

# NEIL GAIMAN: *the J.R.R. Tolkien of the new millenium*

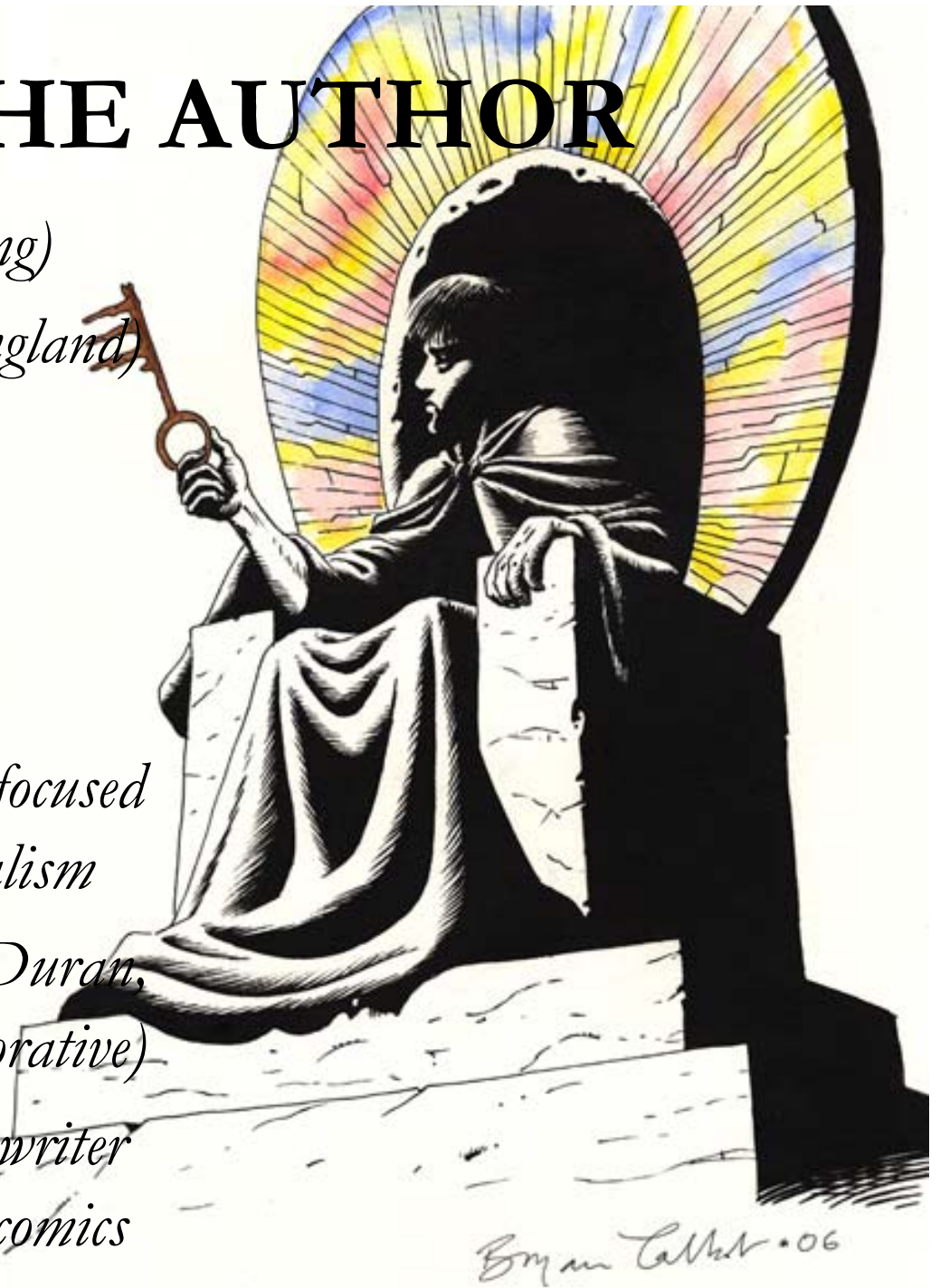


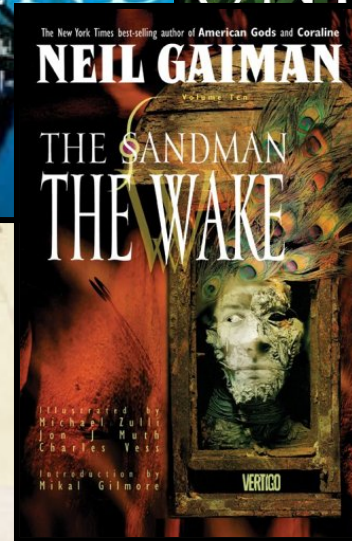
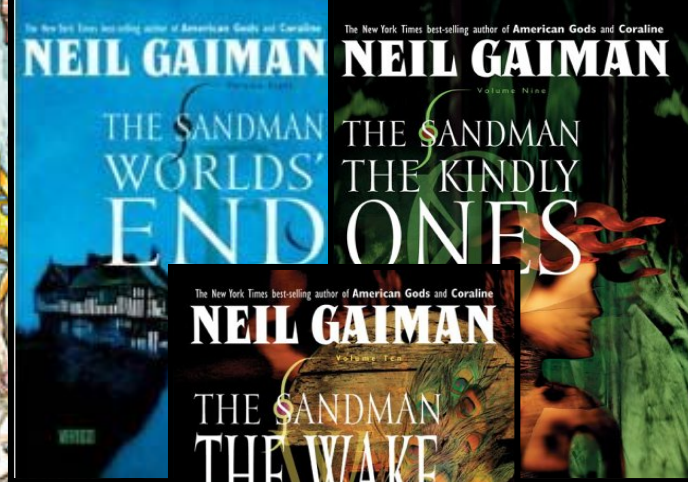
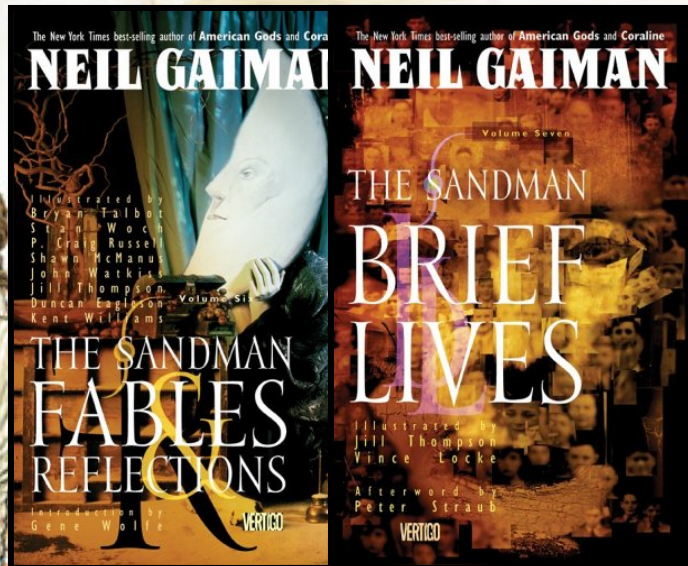
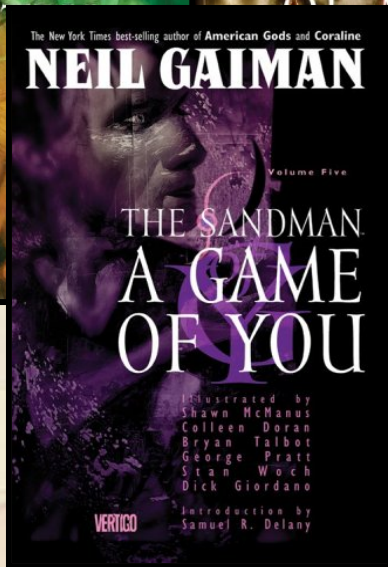
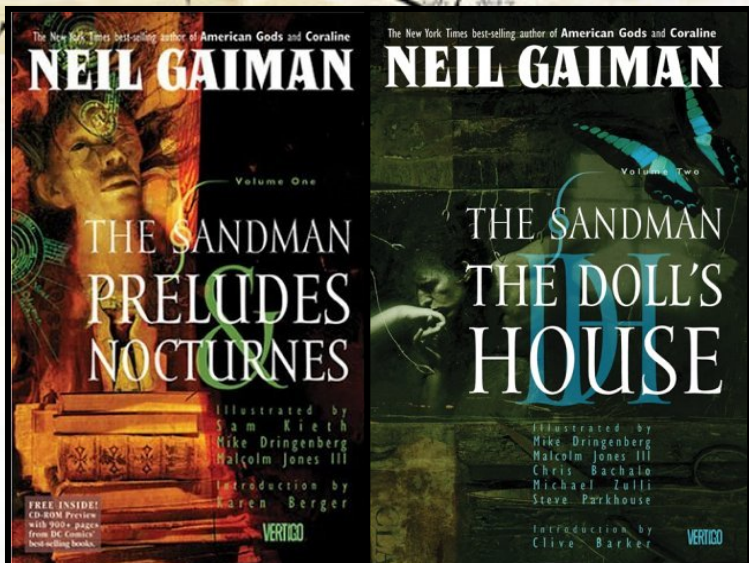
*“My parents would frisk me before family events .... Because if they didn’t, then the book would be hidden inside some pocket ... and as soon as whatever it was got under way I’d be found in a corner. That was who I was ... I was the kid with the book.”*



# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

- *Nov. 10<sup>th</sup>, 1960 (came into being)*
- *Polish-Jewish origin (born in England)*
- *Early influences:*
  - *C.S. Lewis*
  - *J.R.R. Tolkien*
  - *Ursula K. Le Guin*
- *Pursued journalism as a career, focused on book reviews and rock journalism*
- *1<sup>st</sup> book a biography of Duran Duran, 2<sup>nd</sup> a book of quotations (collaborative)*
- *Became friends with comic book writer Alan Moore & started writing comics*







# GAIMAN'S WORKS

- *Co-author (with Terry Pratchett) of Good Omens, a very funny novel about the end of the world; international bestseller*
- *Creator/ writer of monthly DC Comics series Sandman, won 9 Will Eisner Comic Industry Awards and 3 Harvey Awards*
  - *#19 won 1991 World Fantasy Award for best short story, 1<sup>st</sup> comic ever to win a literary award*
  - *Endless Nights 1<sup>st</sup> graphic novel to appear on NYT bestseller list*
- *American Gods in 2001; NYT bestselling novel, won Hugo, Nebula, Bram Stoker, SFX, and Locus awards*
- *Wrote the script for Beowulf with Roger Avary*

# OTHER WORKS

- *Mirrormask film released in late 2005*
- *Designed a six-part fantastical series for the BBC called Neverwhere, aired in 1996. The novel Neverwhere was released in 1997 and made into a film.*
- *Coraline and The Wolves in the Walls are two award-winning children's books; Coraline is being filmed, with music provided by They Might Be Giants, and TWW is being made into an **opera**.*
- *Neil Gaiman's website is [www.neilgaiman.com](http://www.neilgaiman.com), where he blogs regularly.*
- *Gaiman now lives near Minneapolis, Minnesota, with his wife and three children.*



# MISC.

- On Good Omens:

*“(Believe us: We have signed a delightfully large number of paperbacks that have been dropped in the bath, gone a worrying brown color, got repaired with sticky tape and string, and, in one case, consisted entirely of loose pages in a plastic bag. On the other hand, there was the guy who’d had a special box made up of walnut and silver filigree, with the paperback nestling inside on black velvet. There were silver runes on the lid. We didn’t ask.) Etiquette tip: It’s okay ... to ask an author to sign your arm, but not good manners to then nip around to the tattoo parlor next door and return ... to show them the inflamed result.”*

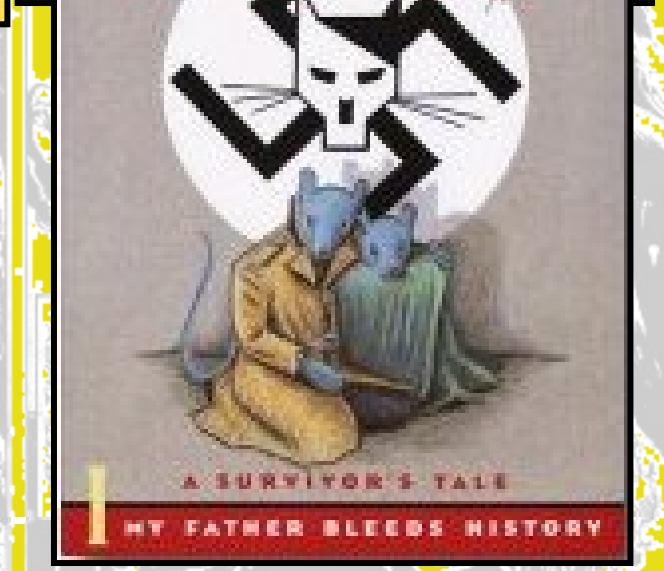
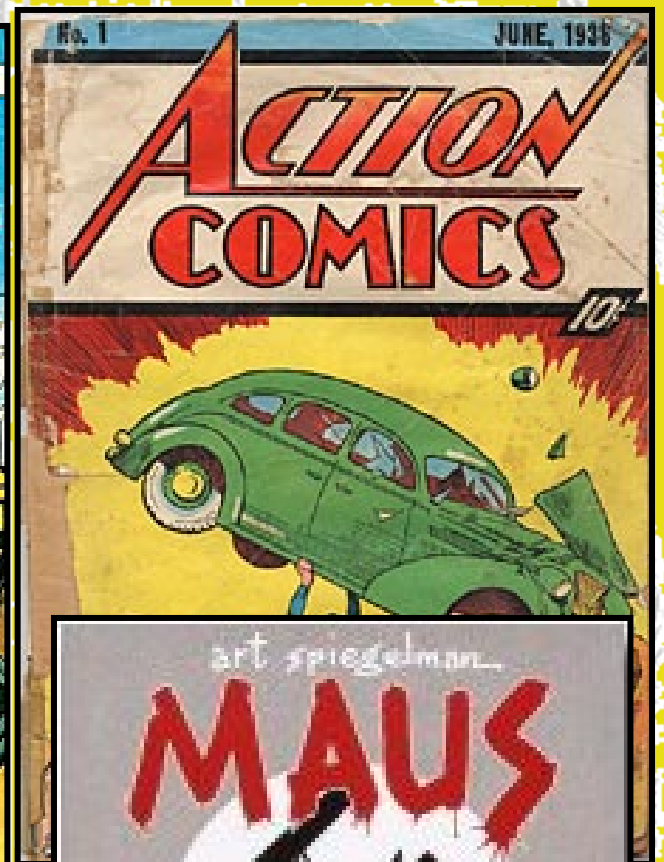
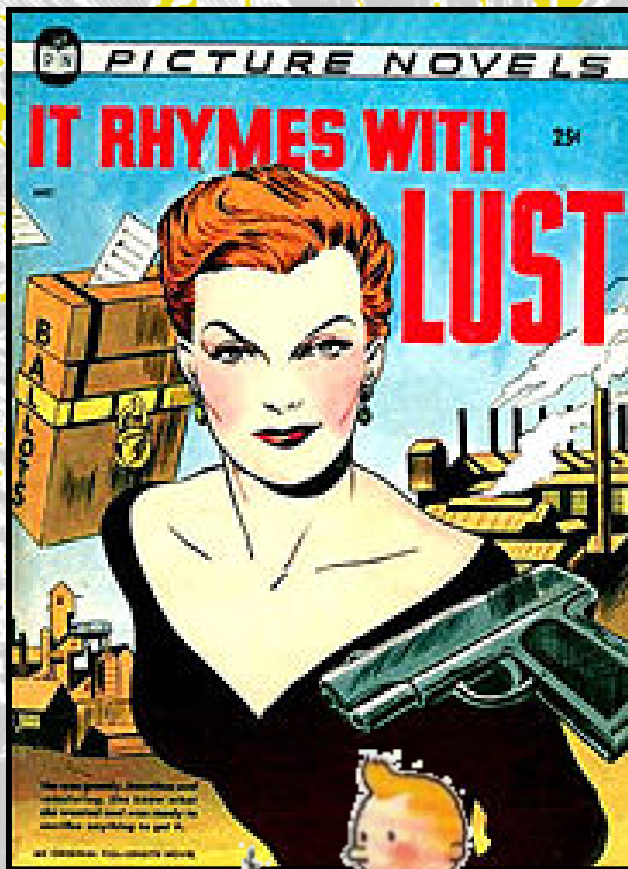


# WHAT IS A GRAPHIC NOVEL?



flashbunny.com Anand Duncan 2007

- *Type of comic book, usually longer & more complex than a comic*
- *Storyline similar to a novel*
- *Aimed at young adults & adults, not children*
- *Bound*
- *“Story-Arcs” (a series of stories w/ in a series)*
- *Sold at bookstores & specialty comic shops, not newsstands*
- *Some authors object to the term “graphic novel”*
- *A.K.A.: comic strip novel, picture novella, comic book, artist’s book, collage novel, Tankobon, and manga*
- *Neil Gaiman = Hooker*





# “COMICS AREN’T JUST FOR KIDS ANYMORE”



- *Graphic novels have been around since the 1920's*
- *Reached new heights in late 1980's/early 90's*
- *Some of Gaiman's influences & the forerunners in turning the graphic novel into an adult comic:*
  - *Art Spiegelman's Maus: A Survivor's Tale (Pulitzer Prize Special Award 1992)*
    - *Memoir about surviving the Holocaust as a Polish Jew, draws on his father's experiences*
  - *Alan Moore's Swamp Thing, Watchmen (Hugo Award & TIME's list of the "100 best English-language novels from 1923 to the present"), and V for Vendetta*
    - *The Saga of the Swamp Thing explored the autopsy of Swamp Thing's body, and the realization that it was only superficially human, and that the vegetation had consumed his mind and internal organs, creating a monster (Frankenstein)*
  - *Frank Miller's The Dark Knight Returns (40 weeks on a UK bestseller list)*

# WHY GRAPHIC NOVELS, THEN?



*It's untouched ground:  
"When I'm writing novels I'm painfully aware that I'm working with a medium that people have been writing absolutely jaw-droppingly beautiful things for, you know, 3-4 thousand years now .... But with comics I felt like – I can do stuff nobody has ever done. I can do stuff nobody has ever thought of. And I could and it was enormously fun." (Bender)*



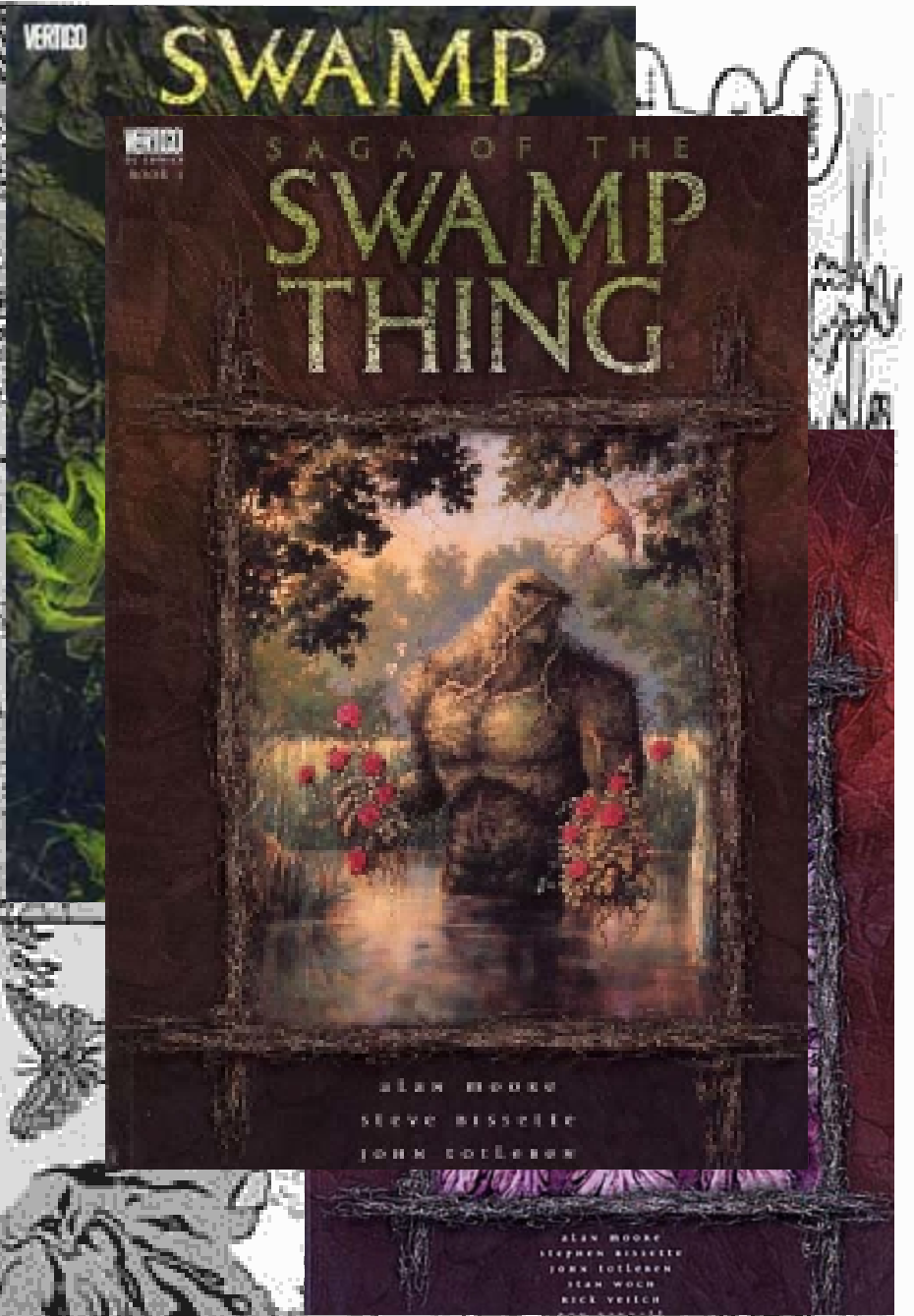
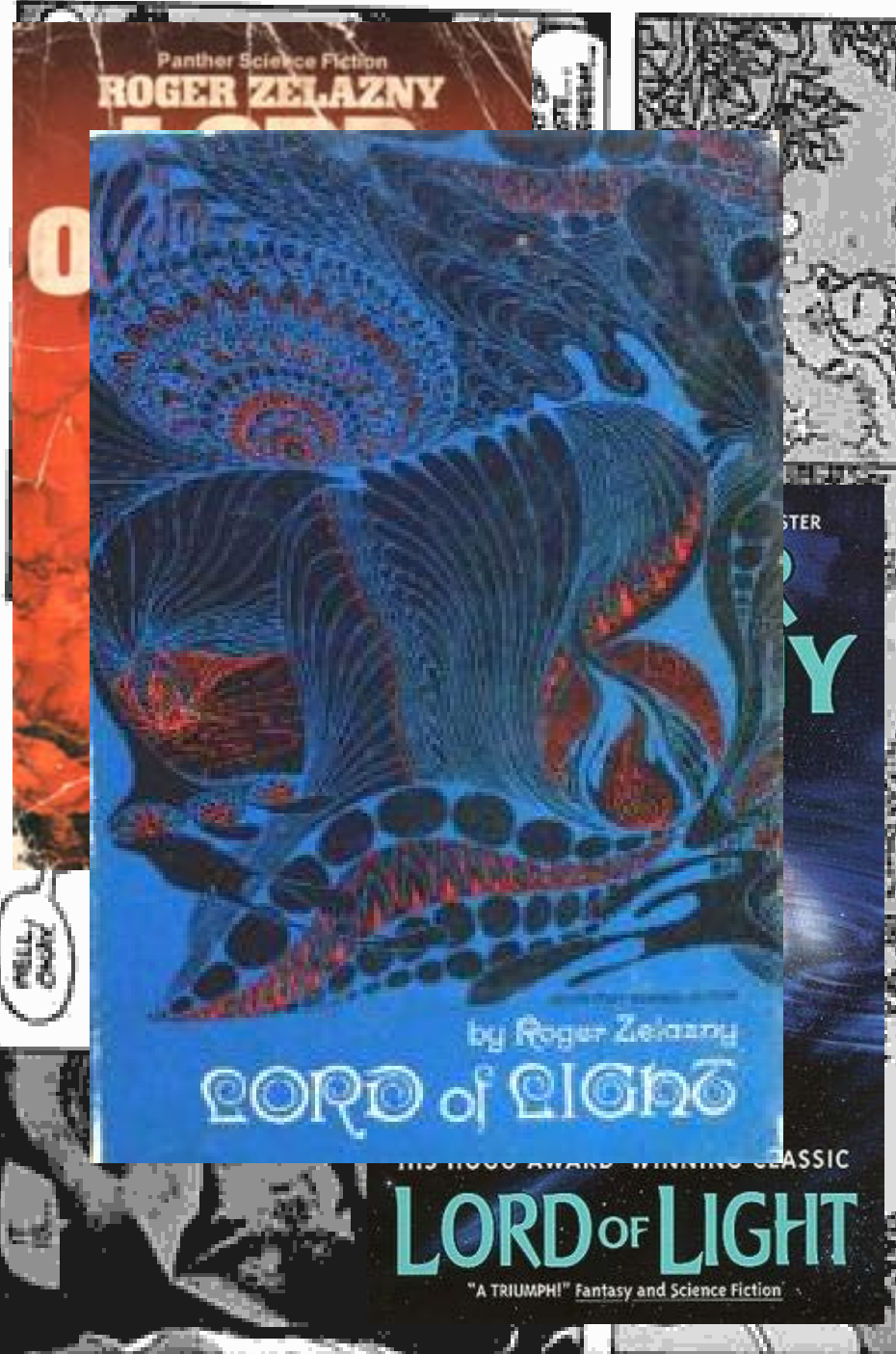
# LITERARY INFLUENCES

- *New Wave science fiction of the 1960's*
- Roger Zelazny, Lord of Light & The Isle of Dead
- Samuel R. Delany
- J.G. Ballard
- M. John Harrison
- John Sladek

Lord of Light, a 1967 novel, struck me as a very interesting novel, because it's about people who take on the attributes of Hindu gods, constituting, in effect, a heavenly Legion of Super-Heroes. I ... decided to take it a step further – instead of writing about humans acting as gods, why not just write about gods?" (Bender 233)

**Note:** In the Sandman series, Shakespeare himself appears in 3 stories. He makes and fulfills a deal with Morpheus, who grants Shakespeare the gift of inspiration in exchange for 2 plays celebrating dreams, A Midsummer Night's Dream & The Tempest. (Bender)





# A TYPICAL SANDMAN STORY

- *Emphasis isn't on what events take place or why, but on how the events affect the people*
- *Two-way dialogue; Sandman characters define themselves by who they talk to and what they say (Bender)*



Art by P. Craig Russell

