

Full of Hot Air (Q1, pt. 2)

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 19 Feb 2003

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/3858>

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Michael Andre-Driussi — 19 Feb 2003, 16:54

The question came up:

1) There is a GW short story about a hot air balloon.
What is it called (or even about)? I believe it is in
Endangered Species but I am far from certain.
In the introduction, GW says something about a writing
exercise -- what if something was invented much
earlier than it was? Any other story fit this general
"writing exercise" format?

I think what you mean is more "thought experiment" or "extrapolation of a technological advance and how it would change society" -- when I first saw "writing exercise" I thought of Wolfe's writers' workshop stories, like "The Bellman's Wonder Ring" (oops, that might be an article), "Alphabet" (in SFTOH), and maybe one or two others.

The thought experiment type, though . . . hmmm. "The Packerhaus Method" comes to mind (=hey=, that's in SFTOH, too!), where in the intro, iirc, he labels it as such a story.

As for "Straw," which I named before but did not say more: it is about "what if hot air ballooning had been invented in the middle ages?" It is a neat story, with an almost Urthly feel to it (medieval setting, strange weapons with common-seeming names, etc.).

=mantis=

Michael Straight — 19 Feb 2003, 19:10 · follows Michael Andre-Driussi

In the introduction, GW says something about a writing
exercise -- what if something was invented much
earlier than it was? Any other story fit this general
"writing exercise" format?

I'm blanking, but feel certain I've seen Wolfe defend some other technological anachronism in one of his stories with, "well, they could easily have had/done such a thing back then." Maybe in the Soldier series?

-- Rostrum