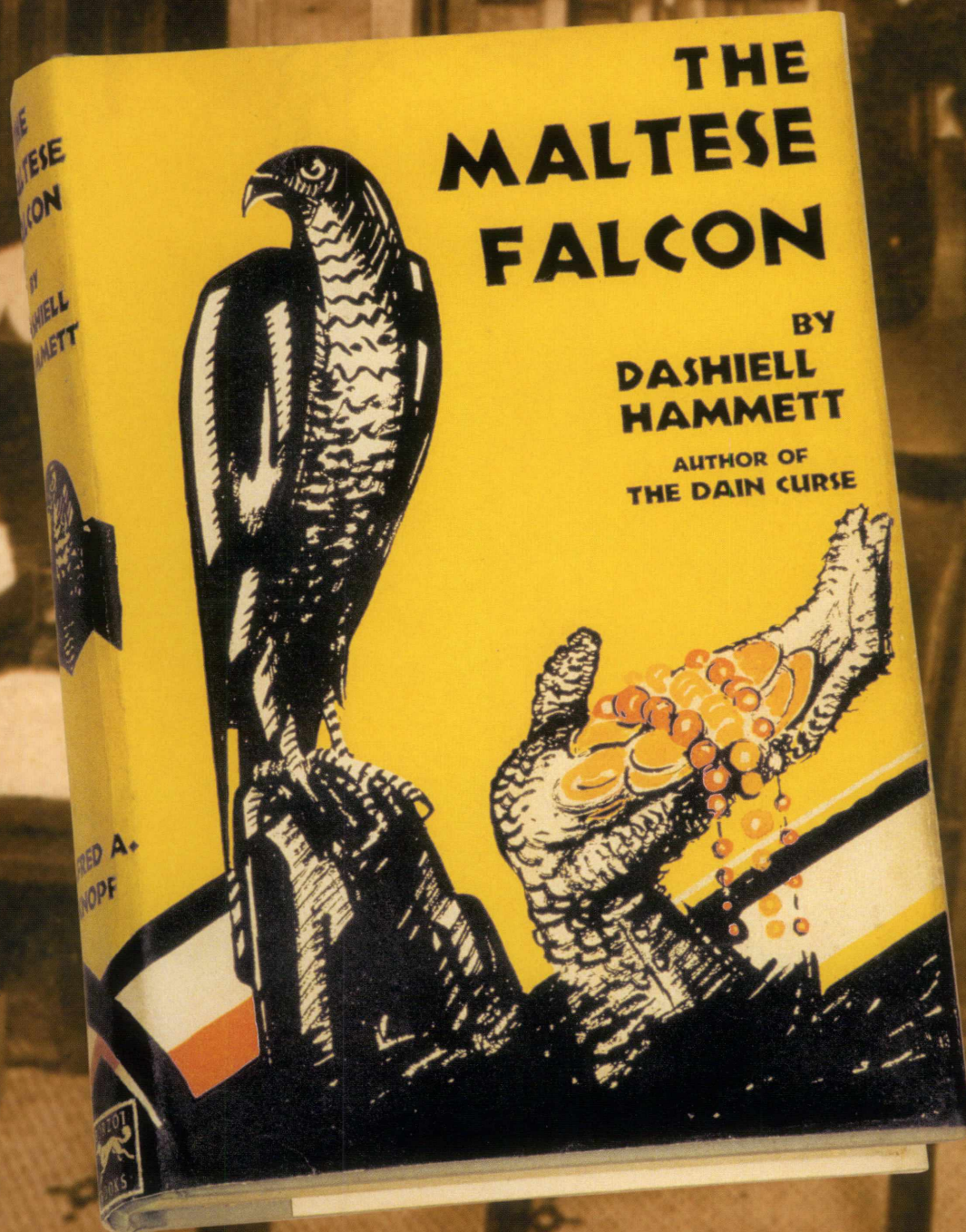


November, 2000 Volume 10, Number 11 \$4.95

FIRSTS

THE BOOK COLLECTOR'S MAGAZINE



**CHRISTIE,
HAMMETT
&
COLD, COLD
MURDER**

UPDATE

COLLECTABLE BOOKS

Mark Danielewski

House of Leaves

[Mark Z. Danielewski's] House of Leaves/by Zampanò/with introduction and notes by/Johnny Truant/2nd Edition/Pantheon Books New York [2000] States "First Edition" on copyright page and "9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1"

innovative, and dismissed by others as gimmicky. The typography (the book was designed and typeset by the author) is thoughtful, not just gimmicky, with various typefaces serving graphic and psychological purposes (one reacts differently to a typewriter font [Courier] than to a nice Palatino)

and pacing purposes (extremely dense pages followed by extremely sparse pages). The word "house" always appears in blue. (Pantheon deserves praise for being so cooperative in dealing with a first-time novelist's ideas of how his book should look.)

Though such typographical

House of Leaves by Mark Z. Danielewski is a hypermodern novel that has become surprisingly collectable and expensive *instantly*. Since the first printing hardcover of *House of Leaves* is already trading on eBay and selling at small book fairs in the \$150 to \$300 range, we thought it a good idea to set the record straight on the relative rarity of the author's various signatures and other matters.

Published in March 2000, the book received extensive and mostly good press, based on its skillful intertwining of generally separate genres ("Horror" and "High-brow Literature"). The cover blurb by Bret Easton Ellis was correct in stating that the book could remind one of such disparate authors as J.G. Ballard, Stephen King, David Foster Wallace and Thomas Pynchon—alternately or simultaneously—though Ellis goes overboard in imagining Pynchon bowing in awe at Danielewski's feet.

The book received additional notice for its unusual typography, praised by some as fascinating and

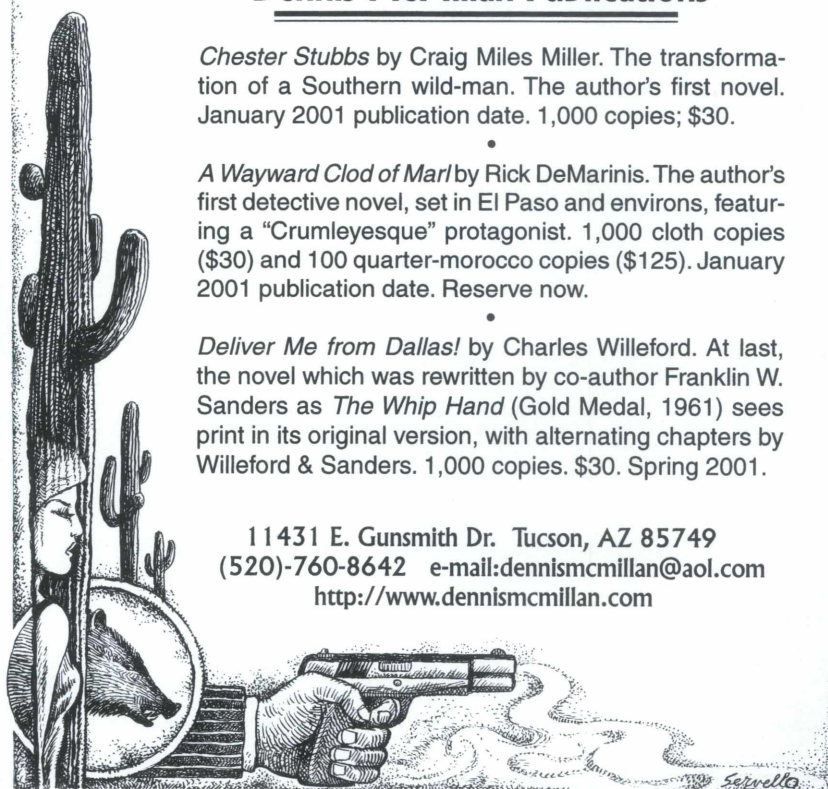
Dennis McMillan Publications

Chester Stubbs by Craig Miles Miller. The transformation of a Southern wild-man. The author's first novel. January 2001 publication date. 1,000 copies; \$30.

A Wayward Clod of Marl by Rick DeMarinis. The author's first detective novel, set in El Paso and environs, featuring a "Crumleyesque" protagonist. 1,000 cloth copies (\$30) and 100 quarter-morocco copies (\$125). January 2001 publication date. Reserve now.

Deliver Me from Dallas! by Charles Willeford. At last, the novel which was rewritten by co-author Franklin W. Sanders as *The Whip Hand* (Gold Medal, 1961) sees print in its original version, with alternating chapters by Willeford & Sanders. 1,000 copies. \$30. Spring 2001.

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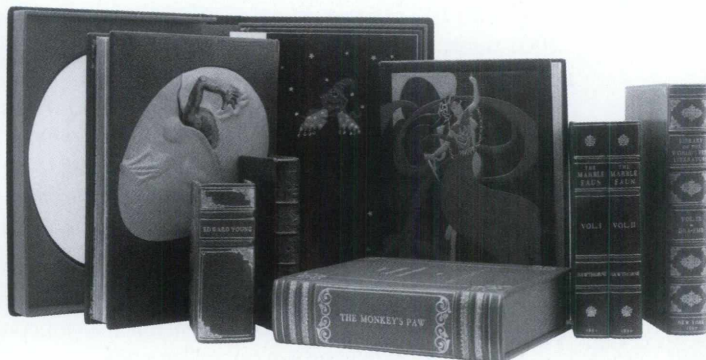
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stylization captured the imaginations of modern reviewers in both the retail trade book press and the fashion press, the author, in interviews, seemed well aware of being part of a tradition unknown to the interviewers.

Stylized, creative typography goes back at least as far as the 1474 Cologne edition of Werner Rolewinck's *Fasciculus Temporum* (a medieval world history that became a early "bestseller," going through many editions). This edition had over a dozen different line lengths, and had some type set vertically, some upside down, and some even in circles. (This within 20 years of the invention of moveable type!) Along the way to *House of Leaves*, other stand-out examples of creative typesetting and typography include Laurence Sterne's *Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy* (published in nine volumes between 1760 and 1767) and Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (published in 1866), down to B.S. Johnson's *House Mother Normal* and Christie Malry's *Own Double-Entry*. All of us could name other famous examples, as well as a few personal favorites. And, of course, odd page layouts became a commonplace, often an aggravating one, in Twentieth-century poetry.

Hand in hand with the different fonts and the complex page layouts goes Danielewski's use of footnotes that constitute an imaginary editor's sidebar comments and running contemporary autobiography, and a relentless parody of the modern "industry" of scholarly critical and analytical material.

The facts in the case of *House of Leaves* are as follows: 2,000 units of the hardcover constitute the first edition, simultaneous with the trade paperback from the same sheets (like *Gravity's Rainbow*), stating First Edition on the copyright page and with the number row below descending to and

including 1. Also like *Gravity's Rainbow*, only the first printing hardcovers will ever be collectable. No second printings, no paperbacks will ever be sought after except by rabid title completists (who may already have spotted that only the American paperback had the ephemeral little "blow-in" for the upcoming Poe CD, *Haunted*, which will be related to this book). (Poe and Danielewski are siblings.) Title completists should also be aware of the UK paperback, which has a nice alternate cover, though at first glance the book seems to be written by Bret Easton Ellis, whose name, irritatingly, is in brighter type than that of the author. Recently, we have seen a New Zealand case-bound issue from Hard Echo Press Ltd. using the UK paperback sheets from Anchor (a now-defunct imprint of Transworld Publishers, a division of the Random House Group Ltd.) with the dust jacket using the British paperback cover art. In the British edition, the word "house" isn't in blue, but rather a thin grey, making this the "black and white edition" mentioned on the American copyright page.

Danielewski (pronounced "Danielefski" not "Danielooski") signed 1,500 sheets which were to be inserted in the 2,000 first edition hardcovers in the following breakdown:

Z: 1,200 in blue
(Z for Zampano)

JT: 280 in red
(JT for Johnny Truant)

Phl: 15 (numbered) in purple
(Phl for Pelafina Heather Lièvre)

All three: 4 (numbered) in blue/red/purple

Mark Danielewski: 1 in black

Of these 1,500 sheets, Pantheon reports to us a rather high spoilage rate of 500, with no breakdown as to how many of each were lost. But in the end,



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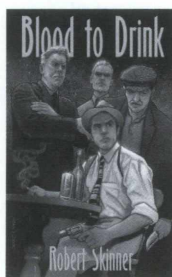


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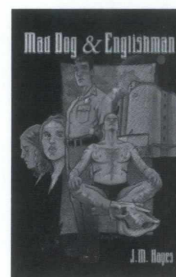
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only about 1,000 copies (rather than the 1,500 intended) of the 2,000-unit first printing hardcovers had the bound-in sheets. The signed sheets were bound in before the half-title. Such copies and regular copies were available as specific pre-orders before publication on Amazon, and went

indiscriminately to stores upon publication. The signed and unsigned issues were given different ISBNs.

Copies that were signed or inscribed by the author on his publicity tours for the book have always been signed exclusively on page [ix].

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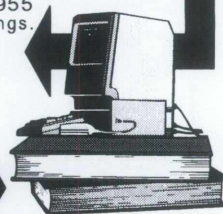
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There were no ARCs (advance reading copies) of *House of Leaves*. There were, per Pantheon sources, 293 uncorrected galleys in plain blue wrappers. Pantheon issued a "blad" (an excerpt from the beginning of the book [Title-page, Introduction, and Chapters

1-4]) in an unknown number of copies, but they got their official blad out after an "alternate blad" had been privately circulated in 75 copies. Both blads were on standard size 8 1/2 x 11 paper. The Pantheon blad was tape-bound and the alternate blad was stapled.



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




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These blads have color prints of plates that appear in the published book only in black and white. The British blad, which they call an "Uncorrected Sampler," uses the British paperback cover art.

As mentioned on the front flap of the Pantheon hardcover, parts of the book, downloaded off a pri-

vate site on the internet, did circulate through the underbellies of Los Angeles, Las Vegas and San Francisco, through strip clubs and recording studios, long before publication. Even more ephemeral than the Poe CD "blow-in" has to be the original "House of Leaves" business card with that now-

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defunct URL that circulated through the seedier venues mentioned above, as well as many Los Angeles and East Coast bookstores.

Also, the text was serialized on iUniverse.com before the book came out (with slight overlap). The "2nd Edition" statement on the title-page appears on the first edition, first printing. The "note on this edition" boxes on the copyright page are another area of confusion: Box 2 ("2-color") is the American edition; Box 3 (Black & White) is the British (and New Zealand); Box 4 ("incomplete") refers to the various downloaded hard copies (irrelevant) and Box 1 ("Full Color") currently exists only as a single privately-held copy.

There are also two private compact discs (CDRs) related to the book: *5.5 House of Leaves* (May 1999, running time 9:36) and *Exploration #4* (March 2000, running time 35:05), the latter with some music from the official Poe CD, *Haunted*, which is heavily related to *House of Leaves*, featuring track titles such as: "Exploration B," "5 1/2 Minute Hallway," "Dear Johnny" and "House of Leaves." The American and British versions of *5.5 House of Leaves* have different artwork, the American using a piece of art from within the book and the British using their cover art. As far as we know, there is no British issue of *Exploration #4*. Included in the October 2000 *Interview* magazine was a promotional CD, a shrink-wrapped, silver disc running 20 minutes and 43 seconds.

The Whalestoe Letters by Mark Z. Danielewski (published only in a paperback edition on October 10, 2000) is an offshoot of *House of Leaves* though, beyond replicating appendix material from *House of Leaves*, the new publication includes some fresh material.

—Jesse Rossa and Lee Biondi



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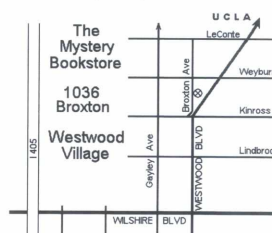
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