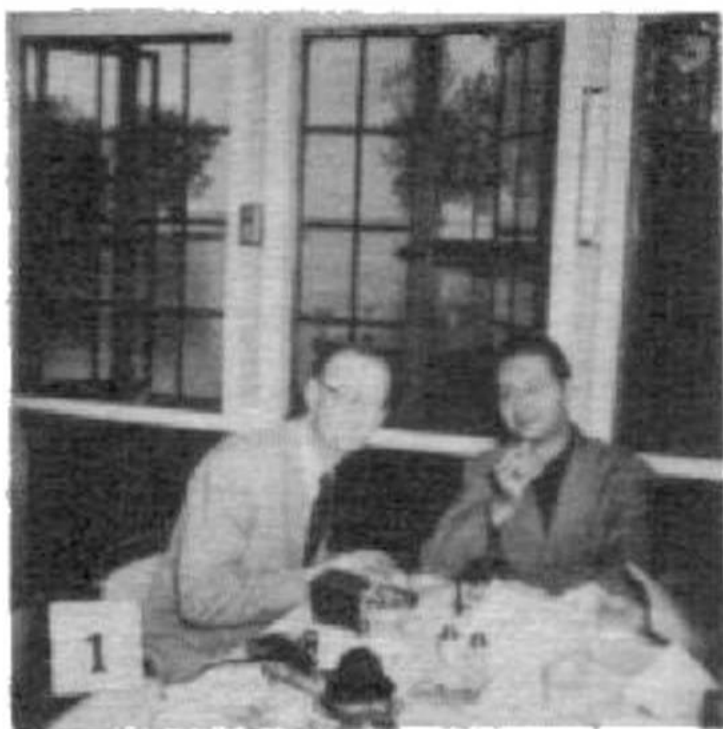


SCIENCE FICTION

NEWS LETTER



INDIAN LAKE: 1953

To obtain the names of these characters spread the magazine out flat, and read the back cover.

(Story on page 15.)

San Francisco in 1954

People in The News

Bea Mahaffey flew to Europe on vacation in May. She visited Belfast, the London S-F convention, and then pushed on to the continent for a six-weeks tour. Other editors scheduled to attend the London convention were: Ted Carnell (NEW WORLDS, London), H.J. Campbell (AUTHENTIC, London), Peter Hamilton (NEBULA, Scotland), Nic Osterbaan (PLANEET, Holland), and Georges Gallet (books, France.)

Arthur C. Clarke is again visiting in this country from England. He attended the Indian Lake conference for the second time, and then went on to Florida to hydrographic survey trip on the oceanbed. Audrey Lovett, "London's pride-and-joy brunette fan" also arrived in New York last month. She plans to remain in this country.

Walter Willis has recently recovered from a bout with pneumonia.

Bill Nolan is doing the narration on a Morrie Scott Dollens S-F film, "Dream of the Stars." The film is being shot for a half-hour television program, in Los Angeles. Also in that city, the ABC Radio Workshop effected a hook-up with the LASFS to present experimental science fiction dramas on the air.

Milton Rothman has been elected chairman of the Philadelphia S-F convention, following the death of James Williams. This will be the second time Rothman has held that post, having piloted Philly's first conclave in 1947. Tom Clareson resigned as vice president and publicity chairman, to accept a teaching position in Labrador. Al Nourse is the new publicity chief.

Lin Carter, returned from Korea and again living in Florida, is working on the 1954 Oz book, THE TIRED TAILORS OF OZ. His second collection of verse, GALLEON OF DREAM, will be ready in July; meanwhile he is doing preliminary work on a novel of ancient Britain. Carter will attend Boston U next fall.

Mack Reynolds and his wife have moved to San Miguel, Mexico. He claims to have found other S-F writers there, says the colony is a low-cost paradise for struggling pros.

Edward Wood and Charles Freudenthal have published the fourth and final issue of their JOURNAL OF SCIENCE FICTION (at 50¢, from 31 north Aberdeen St., Chicago.) This issue contains 80 pages, the 1952 Magazine Index, a chart showing the alleged circulation of ASTOUNDING as guaranteed to advertisers, and one of the most bitter leave-taking editorials ever published.

LATE BULLETIN: Arthur C. Clarke was married on June 15th to Miss Marilyn Torgeson, of Jacksonville, Florida. The wedding took place in Manhattan City Hall. Whirlwind courtship.

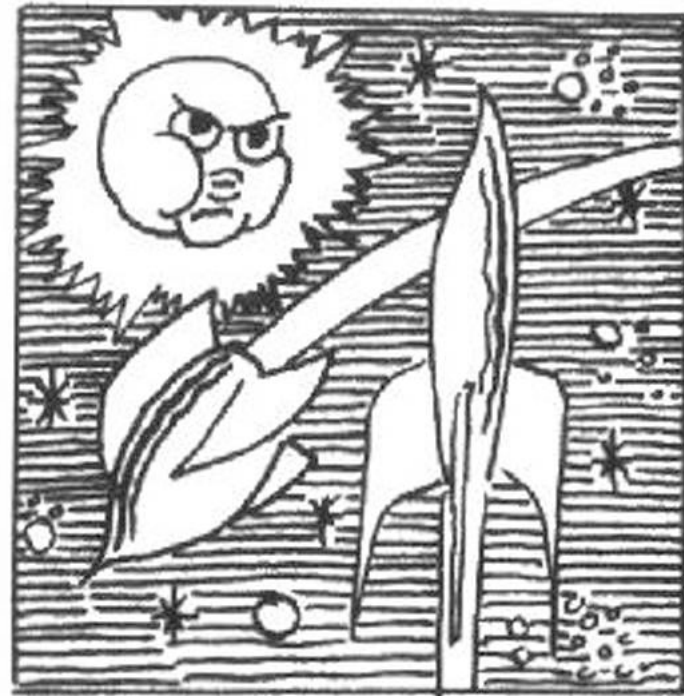


THE SUMMING UP

(MODERN SCIENCE FICTION, Its Meaning and Its Future. Edited by Reginald Bretnor. Coward-McCann, New York City, 1953. \$3.75)

"Roughly science fiction stands today, in book publication, where the detective story did twenty years ago: It's a form that has always existed to some extent, but has now acquired enthusiastic specialist readers which means specialist publishers, specialist reviewers and all the other phenomena we saw with the mystery (story)." Thus speaks Tony Boucher in his chapter of a symposium of science fiction literature, high and low. Boucher's job was to trace the rise of science fiction, with the names and dates, and to present a picture of the practical angle: actual publishing with regards costs, returns, profits and losses, etc. He does it magnificently, educationally: "(Doubleday) publishes specialized lines in both mystery and science fiction. In fact, it publishes as many mysteries as any other three houses combined and an almost proportionate amount of science fiction. Sales in both fields run about the same (somewhat higher than with most other houses): five thousand copies for a normally successful book; ten thousand for a smash hit. But a mystery is dead within six weeks after its publication; it will never sell another copy in its original edition. Whereas the science fiction book runs up the same initial sales ... then continues to sell indefinitely in a steady slow trickle, even after it has appeared in a paperback reprint."

The symposium contains eleven chapters, each by an authority in the field. With two exceptions, the material is new and has been written expressly for this volume. Arthur C. Clarke's chapter on the preparation for space flight was first published in England; a minor part of Sprague de Camp's chapter on creating imaginative fiction first appeared in GALAXY. Besides these three, the other contributors are John W. Campbell, Fletcher Pratt, Don Fabun, Rosalie Moore, Isaac Asimov, Philip Wylie, Gerald Heard, and the book's editor, Bretnor.



In his chapter on radio, motion pictures and television, Don Fabun also discusses debits and credits, financial and otherwise. While he believes the broadcast space operas are but cardboard substitutes for cardboard westerns, "CAPTAIN VIDEO is no mean package, as shows go. It is reputed ... to be signed ... on a five-year, \$10,000,000 contract for Post Cereals." And: "On romantic interest, SPACE PATROL goes SPACE CADET one better. In addition to a reformed villainess named Tonga, who runs about in tights ... there is a winsome wench named Carol, also dressed in tights, who provides what the producers are pleased to call "extremely subtle and kissless love interest." In movies, ROCKET-SHIP X-M cost only \$94,000 to produce ... (and) picked up \$700,000 in receipts, a fairly respectable figure and one that made Hollywood take a second look at science fiction. DESTINATION MOON, said Fabun, earned nearly three million in early returns. He looks into the perversion of "Who Goes There?" and "Farewell

to the Master"; was disappointed because Arch Obler's magnificent FIVE failed to attract the needed audiences.

Campbell discusses the place of science fiction in the world today and the place it should logically occupy tomorrow. "But a scientist must not speculate in public. ... Sciencefiction can provide for a science-based culture ... a means of practicing out in a no-practice area." Fletcher Pratt delivers the best service to the writer and would-be writer with his critique of the field, its plots, characterizations, hack-works and sometimes brilliant presentation. He names scores of stories and books, the stories they tell or attempt to tell, and the stories that may be drawn from their success or failure. He points out what few writers seem to realize: their tales are overloaded with gobbledygook which the fan easily recognizes and sometimes accepts but which the non-cult reader reels under. And inasmuch as it is that outside reader who supports the periodicals and books---! "We are talking about literature, and as literature it's nonsense and it's lousy." He defines the difference between the way George O. Smith and A.E. van Vogt pull the respective rabbits out of the hats.

Rosalie Moore delves deeper into somewhat the same vein with "Science Fiction and the Main Stream. Quote: "Too much mainstream fiction is a literature of reconciliation, and nothing more. ... From science fiction one gets the feeling that there is so much of interest going on ... there isn't much time for nostalgia." De Camp, while investigating the prehistoric beginnings of S-F, likewise contributes to the would-be writer's notebook in his chapter on the creative imagination. Asimov looks into the aspects of social science fiction, divides the genre into four eras and then examines the pigmies and giants of each. Arthur C. Clarke's chapter is a delight with its literary detective work, and its laying the fictional groundwork for the ships that will leap into space. Philip Wylie, veteran beater of drums, believes that science fiction and sanity go hand in hand in this age of crisis; a stand that, however pure in intent, will cause no end of trouble should the Beanie Brigade seize upon it as a substitute for "slan," "star-begotten," and other high I.Q. suggestive slogans and battle cries. ("AA-194," here we come!) In closing the volume, Gerald Heard examines the morals and religion attendant to the field, and editor Bretnor looks at its future. The book is a handsome one in all respects and cannot be recommended too highly. We suspect it will be a definition of sciencefiction itself for many years to come.



It should be required reading for some editors.

-BT

Breaking with hallowed tradition, News Letter presents here its first outright fiction offering, regardless of what you may have thought of some past news stories. There are many reasons for this presentation. (1) Boucher & McComas rejected it, thereby proving its worth; (2) Howard Browne recently introduced a well-known thud-and-blunder writer into his fantastic pages, proving the popularity of this kind of story; (3) mystery and science fiction have to mix someday; (4) the author is a friend of ours. Because we do not believe in editorial blurbs which attempt to provide the reader with an emotion that should be evoked by the story, we shall content ourselves with saying that this masterpiece by a struggling new writer compares favorably with Dunsany, Bierce, Poe, Bloch and Spillaine. It is subtly calculated to chill a nether portion of your anatomy.



When I got to the office I felt like hell. "Gawdamn," I said. My lip curled around a bottle of hooch and I didn't stop swallowing until the damn thing was empty.

"Hair of the dog, eh Sam?" cooed a honey-blonde I'd never laid eyes on before. She was perched on my desk like a sleepy Siamese dangling a pair of luscious silk-stockinged gams in my direction. Her dress was open to her kneecaps and I liked what she had inside it. But definitely. I swore under my breath and went for her like a two-dollar bettor for a longshot he knows can't lose. Her lips were red wine and I was bone-dry.

After a while she said, "I'm here for a reason."

"Well?" I snapped, lighting a butt. I put it in the side of my mouth and let it live there.

"You've got a nasty reputation, Mr. Slammer. Real nasty."

"Been reading my fan mail, doll?" I smiled crookedly.

"Never mind how I know. I know."

"So--?"

"So I want a man killed. I can make it worth your while." Her tone was ice and fire. I liked the things the sun did to her hair.

I stubbed out the butt on the barrel of my .45 and leaned back in my chair.

"I'm listening."



"Name is Max. Runs a clip joint on Broadway east of the Ferry Building. Short. Bald. Beefy. Red face. Moustache. Cigar. Gold teeth. Glasses. Squinty eyes. Hook nose. Loud dresser. Scar on cheek. Check?"

"Check," I said and reached for her.

After a while she handed me the key to her apartment and walked out. Lancaster Arms. 7g. But that would have to wait. Right now I had a date with a joker named Max at a clip joint on Broadway east of the Ferry Building. I bought a bottle of hooch from a cute little bundle downstairs and caught a taxi.

The joint was called THE SILVER SLIPPER, a seedy firetrap which reminded me how much I needed a shave. But the mouse that opened the door was a knockout. I reached for her.

After a while she said, "I belong to Max."

"Where can I find him?"

"Why should I tell you?" She was playing a close hand but I had all the aces. I laid the barrel of my .45 along her skull, splitting her skin like a ripe peach.

"I'd talk, delicious."

"Back room. Third door down the hall." Her face was all red and sticky like a circus clown's.

I smiled and gave her a pat on the fanny. She had guts. And I liked the things the sun did to her hair.

When I reached the door I didn't bother to knock. I blew the lock to hell and gone with Suzy and stepped into the room. A beefy little bastard with a cigar living under his moustache gave me the fish-eye behind a pair of horn-rims. "You Max?" I asked.

"Could be."

"Well then--" I said, and shot him in the stomach.

He did a sort of jerky dance--the kind you see in a puppet show--and folded like a wet newspaper. I hoped he was the Joe I was looking for. In my racket you can't be sure of anything. I killed a pint of hooch and thought things over. If Goldilocks wanted him rubbed out there must be an angle. I didn't like the smell of things.

Ducking out a side exit I hailed a cabbie. "Lancaster Arms," I snapped. "And don't spare the retreads." I intended getting some fast answers. One way or another.

Within ten minutes I was in her apartment. She was wearing a transparent silk negligee that did things to me. I swore under my breath and reached for her.

After a while I said, "Some answers, doll."

"Such as?" She got out her powder and paints and put on a new face.

"Such--" I drawled, playing the game my way, "as who was Max?"

She smiled like a fish-filled kitten. "My husband."

Things were beginning to tally. I didn't have all the details but I was old enough to add two and two.

"Insurance?" I snapped.

"Maybe."

"Let's be sure," I said and slapped her across the room four or five times. She whimpered like a sick mongrel and went into a Betty Davis.

"You can turn off the faucets," I growled, "it doesn't go with me." I was getting a little sore. If she wanted me to begin playing rough, well--

She'd had enough and said so.

"Who's in this caper with you?"

"Name is Keener. Hangs around the bookie joint behind a cigar store on Sutter. Tall. Wavy-hair. Blue eyes. Fair complexion. Pipe. Neat dresser. Watch-chain. Always smiling. We had it planned."

I'd been taken for a prize chump! Hired to knock off a husband so she and wavy-hair Keener could lam with the insurance money. Well, I had the answers now and I was through being the stooge. The roller-coaster ride was over. I grabbed a handful of negligee and jerked. She was mother-naked underneath and looked good that way.

"No doll plays Sam Slammer for a sucker. Not even one as easy on the optics as you are, Goldilocks," I said and levelled Suzy at her bellybutton.

"Sam ... darling! Don't shoot!" Her lovely torso heaved like a tug in choppy water and she was screaming in high C when I plopped four slugs into her stomach. She coughed and folded like a tired accordion.

Then I did a quick double-take. This was strictly for the birds. She was the first dame I'd ever air-conditioned who didn't bleed! I stowed Suzy and hunkered down for a closer look. Four little round black holes in that gorgeous alabaster skin and not a trace of blood. Puzzled, I opened her up with my boy-scout sticker and got the shock of my young life. She was nothing but cogs and coils and springs. A mechanical doll! Remembering some earlier events, I felt like a damned fool.



"I'm gonna find this bird Keener," I said aloud. "He's got some tall explaining to do."

"Finding me won't be necessary," a smooth-as-glass voice purred behind me, "since it seems I have found you."

I swung around to face a cannon in the hand of a tall wavy-haired, fair-complexioned, pipe-smoking, neatly-dressed, watch-chained smiling man.

"Keener!" I snapped.

"Correct, my impulsive friend."

"What's the score?" I asked, pointing to Goldilocks with the toe of one shoe.

"I created her," Keener said, "to fulfill my plan for your Earthly wealth. I arranged her marriage to this fellow Max, then arranged for his death and planned to collect a considerable amount of insurance. I did not count on your destroying my creation, Mr. Slammer. Very careless of you." As he spoke he was doing something to his body. His clothes suddenly fell away and I did my third double-take of the afternoon. His skin went with them, smile and all. The thing that held the cannon was seagreen with tentacles and bug-eyes.

"Gawdamn!" I breathed, backing toward the couch.

"As you have observed, Earthman, I am not of this planet. The knowledge you have of my presence here will die with you in a short moment."

I decided it was time to quit playing Information Please and took a quick dive behind the couch. Suzy was out and working for me by the time Green Gus got over his surprise. I emptied the clip into him and was mighty relieved to see him fold like any other leaded duck. Guess I'd been reading too many comic magazines about bullet-proof Martians. And this one bled--plenty. All green too, I noted, inside and out. The hall was packed like a New York subway so I took the fire escape down instead of the elevator. Let homicide answer the questions. I smiled, wondering what Lt. O'Shabe would say when he found the bodies.

It was raining outside. I bought a bottle of hooch at the liquor store, turned up my coat collar and headed for the office. I felt like hell.



(Nolan)

THE 6th WESTERCON: was held at the Commodore Hotel, Los Angeles, over the May 30-31 week-end, to an audience estimated at two hundred. The affair was sponsored this year by the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society; next year San Francisco will play host, Les and Es Cole having made the bid.

Principal speakers were Tseu Yano, recently arrived from Japan (he hopes to attend Philadelphia), who outlined plans for translating science fiction into Japanese; Gerald Heard, spoke on a "controversial subject" our reporter neglected to identify; Ray Bradbury, who outlined the story of filming his screenplay; Mel Hunter, who illustrated his talk with astronomical slides; and R.S. Richardson who did the same. Other speakers were Clinton, Cox, Ackerman, van Vogt, Nolan, and Chad Oliver. E.E. Evans was chairman of the event, with Wendy Ackerman the program mistress. Two short films by Ray Harryhausen and Morris Scott Dollens were shown; and the radio team of Steve Markam and John Eppolito presented tape records of three air programs, including the Ray Bradbury story, "Mars is Heaven." A banquet, panel discussions, and readings from prepared texts (fiction and non-fiction) rounded out the two day program.

-Frank Anmar

SHOP TALK



A representative of Ballantine Books, speaking at the Indian Lake conference last month, declared that his company intends to publish one science fiction book a month for at least the next 12 months. (He also said they soon hope to offer \$5000 for book manuscripts, and that 9¢ a word would be paid for stories in next year's anthology, STAR SCIENCE FICTION STORIES.) Ballantine does not reprint hard-cover books, but do occasionally reprint magazine serials and short stories. Next September, Dell Books will also start a line of original novels called "Dell First Editions" and again science fiction is included. To these, add the usual reprint companies, and you will find that the following titles will be available in paperback editions this summer and fall.

Now:

WAR OF THE WORLDS (Pocket Books) H.G. Wells
 SPACE PLATFORM (Pocket) Murray Leinster
 THE HAPLOIDS (Lion Books) Jerry Soh
 FRANKENSTEIN (Lion) Mary Shelley
 SLAN (Dell Books) A.E. van Vogt
 FIRST HE DIED (Dell) Clifford Simak
 THE PUPPET MASTERS (Signet Books) Robert Heinlein
 DESTINATION: UNIVERSE (Signet) A.E. van Vogt
 FANCIES & GOODNIGHTS (Bantam Books) John Collier
 IS ANOTHER WORLD WATCHING? (Bantam) Gerald Heard
 STAR S-F STORIES (Ballantine Books) Fred Pohl
 THE SPACE MERCHANTS (Ballantine) Pohl & Kornbluth
 THE UNDYING FIRE (Ballantine) Fletcher Pratt

July:

PLANET OF DREAMERS (Pocket) John D. MacDonald
 AHEAD OF TIME (Ballantine) Henry Kuttner
 THE SECRET MASTERS (Ballantine) Gerald Kersh

August:

TOMORROW, THE STARS (Signet) Robert Heinlein
 HUMAN ? (Lion) Judith Merril
 SHADOW OF TOMORROW (Permabooks) Fred Pohl
 CHILDHOOD'S END (Ballantine) Arthur C. Clarke

Sept:

SIX GREAT SHORT NOVELS OF SCIENCE FICTION (Dell)
 Boucher, Cloete, Heinlein, Sturgeon, others.
 BRING THE JUBILEE (Ballantine) Ward Moore

Undated:

THE LONG LOUD SILENCE (Dell) Wilson Tucker
 SPACE TUG (Pocket) Murray Leinster

Few if any writers are unhappy with this state of affairs, for quite often the income realized from paperback editions is much greater than the royalties received on the original two or three dollar edition. Some science fiction books have sold only a few hundred copies, and the loss to author and publisher alike would be staggering if it had not been for a reprint later. The income a writer receives from the paperbacks ranges from a low of five hundred dollars, to the probable high of five thousand that Ballantine mentions. (In cases of "names" such as Heinlein, the figure could be much higher.) On the average, a writer today might expect one to three thousand as his share from each title.

Except Mary Shelley.



THE DEMOLISHED MAN (Shasta Publishers, Chicago, 1953, \$3.) For the benefit of those 10% of our readers who have not previously read Alfred Bester's striking novel in magazine form, THE DEMOLISHED MAN might best be described as a 24th century science fiction murder story. In that century, Espers can prevent crime before it happens by reading a criminal's intent in his mind--and packing him off to demolition. In the face of this and the fact that a murder hasn't occurred in more than seventy years, one man deliberately plots and executes a murder. Within thirty minutes, a telepathic detective discovers him, but it requires two hundred pages and weeks of work to prove it. And at that, the detective is unable to bring him to justice; the murderer himself is his own (and the novel's) climax.

Of more interest to the 90% of our readers who have read the magazine version is a report of what has happened to the book version. It has been rewritten. By that, we mean complete chapters have been dropped, characters have been relegated to minor roles, 24th-century inventions have been eliminated, names have been changed, material added or slanted to make the book interesting to the general public, and the whole has been dressed up--or perhaps we should say "undressed." The original story remains the same, as does the outcome, but new motives move some of the characters, while others are almost eclipsed in the excitement. The eliminations from the magazine version include: the entire first chapter, the crime-tracing "moltec" machines, and those sometimes clean, sometimes dirty "panty" shows. Changes or additions include: Ben Reich subsidizing and owning "The League of Esper Patriots," and Preston Powell becoming Lincoln Powell, or "Dishonest Abe," a man who sometimes lies for the fun of it. Some other interesting name-changes are as follows:

Old magazine version

New book version

Augustus TB
 Ktry (book appraiser)
 Krst (criminologist)
 Wilson Maine
 Sam Jordan
 \$Son
 Mr Peetcy (computing machine)
 Gimp-head
 Dollars
 Blogg

Augustus Tate
 Graham
 DeSantis
 Wilson Jordan
 Jo Maine
 Jackson Beck
 Old Man Mose
 Bem
 Credits
 Blonn

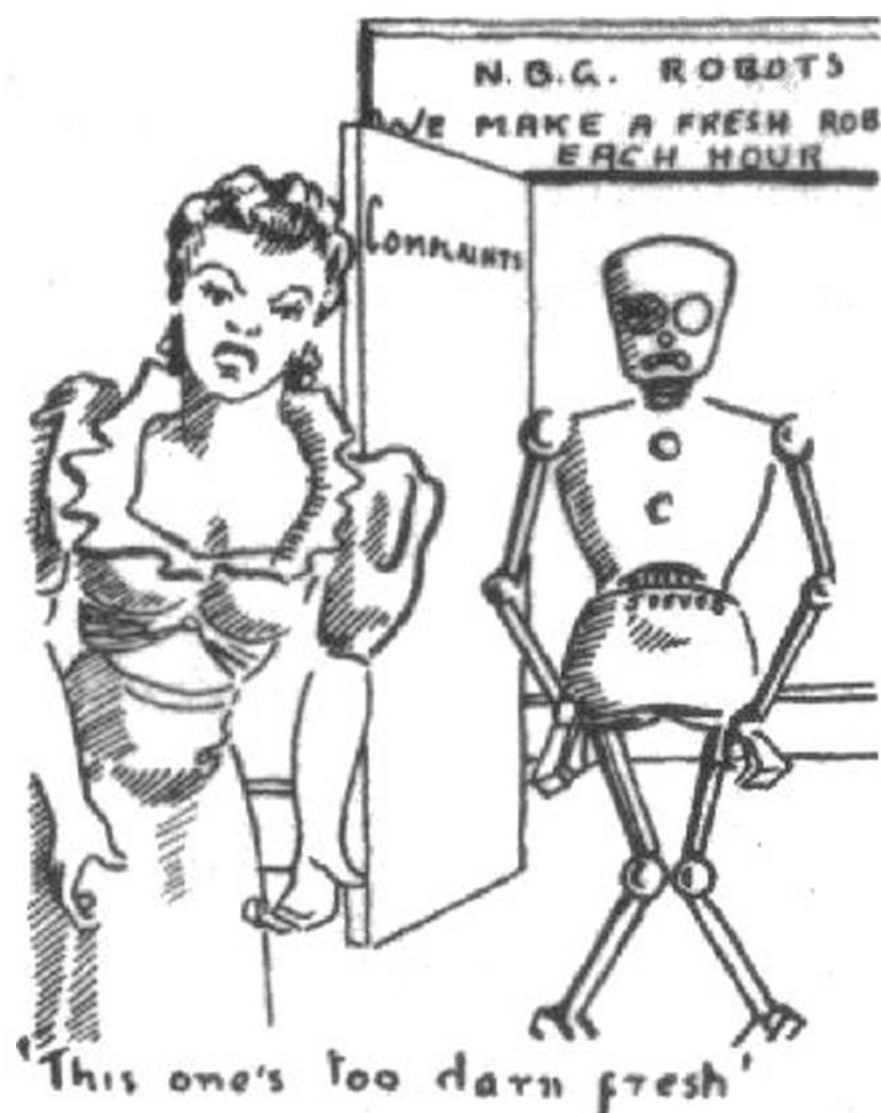
Duffy Wyg&, bless her, remains Duffy Wyg&, but she's toned down.

Year in, Year out, ever since the day Phil Stong published a weird-fantasy collection, THE OTHER WORLDS, and Donald Wollheim followed a few years later with his POCKETBOOK OF SCIENCE FICTION we've been deluged with anthologies and collections. Some of 'em have been extremely popular; witness the sales figures of thirty to forty thousand copies; others are best left lying. To judge

by the continual rash of them, anthologies must be money-makers. Here are seven of the latest:

FUTURE TENSE (Greenberg, New York, 1952, \$3.50.) Edited by Kendall Foster Crossen. Crossen begins this anthology with a thought-provoking introduction, and ends it in the grand old tradition of show business with a "leave them laughing" short yarn, "Love Story" (by Christopher Monig). The volume contains seven reprints from magazines, the best of which are Plagiarist (Phillips), Things of Distinction (Crossen), Dream's End (Kuttner), and The Ambassadors (Boucher); plus seven new tales written for the book. The best of these new ones are by James Blish, Gerald Heard, John D. MacDonald, and the above Monig entry. The remaining stories, both old and new, range from "just good" to mediocre; being by no means the best work of C.L. Moore, Rose B. Elliott, Marylin Gardner, Bruce Elliott, Miriam Allen de Ford, and Ward Moore. For my money, the best of the original stories (and, with the exception of "Plagiarist," the best in the book) is the longest entry by Blish, "Beanstalk," some 30,000 words. On the basis of eight excellent tales, the volume is recommended.

-Len J. Moffatt



THE BEST FROM FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION (Second Series). (Little, Brown & Company, Boston, 1953, \$3.) In a follow-up to their successful anthology of last year, editors Anthony Boucher and J. Francis McComas here present a new selection of 18 tales they judge to be the best of those recently published in their magazine --- and this reviewer is inclined to agree. We don't believe this second volume matches the entertainment level of the first, but nevertheless it is well worth the asking price. As in the magazine, you will find less straight-laced science fiction here, but more experimenting with fantasy and non-standard S-F ideas. Offered are fifty-five more pages and 25¢ more cash than before. -BT

SCIENCE FICTION ADVENTURES IN DIMENSION (Vanguard, New York, 1953, \$2.95) Edited by

Groff Conklin, who surely is the busiest editor in the anthology field; this is his seventh in seven years, and unusual in that he includes fantasy in the volume (perhaps for the first time.) The collection is notable for several time-travel stories that are really worth keeping in book form, plus a few on parallel worlds. There are twenty-three yarns here, dating from 1930 thru 1952--- or to put it another way, from Atlantis, B.C. to ???A.D. Best-liked were "The Good Provider" by Marion Gross, and "Castaway" by A. Bertram Chandler. Remember when steaks were 45¢ a pound? -BT

THE CONTINENT MAKERS (Twayne, New York, 1953, \$2.95.) L. Sprague de Camp has brought together here eight of his tales of the Viagens, a Brazilian government-sponsored space transport and exploitation system. The eight have originally appeared in four magazines, and are based upon the proposal that

Brazil is the globe's leading nation, following a war that all but wipes out the present leading powers. Followers of his well-developed Krishna tales will know what to expect. -BT

WORLDS OF TOMORROW (Pellegrini & Cudahy, New York, 1953, \$3.95.) August Derleth's twelfth anthology, and as is usual he dips into yesterday to publish a Lovecraft and a Wandrel --but with these standard trimmings out of the way, the remainder of the nineteen yarns are readable and a few downright excellent. Present are Mack Reynolds' delightful, "The Business, As Usual," (which ought to end all time-travel tales), William Tenn's "Null-P," and Arthur C. Clarke's "Superiority." As mentioned in our last review of a Derleth title, we have in the past thought little of his editorial tastes, but this book as well as the previous collection are causing a change of mind. -BT

STAR SCIENCE FICTION STORIES (Ballantine Books, New York, 1953, 35¢.) Edited by Frederik Pohl, we can only suggest that you skip purchasing the current copy of some magazine of like-price, and buy this instead. Pohl collects here fifteen stories never before published anywhere, and it is rumored that he paid 6¢ a word for the material. The result is fantastically better than any current magazine on the stands, despite the fact that all of these yarns are not up to one quality level of entertainment. Definitely recommended. -BT

THE GOLDEN APPLES OF THE SUN (Doubleday, New York, 1953, \$3.00)

Ray Bradbury's fourth. A portrait in utter frustration is this reviewer. In days now gone, to praise Bradbury was like taking chances on the ponies: you either won or lost--a fifty-fifty opportunity. Half the S-F readers loathed him like a plague and the other half swooned noxiously at the mere mention of his name. Now that the furore has died away and it is usually safe to state emphatically that you enjoy Ray's work, there is no longer much to praise! His retreat to pseudo-sophisticated writing and his disregard for all that work done in the pulps (and pulpy though it may have been, it was top-grade) is indeed discouraging. It appears that the slicks have gained an avant-gardeist, but S-F has lost one of its foremost proponents. The stories in this book are good, there's little doubt of that -- even the reviewers of TIME who pan S-F as a matter of form, rated it highly.



But this reviewer found such tales as "Powerhouse" (the new "Powerhouse"), "The Wilderness," and "The Great Fire" more tedious than entertaining. The eight (of twenty-two) stories in the volume that deligned to be science fiction are pleasing to the aficionado, but it will be gruff stuff bulldozing through Bradbury's hodge-podge of mood pieces, Mexican portraits, fantasies and what-have-you, for the reader who wants straight S-F. Despite the somewhat negative approach of this reviewer, the book was quite pleasing to him.

-Harlan Ellison

BALLROOM OF THE SKIES (Greenberg, New York, 1952, \$2.75.) John D. MacDonald's second book in the science fiction field, and an eye-opener in the later pages. As in his first novel, this one deals with an Earth controlled by "super-beings," if you'll forgive the term, controlled in a degrading manner and in degrading ways, for a really superior purpose. The protagonist suffers much in learning this, due perhaps to his hard-headedness, but eventually he rebels in the right way and discovers what is going on. Vivid writing and reading, especially in the portrayal of this country as a second- or third-rate power with India riding high in world affairs. -Len J. Moffatt & BT

THE TRANSCENDENT MAN (Rinehart, New York, 1953, \$2.50.) Jerry Sohl's second novel, and superior to his initial entry. Again the idea of "super-beings" living among us is involved; this time they are discovered in a secret government laboratory where there appears to be a hint of artificially-stimulated regeneration (for example growing new limbs on battle casualties), and more than a hint of sabotage. Magazine writer Martin Enders is sent in undercover by the C.I.C. and practically winds up with a hole in the head from a Colt .45. Enders' job is separating people from outsiders who resemble people, and in the final pages he discovers himself among the separated. -BT

HELLFLOWER (Abelard, New York, 1953, \$2.75.) George O. Smith having fun in his quaint way, mixing up hellflower (dope) peddlers and space opera. We still don't understand why some of the characters did the things they did, or didn't do the things they should have; people walk into spaceships and sit down as though they were phone booths, other people do equally odd and unsatisfactory things. Loose ends left dangling. -BT

WEST OF THE SUN (Doubleday, New York, 1953, \$2.75.) By Edgar Pangborn. What is originally a fascinating idea becomes bogged down in verbiage: seven people are selected and trained on earth and then sent to a new planet to build and populate it; one dies enroute and the remaining six crash-land, to start work, amongst the discovered aboriginal natives and beasts. In his effort to describe in the most minute detail, the author sacrifices interest and movement in the telling. -BT

NEW BOOKS

The John C. Winston Company of Philadelphia have published five more teen-age novels, to accompany the ten volumes published last year; each at \$2. The new ones and their themes are: MYSTERY OF THE THIRD MINE by Robert Lowndes (asteroid mining); ROCKET TO LUNA by Richard Narsten (building a depot on the moon); THE MYSTERIOUS PLANET by Kenneth Wright (new planet enters the solar system); VANDALS OF THE VOID by Jack Vance (space piracy); and BATTLE ON MERCURY by Erik van Lihn --is this Lester del Ray? (battling the sun). We found the two volumes by Wright and Jack Vance to be the most interesting.

OTHER TITLES received at press time, and to be reviewed in future issues are: THE ROBOT AND THE MAN (Gnome) edited by Marty Greenberg; PRIZE SCIENCE FICTION (McBride) edited by Donald Wollheim; ICEWORLD (Gnome) by Hal Clement; AGAINST THE FALL OF NIGHT (Gnome) by Arthur C. Clarke; FLIGHT INTO YESTERDAY (Bourey and Curl) by Charles L. Harness; CHILDREN OF THE ATOM by W. Shiras.

THE FANTASY BOOKMAN

by Darrell
C. Richardson

Fans, collectors and just plain readers of science fiction who are still without Donald Day's INDEX TO THE SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINES are doing themselves an injustice. This very helpful tool for the reader contains an index of the S-F magazines from 1926 through 1950; there is an index by author as well as by the title, plus a check-list showing the date, volume and number of each issue of the various magazines. The work involved in compiling such a volume makes me shudder to think of it! Order from Donald Day (The Perri Press, Box 5007, Portland 13, Ore. \$6.50.)

I have just finished reading THE DEMOLISHED MAN by Alfred Bester (Shasta), and it was quite an experience. It may seem trite to call it "unusual," "unique," or "different," but all these adjectives apply. It's the kind of a book you will either detest or like intensely; the concept of the super mutant men, called Espers, is not new; the plot isn't so new either -- it's a murder mystery. But it's the style of this novel which may well set a new trend in science fiction. Bester uses his experience in writing for television to very good effect, and Shasta has done a very good job of book making.



CLOAK OF AESIR (Shasta, Chicago, 1952, \$3) is another collection of John W. Campbell's yarns which may well join your basic S-F library. In quality of writing this book ranks next to WHO GOES THERE? among Campbell's seven published volumes. The lead story, Forgetfulness, is especially unforgettable. Other tales in the volume are The Escape, The Machine, The Invaders, Rebellion, Out of Night, and the title story. All of these appeared in AST under the "Don A. Stuart" pseudonym.

SECOND STAGE LENSMAN (Fantasy Press, Reading, Pa., 1953, \$3) is the fifth book in the famous "Lensmen" series by Edward E. Smith, and my personal favorite of the lot. It is doubtful if any science fiction series has been more popular than these; needless to say, this continues the exploits of the Galactic Patrol in its conflict with Boskonian. The other summer I toured the west on my vacation; I visited bookstores in St. Louis, Oklahoma City, Portland, Amarillo, Albuquerque, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Boise, Salt Lake City, and Denver. And everywhere, the book-dealers told me: "Smith books sell better than any of the new S-F books from the small speciality publishers." There's a reason -- ask the man who owns one!

THIS ISLAND EARTH (Shasta, Chicago, 1953, \$3) is Raymond F. Jones' fourth book. It is based on a novel which appeared only last year in TWS. The story revolves around a unique catalog, which offers for sale all sorts of complicated equipment which isn't supposed to exist! Cal Meacham, an electronics en-

glacier, orders some of the strange stuff and is able to put it together; this caused him to make contact with the "Peace Engineers" and become involved in an incredible invasion against "this island earth." I believe almost any S-F reader will enjoy this one. It is a beautifully bound book, artistic and eye-catching.

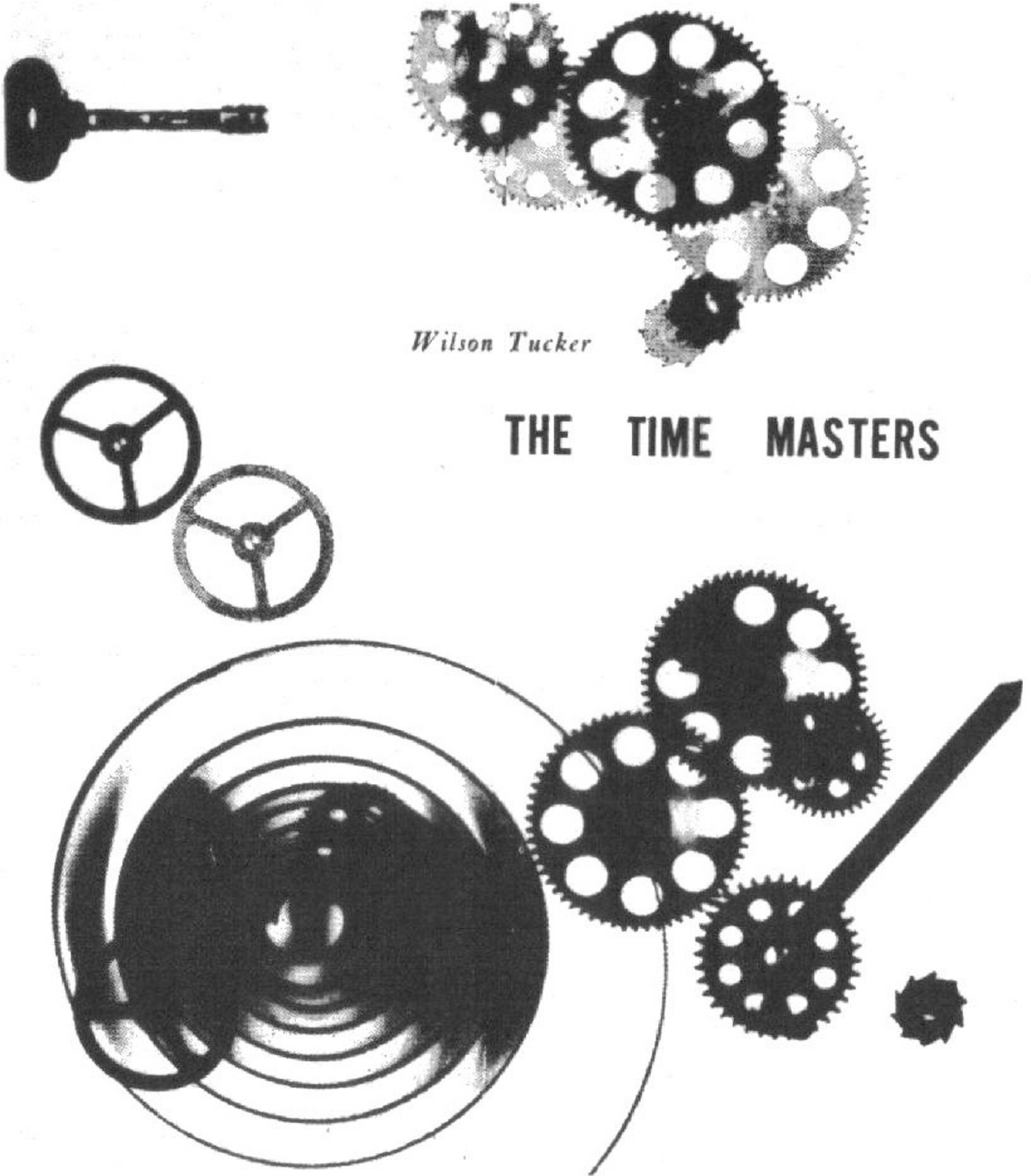
KING CONAN (Gnome Press, New York, 1953, \$3) is the third "Conan" book, but Robert E. Howard's fifth volume. (In case anyone is wondering what the five titles are, I refer to the Arkham House omnibus book SKULL FACE AND OTHERS (1946), A GENT FROM BEAR CREEK (Jenkins, London, 1937), and two former Gnome Press titles, CONAN THE CONQUEROR and THE SWORD OF CONAN.) You who have enjoyed all the Conan yarns from Weird Tales will still want this new book because it contains a brand new title, The Treasure of Tranlcas; other novelettes which round out the volume are jewels of Gwahlur, Beyond the Black River, The Phoenix on the Sword, and The Scarlet Citadel. Sprague de Camp supplies a most interesting introduction and also "edits" the new Conan yarn. For years I've wanted to write a story in which Conan and Tarzan meet in mortal combat. Would that be a scrap! -DCR

THE INDIAN LAKE CONFERENCE:

came off on schedule again this year (May 16-17) at Beatley's Hotel, Russells Point, Ohio. 117 persons registered at the lake resort hostelry, with perhaps a dozen more staying nearby; they came from the larger and smaller cities of the midwest, from England, Canada, Georgia and New York City. The rainy week-end stillness was often punctured by firecrackers, sinister cries in the night, and several young gentlemen calling themselves "Seventh Fandom," who marched-and-chowdered on the front sidewalks. As usual, Doc Barrett played host, assisted by Don Ford, Roy Lanender, and the central Ohio fan groups.

Principal speaker was Arthur C. Clarke, paying his second visit to the States. Clarke revealed he has ten books coming off the presses in the next two years (including a collection of short stories from Ballantine), and promises to stop writing for a while. He exhibited color slides taken on last year's journey across the country, and also offered a tape recording for those who wished to listen in his room -- noise in the hall made it almost impossible to hear there. Other brief speakers were Frank Robinson, Phillip Jose Farmer, Ned McKeown, Ted and Judy Dikty, and Harland Ellison, who presented a gold plaque to Arthur Clark for the meritorious work done in the science fiction field.

Unscheduled entertainment was provided by Randy Garrett; and also by Ray Beam, who managed a next-to-impossible feat with a Beatley table knife. Dr. Barrett repaired the damage with three stitches, the second time over the week-end that such needlework was necessary. Many slides were shown in addition to Clarke's, including a hundred or more taken on an European trip by Shirley McKeown. "Old Woodchuck" Grant exhibited movies of previous Lake conferences and past national conventions. Serious constructive fans playing poker in the "sua rooms" at the end of each corridor were constantly annoyed by the sounds of weeping women, people discussing "very old ancient archaic" languages, and the house dick merrily tossing bounders out of young ladies' rooms.



Wilson Tucker

THE TIME MASTERS

THE TIME MASTERS, Wilson Tucker's new science fiction novel, poses the problem of a man who drops to earth from a wrecked spacecraft, drops somewhere, someWHEN. What culture does he find, and which culture discovers him? Tucker's new novel goes on sale in all bookstores in June. \$2.50

Autographed copies will be available from W.B. Read & Co., 109 N. Main street, Bloomington, Illinois. Mailed to you postpaid.

Rinehart & Co., Inc. New York Toronto

THE BIG BLOODSHOT EYE

Is watching you!

For those who make a hobby of viewing things with alarm, the current state of science fiction publishing should be red meat and fertile ground-- and damn the metaphors! The magazine field is going both up and down simultaneously, with three pulps dead and four new ones born, with schedules cut back all along the line and ambitious new projects announced for the near future. As one scribe caught in the pinch put it: "The field is shaking itself out. Not a full-scale recession, but there's so damn many magazines that some of them are having difficulties."

More will be in difficulty before the summer is out; summer-time is death on magazines. Many an editor and his publishers have witnessed the horrors of a 60 or 70 percent return of unsold copies, on summer issues; and when you are a science fiction editor or publisher, and your press run is barely 50,000 copies to begin with, thirty thousand unsold magazines is disaster. Privately, we've always enjoyed the boasting and bragging various individuals have done about their circulation figures. They are happy liars of course, and often quite transparent. Take a look at the ASTOUNDING circulation figures, as given in an advertising chart reprinted in the JOURNAL OF SCIENCE FICTION.



Where the JOURNAL editors got a copy of the jealously guarded chart is a minor mystery, but John Campbell's advertising salesman claim their circulation is now 131,000 copies. In May, 1949, it was 78,000; the next year 94,000; the next year 101,000; and last year 119,000. We aren't so much surprised at this year's estimated 131,000 as we are at 1949's miserable 78,000. Was that all? That figure hardly agrees with all the wiseacres who were tossing off circulation numbers like pony bets. But if ASTOUNDING was that low in 1949, how far down were the really worthless magazines? And where are they today?

Our opinion, for what it is worth, is that many of our less-pretentious magazines are drifting along on circulations of fifty thousand OR LESS. The boasts and misleading half-truths of staff members are being deliberately ignored. Inasmuch as the complete staffs of these small jobs often are no more than one or two men, and sometimes operated from the home or small offices, they do not need the higher sales figures of their expensive brothers to break even. Ironically, they may safely survive the summer.

Somewhat similar to the magazine position is that of books and motion pictures; both markets are at or near flood tide. Ten movies are noted elsewhere in this issue, and the reviews of at least twenty-two books. On a later page you will find several more titles of books still to come this summer and fall. Presumably the movies will do all right except in the TV areas, but while book titles are many, their sales are few. Apparently only the paperbacks are enjoying the best of times.

(continued on next page)

J.T. McIntosh, a British lad whose real name may be James MacGregor, is one of the newer writers whose work we've followed with keen enjoyment. This month, Doubleday is publishing his first book, *WORLD OUT OF MIND*, and same will be reviewed here in the next issue. But meanwhile in the April issue of *FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION*, he said something about spaceship crews that has long needed saying: "Scouts' crews were half men and half women for one main reason. Any other system was ridiculous." Amen.

Subject: Milty Rothman and the convention publicity. A few months ago we received a letter from a Philadelphia fan who told us it was "our duty" to publicize the convention, and then to give it only good publicity. That's nonsense. What might be called a whispering campaign has been going on these past months against Philly, and we've had a small share in it. The whispers were caused by the rumor (and speculation) that "Sprague de Camp's rules" would forbid certain cities from bidding for the 1954 site. You may have read of this matter in some fanzines.

It seems to be the fate of every convention to suffer attack from some quarter. Cincinnati "was won by trickery in a smoke-filled room," Portland was written off as a loss because of its distant location, New Orleans was ridiculed as a "dianetics convention," while Chicago was "sold down the river to (and by) dirty pros." Presumably the smear against San Francisco will be the foggy weather, or mosquitos. But some people were honestly troubled with the "de Camp rules" and the apparent undemocratic procedures Philadelphia is building. We've corresponded with these people, and with Rothman, with the below results.

Rothman states: "Nowhere in any rules written as yet is it stated what criteria will be used by the credentials committee in approving bids. de Camp's only purpose ... was to make sure that bids would be submitted only from cities having bona-fide fan organizations." In other words, no more frivolous bids for a "Barrel-con at Niagara Falls." Rothman further points out that ALL prospective rules must first be put to the floor for adoption, amendment, or rejection; and if the credentials committee and their ideas aren't liked, they can be voted down. We are willing to let it stand at that, with the reminder that interested parties should see to it they are present when the rules are read and voted upon.

Closing subject: a postcard bearing the following messages was received from Belfast just before presstime:

"We've got Bea locked up here in an old castle. Why don't you saddle Lee's horse and come rescue her? Though there's a moat here which might take the beam (gleam??) out of your eye." "Who wants to be rescued? I'm having the time of my life. Why don't you join us and we'll stage an Elre-con here and now?"

The signers: Walt, Madelaine, and Bea.



"THAR SHE BLOWS . . ."



Hollywood has long held the habit of rushing into headlines with any bit of information or misinformation which they believe will bring publicity -- good, bad and indifferent. Announcements of story-purchases are included in this publicity grab-bag, and for that reason you've probably read of scores of science fiction properties bought in the last few years. But you haven't seen scores of pictures. The answer is that the majority of them have been indefinitely postponed or even discarded. The studios think little of spending a few thousand on a literary property, and then putting it on the shelf to gather dust. Some of these S-f tales may reach the screen in the future, some may never. Below is a list of spring and summer pictures which will reach the screen because they've overcome the initial obstacle, and have actually been filmed. (Some may already be seen in theaters.)

February release: THE MAGNETIC MONSTER (United Artists); with Richard Carlson and Jean Byron.

April release: ABBOTT & COSTELLO GO TO MARS (Universal); with those two characters plus Mari Blanchard.

May release: PHANTOM FROM SPACE (United Artists); with Rudolph Anders and Noreen Nash. IT CAME FROM OUTER SPACE (Universal); with Richard Carlson and Barbara Rush. SPACEWAYS (Lippert); with Howard Duff and Eva Bartok. INVADERS FROM MARS (20th Century Fox); with Arthur Franz and Helena Carter.

June release: THE BEAST FROM 20,000 FATHOMS (Warner Bros.); with Paul Christain and Paula Raymond. THE TWONKY (United Artists); with Hans Conreld and Gloria Blondell. THE NEANDERTHAL MAN (United Artist); with Robert Shayne.

Later: THE ROBOT MONSTER (Independent); with George Nadar.

Comment: Strangely missing from the above line-up is the new George Pal picture, WAR OF THE WORLDS, which you've already read of in the fan press. It was scheduled for May, but at the last minute, Paramount studios postponed it indefinitely, despite the fact that it has already been previewed about the nation. Studio claims they are now considering a 3-D process.

Ray Bradbury is twice represented in the above list, having penned "It Came" for May (the first 3-D space opera), and "The Beastie" for June. Ray Harryhausen, a Los Angeles scienceer, is credited with the special effects and trick-shots of the beast. We take a dim view of most of the ten pictures on the release chart, having already seen a few and read synopsis of others. Beware of those Invaders from Mars-- they prove to be all a dream and not even a supposedly - surprise ending saves it. The space cadets in the audience may be caught in open-mouthed surprise, but old hands will spot the telegraphed ending long before. We have no data on hand for "The Phantom", but "Spaceways" is a tale of the building and launching of the first space station. That's Henry Kuttner's "Twonky" there, or it was in the beginning ... it could be anything now. As for the Neanderthal gentleman, expect the worst and you won't be disappointed.

Note to readers: Science Fiction News Letter will discontinue publication at the end of the year. We contemplate only two more issues before suspension. There are four primary reasons for suspending publication, the last two of which being the more important: (1) a steady decline in circulation, (2) the higher cost of printing and mailing, (3) an increasing lack of spare time to devote to the magazine, and (4) a waning interest in it. Under one format or another, Bloomington News Letter and Science Fiction News Letter has been published since 1945. Upon cessation of activities, the title reverts back to Richard Wilson, from whom it was only borrowed. Please do not remit more than forty cents for the next two issues. -BT

THOSE PHOTOGRAPHS ON PAGE ONE:

TOP ROW: (1) Arthur C. Clarke and Robert Bloch. (2) Mrs. Phillip Jose Farmer, Earl Perry, Mrs. Randy Garrett. (3) standing, unidentified man and Doc Barrett. Seated, Harriet Fellas and Jerry Bixby. These scenes from the Sunday noon banquet.

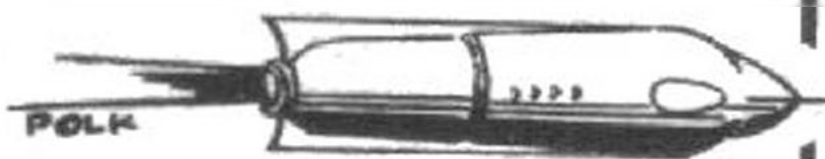
SECOND ROW: (4) Ned and Shirley McKeown. (5) Sybil and Howard DeVore. (6) unidentified fan in background, Don Ford and Ned McKeown sampling the rare sunshine of the state.

THIRD ROW: (9) Larry Shaw, same sunshine. (10) Dave Kyle, who was smuggled in from Canada in a trunk. Pictures number seven and eight were submitted to the Breen office and rejected.

LAST BLAST:

We didn't think too well of Pangborn's novel, WEST OF THE SUN, reviewed on page 13, but in honesty we should report it is superior to the blurbs written on the dustjacket. When you read the jacket, you will learn that the planet Lucifer is "several light years west of the Sun of Earth." And the Pole-star is due north of it, we presume?

SCIENCE FICTION



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