

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

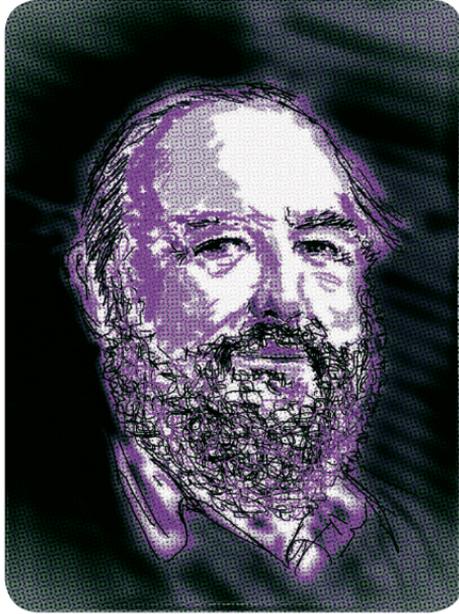
The Law of Chaos: the Multiverse of Michael Moorcock was previously published in 2002 as *The Age of Chaos* by the British Fantasy Society, to whom I am grateful for their support of this work. The title has reverted to my original and preferred 'Law of Chaos', whose paradoxical tone better reflects the tension of opposites in Moorcock's multiversal balance.

This edition contains a number of revisions, expansions, updated clarifications and new material. Moorcock's novels published since 2002, such as *The Vengeance of Rome* are now added to the discussion — plus a chapter on Oswald Bastable, whose previous omission had lost me many a night's sleep. More has been included on Moorcock's non-fiction, particularly his work as an editor. The appendices include previously unpublished and lengthy letters from Moorcock plus a previously unseen interview. The bibliography has been heavily revised and reorganised as a reader's guide, noting original editions and dates. I also include here a short essay examining Moorcock and Robert Calvert's lyrics for the rock band Hawkwind.

I would like to thank David Mosley, John Davey and David Kerekes for helping me with this book. A mention should also go to artist Malcolm Laverty who has provided me with a number of illustrations used in this revised edition.

My biggest thanks, though, go to Michael Moorcock himself for his generous and lengthy introduction. He continues to be patient, polite and never patronising even when asked the same old questions over and again. Thanks, Mike, for all the dreams, laughter, shocks, challenges, inspiration and entertainment you've provided over the years. The very best of health to you, sir!

Jeff Gardiner, 2014



Illus. Malcolm Leaverly

“The idea of a “quasi-infinite” series of interlocking worlds, each a fraction different from the next, where millions of versions of our realities are played out, fascinated me from the age of seventeen.’

Moorcock’s introduction to
Michael Moorcock’s Multiverse no. 1 (DC Comics 1997)

INTRODUCTION BY MICHAEL MOORCOCK

How do you judge a book which is about yourself? Naturally, if it is kind, you are flattered. Then you are concerned that it doesn't somehow misrepresent you and that it has its facts right, and then you read it to see if it offers you any fresh ideas on your own stuff. Jeff Gardiner's excellent book has offered me many fresh insights into my own work and it will remain, for me at least, a very useful reference when I have one of those increasingly frequent moments of not knowing what's going on in my own fiction, let alone my life.

I don't have a habit of rereading my own work and so much of Jeff Gardiner's detailed study is pretty fresh to me. I feel, therefore, that I can recommend it as a pretty useful guide to the variety of fiction I've turned out over a fifty-seven-year career as a professional writer. Whether it is of any use to other writers, they will know best, but I think it should help the casual reader to get a better grip on the vast raft of stuff I've produced and also, I hope, give them an idea about what they would like to read and what doesn't interest them.

I must admit I pity any reader coming to my work for the first time and wondering where on earth they should begin. It tends to baffle me, let alone them. And when I am asked to recommend something of my own, I find it very hard to do. Readers who love *Mother London*, for instance, might not care for *The Sundered Worlds* at all and Hawkmoon fans might be bored to the teeth with *King of the City*. My father's personal favourite of mine was *Kane of Old Mars*, which was closest to the Edgar Rice Burroughs romances I first started reading in his copies.

I have an old-fashioned idea about my profession. I believe I should be able to turn my hand to almost any form at the drop of a hat — belles-lettres, criticism, fiction of various kinds, film scripts,

THE LAW OF CHAOS

TV work, short stories, novels, reminiscence, music and lyrics, whatever you can do. I think that some ideas are best expressed in semi-fiction, some in fiction, some in non-fiction and so on. Genres present their own methods. You use the best tools for the job. Some ideas are more suitable for essays, some for fiction. I also have ideas for novels which suit certain methods or express certain ideas best. I have written spoof detective stories, westerns and fantasy stories. I have written mostly non-modernist literary fiction but on occasions I have used modernist techniques because they are best suited to what I have to say. I have a habit of putting some of my most thoughtful notions into comic books.

Until recently, my best description of 'the multiverse' was in the DC graphic novel, *Michael Moorcock's Multiverse*, which a number of my readers found impossible to understand. There is a way of reading a modern graphic novel which, to some degree, you have to learn, just as children have to learn the sequence of an ordinary sentence. Equally, there is a specialist vocabulary in fantasy and science fiction circles which often baffles the casual reader and indeed can act to alienate them from work they might otherwise enjoy. For this reason, I tend to start every fantasy book I write as if neither I nor my reader had read a fantasy novel before. I believe this helps to keep the book's vitality and interest, as well as being generally more user friendly! This method tends to give me, as far as I can tell, a slightly broader general audience than the average genre writer while making me slightly marginal to the genre audience, who are sometimes suspicious of what they might see as my divided loyalties!

Whatever my qualities as a writer, I am hard to pigeonhole. Critics who see me as 'sampling' different genres don't quite understand that I am not much interested in the genres themselves, just what the genres can offer me. While I've written Kit Carson and Buffalo Bill stories for juvenile weeklies, my adult ventures into their

the Multiverse of Michael Moorcock

galloping grounds have been satirical or making some specific use of the local mythology. I actually have very little nostalgia for adventure fiction and my own leisure reading tends to be the likes of Elizabeth Bowen, Elizabeth Taylor and Angus Wilson. I can get very enthusiastic about *Death of the Heart* but remembered a short while ago that I never actually finished *Lord of the Rings*. I still don't know how it ends. This means that I have very few adult enthusiasms within the fantasy and SF genres, though I do greatly admire individual writers like M. John Harrison who write their own highly idiosyncratic fiction and who are as hard to pigeonhole as I am.

I know that I'm a bit of an academic's nightmare. Add to my various literary enthusiasms, my musical career and my career as an editor of a fairly wide variety of publications, and it's no surprise to me to hear that some researchers and writers have actually lost their sanity before they could finish their bibliographies of my stuff, let alone begun their theses. Sometimes just finding the more obscure bits and pieces themselves is daunting and I am of no use, being bad at dates and record-keeping in general. For that reason, if no other, I can genuinely celebrate the publication of this book. It lifts some of my own confusion and I'm pretty sure it will lift some of yours. I welcome its publication especially since its author still manages to retain a convincing veneer of sanity and is, by all accounts, recovering well.

Michael Moorcock, 2012