest in Commedia dell'arte.

In the early 20th century transformations of his plays into operas

had been successfully attempted by Sergei Prokofiev (*The Love for Three Oranges*) and Giacomo Puccini (*Turandot*).

Practical skills such as woodworking were synthesizing with skills derived from dance and body movement aesthetics. The marionettes are presented as part of the exhibition, also emphasizing the tradition of interest in puppets and puppetry in central Europe at the time. The adaptation of *King Stag* emphasized its modern, Freudian elements which were also important to the Dada movement.

At the same time Taeuber was also producing non-figurative artworks on paper and cross-stitching embroideries. She was friends with the leading contemporary dancers Mary Wigman and Katja Wulff, pioneers of Expressionist dance in Germany and Switzerland. Ball described her performance as 'a dance full of flashes and edges, full of dazzling light and penetrating intensity.'

Taeuber was preoccupied with applying the tenets of abstract art to the everyday world, using artistic principles to design practical objects, furnishings, and fashion. She studied at the von Debschitz school in Munich in 1911 and at the School of Arts and Crafts in Hamburg from 1910 to 1914.

At the same time, she wrote to her sister, 'furnishing rooms for an architect – wallpaper, rugs, upholstery, curtains and lamps, and perhaps even designing furniture – is what appeals most to me.' She was a teacher at the Applied Arts Department of Zurich's Trade School and published theoretical arguments in favour of her works such as *Remarks on Instruction in Ornamental Design*. To signify her belief that applied art was just as important as fine art she began to sign her work which included cushion embroideries, beaded jewellery and designs for rugs and textiles.

Taeuber was clearly affected by the war and after it ended, she travelled throughout Europe and eventually decided to commute between Strasbourg and Zurich. She became increasingly interested in architecture and interior design and was asked to redesign the Aubette building in Strasbourg in 1926 along with Arp and another collaborator, the Dutch artist Theo van Doesburg.

For the next few years Taeuber-Arp completed a variety of interior design jobs for private homes and a set of stained-glass windows was commissioned by the collector Andre Horn. Eventually, Taeuber-Arp became a French citizen and purchased some land in Clamart, near Paris. She designed her own house. It was here that members of the international avante garde mixed. Taeuber-Arp continued to work on furniture and interior design projects in the inter-war period.

Taeuber-Arp now became a member of the Parisian avante garde and mixed with international figures like Wassily Kandinsky, Le Corbusier, Piet Mondrian, Franciska Clausen and Sonia Delauney in the abstract artists group *Cercle et Carre*. Not all the members of *Cercle et Carre* were happy with the direction it was taking.

Franciska Clausen, for instance, felt that women were not taken seriously and that an underlying misogyny informed the group's dynamics. Works from this period include *Composition a rectangles et cercles* (1931, oil on canvas), *Pointe sur pointe* (1931, oil on canvas) and *Cercles et barres* (1934, oil on canvas). Anyone familiar with the work of the above-mentioned artists can guess what these works are like.

A sceptic might say that they look like a game of dominoes photographed from above, but it is quite clear that a visual game is being alluded to. Other artists who became known to Taeuber-Arp at this time were the American artist and sculptor Alexander Calder who had taken up residence in Paris. The influence of Calder's mobiles can be traced in works like *Surgissant, tombant, adhérent, volant* (1934, oil on canvas).

In 1931 Taeuber-Arp visited Munich and observed the rise of the National Socialist movement. She said, 'these people are willingly narrowing their horizons and churning up a truly war-like atmosphere.' She became increasingly identified with abstract, experimental art and moved from a preoccupation with modular structures to freer organic forms. She collaborated with international exhibitions and ventured into graphic design and editorial work. Wassily Kandinsky praised her work by saying, 'To the beauty of the volume...is added the mysterious moving power of colour.'

Taeuber-Arp and Arp had to leave their home in Clamart after German troops entered Paris in June 1940. They sought refuge in the south of France, moved frequently and could only use the lightest materials such as paper and pencils. Taeuber-Arp had begun to assist her husband with the publication of several volumes of poetry, *Shells and Umbrellas* (1940) and *Poems without First Names* (1941).

Eventually Taeuber-Arp and Arp were granted visas to travel to Switzerland. Taeuber-Arp was accidentally killed on 14 January 1943 when she was staying with friends and suffered carbon monoxide poisoning caused by a faulty stove.

She was 53.

Letters to the Editor

Dear DJ,

Many thanks for the recent **Bard**. I liked your poem *Gulls* and Colin Ian Jeffrey's *Looking in the Mirror*, and also *Kisses* by Sally Plumb.

Yours,

Christopher Catt James

Dear DJ,

From the 196th issue of **Bard**, the cover art by Christopher Catt James and your own front page poem *Gulls* bring to my mind the amazing fact that in a Walmart parking lot in Muncie, Indiana (almost the middle of the middle of America) many, many miles from any ocean – or even the inland sea of The Great Lakes – one can watch and listen to the daily spectacle of seagulls perched atop light poles, screeching at their crow and Canadian Geese rivals as they vie for meals of retail scraps and detritus.

The penultimate line of your poem could here be changed to "Flying over blacktop and autos."

Other standouts from this issue of **Bard** are *Looking in the Mirror* by Colin Ian Jefferys and the Aeronwy Dafies' haiku.

Best Wishes,

David Edwards

Dear DJ,

Thank you for the October edition of **Bard**.

A Sinking Feeling by Donna McCabe.... wow!!! Loved it.

All best to you,

Sally Plumb

Dear DJ,

Thanks for **Supplement 96** (*apologies for the delay in printing this – Ed*). Not sure where you're going with this, these days, as you seem to have shifted from a genre review to a general arts review. No objection to Paul Murphy's art exhibition reviews as a sort of Fiona Bruce role, but there's little scope to comment on them.

My own take on Beardsley is that he was inspired by the camp shenanigans of the literati hanging around his publisher, but that he never caricatured them, instead referring more to their theatrical stereotypes for his subjects. The contemporary world of Rowlandson lampoons was of no interest to him.

On the other hand, Bukowski invented his own caricature and played up to it, rather like Keith Moon did, as it seemed to be what the public expected and it generated the publicity that was beneficial financially. Much of his work

was what the English call 'tongue-in-cheek' and he would have referred to as 'taking the piss'. Like most alcoholics, it was a case of "this is what would have happened last night if I hadn't been unconscious under the table."

Cardinal Cox's piece looks like it had been 'hacked' – all the irritation of a genuine website where you're constantly screaming – just give me the piece, not the claptrap.

Good luck,

Andy Robson

The Editor Replies – I'm never too sure where we're going, either. I've had less time to write much for The Supplement myself, so it's largely come down to whatever I'm sent. Which is a hint to anyone reading this who might have an interesting idea for an article or review, or even just a letter. Send them this way!

Dear DJ,

T'Supplement #98 strode into my consciousness in a bigger, beefier bolder state than I remember for some time. Perhaps it is marshalling its forces for a centenary show of power. Certainly plenty to get the eyes of my teeth, brain and nervous system into. AC Evans's *Cultural Seismology* was a highly effective outline of the cultural geoscape, all the more disturbing for the light of coldly orbiting reason throwing things we know and take for granted into stark relief. Escape from the system seems impossible – but who knows what a passing asteroid might do?

Harris Coverley's *Punished For Telling The Truth* and Colin Ian Jeffery's *What Is Poetry?* complemented each other excellently. They put their cases with style and conviction, and I found myself equally compelled by both.

Paul Murphy's *Nero* piece boggled my mind with the idea of popular classical hairstyles and inept matricidal conspiracies, while his *Paula Rego* review opened my mental eyes to an artist I wasn't previously aware of. It's always a pleasure to be taken for a gallery tour by Paul. Mervyn Linford's *Advent To Passiontide*, as reviewed by Neil Leadbeater, looks a pleasant and interesting read. And Aeronwy Dafies's *Fading Daylight* was a perfect curtain-closer on this end-of-summer issue.

Altogether a good solid read, with its feet firmly placed on *terra firma*.

Yours, boiling away beneath the crust,

Neil K. Henderson

Dear DJ,

Just a few remarks on **The Supplement 98**.

Paul Murphy's *Nero: The Man Behind the Myth* demonstrates that the outre' Roman emperors continue to be a seemingly

inexhaustible source of inspiration for fiction and nonfiction alike. Thanks largely to – at least in the case of the Julio-Claudians and Flavians – Seutonius (probably the greatest gossipmonger of all time) such villainous historical 'characters' as Nero (of **Quo Vadis** and television's **I, Claudius** and **A.D.**); Caligula (eponymously played by Malcolm McDowell in the notorious 1980 big-budget box-office bomb, as well as being a major antagonist in **I, Claudius** and Eugene O'Neill's **Lazarus Laughed**); the cruel and justifyingly paranoid despot Domitian; cowardly and vainglorious Commodus (of **Fall of the Roman Empire** and **Gladiator** fame); the, as far as I know yet to be presented on stage or screen Caracalla (concisely summed up in the index of Compton's **Pictured Encyclopedia** [1960 edition] with the entry "nickname of Bassianus (188-217), Roman emperor; succeeded A.D. 211; recklessly extravagant; brutal in his fight for absolute power"); and the almost unearthly dissolute boy-emperor Heliogablus, continue to serve humanity as reproach and warning.

I was not familiar with the **Barren Magazine** controversy that Harris Coverley opines about in *Punished For Telling The Truth* but find myself largely in agreement with Ms. Rose's tweet: modern poetry is mostly read by poets – be they professional, amateur, or inchoate. Very few readers of a novel or short story attempt one themselves... this isn't true of poetry.

As for identitarian poetry, there is nothing wrong with it *per se*... as long as the poetry comes first and foremost. I like that Mr. Coverley ended his piece on a positive note: encouraging his fellow poets to keep writing and submitting (and I would add, reading) micro-press poetry.

Another "thought from a fellow poet" for Colin Ian Jeffery's *What is Poetry?* – in his Letter to Pierre Loeb Antonin Artaud wrote "We are 50 poems, the rest is not us but the nothingness we are clothed in."

In *Cultural Seismology* AC Evans must have set a **Supplement** record for most abstractions per page. The intoxicating flow of words includes (not exhaustively) biosphere, superstructure, transcendental, metaphysics, phallogocentric, angst (probably the best German word since "kindergarten"), causation, elasticity, substrate, force-field, matrix, fissile, existential, centripetal, penumbra, hierarchic, ontology, ad infinitum, morphological, continuum, convection, aesthetic, neophobic, ephemeral, effervescent, subaltern, normative, paradigmatic. These may not all be abstractions, but when used in an

The Imperium, Right or Wrong

By DJ Tyrer

abstracting manner the effect is... abstracting. My own precis (or *aperçu*) on this subject: simply stated "culture" is complicated.

An apropos envoi to this early Autumnal edition of **The Supplement** is Aeronwy Dafies' *Fading Daylight*.

Best Wishes,
David Edwards

Dear DJ,

I think my Nietzsche quote is authentic but even if it wasn't, well that would be... er... Nietzschean, wouldn't it? I first read Nietzsche as a student at the University of Warwick in English translations. Of course, I found it compelling as I did Plato which I read at the same time. It wasn't like philosophy, like a set of washing machine instructions (I'm thinking of Kant or Wittgenstein.).

Later on I read Nietzsche in German with the help of Armin Steigenberger, a poet associate from Munich. I had various debates, in taxis, open air baths and in cafes about Nietzsche with authentic Germans who weren't scholars but still found something in it to connect with.

Armin still resides in Munich. You can tune into the radio station he runs, Radio Lora, on Friday evening to hear some Germans and Austrians read their poetry – visit <http://www.lora924.de/>

All the best,
Paul Murphy

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Got a reaction to something in this issue or an opinion on something going in the worlds or writing, film or the arts? Want to tell us what you think about an issue or booklet? Send a letter of comment to the editorial address of email address.

We want to hear from you!

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Games Workshop has felt it necessary to issue a [press release](#) to remind everyone that **Warhammer 40,000** is satirical and the company doesn't condone fascism due to the fact that some fascists have co-opted the game's imagery or have fallen in love with the Imperium as a state to aspire to.

It's an unfortunate sign of the times that creators have to apologise for people who have become fans of their work. We don't have a say in who likes, or dislikes, what we create, or why. Unless someone is actively creating propaganda, how people react to their work is largely beyond their control. Even when a creator explains their work, people are free to ignore them and interpret it differently.

But, worse, is the fact that people cannot grasp the concept of satire. It's amusing that both those who are fascists – seeing the advocacy of their creed in the Imperium – and those who are 'woke' – seeing the setting as 'promoting hate' – fail to understand that it is satire.

Even in those editions of the game which are less-overtly comical or satirical, playing the setting fairly straight, it should be obvious that the Imperium is not an advert for the brilliance of fascism. Indeed, whilst some neo-Nazis love to paint models with Nazi imagery, the Imperium actually owes more, both in imagery and society, to Stalinist Russia and a fantastic version of medieval Inquisitorial Catholicism, whilst also be so decentralised as to allow many cultural and political variations to exist. But, it's certainly a totalitarian state and can stand in as a proxy for real-world fascistic dictatorships.

But, anyone who pays more than the most cursory attention to the setting and looks past the cool Space Marine designs and such, the Imperium is very definitely *not* an advert for the success of totalitarianism or fascism.

Yes, the Imperium *is* the lesser of two evils, but that doesn't mean it presents fascism as plausible. It's the lesser of two evils in a universe that is at imminent risk of being swallowed by primal chaos, devoured by bugs from another galaxy, and overrun by sentient fungi. And, even then, it's losing the fight, often as much due to its own inefficiencies and errors as the power of its enemies, and there are plenty who would abandon its protection in favour of trafficking with aliens, worshipping chaos power, or joining Genestealer cults ready

to welcome the ever-hungry Tyranids.

Consider that for a moment. This alleged fascist paradise only makes any sort of sense in a universe where everything is (often literally) going to Hell and is doing a terrible job of stopping the rot...

If you can't see that's satire, then there's no helping you. And, if you think this is something to emulate...

Of course, sometimes satire *can* fail. A good example is **The Iron Dream** by Norman Spinrad, which purports to present a novel written by Adolf Hitler in an alternative timeline. The intent was to show up what he saw as the fascist tendencies inherent in fantasy fiction. But, the novel-within-the-novel, *Lord of the Swastika*, proved to an enjoyable romp that didn't quite work as he intended.

The problem, in my opinion, beyond Spinrad writing a good novel, is that he presented a fantastic version of Nazism in a world where it actually made sense, where the enemies of 'pure humanity' were mutants and the analogue of the Jews were literal mind-controlling mutants.

Warhammer 40,000 avoided such missteps by clearly making the Imperium flawed. (The Imperium might hunt down mutants as agents of Chaos in a manner reminiscent of *Lord of the Swastika*, but it's always clear that not all mutants are tainted by chaos, that the abysmal approach of the Imperium towards health and safety is responsible for many, that the Imperium will use mutants when it suits them, and the majority of the leadership are little more human themselves thank to gene tinkering and cybernetics. In other words, the Imperium are hypocrites.)

The Imperium might be the best alternative for humanity in the grim darkness of a future consumed with war, but it can never really be called good. At best, it's a placeholder that offers the potential for something better if only humanity can survive the myriad threats assailing it. At worst, it's an abrogation of all that is good about the human race that is doing nothing more than delaying the inevitable a little longer in favour of a hellish existence.

There is nothing admirable about the Imperium and it's a shame that it has become necessary to explain this to people.

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Got an opinion?
Write in!

Aftermath Of Enlightenment From the Gothic to the Hermetic

By AC Evans

According to C. G. Jung, 'all art intuitively apprehends coming changes in the collective unconscious' and it is indeed illuminating to compare aspects of cultural and artistic activity to trends in political history and developments in social evolution.

Taken in its entirety the period under consideration may be viewed as a continuum from the French Revolution (1789-1804) to the outbreak of World War One in 1914. This was the first epoch of artistic modernism, a century punctuated by successive spasms – the revolutions of 1848, the war and Paris Commune of 1870/71, and closing the final years (the fin-de-siecle), the Bolshevik Revolution. Throughout the period the rise of state nationalism and the struggles of oppressed minorities undermined the great dynastic empires of the Romanovs, The Hapsburgs and the Ottoman Turks.

Jung asserted that a key characteristic of this period was a deepening concern with the inner world of the mind. A turning away from religious solutions based upon blind faith to other doctrines based upon initiated Gnostic knowledge. For example, Jung regarded Theosophy as 'pure Gnosticism in Hindu dress', while some recent critics (e.g. Webb) have identified Jungian Psychology itself as a contemporary form of Gnosis. Jung wrote:

There can be no doubt that from the beginning of the nineteenth century – ever since the time of the French Revolution – the psyche has moved more and more into the foreground of man's interest, and with a steadily increasing power of attraction.

The official overthrow of Christianity and the enthronement of The Goddess of Reason by the French Revolutionaries symbolized a telling configuration of ideas. A startling factor being that far from heralding a new era of utopian Enlightenment rationalism, the revolution of 1789 triggered an outburst of fanatical terror perpetrated by ideologues of a new calibre: Marat, Maximilien Robespierre, Saint-Just, and Jacques Roux. Total politics and the cult of the guillotine. It is significant that the idea of Nihilism first appears at this time, in Mercier's **Dictionary** of 1801 where it was defined as a 'product of the evil

philosophy that flaunts itself in the fat **Dictionnaire Encyclopedique**. What does it want to make of us? Nihilists!' The term originated in Germany where some philosophers predicted that Cartesian Rationalism would lead to a terrifying solipsistic nihilism.

In the arts these upheavals were reflected in the works of a few key figures. In painting Fuseli and Goya, and in literature, the horrors of popular fantasy in the form of the Gothic Novel.

Goya stands as the first 'modern' painter in a very special sense, for his works after 1790 displayed a grim new vision, a radical break with the past. His 'Black Paintings' and engravings like *The Caprichos* (1793) depicted a universe of terror and grotesque realism. To quote Gwyn A. Williams:

Goya's new vision was a dark one; realism twisted by manic passions, ferocious struggles spotlighted in a somber world, an inhumanity which was all too human, an explosion of violence and unreason into the world of tapestry and portrait and enlightened discourse.

Goya's subject matter comprised themes such as shipwrecks, insanity, brigandage, cannibalism, witchcraft, plagues, massacres and mindless cruelty - and his counterpart in the world of literature was the Marquis de Sade. De Sade exemplified the terrors of the Revolution and sublimated them into works of hedonistic nihilism written whilst incarcerated in the Bastille: **Justine** (1791), **Aline et Valcour** (1795), **Philosophie dans le Boudoir** (1795) and **La Nouvelle Justine** (1797). Called 'the Divine Marquis' his works were as savage and incoherent as the age of turmoil in which he lived and they were to exercise a covert influence over subsequent poets and artists, from Petrus Borel (*Champvert, contes immoraux*, 1833) to the late Gothic of Julien Green (*Adrienne Mesurat*, 1927).

Sade's world, like that of Goya showed links with the writings of popular fantasy which also signified the destruction of a world of enlightened discourse by an eruption of violence and unreason. The Gothic Novel, and its offshoots, is widely perceived by critics to reflect the social and political stresses of the breakdown of Enlightenment culture. It introduced, at the dawn of the modern era, themes of cultural disintegration, anomie, irrationalist millenarianism, supernatural occultism, primitivism, sadism, transformation and global disaster which were to permeate various dark currents of 'modernism' and the 'fin-de-siecle'.

Books like Walpole's **Castle of Otranto** (1764), Beckford's **Vathek** (1786), Ann Radcliffe's **Mysteries of Udolpho** (1794), M. G. Lewis's **The Monk** (1796), Mary Shelly's **Frankenstein** (1818) and Charles Robert Maturin's **Melmoth the Wanderer** (1820) were the first examples of a disreputable but significant strand of creative activity acting as an outlet for modern man's concern with the alienation of the world and the dark, hidden, occult aspects of his own mind. As the nineteenth century progressed via the upheavals of 1870 towards the apocalypse of 1914 genres of popular fantasy were to proliferate, impinging upon both the subculture of the occult and the struggles of the artistic avant-garde. A pivotal figure in this process was Edgar Allan Poe who infused the European-American Gothic tradition with his own brand of necrophiliac soul-sickness with tales like *Ligeia* (1838), *The Fall of the House of Usher* (1839) and *The Masque of the Red Death* (1842).

Translated into French by Baudelaire (starting in 1847) these stories exerted a powerful influence over subsequent horror fantasy literature: the crumbling Gothic castles of the original romances become the haunted 'inner rooms' and dream-chambers' of the hypersensitive initiate engaged in half-understood rituals of death and transformation. Thus Poe became one of the grand masters of Decadence when his aesthetic ideas, which defined the poetic procedure as 'an ecstatic prescience of the glories beyond the grave...' percolated into the literary cénacles of the French *maudits*. Poe's combination of intellectual dandyism, morbid introspection and prototype aestheticism illuminates some of the mutually reinforcing links that existed between fantasists, occultists and the avant-garde *maudits* of Decadent Hermeticism.

After 1870 many exponents of the new poetry found themselves exiled to the limits of cultural acceptability. It is understandable that writers such as Rimbaud, Huysmans and Andrei Bely should be influenced by the occultism of Eliphas Levi and Rudolf Steiner, whilst others, such as Villiers de l'Isle Adam, William Morris or Maurice Maeterlink should themselves exert an influence over the literature of fantasy and horror that grew from the original Gothic.

Writing about fantastic literature Rosemary Jackson (1981) has identified

the essential characteristic of the movement as a 'severance of the connecting lines of meaning'. She uses a quote from Beckett to illustrate her point: 'There could be no things but nameless things, no names but thingless names.' She asserts that a 'gap between sign and meaning' is a dominant concern of modernism and reveals a zero point of culture where meaning itself - no longer supported by traditional modes of discourse - evaporates into a 'void of non-meaning' or an abyss of 'non-signification'. In the face of this 'void' the various subgenera of the fantastic mirrored the increasing desperation of the secularized, alienated inhabitant of the modern world. The poet the fantasist, the occultist and the magus were all outsiders, some searching in vain for a religious alternative to de-Christianisation and Darwinism, all exhibiting symptoms of a deep-rooted anxiety, the 'unspoken terror' of Roderick Usher, the debilitating disgust of des Esseintes ('tortured by the present, disgusted with the past, terrified and despairing of the future') or the 'nameless disaster' that haunted Georg Trakl.

So, the various subgenera of the fantastic proliferated throughout the century, and reached their full flowering during the closing decades of the era. The period 1890-1914 witnessed the emergence of 'modern fantasy' as we know it today. Several major writers contributed to the field, for example, Henry James with the classic ghost story **The Turn of the Screw** (1898), Oscar Wilde with **The Picture of Dorian Gray** (1891) and William Morris with a series of works which inaugurated a completely new strand of fiction which could be called 'Alternative Worlds' fantasy: **The Glittering Plain** (1891), **The Wood Beyond the World** (1895) and **The Well at the World's End** (1896). These works by Morris were illustrated by the Pre-Raphaelite artist Edward Burne-Jones, setting the precedent for the emergence of a whole school of fantasy illustrators linked to the emergence of new techniques of reproduction and book production.

Both in England and on the Continent a host of other authors produced works in a diverse range of sub-categories: Occult Fantasy, Grotesque Fantasy, Cosmic Horror, tales of degeneration and sexuality, and pioneer Science Fiction. Occult Fantasy was represented by the works of the Austrian

Gustav Meyrink, a keen alchemist and a member of a Theosophical Lodge in Prague called the Lodge of the Blue Star. Meyrink was originally inspired by occult Freemasonry and also wrote grotesque tales in the manner of Poe and E. T. A. Hoffmann. His most famous book was **Der Golem** (1915) but he also wrote numerous other Gnostic-Theosophical allegories and tales like **Das grüne Gesicht** (1916), **Walpurgisnacht** (1917), and **Der Engel vom westlichen Fenster** (1927), a novel about Elizabethan magus Dr. John Dee. The chief precursor of occult fantasy fiction was Bulwer-Lytton whose Rosicrucian novel, **Zanoni** (1842). Lytton was a friend of Eliphas Levi and was said to have been initiated into occultism by the English magus Francis Barrett. Occult initiates themselves also wrote occasional fictions to promote their work. For example H. P. Blavatsky wrote a tale called *A Story of the Mystical* (1875), W. B. Yeats contributed to the genre with a story called *Rosa Alchemica* in 1897 which combined initiated alchemical themes with motifs of fin-de-siècle Decadence.

The particularly English form of supernatural horror was best represented by M. R. James, whose *Ghost Stories of an Antiquary* appeared in 1904. His immediate precursor was J. S. Le Fanu whose first collection of ghost stories appeared in 1851 and who spent the final years of his life as a recluse immersed in the writings of Swedenborg. Swedenborg provided Le Fanu with a philosophical framework for his supernatural fictions which were published in anthologies throughout the later years of the century: **In a Glass Darkly** (1872) and **The Purcell Papers** (1880). Franz Rottensteiner describes Le Fanu's work in terms that reinforce the Jungian notion of increasing subjectivism as the psyche increases its power of attraction:

For Le Fanu, rational life seems to be a small island in an ocean of supernaturalism; the supernatural is always prepared to break through when man's resistance has been weakened... he was obsessed by the materials of his imagination...

Perhaps to compensate for the fearful implications of the world of gothic terrors exposed by the horror fiction of ghost and vampire tales, another sub-genre of the fantastic arose during the 1890s. This comprised the sagas of semi-mythical universes and parallel dimensions which find their first expression in works of George MacDonald such as **Phantastes** (1858), and **Lilith** (1895). The form was more firmly established by William Morris with the books

previously noted, all of which were published between 1891 and 1896.

As mentioned the fantasy fiction of Alternative Worlds also provided an outlet for many new book illustrators who took advantage of new forms of picture reproduction to produce apposite pictorial material across the whole range of fantasy literature, from children's books to tales of legend from the world of ancient mythology and oriental demonology. The first and greatest of these illustrators was Aubrey Beardsley (1872-1898) who set high standards with his mass-produced illustrations for Malory's **King Arthur** (1894), Oscar Wilde's *Salome* (1894), Pope's **Rape of the Lock** (1896) and **The Works of Edgar Allan Poe** (1894).

Another major artist of the time who pioneered illustration for fantasy works was Charles Ricketts (1866-1930) who also produced drawings for the fairy tales and parables of Oscar Wilde. Following Beardsley and Ricketts was a host of minor artists like Robert Anning Bell, John Batten, Arthur Rackham and S. H. Sime, who was closely associated with one of the most famous of all Alternative Worlds fantasists: Lord Dunsany (E. J. M. Drax Plunkett, 1878-1957). His collections of short stories like **The Gods of Pegana** (1905), **Time & the Gods** (1906), **The Sword of Welleran** (1908) and many others, were all illustrated by Sime in suitably bizarre style.

Alternative Worlds fantasy moves to the opposite end of the spectrum from the works of Le Fanu, M. R. James and the terrors of Bram Stoker's **Dracula** (1897).

In place of intimate, personal horrors and manias, or the violation of sexual taboos, this sub-genre provided the public with epic sagas of the marvelous, compensating for the void of unbelief and the abyss of non-meaning by indulging a 'nostalgia for lost moral and social hierarchies' (Jackson) while still expressing symptoms of alienation and Post-Darwinian angst.

These fictions of other worlds also belong to the prehistory of science fiction, as represented by the scientific 'prophecies' and eschatology of H. G. Wells (**The Time Machine**, 1895 and **The War of the Worlds**, 1897) or Maurice Renard (**Le Docteur Lerne**, 1908 and **Le Peril Bleu**, 1910). They were also precursors of twentieth century American Sword and Sorcery as represented by the 'pulp' fictions of Clark Ashton Smith, H. P. Lovecraft and Robert L. Howard. E. R.

Eddison, whose *Alternative Worlds* saga, **The Worm Ouroborus**, was published in 1922, provided the link between these purveyors of gratuitous semi-occult fictions and the world of Morris and Dunsany.

Whereas many of these fantasies moved away from the unnerving revelations of the hard-core Gothic Horrors and sought escape in pseudo-moral and religious allegory (for example in the more recent cases of the Christian fantasies of C. S. Lewis and Charles Williams) other writers during the turn-of-the-century era created works which attempted to plumb even greater depths of fear and menace.

These were the purveyors of Cosmic Horror: William Hope Hodgson (1875-1918), Arthur Machen (1863-1947) and M. P. Shiel (1865-1947). These three writers published works during the final decades of the period and their lives encompassed both world wars (except for William Hope Hodgson who was killed at Ypres). In the works of Machen (a minor member of The Golden Dawn) nature in the Post-Darwinian world is presented as the lair of non-human, primal beings who reduce to gibbering idiocy (or worse) all mortals who dare penetrate their secrets.

It has been observed that Machen's theme was 'the awful transmutation of the hills' (quoted by David Punter) perpetrated by demonic forces which manipulate the process of evolution. Machen is famous for works such as **The Great God Pan** (1894), **The Three Imposters** (1895) and tales of evil fairy lore like **The Shining Pyramid** (1924). The luckless victims and intruding forces in his works represent the tendency of biological entropy, the ability of all things to 'revert' to 'primal slime' to descend 'even to the abyss of all being'. It has been observed that his obsessions with vestigial elder races of pre-human or sub-human beings inhabiting isolated parts of rural England may correlate with proto-fascist occult root-race theories peddled by Dion Fortune and H. P. Blavatsky.

The other writers of Cosmic Horror in the period before 1914 externalized the despair of Europe as its institutions teetered on the verge of annihilation. In **The Yellow Danger** (1898), M. P. Shiel described the atrocities of all-out race-war, and then wallowed in the consummate morbidity of global destruction in his next novel, **The**

Purple Cloud (1901). More extreme, perhaps, was William Hope Hodgson's **The Nightland** (1912), which like his other novel **The House on the Borderland** (1908), developed the theme of the cosmic siege: Man has fallen prey to nightmare forces of eldritch evil closing in from the depths of darkness.

The Nightland was a 'future history', set millions of years hence in an epoch after the extinction of the sun. It describes how the last vestiges of humanity eke out their days in a vast fortified pyramid called 'the last redoubt' surrounded by impenetrable darkness and besieged by unspeakable terrifying entities – the first manifestation of those ultimate 'nameless things' which haunt the works of Lovecraft – manifestations of pure evil 'otherness', symbolizing, or embodying, the disintegration of all normal referential categories; conventional dimensionality, and basic polarities such as animate/inanimate, life/death or self/other. A gigantic extrapolation of the personal degradations and metamorphoses of Stevenson, Wilde and Bram Stoker's **Dracula**.

These works reinforce Rosemary Jackson's argument that

Fantasy points to... the basis upon which cultural order rests, for it opens up... on to disorder; on to illegality, on to that which lies outside the law, that which is outside dominant value systems...

Nineteenth century secularization ensures that the idea of the 'other' or the 'unspeakable' was displaced from institutionalized theocratic fantasies of Heaven and Hell, to desperate domains of the world, or fictitious worlds, or, eventually – as in Olaf Stapledon's nihilistic future histories such as **Last and First Men** (1930) or **Star Maker** (1937) – to the outermost reaches of conceivable space and time. The gradual internalization of the imagination in the nineteenth century was mirrored by a gradual transition from the clumsy horrors of the original Gothic to the intangible menaces of Henry James and Walter de la Mare. While global panic was manifest in the conflicting fin-de-siecle subgenera of Cosmic Horror and Alternative worlds. Others sought relief in the Superman or the life-giving practices of ancient alchemical arts, aestheticised into a doctrine of total art (as in **Dorian Gray**, or **Rosa Alchemica**).

If the literature of fantasy in its varied subgenera reflected the crisis of modernism and the modernist imperative to delve to the limits of experience (The New) unhindered by ancient prohibitions, the development of modern poetry throughout the same period was the most revealing symptom of all.

It has been observed that the crisis of modernism was felt most acutely in poetry 'because poetry, above all genres tends to experience changes in of relationship and belief in a culture at the direct levels of subject-and-object relationship, and at the very base of form and language.' (Bradbury & MacFarlane). Huysmans, the progenitor of the Decadent Movement linked the state a language to the state of culture as a whole when, in 1884, he wrote of 'the Decadence of French literature... attacked by organic diseases... exhausted by syntactical excesses...'

However, far from being the swansong of a dying language, the experiments of the Decadents and Symbolists which gave rise to *vers-libre* and *vers-prose* were simply the forerunners of a stylistic tradition which pushed the powers of language to the very limits of the expressible.

In some respects the poetic products of this modern tradition could be said to be the linguistic embodiments of the impulse to otherness more crudely expressed in the popular subculture by the writers of fantasy. Just as the Gothic fictions, and the works of Sade and Goya coincided with the upheavals of the French Revolution; just as the most extreme outbursts of modernist avantgardism coincided with the First World War (e.g. Dadaism), so a number of other 'symptomatic' works coincided with the convulsions of the Franco-Prussian War and the Paris Commune (1870/71).

These were works by followers of Baudelaire: Rimbaud with **Le Bateau Ivre** and Lautreamont with **Maldoror**. Both these works encapsulated key ideas defining the position of poetic language in an age of cultural crisis. During this period also, Mallarme was working on his curious, metaphysical story-play, **Igitur ou la folie d'Elbehnon** which combined many of the themes touched upon in this section, being a combination of both the apparatus of Gothic Horror, refracted via the perverse lens of Edgar Poe, and the most refined Hermetic poetry.

Igitur is the archetypal Symbolist hero – a fusion of Hamlet and Roderick Usher. His world is his room, which he has lined with heavy curtains to damn the flow of time. This room is the special creation of the Symbolist hero; a private temple in which the hero engages in meditative rites of purification and projection, directing his mind through vistas of space and time.

Igitur sits there, his life focussed on a clock with its hands raised to midnight, his eyes staring at his mirror. Igitur's objective is to gain a position outside time, just as, in broader cultural terms the entire thrust of the poetic and fantasy movements were to 'open up a space without/outside the cultural order' (Jackson). But Mallarme, in confronting the void which is then revealed, can only envisage himself as a discontinuous 'aptitude'. He was forced to realize that all absolute values are baseless and can only be understood as falsehoods – or fictions.

The central image of **Igitur** is the descent of a spiral staircase enveloped in shadow; an image that encapsulates the crisis of the nineteenth century poet facing the dissolution of all cultural reference points. According to the critic R. G. Cohn (1981), this is a vision

of an implacably daring and stubborn explorer of the unknown... with echoes of Hamlet and of an immemorial occult tradition of initiation into life's rock bottom mysteries...

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Reviews by Harris Coverley

Clinton Baptiste Goes Stratospheric

(Lowry Theatre, Salford, 17th October, 2021)

I admit it: I walked into this blind. I simply do not remember the character of psychic medium Clinton Baptiste – created and portrayed by Alex Lowe – in Peter Kay's **Phoenix Nights**. I admit I've never been a big Peter Kay guy, so I approached the evening with a little trepidation, which proved somewhat warranted – but not because it was bad.

The act was indeed so funny that it actually passed the "jaw hurts from laughing so much" test. The fear for the audience comes from Baptiste's frequent trips *through them*, giving "readings from the spirits" that leave the unsuspecting theatre goer looking like a hapless tool. Even a poor old woman who made it clear that she did not want to be "read" was not spared.

The rest of the time, Baptiste told us of his spate in Las Vegas as a side attraction in an awful hotel forty miles from the strip, culminating in a trip down to Mexico where he has an intense spiritual experience in an Aztec ruin – which leads to a poor audience member harvested from the front row is the victim of a humiliating practical joke.

If Lowe brings his act near you I'd

recommend seeing it even if you go in clueless like me – it's *schadenfreude* for the whole family (if they can cope with a giant C-word on the stage at one point) – *as long as* you don't get a ground or lower stall seat! The results could be soul-destroying!

Graham Gouldman's Heart Full of Songs

(Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester, 9th October, 2021)

I *almost* did not see this – my latent and unpredictable agoraphobia suddenly acted up and nearly forced me from the venue, but I was, at the last minute, convinced to go into the auditorium, and what a wonderful evening did transpire...

Graham Gouldman has written a lot of hits... *lots*. I mean, I knew he *had*, but in this curated selection, you really see the powerful and enduring spread that he has achieved across a six decade-long career. Supposedly an acoustic concert, *electro-acoustic* would better describe it, but it is no matter.

With Ciaran Jeremiah on keyboard, guitar, and bass, Iain Hornal on guitar and ukulele, and Dave Cobby on percussion, Gouldman took us from the jangly chart-toppers like *No Milk Today* (recorded by Herman's Hermits) and *For Your Love* (The Yardbirds), through the hits of Gouldman's most famous outfit 10cc (hearing *I'm Not in Love* live by the man who co-wrote it will always be a glorious memory) to Gouldman's later songs, a number of them co-written with the late 'Lonely Boy' Andrew Gold. At seventy-five and proudly back on his home turf of Manchester, Gouldman's still got it, a voice as smooth as butter, a soft and friendly charisma which eases you into the music.

A marvellous concert that leaves you with a warm, nostalgic feeling (even if like me you were born in the early '90s). Strongly recommended.

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Retro-Review by Christine Despardes

The Drowningdays

By Emma J. Sanderson

Atlantean Publishing, 2012, £5 (UK), £7 (RoW)

"The futility of my life is a shattered glass", the 16-line *Futility* starts. The eight couplets evolving into an outcome which might be summarized as 'from the embers of despair comes hope'. Until that theme forms in the mind verbally, one spirals down a helix of meaning to the conclusion of the piece, where it becomes clear and confirmed.

The Drowningdays by Emma Sanderson inundates the reader with a restless stream of intense, skilful, heartfelt imagery.

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The Supplement will return in March

Reading this work is like kayaking rapids, manageable but rapids nonetheless. The flow of imagery reminds me of how Hamlet speaks – mainly by imagery and association. Sanderson's pieces are a cleansing purge for herself, I'm sure, and, to an extent, for the reader, who, in addition, discovers in them marvellous skill. For the speaker of each poem, i.e., the author, image-laden utterances flow like lymph, carrying toxins out of and away from the body.

The iambic pentameter line is too confining for what Ms. Sanderson wants to do with writing-pen on paper. She creates it then eludes it in every way she can, while persisting in each piece with an organic melodic texture all her own.

She is an artist who is a poet too, so it's her nature to think in images. In my mind's eye, I see her at her easel, processing life, events and the arena of the soul by means of imagery. Here, she goes a step further and puts images into words.

What is written amazes – like events and observations sometimes expressed in a psalm-like manner. Often, evaluations of events or situations go chthonic, archetypal, symbolic, all within in an extraordinary psychological and intellectual milieu.

In *Remembering*, "the fatherless son drains his life-tears out of earshot" followed later by, "Our tortured pasts rely on our dark self-consciousness / Eating like a worm in the intestines of identity".

This piece is like a mathematical proof, because in it she creates three characters and circumstances to show memory as an intrinsic human power. It's built into our confinement within the dimension of time.

An expression of her own humanity shows up explicitly in occasional moral pronouncements. For example, in *Etiquette*, a baby was just buried that afternoon, and yet, all who attend the burial are now at a mediocre table setting, more than ready to stuff their faces with food. Even the chrysanthemums are artificial, and get put away for the next critical family event and its accompanying meal.

The Bending Of Light is also saddening. But it digests better with humour. Characters at a wedding are drawn by Ms. Sanderson as failed social selves abiding atop pits of vipers and damnation of their own making: "...the thin woman who's selling her body to pay the bills // ... the mother who wishes she wasn't there"

Then guests are brought together to be photographed. The photographer tells them to smile. Although the emotional atmosphere is more psychiatric and tragic than happy, they manage a kind of smile on very troubled faces (hence the title). All this, in five brief unrhymed quartets.

The Drowningdays is well-wrought and wants to be read, cherished and re-read.