

Il continuum Sheldon-Tiptree-Raccoona

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Abstract

Between 1968 and the end of 1976, Alice Sheldon not only wrote science fiction professionally using a male pseudonym (James Tiptree, Jr) and then a female one (Raccoona Sheldon), but she interpreted actual roles, giving them the semblance of reality, with their own addresses and bank accounts. Recurring to the tools of analytical psychology, the purpose of this article is to try to show that, for Tiptree/ Sheldon the opposite occurred: the male part of her personality, which can be called Animus, asserting itself on her ego, pushed Alice Sheldon to assume the pseudonym James Tiptree, Jr. At the same time, this proposed interpretation of the writer's life seeks to give a reason to Silverberg's famous misplaced phrase according to which Tiptree was definitely a Hemingway-type, a definition that would give a socio-cultural justification to the particular style of the writer whose multifaceted personality would be described as a continuum.