



# BUSTED RIBS AND BROKEN ENGLISH

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David B. Gentzel (gentzel@pobox.com)

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<http://pobox.com/~gentzel>

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## Always Comes Errors

While we all rant and rave about the various editorial butcherings that have taken place in Howard publishing, it is easy to overlook an equally damaging problem: typographic and transcription errors.

It is a fact of publishing that errors occur. I was recently lending Joe Marek a hand by proofing some of the poems for issue 2 of *The "New" Howard Reader*. I know well that Joe a true Purist and has tried to be as accurate as possible in his work as compiler and publisher. Despite this, I discovered a surprising number of errors. Is it then any wonder that mass market publishers, without our Purist zeal, would be subject to the same problems?

The nastiest thing about these errors is the way they have of accumulating. As Rusty points out so effectively in his article "Textual Changes to 'The King and the Oak'", a few errors in the Lancer *King Kull* volume were subsequently reproduced in almost all later printings. Bantam copied Lancer and introduced more errors. Grant copied Bantam and added yet more mistakes.

Of course, in these days of 24 hour copy shops and computers, it is easy to forget the problem that faced authors, agents, and publishers in bygone times. If *Spicy Sanitation Tales* wanted to print "Solomon Kane's Housecleaning", they had three options:

- 1 The author/agent could send the original typescript (or a carbon). This was fine if there was a carbon, but otherwise he ran the risk of losing his only copy. Witness the problem REH had with *Weird Tales* and "Wolfshead".
- 2 The author/agent could retype the work and send that. If the work was short enough, this was fine. But for long works...
- 3 If the work had been previously published, the author/agent could send tear sheets or the entire publication.

It doesn't take a genius to see that #3 was (and is still) often used. Unless those submitting the work have taken the time and effort to carefully compare the published version to the original (and to a professional writer, that is time and money wasted), the error domino effect has started.

I sometimes feel like I am being overly picky or missing the forest for the trees when I try to strive for "pure" texts for my collection. After all, do a few commas or spellings really lessen the power of Howard's works? But when I see the insidious nature these changes have of becoming the standard, I realize that the effort is worth it. In fact, I feel that it is the responsibility of all Purists to fight this trend with all of their power.

And how can we work against this tide of typos?

- 1 Volunteer to proofread or transcribe for current REH publishers. Most of the errors I found in Joe's publication were only discovered by hav-

ing already created text files of many REH poems and stories. Some were retyped by me, others were scanned and converted to text via OCR software.

- 2 Encourage publishers to include attributions for their texts. A simple “Text for this story was taken from *Weird Tales*, September 1933” would be sufficient. This would go a long way toward determining if differences were accidental or editorial in nature. Karl Edward Wagner had the right idea.
- 3 Is it too much to ask that all REH publications solicit two separate versions of the texts? It is very unlikely that two people would make the exact same mistakes. Once I have two text files on my computer, I can compare versions incredibly quickly, even ignoring whitespace and formatting differences.

Which brings us to the issue that sparked this whole diatribe, “Always Comes Evening”...

I recently had the good fortune to purchase a copy of the August 1936 issue of *The Phantagraph* from a fellow REHupan. One notable item about this issue is the first published appearance of the poem “Always Comes Evening”. I also happen to have a copy of the poem's second appearance in the February 1941 issue of *Stirring Science Stories*. There are three differences between these two versions:

- ⇒ Line 2: *The Phantagraph* ends with a colon. All other appearances end with a semicolon.
- ⇒ Line 6: *The Phantagraph* references “brass-cinctured Truth” while all other appearances have this as “brass-tinctured Truth”.
- ⇒ Line 7: *The Phantagraph* capitalizes the second occurrence of the word “Till”, all others do not.

It is interesting to note that all three of these differences are carried forward to all subsequent versions. This either implies that they were typographic errors in *The Phantagraph*, or that that *Stirring Science Stories* was used as the basis

(directly or indirectly) for all appearances that followed. This is certainly a logical conclusion as *The Phantagraph* was a very limited distribution amateur publication while *Stirring Science Stories* was a (relatively speaking) widely distributed and common pulp.

I am willing to concede that the third difference (“Till” vs. “till”) is probably an error in *The Phantagraph*. The word occurs mid-phrase and I can see no reason for the capitalization.

The first difference seems to me to be on the side of *The Phantagraph*. The verse has just introduced a long quoted passage. A colon seems far more natural here. There is precedent for this in other REH poems, notably “Solomon Kane's Homecoming”.

The second difference is the most interesting as it is an actual change of wording. Both “brass-cinctured” and “brass-tinctured” can be defended here, the former roughly meaning “brass-girdled Truth” and the latter “brass-tinged Truth”. I have some sentiment toward the former on the basis of the capitalization of “Truth”. This can be viewed as a personification of the word, and hence the more human “brass-girdled” seems to ring correct.

Later printings, of course, continue to introduce errors of their own. Here is a quick rundown of the versions:

*The Phantagraph*, August 1936

Assumed source: The original typescript or holograph, or a transcription thereof.

*Stirring Science Stories*, February 1941

Assumed source: *The Phantagraph*

Changes: Three changes, noted above. These changes were carried forward in all future versions.

*Uncanny Tales* (Canadian), September-October 1943 - UNKNOWN

*Dark of the Moon*, edited by August Derleth,  
Arkham House, 1947 - **UNKNOWN**

*Always Comes Evening*, Arkham House,  
1957 - **UNKNOWN**

*Dark of the Moon*, edited by August Derleth,  
Books for Libraries Press, 1969 - **UNKNOWN**

*Fantasy Crossroads* #2, February 1975  
Assumed source: *Stirring Science Stories*  
Changes: none

*Night Images*, Morning Star Press, 1976 -  
Truly unforgivable.

Assume source: *Stirring Science Stories*  
Changes:

Line 7: First "Till" changed to "Til"  
But the true evil is that **the last six lines were omitted entirely!** Yes, that's right, the last 30% of the poem was just dropped. Some "Deluxe Collector's Edition", huh?

*Always Comes Evening*, Underwood-Miller,  
1977

Assumed source: *Stirring Science Stories*  
Changes:

Line 11: Comma changed to a period.

*Voices of the Night and Other Poems*, Necromicon Press, 1977

Assumed source: *Stirring Science Stories*  
Changes:

Line 18: Period dropped

*Ein Traumer aus Texas*, Erster Deutscher  
Fantasy Club, 1987

Assumed source: *Stirring Science Stories*  
Changes:

Line 6: "brass-tinctured" changed to  
"brasstinctured"

Line 9: Semicolon changed to comma

Line 16: "Hells" changed to "hells"

Line 18: Period dropped

*Chants de Guerre et de Mort*, Nouvelles  
Editions Oswald, 1988 - **UNKNOWN**

*Hardwired Hinterland* V2#7, distributed in  
130th mailing of REHupa (December  
1994) - **UNKNOWN**

*Pfade ins Phantastische*, Erster Deutscher  
Fantasy Club, 1996

Assumed source: *Stirring Science Stories*  
Changes:

Line 7: "idols" changed to "Idols"

Line 18: Period dropped

Note that there are several versions which I do not possess. The repeated dropping of the period at the end of line 18 in particular leads me to guess that one of the earlier appearances I lack (most likely the Arkham collection) first made this change.

What we really need to determine the "true" text here is the original REH typescript or holograph. Unfortunately, I do not know if it even still exists. If anyone has any information on this, please let me know.

Which raises a related topic. Just where are the surviving original REH typescripts? Some are in the hands of private collectors. Glenn has a substantial collection. Several libraries have some as a result of donations (such as from Derleth and Barlow). But it would be very handy to have a guide as to what is where...



From *Action Stories* February 1936  
for "Pilgrims to the Pecos"

# Rauher Sand Redux

After preparing the *Rauher Sand und Wilde Eichen* article for REHupa #150, I was rather embarrassed to realize that I had not credited the men responsible for this fine work: Thomas Kovacs and Bernd Karwath. As a followup, I'll here reproduce some edited excerpts from subsequent mail exchanged between Thomas and I:

Thanks for the nice words you wrote on our translation of REH's POST OAKS & SAND ROUGHS!

You're right on every point. We (Bernie Karwath and I) both thought also that one of the most vital parts of this edition were the extensive footnotes.

In case you're interested in some "history": Bernie and I worked for 7 (seven!) years on the translation. We rewrote the whole translation several times - trying to stay as close as possible to the original. As far as I know nobody ever did such a serious and accurate translation on a Howard ms.

There are a few minor bugs though. The one "big" mistake was done by the editor of the "Fantasia" series Franz Schröpf. When we started the project in 1986 (or was it 85?) we made a deal with Franz. This deal was put down in an informal but written form (it was part of a letter) and consisted of the following:

- 1 Bernie and I would keep the rights to the German translation
- 2 Bernie and I payed Glenn the royalties (the EdFC's policy didn't allow to spend money on royalties!)
- 3 Bernie and I would have the last word before the novel was published (we wanted to proofread the whole novel before it went into print)

Franz kept his word on 1 and 2. He screwed up on 3.

When basically all was finished and Franz had the finished texts we waited for the last computer print-outs that we could proofread. What we got instead weeks later were our "author's" (translator's) copies. We were robbed of our chances to have the last word on the book; it was published without our "permission".

Result: Some typos remain; one of them being REH's birthday completely wrong. A few footnotes were so

long that they wouldn't fit on one page, so Franz put them in the appendix at the end of the book. But he made the mistake of not referencing them to the text. And some more minor errors remain that could have been prevented had Franz played it close to our "contract".

To be honest I was quite furious when the book was published. You have to imagine putting 7 years of enthusiasm and energy into a project that is very important to you and means to you a lot. And then some guy can't wait another two weeks or so to let you proofread the whole thing one last time. And bang! There it goes. You have a book that is 90-something percent of what you had in mind. And you start asking yourself why they didn't let you do it 100%. 90-something is okay - but 100% is better. Especially when you've put 7 years behind it.

Franz's explanation was short & simple. He said it was our fault we didn't correct those typos. He didn't want to take the chance that we started proofreading and rewriting the whole novel another time. (Which we absolutely did NOT intend to do.) The irony of it is that the typos (especially Howard's birthday) weren't ours - these were Franz's doing we could have corrected!

ME> I was truly impressed by the volume. I just wish my German was good enough to appreciate it fully.

And believe me, you WOULD appreciate it. I don't want to brag, but Bernie is truly an expert when it comes to the German language. Of course we very much emphasized the fact that it was a text BY REH. We wanted to produce a text in the spirit of "what if REH wrote in German", i.e. we truly tried to stick as closely as possible to the original with our translation.

ME> I do want to apologize for not giving you and Bernie credit in my article.

No problem not mentioning our names. And certainly no need to write a followup just to satisfy our egos. What IS important, is that people like you (truly interested persons in the life and works of REH) DID notice the publication and DO appreciate the work we've done.

**"I shaken the stars and sweat and blood out of my eyes and dismantled by the simple process of pulling my feet out of stirrups and falling off."**