SF/Fan Origins #75

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The Journal of the National Fantasy Fan Federation's History and Research Bureau
Edited by Samuel Lubell

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Editorial Note

Welcome to issue #75 of *Origins*, a National Fantasy Fan Federation (N3F) publication of N3F's Historical and Research Bureau. *Origins* covers the history of science fiction/fantasy, fandom, and related science focusing on pre-21st century content. Note that reviews and summaries may have spoilers. I urge people to send in articles, letters, reviews of older SF, and anything relevant to SamJLubell@gmail.com. I would be interested in stories on how people discovered fandom and what they did. I am also interested in articles about SF and fandom in other countries. I also welcome art. Thanks to Jose Sanchez for the cover and interior illustration on page 12. Opinions in these pages are those of the author, not N3F or any organization or employer.

Please support N3F by joining and paying annual dues, which are only $6 (for Electronic Members, $18 for a Regular Membership that gives you a mailed paper version of *The National Fantasy Fan*). Paid members can vote for the Neffy Awards and N3F officers. Visit https://tnfff.org/to-join/

In Memoriam:

John W. Thiel

August 6, 1944 - March 25, 2026

John Thiel originated N3F's *Origin* (now *Origins*) fanzine in March 2018 and ran it for 70 issues through December of 2023. He also founded *Ionisphere*, starting October 2016 and ran it for 44 issues through December 2023. He also wrote/edited the *Synergy* zine for N'APA. He ran N3F's Fan-Pro Coordinating Bureau and the History and Research Bureau. He won the N3F's Kaymar award in 2017. Outside N3F, he began writing fanzines in the 1950s and continued throughout his life. He wrote/edited the fanzine *Pablo Lennis* from April 1975 to 1982 and then from 1986 to 2025 with over 450 issues. He published *An Index to Popular American Fanzines*.

Here is the obituary from Eric Thiel:

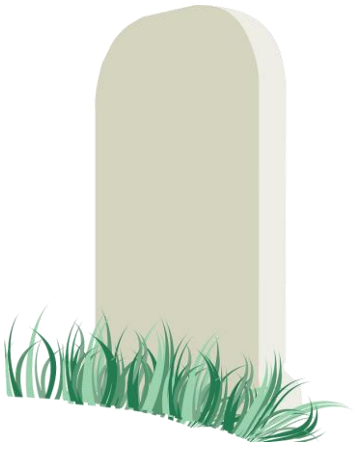
John William Thiel III, 81, died on March 25, 2026 in hospice care at IU Arnett Hospital, suffering from metastatic cancer.

John was born on August 6, 1944, the same day the U.S. dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima, in Gary, Indiana, to John W. Thiel II and Joyce Ida Thiel, both deceased. He was the oldest of 4 brothers, Mark (deceased), Eric, and Kurt.

As a young child, he read widely, both classical literature and genres like science fiction and fantasy. While in his early teens he began publishing fanzines for science fiction and fantasy, printing his earliest ones on a hectograph and, later, on a mimeograph.

John served in the US Army for two years in the early 1960s in Germany, but was discharged after developing schizophrenia. He travelled to both New York and San Francisco afterwards, following the beatnik culture of the early 60s, and developed a love for jazz of all genres.

By the end of the '60s John had moved back to Lafayette, Indiana, with his parents and youngest brother Kurt, living at <address>, where he lived for the rest of his life, sometimes alone and sometimes with his younger brother Mark and Mark's children after Mark's death in 2016, which occurred on the same day and month that John died on in 2026.



John had continued publishing science fiction and fantasy magazines, including "Pablo Lennis" and a webzine called "Surprising Stories" which published 54 thrice yearly issues for 17 years. He also read poetry occasionally at local bars. He was also a founding member of the Hells Tunas Motorcycle Club.

He is missed by his two surviving brothers and the children of all three brothers as a unique individual in their lives.

Fandom: Origin of the Hugo Award

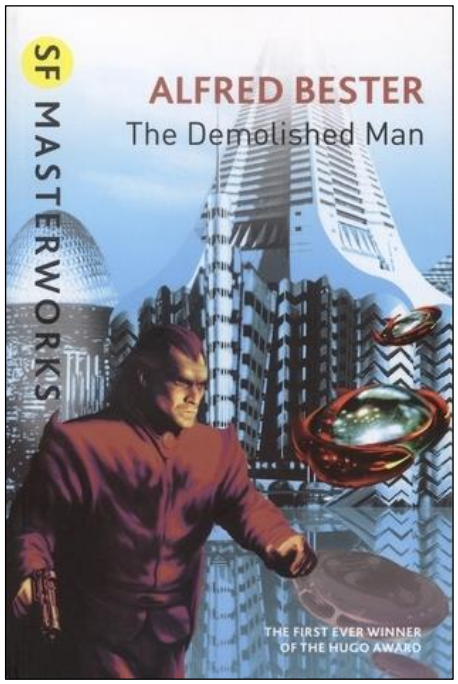
"Hugo Award" is a service mark of the World Science Fiction Society, registered as a service mark in the USA and the European Union.

Philcon II, the 11th World Science Fiction Convention (Worldcon) in Philadelphia, September 5-7, 1953 awarded the first Hugo awards, based on an idea by Philadelphia fan Harold Lynch and modeled after the Academy Awards. Robert A Madle named the Hugo award in honor of Hugo Gernsback, the founder of Amazing Stories magazine (see last issue), although the official name was the Annual Science Fiction Achievement Awards until 1993. Jack McKnight and Ben Jason manufactured the first Hugos adapting a rocket-shaped hood ornament from an Oldsmobile 88 car.

The first few Hugos did not have the current Hugos nomination procedures and in fact, until 1959, lacked rules. Instead, people wrote in their choices based on work published since the last Worldcon, not the calendar year.

The first Hugos went to:

- Best Novel: The Demolished Man, by Alfred Bester (Galaxy January, February, March 1952; Shasta, 1951)
- Best Professional Magazine: (tie) Astounding Science Fiction, edited by John W. Campbell, Jr. and Galaxy Science Fiction, edited by H. L. Gold
- Best Cover Artist: (tie) Hannes Bok and Ed Emshwiller
- Best Interior Illustrator: Virgil Finlay
- Excellence in Fact Articles: Willy Ley
- Best New SF Author or Artist: Philip José Farmer
- #1 Fan Personality: Forrest J. Ackerman



Although the following year's Worldcon, SFCon in Los Angeles, did not do the Hugo Awards, they returned in 1955 and subsequent years. The categories changed frequently, and even today, under more formal rules, each convention can create one category of their own.

Note that not all the awards presented at a Worldcon's Hugo ceremony are Hugos. The ceremony usually also presents the Lodestar Award, for best young adult science fiction or fantasy novel and the Astounding Award (formerly the John W. Campbell Award), for the best new writer (two-year eligibility window).

The first Best Novel winners were:

1953 Alfred Bester, *The Demolished Man* - This is a mystery about committing a murder in a world where the police have telepaths. It remains a classic to this day.

1955 Mark Clifton and Frank Riley, *They'd Rather Be Right* (AKA *The Forever Machine*) – This book postulates a machine that can grant immortality, but only to those willing to give up their prejudices and beliefs. Although it is sometimes called the worst Hugo winner of all time, I rather like Clifton's writing; I admit that his short stories are better than his novels.

1956 Robert A. Heinlein, *Double Star* – This book features an actor taking the place of a candidate for interplanetary Prime Minister. This is an okay book but far from Heinlein's best.

1958 Fritz Leiber, *The Big Time* – This is one of the all-time great time travel stories (more of a novella than a novel) about two sides, the Spiders and the Snakes, constantly changing history. If you haven't read it, stop what you are doing and visit https://www.gutenberg.org/files/32256/32256-h/32256-h.htm

1959 James Blish, *A Case of Conscience* – This is one of the great novels of religion. It is the story of a Jesuit who meets an alien race with perfect morality but no religion.

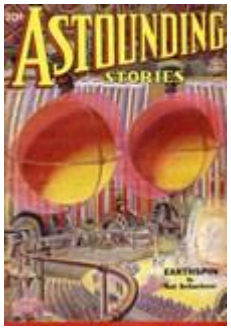
So, among the first five best novel Hugo winners are three classics and two okay novels (in my opinion anyway).

Literary: Review of *Adventures in Time & Space* edited by Raymond J. Healy and J. Francis McComas (Part I)

Reviewed by Samuel Lubell

There was a time when nearly every science fiction fan had a copy of *Adventures in Time & Space* (1946), a very lengthy (997-pages) anthology of Golden Age SF stories. For decades, it was a featured selection in the Science Fiction Book Club's introductory offer (Five Books for a Dollar when I joined) to get new members. Originally published in 1946 by Random House (then Modern Library in 1957 and Ballantine Books in 1975), this was one of the first science fiction anthologies from a major publisher. Many of the 33 stories are all-time classics (although I will admit to not having heard of some of these). If someone wanted to learn what the Golden Age of SF was all about, this book should be their starting point. The careful reader will note that most of the stories came from John Campbell's *Astounding Science Fiction*, which mirrors the magazine's dominance of the Golden Age. Due to the length of this anthology, I will divide the review into 3-4 parts to cover the whole thing.

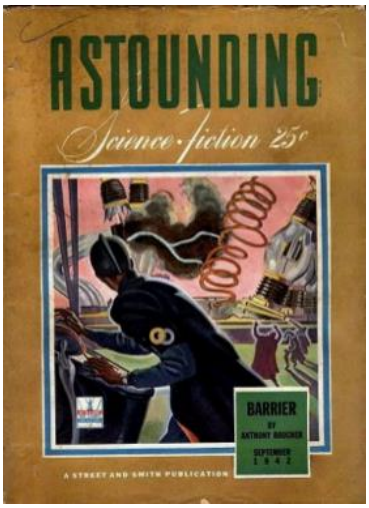
"Requiem" by Robert A Heinlein (*Astounding Science Fiction*, January 1940) – Part of Heinlein's Future History, this story tells how D. D. Harriman, "The Man Who Sold the Moon," finally achieved his dream of landing on the Moon himself. Rich businessman Harriman, who owns the company controlling travel to the moon, cannot pass the physical exam to travel to the Moon himself. So, he hires a couple of cashiered spacemen and their old ship from a fair to bend the rules and let him go. This is a very emotional story, but it works better as part of a collection of Future History stories than as a standalone story since then the reader would know what Harriman did to get mankind to the Moon. And, I think I would have put it as the last story in the anthology, rather than the first.



"Forgetfulness" by Don A Stuart (really John Campbell) (*Astounding Stories*, June 1937) –This is an older story, predating the transformation that Campbell himself would create in SF. Colonists from planet Pareeth, after a six-year journey, discover that their would-be colony planet (Rhth) already is inhabited. The people of Rhth were once a mighty empire, who had even visited Pareeth, but the city builders had helped another alien race, only to be attacked by them. The main character, a Pareeth astronomer thinks about plans for more colonists and has only minor regrets that this will destroy the remnants of the native population, only for the narrative to be interrupted by a report by the commander saying it

seemed wise to return to Pareeth to build more ships, even though the astronomer warned that the colonists were underestimating the remaining people on Rhth. After 12 years, they return. But when they tell the Rhth people they intend to found a permanent colony, they are instantly transported back to Pareeth and shown a single empty system they could colonize instead. This story is not always clear with showing what is going on and does not really have a main character. I found this weaker than the later stories in the book.

"Nerves" by Lester Del Rey (*Astounding Science Fiction*, September 1942, October 1942) – This is a classic about Roger Ferrel, a physician serving at an atomic products plant, when an explosion creates dangers of radioactive sickness. The one man with the knowledge that could save the plant was critically injured and Ferrel has to perform a critical operation on him that he has only seen performed once. When that's not enough to save the day, Ferrel's assistant doctor turns out to have been hiding his own advanced knowledge of atomic energy and saves the plant. The aptly named story shows the dangers of atomic power and the tension atomic workers face years before the Manhattan Project made the fiction a reality. The author expanded this story into a novel.



"The Sands of Time" by P Schuyler Miller (*Astounding Stories*, April 1937)– The first person narrator, a dinosaur expert, is shown a photograph of a live dinosaur and refuses to believe it and points out where the photos differ from established dinosaur science. Donovan finally convinces him to see his time machine that can only travel 60 million years at a time. While in the past Donovan had encountered humanoid aliens from a spaceship and rescues a woman from a group of black aliens. Since his machine can only hold one person, he shows the narrator how to use it so that the narrator could send it back for him after he uses it to send the alien woman to his present. But the story ends with neither Donovan nor the woman coming back.

"The Proud Robot" by Lewis Padgett (really Henry Kuttner and C. L. Moore) (*Astounding Science Fiction*, October 1943) – Gallegher, a brilliant inventor when drunk, builds a robot who does not follow his orders and just admires himself in the mirror. He has accepted money from Mr. Brock of Vox-View who wants a solution to the bootleg theaters using 3-D technology with pirated Vox-View programs. But the robot signs Gallegher's name to a contract with a competitor. Gallegher tricks the robot into hypnotizing himself and learns that he built this super-sophisticated robot as a better beer can opener. Once he orders the robot to open a beer can for him the programming kicks in and the robot has to obey his other orders. This solves the problem with the 3-D movies. But then the last beer manufacturer to use pull tab cans changes over to plastic bulbs, outdating the robot's original purpose. Padgett expanded this classic story into a series.

"Black Destroyer" by A. E. van Vogt (*Astounding Science Fiction*, July 1939) – "Black Destroyer" was van Vogt's first published story. Coeurl, a great black cat with tentacles, has run out of id-creatures to eat when a spaceship from Earth lands. The Earthlings assume he is a primitive descendent of the inhabitants of the nearby ruined city. While the Earthlings assume they can contain a primitive, Coeurl plots to eat all their id and then take the ship to Earth for unlimited eating. After Coeurl's first kill, one of the humans wants to execute him but the others, including the Captain, decide there is too much they want to find out about the alien. He gradually kills the humans despite being confined to a supposedly escape-proof cage. But, after Coeurl takes over the ship using his control over vibrations, the humans are able to use vibration and electrical energy to create confusion and then activate anti-acclerators to defeat him. The story was incorporated into van Vogt's 1950 novel *The Voyage of the Space Beagle*. Van Vogt received $50,000

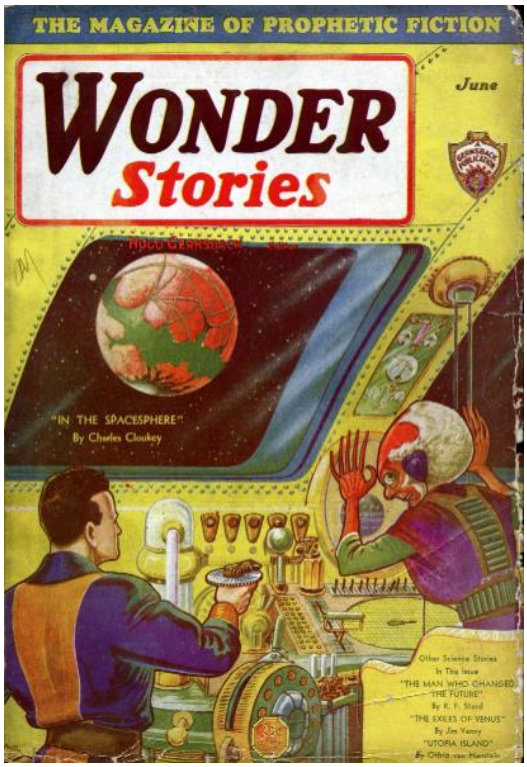
from the producers of *Alien* who settled a court case rather than face accusations that the movie copied elements of this story. This is much anthologized classic.

"Symbiotica" by Eric Frank Russell (*Astounding Science Fiction*, October 1943)—This story from Russell's Jay Score series has the crew of the Marathon—including Earthlings, Martians, and a robot—deal with a world where plants and native intelligent life (greenies) live in symbiosis that allows them to attack the invaders despite their lack of technology. Ultimately, the Captain decides he has lost too many men and returns to Earth. This story is very typical Russell in that the pastoral beings defeat high technology.

Fandom: Review of *The Way the Future Was* by Frederick Pohl (Part I)

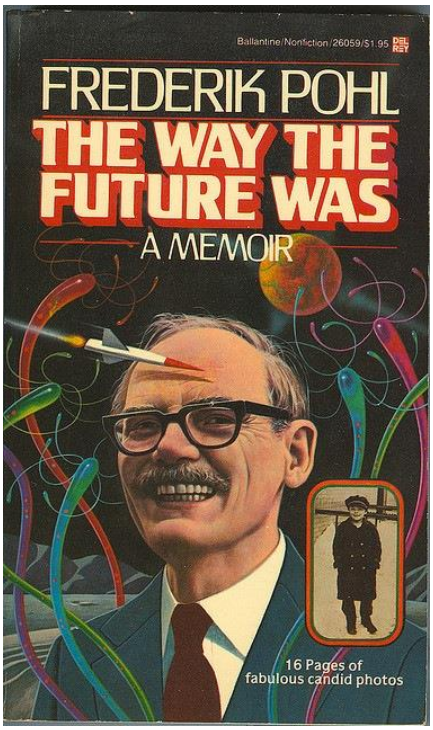
Reviewed by Samuel Lubell

The Way the Future Was: A Memoir by Frederick Pohl is the story of his journey in science fiction from reader to active fan to science fiction professional. Pohl was fan, writer, editor, and agent. The book starts off with Pohl as a ten year old in 1930 discovering science fiction through the magazine *Science Wonder Stories Quarterly*. He wrote, "Damon Knight says that, as children, all we science-fiction writers were toads. We didn't get along with our peers. We had no close friends and were thus thrown on our own internal resources. Reading, particularly science fiction, filled the gaps. A more charitable explanation might be that most science-fiction readers were precocious kids who got little reward from the chatter of their subteen schoolmate and looked for more stimulating companionship in print." As a kid in the Great Depression, he basically read anything he could find, but sought out science fiction in used bookstores and magazines and in an uncle's attic filled with old pulp magazines.



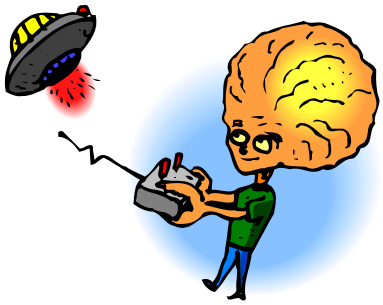
Hugo Gernsback, after losing control of *Amazing Stories*, created *Wonder Stories* out of two existing publications and promoted the magazine by inventing the Science Fiction League, the first organized science fiction fandom, in 1934. Young Fred Pohl promptly joined (member #490). He was invited to attend meetings of the Brooklyn Science Fiction League run by G.G. Clark, an adult in his late 20s. Pohl became editor of its mimeographed fan magazine, *The Brooklyn Reporter* (and later his own fanzines, including *Mind of Man*) which published news, reviews, letters, and amateur stories that had been rejected by the magazines. Writers John B. Michel and Donald A. Wollheim started going to meetings to convince fans to separate from the Gernsback affiliated clubs (since Hugo was not paying his writers). And so, Pohl became involved in his first fan feud.

Pohl attended Brooklyn Technical High School where he met follow fan Dick Wylie who became his best friend and the two explored Brooklyn and NYC together. He became an active participant in Don Wollheim's fan coups, joining science fiction clubs and taking them over until they finally launched their own group, which became the Futurians. While part of the International Scientific Association, he became editor of its fanzine, *The International Observer*. He also saw science fiction movies including a film of H.G. Wells *Things to Come* which he saw with future SF great James Blish.



In 1936, six NYC fans took a train to Philadelphia and met fans there in what Pohl called the world's first science fiction convention (he does not say that this claim has been challenged). Pohl took the minutes as secretary, but lost them. In attendance were NYC fans Johnny Michel, Don Wollheim, Will Sykora, Dave Kyle and Fred Pohl who met Philadelphia fans Robert A Madle, Oswald Train, and Milton A Rothman. Soon afterwards, Pohl became involved with the Young Communist League (YCL) even while he and friends founded the Futurians, a fan group that included Isaac Asimov, Cyril Kornbluth, David Kyle, John Michael, Jack Rubinson, Donald A. Wollheim, Dirk Wylie, and later Damon Knight and Judith Merril. Many Futurians became professionals. The group was highly competitive, arrogant, ambitious, smart (and made sure everyone knew it), and brash. For fun they started various fan feuds, especially with Will Sykora's New Fandom. This came to a head over sponsorship of a NYC World Science Fiction Convention that resulted in the exclusion of most of the Futurians.

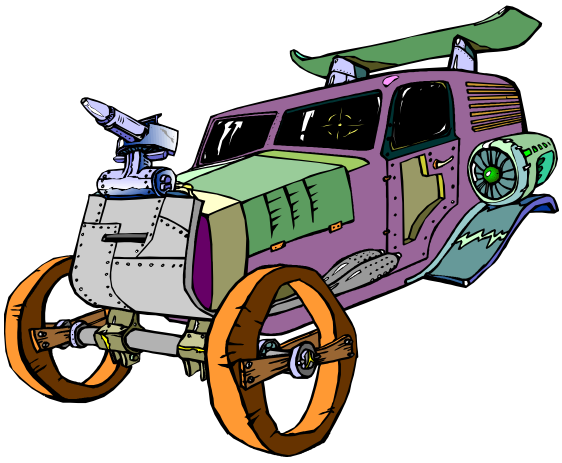
Don Wollheim originally had the idea of a World Science Fiction Convention to tie into the New York World's Fair that was already going to draw people from all over. Willy Sykora, of the NYB-ISA, Jimmy Taurasi, and Sam Moskowitz (New Fandom) took control of the convention by getting SF editors involved, convincing writers to speak, and hiring a hall. They accused the Futurians of being Communist (which some actually were) and "What we Futurians made very clear to the rest of NY fandom was that we thought we were better than they were. For some reason that annoyed them." The New Fandom organizers excluded Pohl, Bahai Hall, Don Wollheim, Johnny Michel, Bob Lowndes, and Jack Gillespie from even entering the Worldcon (although other Futurians, including Asimov got in). But the excluded Futurians met people in a nearby bar and cafeteria including Forrest J. Ackerman, Ray Bradbury, Jack Williamson, and L. Sprague de Camp. They also ran a counter-convention at the headquarters of the Brooklyn YCL (which Pohl headed).



Pohl devoted so much time to science fiction that his schoolwork suffered and he dropped out at 17 without graduating and never went to college. (Among the Futurians, only Isaac Asimov and Jack Rubinson stayed in formal education through their doctorates.) Pohl had a short-lived marriage and a shorter-lived job delivering letters for insurance underwriters while beginning to earn a few dollars as a writer in the late 1930s. So, when he lost his job, he decided to become a literary agent (starting with his pseudonyms as clients and then his friends in the Futurians (sometimes editing/rewriting them)). He thought that John Campbell was not particularly distinguished as a writer (although he later wrote some of the finest SF novelettes under his pseudonym) but was the best there was as a SF editor, especially at first (although Pohl never sold him a solo story) and Pohl describes many conversations with him and how Campbell taught him a lot about being an editor. Pohl did not think Campbell was anti-Semitic, "But he wasn't sure that his readership (who he assumed were also largely WASPs) were as tolerant as he. So he invited his Jewish writers to conceal that blemish)."

The Futurians briefly rented a house for a headquarters, and several Futurians rented a shared apartment, called "The Ivory Tower" and lived together in a SF commune. The Futurians, especially their leaders, the Quadrumvirate, competed among themselves for power and friendship, especially Pohl and Don Wollheim. Meanwhile, WWII raged across Europe. Pohl became disillusioned with the YCL when it completely reversed itself overnight from opposing the Nazis to "Keep America Out of the Imperialist War" after Stalin signed a non-aggression pact with Hitler. And the YCL began questioning Pohl over his association with non-Communist SF people. In 1940, he separated from the YCL despite his friends and commitments.

Then, at age 19, due to his connections with editors, Pohl became editor of Popular Publications' science fiction magazines – *Astonishing Stories* and *Super Science Stories* on a budget of $405 an issue for *Astonishing* ($275 for stories) and $455 for *Super Science* since it was 16 pages longer. He paid about half a cent per word and got art from fans and art students. He got stories from former great Ray Cummings, who had given up caring about quality, and pouched new writers from Campbell's *Astounding* who let some stories by his best writers go (because he thought readers got tired of the same byline and also because he was rather prudish about sexuality in stories). Pohl confessed that he was not a very good editor at first; "being an editor requires kinds of maturity and resourcefulness you do not find in your average 19-year-old." The job requires making guesses about what will please readers and encourage writers to submit their best stories to his magazine instead of a competitor. But, he said he had fun as an editor and made all the other Futurians jealous. The ties of friendship in the group began to fray once Pohl was an editor and the rest were writing for him for pay. Still, Pohl needed the Futurians as a source of cheap (but earnest and occasionally showing early signs of future talent) stories. Pohl also made friends with other editors (a friendly rivalry) and more experienced writers like Manly Wade Wellman, Henry Kuttner, L. Ron Hubbard, and Lester del Rey). Unfortunately his salary was barely enough to pay for a married man's apartment. So, he had to supplement his salary by writing. By 1941, salary increases and writing income put gave his budget room for a few comforts and a social life. As a married man, he did not have to worry about being drafted yet.



Pohl admitted that a lot of science fiction is bad (he read slush piles), but back then almost all ideas were new and readers absorbed everything they could. As a writer himself, he described the various rejection slips sent by magazines and how he broke into publishing (with a poem of all things). In writing about the pulps, he confessed that he never figured out who read them, but "What was clear about the general pulp audience was that it was not finicky about literary quality, because, my God, most of the stories were awful. Even the science fiction magazines of the time showed an awful lot of leaden prose and tone-deaf style, and they were the class of the field." Part of the problem was that a penny a word (and frequently less) did not encourage quality or even rewriting. "You see, it [quality] didn't matter. The customers were not critical, and there were no rewards for virtue."

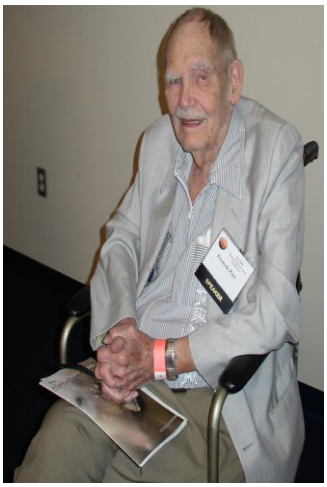
But then in the summer of 1941, Pohl lost his job (for asking for a raise) and had to become a full-time freelancer, writing five stories in seven months. Unfortunately, getting paid for them was not as easy. And residual rights, which the Pohl writing the memoir wrote now comprise nearly half of his income, did not help when he needed it then. He could have found another editing job but wrote that it never occurred to him, "If I couldn't edit *Astonishing* and *Super Science*, I would write, and if I couldn't write I would do nothing." Instead, he played chess, read, listened to music, visited friends "and only when I wasn't doing any of those

things I wrote." He did learn how to become more organized, but not at age 21. Instead, he wrote in bursts. His unhappiness with himself led to difficulties with his wife. Then, a little over a year later, Pohl returned to Popular Publications as an assistant to the department head who had fired him (after most of the other assistants had been drafted). By the end of 1942, Pohl had separated from his wife and after four months of talking with the draft board, begging them to take him, was finally inducted on April 1, 1943.

The occasional remarks about Isaac Asimov are amusing. When Pohl wrote that all writers sometimes froze up when their pay depends on their writing, he adds "But always excepting Isaac Asimov, who is not like mortal man". Later, when writing that he had not known many organized writers, "(Just one, I think – and you know who you are, Isaac.) ...TBC

Literary Fandom: Author Spotlight: Frederick Pohl

Since I reviewed his memoir above, I am reprinting the Spotlight on Frederick Pohl from Samizdat #19.

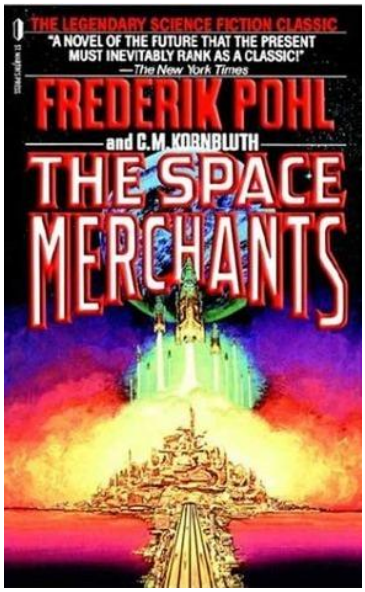


By AllyUnion - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=4068697

Frederick Pohl (1919-2013) isn't yet a forgotten author, but he is much too close to it considering his importance to SF. Only a handful of his books are still in print (excluding ebooks) and I have not seen one in the bookstores in years. He is probably best remembered for authoring the *Heechee* series (starting with *Gateway*) and coauthoring *The Space Merchants* with C.M. Kornbluth.

He was known for using SF as a vehicle for social criticism and psychological examination. He also included humor in many of his works. Pohl won the Nebula for *Man* Plus; the Hugo, Locus, Campbell, and Nebula for *Gateway*; the National Book Award for *Jem*; the Best Editor Hugo for *If* magazine (three times); Hugos for best short story (twice); and a Hugo for best fan writing for *The Way the Future Blogs*. SFWA named him a Grand Master in 1993. He collaborated with many authors, especially C.M. Kornbluth, and even late in life he had books with Isaac Asimov and Arthur C. Clarke. He also wrote mysteries, history, and other non-fiction under pseudonyms.

His first published writing was a poem when he was 17 and a story with C.M. Kornbluth in 1940. His first novel, also with Kornbluth, was *The Space Merchants* (1953) and his first solo novel was *Slave Ship* (1956).



In addition to his writing, Pohl was a prominent fan. He co-founded The Futurians in 1938, which grew to become the major SF fan club in NYC in the 1940s. He had his own fanzine, *Mind of Man*.

He also was an editor; he edited *Galaxy* and *If* magazines from 1959-69. Before that, he edited the smaller pulp magazines *Astonishing Stories* and *Super-Science Stories*). He also did book acquiring and editing, including the Frederick Pohl Selections for Bantam. He also worked as a literary agent and advertising copywriter.

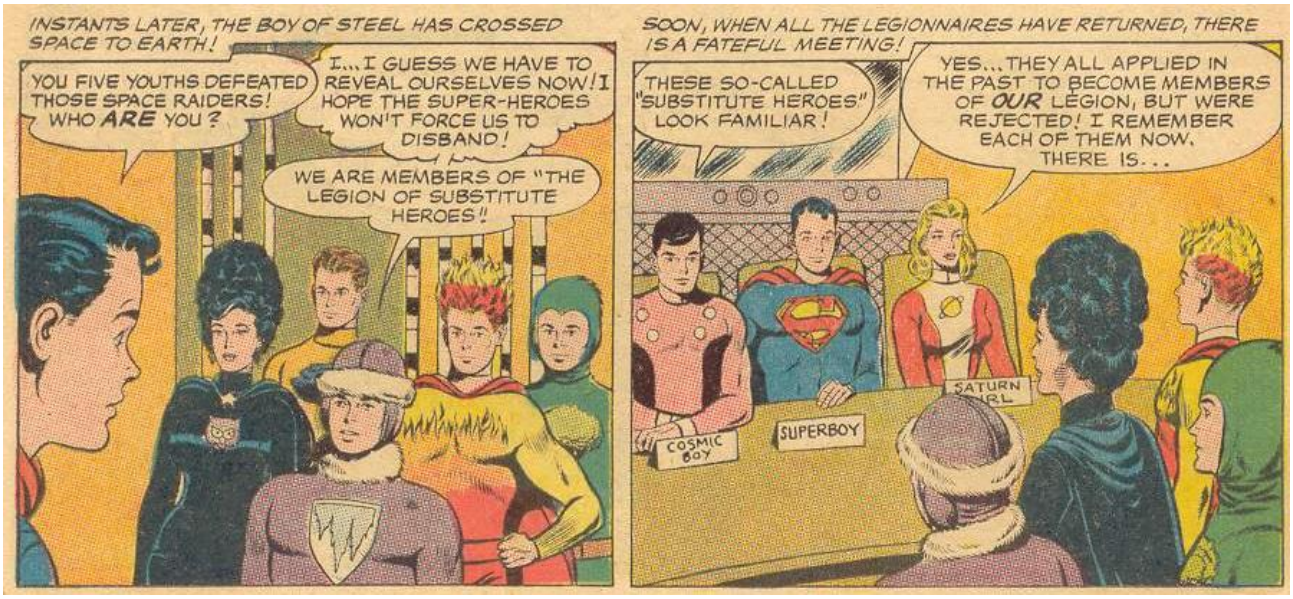
He was briefly a member of the Young Communist League although he quit after the Soviet Union allied with Nazi Germany.

Those unfamiliar with Pohl can get a taste with a few of his stories that have fallen into the public domain on Project Gutenberg (Books: frederick pohl (sorted by popularity) - Project Gutenberg) His collection *Platinum Pohl* is still in print with a nice selection of his stories. For his novels, I recommend *Gateway, Man-Plus*, and *The Space Merchants*.

Comics Fandom: Early Legion of Super-Heroes (part V)
By Samuel Lubell

The Legion of Super-Heroes (LSH) from DC Comics is a super-hero team of special interest to science fiction fans since their adventures take place a thousand years in the future with aliens, spaceships, and a United Planets. Also, many of their early adventures were written by science fiction author Edmond Hamilton.

#31–*Adventure Comics* #314 (November 1963) "The Super-Villains of All Ages!" by Edmond Hamilton – LSH has the cover. The LSH rejects new applicant Alaktor because "We only use members whose super-powers are physical, not dependent on a device or machine." He secretly takes pictures of all their security devices and steals a time bubble to capture the "three wickedest men in history" – Roman Emperor Nero, bank robber Dillinger, and Hitler. Alaktor puts the personality of Hitler into Superboy, Nero into Mon El, and Dillinger into Ultra-Boy. They betray Alaktor and plan to commit more crimes. Telepath Saturn Girl gives the evil minds controlling her friends knowledge of the others' weaknesses which they use to turn on each other. There are some problems with the story. I am not sure why the author thinks Dillinger is more evil than any other bank robber let alone more evil than Stalin, Gheghis Khan, or Pol Pot). And Saturn Girl is with Superboy when he somehow identifies the three people from their backs yet two pages later is mystified by who the masked men with Alaktor are. And the dialogue sometimes makes it seem like only the personality, not the mind, transferred, as when Superboy says, "To think that for years, I've wasted my super-powers helping others." This is a below average story.



#32-*Adventure* #315 (Dec, 1963). "The Legionnaires Super-Contest!" by Edmond Hamilton – The Legion discovers the Legion of Substitute Heroes when aliens take advantage of the LSH's attendance at a Galactic Law Enforcement Convention to try to seize Earth's glass to turn into poison gas. Cosmic Boy and Saturn Girl recognize that the Substitutes are all former failed applicants. To thank the Subs, the LSH promises to elevate one Substitute to the LSH and hold a contest to see who gets admitted. All the Substitutes complete their assigned missions except for Stone Boy, whose only ability is to turn himself into stone. Stone Boy quits rather than risk having the beast he was assigned to hunt escape to hurt others. The LSH says that made him the winner. But Stone Boy declines LSH membership because he does not want to leave his friends in the Substitutes. I saw that ending coming from the start (but admit that I did not predict that the winner would be the only one who quit). I thought this was a nice use of the Subs and an okay story.

#330-*Adventure* #316 (January 1964). "The Renegade Super-Hero" by Edmond Hamilton – The LSH has the cover and both a 19 page main story and a 5 page Origins and Powers feature. There is no solo Superboy story. In this story, aliens use a force tube from space to steal valuables. Meanwhile, members of the LSH go through records of criminals and find one who looks like Ultra-Boy and even has matching fingerprints. Assuming that Ultra-Boy is really a criminal they expel him (with just Phantom Girl abstaining). Ultra-Boy says he will become an enemy of the LSH and escapes. Phantom Girl keeps talking about all the good Ultra-Boy has done but the LSH still chases him. She figures out his hiding place, but instead of telling the others she goes to warn him. The two get captured by the sucking tube aliens who say that since Ultra-Boy is now an outlaw he should help them. He agrees and helps the aliens capture some Legionnaires before turning on the aliens and using the freeze ray on them. Ultra-Boy says this was all his plan to capture the aliens and that he faked his prison record. The others apologize and Phantom Girl says she knew that Ultra-Boy could not be a traitor. While the ending was obvious, the story shows some conflict within the Legion and the beginnings of a romance. I rate this above average. The section on the powers of LSH members shows both Lightning Lad and Lightning Lass in the LSH.

#34-*Adventure Comics* #317 (February 1964) "The Menace of Dream Girl!" by Edmond Hamilton – LSH cover. While Mon El and Superboy chase a villain called the "Time Trapper" who has created an "Iron Curtain of Time" preventing time travel more than 30 days in the future, yet another LSH membership tryout introduces Dream Girl, a gorgeous girl who can dream the future. All the male LSH members (even the aliens) vote for her, but none of the female members do. She proves to be arrogant and conceited who uses her new knowledge of the LSH constitution to expel members for minor offenses and even has several members go to a planet that de-ages them below the minimum age requirement (she took an antidote so stays the same age). Ultimately, Dream Girl confesses to Star Boy that she dreamt of the death of seven members so she was trying to save their lives by getting them expelled. Star Boy recognizes the description of her dream as a defense plan involving android duplicates, not the real Legionnaires. When she restores the de-aged Legionnaires, she tweaks Lightning Lass' powers so she becomes Light Lass with the power to make objects weigh less (to differentiate herself from her brother Lightning Lad). Dream Girl then quits the Legion, even though Star Boy says "I will never forget you." I was not anticipating she would quit, since I knew she was a member in the future. I found this story a little

too similar to the better story in Adventure 304 in which Saturn Girl gets a message saying that a Legionnaire will die and so finds reasons to kick everyone else off the team making her the only one at risk of dying. Like the last issue, this shows the start of a LSH romance.

#35-*Adventure* #318 (March 1964), "The Mutiny of the Legionnaires" by Edmond Hamilton – LSH cover. An overworked Sun Boy promises to find a home for an alien species whose world is about to explode. Earth builds a giant space ark to save the alien race. Sun Boy is the captain even though the others say he's been on too many missions and needs a rest. Once in space, Sun Boy becomes erratic and insists on being called sir and refusing to listen to the others. When Cosmic Boy highlights a mistake in Sun Boy's navigation, Sun Boy jails him. The Legionnaires mutiny until Sun Boy threatens to destroy the ship. He sends the other LSH members off in a space lifeboat with no food and very little fuel. They are able to travel from world to world through creative uses of their powers. Ultimately they recue the space ark and find Sun Boy paralyzed. A doctor says he had space-fatigue from too many missions, which explained away his erratic behavior. So, a clause is added to the LSH constitution requiring a rest after five missions. This has Sun Boy act so unheroic that there is obviously something wrong with him. This seems like an attempt to show that the LSH is not perfect, but the conflict here comes out of nowhere, not a permanent characterization.

Literary Fandom: From Wizard to Scientist: Changing Views towards the Scientist from Hawthorne to Twain (Part V)

I printed this excerpt from my 1989 undergraduate History and Literature thesis in my personal zine, Samizdat, in Ish 24. So if you read it there, I apologize for the duplication. But it fits here as it has to do with what I was careful not to tell Harvard was 19th century science fiction. This installment concludes the Twain section of my thesis.

Although a representative of science and progress, the Connecticut Yankee is forced to pretend to be a magician in order to gain a position in the sixth century. Magic was a known entity and easily understood by the inhabitants of Arthurian England, while science was thoroughly alien. In his "Legend of the 'Spectacular Ruin'", part of *A Tramp Abroad* (1880), Twain foreshadows *A Connecticut Yankee* by showing the derision with which science was viewed in the middle ages. In this story, a tramp who has volunteered to defeat a dragon after many heroes had already failed, asks:

> "Were any of these heroes men of science?" This raised a laugh, of course, for science was despised in those days. But the tramp was not in the least ruffled. He said he might be a little in advance of his age, but no matter- science would come to be honored, some time or another.[1]

In *A Connecticut Yankee*, after pretending to cause an eclipse in order to save his life, Hank Morgan must continue to claim magical powers mightier than the wizard Merlin's to maintain his status as "the Boss" and his efforts to modernize Arthurian England. "I am a magician myself," the Yankee declares to the page Clarence, "and the Supreme Grand High-yu-Muckamuck and head of the tribe, at that,"[65] and belittles Merlin's abilities: "He don't amount to shucks, as a magician; knows some of the old common tricks, but has never got beyond the rudiments, and never will."[64] By combining feigned magic with actual science, Hank Morgan becomes Boss of the country.

While the Yankee gains this authority by claiming to have magical powers, he never forgets that

[1] Mark Twain, "The Legend of the Spectacular Ruin" from *A Tramp Abroad* (1880) reprinted in *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*. Norton Critical Edition. Ensor, ed. p. 283

he is only pretending to be a wizard, while really using the far more effective power of science.[2] He could not simply declare magic worthless, and expect the country to believe him, since the habit of superstition was too deeply ingrained. While on a quest with Sandy, his future wife, the Yankee realizes the divergence between the sixth-century culture of superstition and the nineteenth-century culture of science. To be accepted in Arthurian England, the Yankee had to pretend to believe in its magic- the majority determines what is sane:

> To doubt that a castle could be turned into a sty, and its occupants into hogs, would have been the same as my doubting, among Connecticut people, the actuality of the telephone and its wonders,- and in both cases would be absolute proof of a diseased mind, an unsettled reason. Yes, Sandy was sane; that must be admitted. If I also would be sane to Sandy- I must keep my superstitions about unenchanted and unmiraculous locomotives, balloons and telephones, to myself... if I did not wish to be suddenly shunned and forsaken by everybody as a madman. [252]

The Arthurian society accepted magic as an indisputable fact. Therefore, while under this belief system, and only until he can change its structure, the Yankee disguises his science as magic. While the Yankee obviously enjoys showing off, he never believes he really has magic, but only brags of its great power because of the science that backs it. The Yankee always intends to educate the Englishmen, to remove their superstitions; and he reveals his secrets to his assistant, Clarence, and to others in his schools and "man-factories".

While both the Yankee and Merlin claim to have magical abilities, Merlin's "powers" are not based on science or anything concrete, but only on the belief of his audience. The wizard cannot produce a single result when challenged by the Yankee's science. Although before the arrival of the Boss, Merlin gained his high position by successfully manipulating the public's superstition, he is fatally handicapped by a belief in his own magic. "He did everything by incantations," observes the Yankee. "He never worked his intellect... If he had stepped in there [the fountain]... he could have cured the well by natural means, and then turned it into a miracle in the customary way."[274] Merlin is the embodiment of superstition; however, he is not a charlatan. When the Yankee simply invents a name for a demon which Merlin claimed was blocking the fountain, the wizard spends three months "working enchantments to try to find out the deep trick of how to pronounce that name and outlive it."[294]

Hank Morgan links Merlin's false claims to power, and society's belief in them, with the nineteenth century "pseudo-scientists":

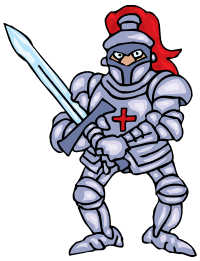
> He was a true magician of the time: which is to say, the big miracles, the ones that gave him his reputation, always had the luck to be performed when nobody but Merlin was present... a crowd was as bad for a magician's miracle in that day as it was for a spiritualist's miracle in mine.[272]

In both cases, the believers do not need any proof in order to believe. However, unlike Hawthorne, Twain does not use this comparison to imply that magic and science are equally perilous. By 1889, the sciences which most frightened Hawthorne were discredited and called "pseudo-sciences". Tying this pretended science to pretended magic, Twain demonstrates the impotence of both. Thus, Twain makes Merlin harmless, a powerless comic figure. The wizard's story bores the entire court to sleep; and the famed enchanter is only kept in the Yankee's weather bureau to undermine his reputation. In the duel between the Yankee "a measuring of his magic powers against mine," [497] all the wizard is able to do is a slight of hand trick, against Hank's lasso

[2] Henry Smith claims that the Yankee began to see his science in magical terms, because the Yankee several times "implies that he and Merlin are almost evenly matched." Henry Smith, *Mark Twain's Fable of Progress* p. 96. However, this was largely for the benefit of spectators, who believed that Hank and Merlin were both wizards. To these watchers, Hank would pretend to believe in Merlin's great powers to gain more credit for the inevitable victory of science.

and pistol. Only at the very end of the novel does Merlin show any signs of true power when he successfully puts the Yankee into a thousand year sleep. Even that accomplishment is ironically marred: Merlin dies by electrocution, while the Yankee survives to arrive back in the nineteenth century.

Much of *A Connecticut Yankee* is devoted to this contest between science and magic. To the residents of King Arthur's Court, both the Yankee and Merlin are enchanters disputing for supremacy. But to Hank Morgan, his battles with Merlin are examples of science and reason defeating magic and superstition. "I was a champion, it was true," he says, "but not the champion of the frivolous black arts, I was the champion of hard unsentimental common-sense and reason."[498] In the scenes where the Yankee blows up Merlin's tower, fixes the monks' fountain, and defeats the knights in the duel, the Yankee always gives Merlin the opportunity to try his ineffective magic powers first, before winning through the superior power of science. Twain himself interpreted this contest as central to the novel. In his introduction to the excerpts of the book published in *Century Magazine*, he calls the conflict "a bitter struggle for supremacy... Merlin using the absurd necromancy of the time and the Yankee beating it easily and brilliantly with the more splendid necromancy of the nineteenth century-that is, the marvels of modern science."[3] Twain never intends the conflict between the Yankee and Merlin to be seen as just two rival magicians squabbling for rank, but instead as the Yankee overpowering magic with his science.



Although Twain allows the Yankee's technology to be defeated in the end of the novel, this is not a rejection of science. Instead, Twain intends to show the strong forces arrayed against science and progress. The Yankee is not defeated by Merlin and magic, but by social forces allied with the superstition of the church. Twain deliberately makes the Yankee into a sympathetic victim, forced to hole himself up in a cave with only 36 boys to support him against the whole 10,000 armed knights of English chivalry. The Yankee is only defending his civilization against the enemies of progress, the same forces that Twain criticized throughout the novel and elsewhere in his writings: the aristocracy, slavery, superstition, and most especially the Church.

The aristocracy, a frequent target of Twain's, fight the Yankee to maintain their power. Twain criticizes the nobility throughout the novel, both for their violence and coarseness, and for their exploitation of the serfs. While these knights serve as tools of the Church, they also fight in their own interests to prevent the Yankee from freeing the serfs. The serfs' acquiescence in obeying the feudal lords rather than joining the Yankee to fight for freedom further harms his cause. The masses of England cheer his republic for a day, but are soon cowed into fighting against it:

> The Church, the nobles, and the gentry then turned one grand, all-disapproving frown upon them and shriveled them into sheep! ...Why even the very men who had lately been slaves were in the 'righteous cause,' and glorifying it, praying for it, sentimentally slabbering over it, just like all the other commoners, [551]

However, while the knights, supported by the serfs, do the actual fighting, the Yankee's most dangerous enemy is really the Church. Unlike Merlin, who also makes use of superstition, the Church is dangerous because it combines superstitions with powerful social forces and authority. For Twain, the Church fills the same role as Hawthorne's scientists, ruling the minds of others. Based on superstition, the Church always acts to prevent progress: in the novel it successfully tricks the Yankee out of the country, and destroys his railway, telegraph, telephone, and even his electric light. [540] The Church claims authority over who can go to Heaven, and uses its monopoly on literacy to train the people to its superstitions. At

[3] Everett Carter. "The Meaning of *A Connecticut Yankee*" in *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court: Norton Critical Edition*. Ensor, ed. p. 442

the end of *A Connecticut Yankee*, all of Hank Morgan's followers surrender to the Church's Interdict, except for the boys who grew up in his new society. Clarence sadly confesses that the Yankee's education ultimately fails against superstition:

> Because all the others were born in an atmosphere of superstition and reared in it. It is in their blood and bones. We imagined we had educated it out of them; they thought so, too; the Interdict woke them up like a thunderclap. [540]

Mark Twain treats the Church as a regressive force in much of his darker writings, most especially his dialogues and philosophy.[4] He had planned to show the Church as the enemy of progress in *A Connecticut Yankee* a year before he even started to write the novel; his 1885 notebook contains the idea, "Country placed under an interdict."[5] Though superstition, in the form of the Church, defeats science, the Church does not win through any inherent truth in its doctrines, but instead through its power over the beliefs of men.

The final battle of the Sand-belt, in which the Yankee kills 30,000 knights with an electric fence, may appear an abuse of science's power more deadly than that of Hawthorne's scientists. While to modern eyes, after the invention arid use of horrific weapons in two world wars, the final battle of the Sand Belt seems uncomfortably apocalyptic, the scenes of destruction would not have had the same resonance for nineteenth century readers. Frontier humor often exaggerated death and destruction to provoke laughter).[6] Also, although Twain knew that science could be misused, he carefully works to avoid the impression that the Yankee is abusing his power. Twain removes all of the sympathetic knights-King Arthur, Sir Lancelot and the baseball players have all died in battle- before the Yankee returns. Those electrocuted are nameless, faceless suits of armor who threaten to destroy not only the Yankee and science; but also his-infant "Republic". Moreover, even without the Yankee's new weapons, the sixth century was violent in its own right. The knights did not just quest for grails and castles; they fought and killed with their swords. The novel's brutal ending merely strips away the last illusion, the glories of battle, from the chivalry debunked throughout the book. Since Twain's audience knew the ending of the authentic Arthurian myths, which also end in a bloody battle, they would not have blamed the Yankee for the destruction of Camelot which would have occurred without him.

While Hank Morgan can be criticized for being inconsistent; he does try sincerely to abolish slavery and use his science to improve the lot of the common man. His failure is not the failure of science, but the result of the aristocracy, slavery, and the Church. The fall of Camelot was inevitable due to the human failings of its leaders, Arthur, Lancelot and Guinevere; and therefore is not an example of Twain losing his original faith in science. While he wrote to William Dean Howells that he left too much unsaid because "they would require a library- and a pen warmed up in Hell,"[7] those unsaid things are most probably even harsher attacks on the Church, aristocracy, and monarchy, rather than against democracy and technology that so much of the book

[4] "' ...don't come near me again until you can interest yourself in some subject of a lower grade and less awful than theology.'

Bessie,(disappearing): 'Mr. Hollister says there ain't any.'" Mark Twain "Little Bessie" (1908) in *The Devil's Race-Track* , John Tuckey ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980) p. 13

[5] Smith, p.43

[6] Carter p. 438

[7] Carter p. 441

praises.

Twain and Hawthorne use a different vocabulary to describe science. Through his language, Hawthorne restricts his science to the mysterious and unexplained, constantly bringing in references to the supernatural, the devil, and legends. He sets his stories in an indefinite past, with abstract and ambiguous descriptions aligning more with magic than science. In contrast, while Twain also sets his novel in the past, the sixth century of King Arthur, his language is more simple and direct. Twain's narrator, the time-travelling Yankee, narrates in the common nineteenth-century speech of his day. While Hawthorne speaks of "Airy figures" and "bodiless ideas,"[8] Twain describes an entire nineteenth century civilization complete with telephones, telegraphs, railroads, matches, and stove-polish. Hank ends all secrecy: in his own words, he "exposed the nineteenth century to the inspection of the sixth."[511]

Like Chillingworth, Aylmer, and Rappaccini, who alter nature for evil, Hank Morgan uses his science to change the world around him. However, in *A Connecticut Yankee*, Twain approves of his character's power: He believes that science and technology will benevolently transform the world. Hawthorne's scientists behave as wizards in all but name; there is little difference between science and magic. But, by the time of Twain's A Connecticut Yankee, the view of science in America had changed. Twain's scientist is more human, less supernatural than Hawthorne's. The Yankee is never a wizard, although he adopts that guise to conform to the world in which he finds himself; he is always against the goals and practices of magic. No longer an ally of magic, concealed in underground laboratory sanctums and walled in gardens, Twain's scientist has become a visible force altering entire countries. His technology and science give him great power, but he attempts to direct that power to the improvement of mankind by transforming the country, introducing nineteenth century institutions and machines. It is in this enthusiastic portrayal of science that Twain differs from Hawthorne. The Yankee is more ordinary, more concrete, than Hawthorne's mysterious scientists precisely because there is less to hide. While Hawthorne's scientists plot to take over souls, the Yankee works to free men from tyranny.

[8] Nathaniel Hawthorne. "Rappaccini's Daughter" in *The Complete Novels and Selected Tales of Nathaniel Hawthorne*. Norman Pearson ed. (NY: Modern Library 1937) p. 1026