

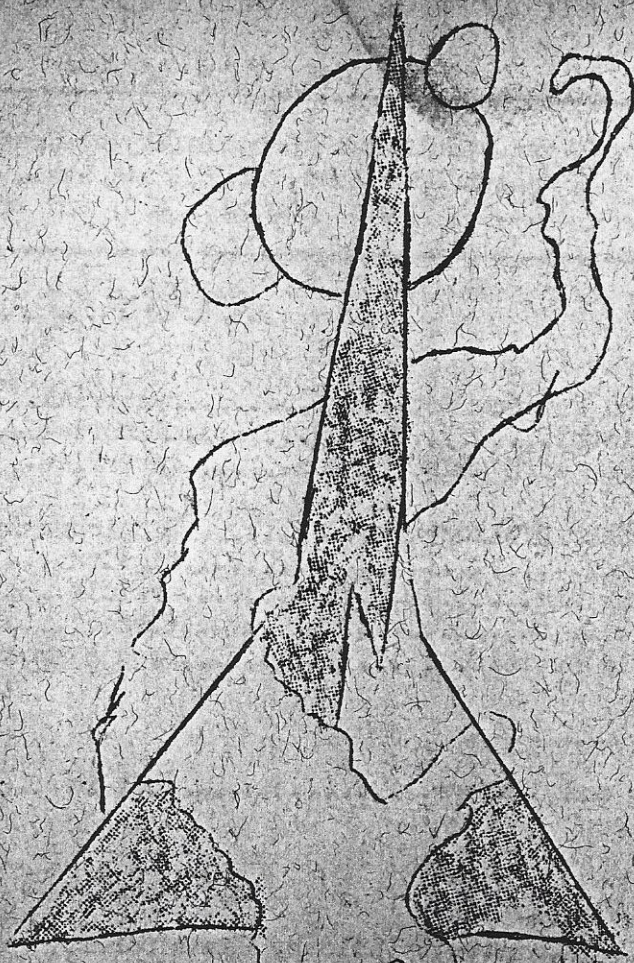
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an interview with

ANDRE NORTON

conducted by

TIM EKLUND

Before the interview proper we feel that a short biographical sketch of Miss Norton is in order. She was born ( and still resides ) in Cleveland of Adalbert and Daisy Norton, being the younger of two daughters. It is to be regretted that Miss Norton was unable to obtain a formal college education. In 1930 she started attending a school where she took a course in journalism, and began helping with the school paper, Spotlight, where she learned the fundamentals of her trade.

She was at one time a children's librarian in a Cleveland library, and once worked for the Library of Congress.

It is also much to be regretted that ill health strictly limits her working time, usually about three or four hours a day.

She is a foster mother and helps to support two small girls—one on an Apache Arizona reservation; the other a Chinese girl in Hong Kong.

Miss Norton's personality is exceptionally rich in the qualities of kindness. Also she has wit and a real zest for living. She is noted for her genuine charm and vitality.

—Tim Eklund

#### THE INTERVIEW

( all answers are quoted verbatim )

Tim: I've noticed that none of your books has ever been published by the book club. Why for is this?

Andre: My books are not book club material because they are classed as teen age ( except for the Witch World series ).

Tim: Have you ever tried collaboration; other than with Grace Hogarth and the mystery Murder For Sale?

Andre: Collaboration is a tricky business—I have tried it twice, both times with writers of mystery stories, only to discover that it does not work out for me. It requires two people who think alike and can work "well meshed"—writers are usually too individualistic to fit well together.

Tim: Doesn't it ever irritate you to have a publisher retitle a work, as was done with Quest for Koldar?

Andre: Well—it is sometimes most irritating when a publisher alters it—as had happened several times with mine at Ace—I still think the titles I gave the mss.



concerned were better.

Tim: We all have our favorite authors. Who are yours?

Andre: Beam Piper, Poul Anderson, Keith Laumer, Eric Frank Russell rank very high with me, as do Leigh Brackett and Marion Zimmer Bradley for fantasy sword-and-sorcery things. I have all of the Conan material—Howard has an excellent technique with action—unfortunately he tends to repeat himself in plot lines—but he can evoke very eerie backgrounds.

Tim: What do you think of the Ace cover art?

Andre: A writer has nothing to say about who illustrates a book—the artist is always selected by the publisher—unless, of course, the writer is his own illustrator. I have found most of the Ace covers very attractive.

Tim: Did you have to do much background reading for your books like Witch World Star Gate, etc.?

Andre: All of these books demand a lot of research—for the Witch World series I have to delve deep into Celtic history and lore, etc.

Tim: Do you ever make carbon copies of your manuscripts? If so, are any for sale?

Andre: The carbon copies of my ms. lately have been going to the various con committees for auction. No, I'm wrong—the originals do—the carbons are used by the publishers for the artists and are not usually returned to me.

Tim: There is speculation that the '65 worldcon will be held in London. If so, do you think that there is any chance of your attending?

Andre: No. I would not be going to England next year—much as I would like to, since I have quite a few friends among writers and publishers over there—but since health does not even allow me to go down town in Cleveland, I can't very well set off for the other side of the world. I do my traveling via books and the tv.

Tim: What happened to your position with Gnome Press?

Andre: Gnome Press ran into financial difficulties, as small presses have the unfortunate habit of doing. I severed all connections with them some time ago.

Tim: Many fans consider your novel Star Man's Son - 2250 A.D. to be one, if not the, best after-the-war story to be written in a long time. Any comments on this type of literature? Do you have a favorite?

Andre: My favorite after-the-war story is Alas Babylon—which seems to me much more close to actual human reaction to such catastrophe than On the Beach—people who sit down and wait for death as did the characters in the latter work, do not appear to have much of the energy and spirit inborn in our species. A handful of them would have retreated to the Anarctic and established an under-the-ice base—with the resources of a whole continent to draw from they were a very spineless lot.

Tim: I think that of all your stories, perhaps The Star Rangers is my favorite.



Is there any chance of a sequel?

Andre: There was no point left in Star Rangers really to hold over into any other tale—we can believe that the Rangers and their companions established a base somewhere in the South and instigated a new civilization with the mixture of peoples. It would be centuries before they might venture into space again. Perhaps some descendants of theirs discovered a last stored ship someday in the take-off city and went out on a new voyage of discovery—there could be a germ of story in that.

Tim: I notice that you live only a stone's throw from Mr. and Mrs. ( Leigh Brackett ) Edmond Hamilton. Have you ever visited them?

Andre: Yes, I have visited the Hamiltons a couple of times—they live in a very charming old Western Reserve farmhouse which they have remodeled—with the upstairs made into a huge library with the most fascinating collection of books! However, since Leigh Brackett writes for the movies now they have taken to commuting between Kinsmand and Los Angeles and are not in Ohio too much anymore. I have not seen them for four years or more.

Tim: Are you ever satisfied with your work?

Andre: No real writer is ever satisfied with any piece of work—that is the sign of the amateur. The finished product is never the bright and shiny thing you have in your mind—much to your sorrow. Sometimes you will produce a scene which comes close to what you wanted—but it never reaches your private standards. And this is very healthy for it is what keeps you always striving to better your own work.

Tim: Does the weather ever handicap your work?

Andre: The sweltering heat which has been with us now for over a week takes all the energy out of one. I am so very glad that I finished the book before this closed down on us, since to think constructively under this blanket is a task I would hate to face. But must start research for the new one by next Sunday and only hope that the weather clears—though there seems to be little prospect of that so far.

Tim: Thank you, Miss Norton.

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## A VISITATION by TIM EKLUND

When I was very small I had a dream. I dreamed of a strange being from another star. He came with peace, and love, and understanding in his heart.

He came with only joy and happiness; into a troubled world he brought a ray of hope.

He saw evil, and did not understand. He saw hate, and did not understand. He saw jealousy, and did not understand.

But if he did not understand the smallness of man, man equally did not understand him. They came one day with dogs and guns, to hunt him.

I remember the Star-Being's death most clearly of all. The men had tracked him to a small bubbling stream. The dogs paced restlessly on the lease. The men were with them loose. The beasts advanced slowly, cautiously. Yet they moved without noise. They sniffed, and licked the being's "hands", and were happy.

The men waited a few moments. A rifle was raised. It spat fire and lead. A jagged hole appeared in the being's shoulder. He looked at it blankly, still not understanding.

The rifle spoke a second time and a trickle of blood ran down the being's face. He rocked gently.

The rifle thundered yet again, and this time its voice was echoed by others. They seemed to flame forever, and then were silent.

The Star-Being lay crumpled on the forest floor, his face, head, and body punctured, blood welling freely.

Far from home, on an alien planet of hate, he died.

The hunters looked for many minutes, and then left, leaving him to the scavengers.

I woke then, and cried all that night.

Note: Miss Norton wishes to say, "My publishers have been most encouraging and understanding, and I appreciate very much their assistance and kindness! Since this interview was stenciled, these books by Andre are planned. Three Against Witch World ( May, Ace ); X Factor ( Harcourt, Fall ); Quest Crosstime ( Viking, Fall ); Magic ( World, Fall ). -- Tim Eklund