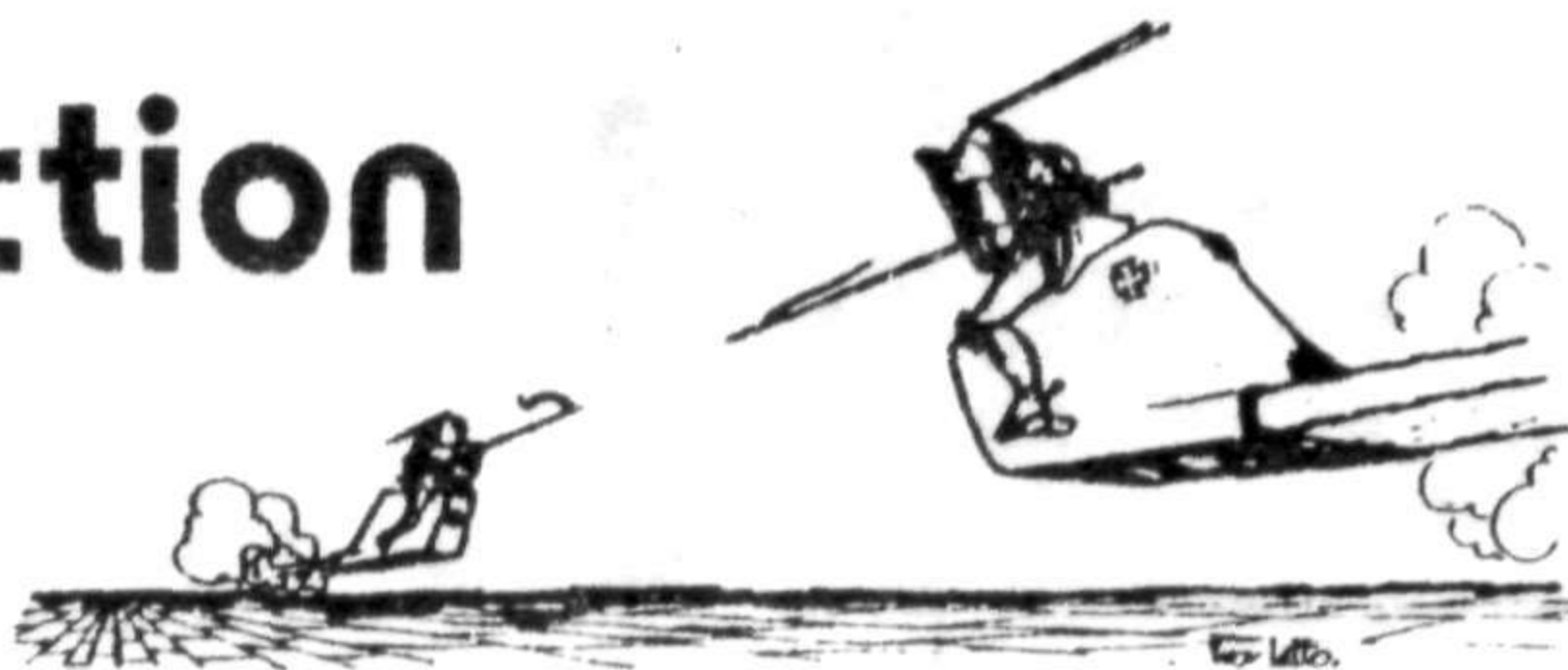


(Honorary Presidents: Brian W. Aldiss
and Harry Harrison)



SEPTEMBER 1982

SEPTEMBER MEETING - Friday 17th September 7.45 pm

AUGUST MEETING

FORTHCOMING

* January - A.G.M. where you will be able to elect a totally new committee.

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S T O P P R E S S : Hugo results just announced. Novel: Downbelow Station - C.J.Cherryh; novella: "The Saturn Game" - Poul Anderson; novelette: "Unicorn Variation" - Roger Zelazny; short story: "The Pusher" - John Varley; nonfiction: Danse Macabre - Stephen King; pro editor: Edward L.Ferman; pro artist: Michael Whelan; film: Raiders of the Lost Ark; fanzine: Locus.

EXTR0 4 is unlikely to appear due to lack of finance due to W.H.Smith and Menzies taking too long to decide whether to distribute it.

SCIENCE FICTION FILM AWARDS of the Academy of SF, Fantasy and Horror Films went to Raiders of the Lost Ark (Best Fantasy Film), Superman II (Best SF Film), An American Were-

BRITISH FANTASY AWARDS, which were not announced at Mythcon, were: Artist - Dave Carson; Small press - Fantasy Tales; Film - Raiders of the Lost Ark; Short Story - 'The Dark Country' by Dennis Etchison; Novel - Cujo by Stephen King.

ANDROMEDA Bookshop's top ten best selling paperbacks for August were: 1. Life, The Universe and Everything - Douglas Adams (Pan), 2. The Golden Torc - Julian May (Pan), 3. Dr Who and the Visitation - Eric Saward (Target), 4. The Restaurant at the End of the Universe - Douglas Adams (Pan), 5. The Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy - Douglas Adams (Pan), 6. Star Trek The Wrath of Khan - Vonda N. McIntyre (Futura), 7. The Quillian Sector [Dumarest 19] - E.C. Tubb (Arrow), 7. Warlock of Firetop Mountain - Steve Jackson & Ian Livingstone (Puffin), 9. The Tyrant of Hades [Cageworld 3] - Colin Kapp (NEL), 9. The Many-Colored Land - Julian May (Pan).

SCIENCE FICTION CLASSES. A course entitled Science Fiction: Authors and Themes begins on September 29th at Birmingham University Faculty of Arts. There will be 20 meetings, on Wednesdays at 7.30 pm. The cost is £14.00.

CREATIVE WRITING CLASS. Some of you may be interested to know that there's a 20-week course in creative writing begining this month at Stone Hall Adult Education Centre, Acocks Green. You can attend either Tuesday evening classes or Wednesday morning classes. Enrolment is on Tuesday 14th Sept. between 7.00pm and 8.30pm, or on Wednesday 15th Sept. between 10.00am and 11.30am, with classes begining the following week.

CHRIS MORGAN is the tutor for the above classes and will give you more information about either if you ask him at the meeting.

[illegible]

BOOK REVIEWS

TWO TO CONQUER by Marion Zimmer Bradley, Arrow £1.75, 335 pages

Reviewed by Pauline E. Morgan.

Ambition and obsession combine to tear the Kingdom of Asturias apart and plunge Darkover into a war that could devastate it. Only if Varzil can persuade the Kingdoms to sign a compact prohibiting all weapons except those used in hand-to-hand combat, will Darkover have a future. In opposition are Rafael di Asturien (who is ambitious for his son, Alaric) and Bard Mac Fianna, his illegitimate son, a superb strategist. Bard is arrogant and selfish, particularly in his attitude to women. So is Paul Harryl, Bard's exact double, brought to Darkover to further Rafael's aims. An excellent novel, it has undercurrents galore and many insights into human nature. Worth reading.

THE TYRANT OF HADES [Cageworld 3] by Colin Kapp, NEL £1.25, 173 pages

Reviewed by Malcolm Thorpe.

Kapp's multi-talented trio set off again, to a 6000-mile-thick shell in Neptune's orbit---the next layer of his increasingly impossible universe of concentric spheres. This shell is not accepting its quota of immigrants, and our heroes are sent to solve the problem. The story is a readable space opera with plenty of drama and incident. Strangely, this volume explains the Cageworld concept more clearly than do its two predecessors, though Kapp's reliance on baffling figures and technical jargon causes many a yawn.

JUPITER PROJECT by Gregory Benford, Sphere £1.50, 182 pages

Reviewed by Dave Hardy.

Anyone buying this assuming it to be a new book by the "Nebula Award-winning author of Timescape" (as it says on the cover) will be disappointed. It was originally written for Amazing in 1972 and has been updated and revised, mainly to include the latest Voyager data on Jupiter. And, despite a smattering of adolescent sex, it is really a juvenile: I was reminded irresistibly of Arthur Clarke's Islands in the Sky. The main difference is that the satellite station in this story orbits Jupiter, not Earth, and the hero and other teenagers have grown up in it from the age of eight or so, with attendant problems. One for the hard-science fans---or teenagers.

THE MAKESHIFT GOD by Russell Griffin, Granada £1.50, 272 pages

Reviewed by Geoff Kemp.

A mildly theological novel involving alien intervention in early christianity. Battadeus, legendary wandering Jew, was actually an and-roid placed on Earth to record technological advances so that this data could help rebuild a civilisation destroyed by civil war. Caine, a linguist pulled in to translate an alien language, recognises it as Latin and realises that the speaker is Battadeus (who is accidentally deactivated by the investigating probe's defences). Caine joins the investigating expedition and searches for the body of Battadeus, hoping to retrieve its memory banks. His search involves meetings with various groups of aliens. It's an interesting book, but hardly Earth-shattering.

THE THING by Alan Dean Foster, Corgi £1.25, 196 pages

Reviewed by Margaret Thorpe.

Now here's Alien on ice! Its pedigree can be traced back to an early story by John W. Campbell ("Who Goes There?", from 1938) via a new film screenplay by Bill Lancaster. There are many similarities between Alien and The Thing, with the addition of the Agatha Christie plot of Ten Little Niggers. Twelve scientists in the Antarctic unwittingly rescue an alien life-form which can, once it has consumed any organic matter, become that life-form. The problem is, of course, to discover which of the scientists is the Trojan horse. Alan Dean Foster manages, as usual, to create a gripping and suspenseful novel from what must have been a fairly cliché-ridden screenplay. Unfortunately, one multi-taloned, bloodthirsty blob is much like another. Above average for treatment, but the content is lacking in originality.

ENGINE SUMMER by John Crowley, Methuen £1.50, 182 pages

Reviewed by Dave Packwood.

Set in a post-holocaust society, Engine Summer is the story of its narrator, Rush that Speaks, whose heartfelt ambition is to become a saint, i.e. a person who in the telling of his life's story unwittingly draws to mind a great truth which is the property of all individuals. Rush is born into the commune-like Little Belaire, which consists of sub-divisions of people called "cords", whose society is based on self-sufficiency. The cords lead contemplative lives influenced by the saints. Rush sets out upon a pilgrimage in order to discover what wisdom is required to become a saint. In the course of his travels he encounters many echoes of the past, not the least of which is the ironical denouement of the novel. Engine Summer is a quietly iconoclastic work, a curious hybrid of science fiction and poetic prose. It will assuredly stand the test of time. Highly recommended.

THE BEST SHORT STORIES OF FREDRIC BROWN, NEL £1.75, 447 pages

Reviewed by John Farr.

Really? Well, no, actually it's not his best short stories, merely two of his earlier collections (Space on My Hands and Nightmares and Geezenstacks) in a single volume. But don't let me put you off. Fredric Brown was SF's greatest exponent of the short-short story (just one or two pages), and he produced a lot of good, often humorous, tales of all lengths. Some of his ideas (particularly time travel paradoxes) have become clichés over the last twenty or thirty years, yet there's so much variety here---56 stories covering SF, fantasy and horror---that you should find plenty to entertain you. Good value for money.

DRUNKARD'S WALK by Frederik Pohl, Granada £1.25, 133 pages

Reviewed by Peter Day.

I've always regarded this novel as one of Pohl's better efforts. He manages to avoid the satirical overkill to be found in some of his other work while still getting in some good digs. Master Cornut, a university lecturer in mathematics, keeps trying to commit suicide, although he doesn't want to die. He suspects there is telepathic skullduggery at work, and sets out to uncover what turns out to be a sinister and far-reaching conspiracy. Splendid stuff.

INTO THE SLAVE NEBULA by John Brunner, Corgi £1.50, 157 pages

Reviewed by Anne Gay.

Talibrand was murdered---a rare event on neat, sanitised Earth. Right in the middle of Carnival, too. (So was an android, but no-one bothered about that.) Add a rich, spoiled youth as the instant detective and watch out; the androids have information. John Brunner's galactic future is coherent. His characters are reasonably 3-D, and the likeable hero develops throughout the story. All in all a workmanlike book. Not great literature but it'll fill a few hours pleasantly and raise the odd smile. Between this and Blade Runner, Android Rights are here to stay.

Editorial Notes

Only four pages this month because of a lack of material. Contributions of articles and artwork will be gratefully received. Thankyou to Locus, Ansible, Dave Langford and Dave Hardy for news items. Art credits this issue: Ivor Latto (p1), Phill Probert (p2) and John Dell (p4). This September 1982 issue has been edited and produced for the BSFG by Pauline E. Morgan, 39 Hollybrow, Selly Oak, Birmingham B29 4LX.

