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Clifford Simak: An Interview

Conducted by Paul Walker*

Of all the Clifford D. Simaks I know, the strangest is that of Goblin Reservation, The Werewolf Principle, *and* Destiny Doll. *What was he trying to do? And why?*

Throughout the years an argument has been in progress as to where fantasy leaves off and science fiction begins and it seems to me that as the art of imaginative writing has progressed, the possibility of setting up a boundary between the two is becoming less and less. There are, I suppose, certain stories which could be called science fiction, where the author limits himself to the realm of the possible, but certainly there are far more that, while they could be adjudged to lie in the area of science fiction, show decided elements of fantasy. If I were pressed for a definition, I think I would be inclined to call all imaginative stories fantasy and let it go at that. It has been said that what we are doing is creating a modern mythology and this seems to me a fair appraisal of the situation.

I do not think that we should attempt to limit ourselves within the narrow bounds of what might be called classical science fiction. If we do so, we may stifle the true development of the imaginative story. We should feel free to use the old mythology, develop new mythology as we are able and give ourselves as free a rein as possible to construct a literature that is intellectually stimulating.

It can be claimed with some logic, I suppose, that ghosts and robots do not mix, but I see no reason why they shouldn't. If a writer wants to interweave the old mythology and the new, there should be nothing to prevent it. Nor does it seem to me that when we go back into time to make use of the old mythology—the ghosts, the goblins, the ghouls—that we of necessity must maintain them in the traditional setting. Goblins are expected to be found in ruined castles; they could be found with as much effect in an Iowa barn.

It was with this thought in mind that I wrote *The Goblin Reservation* and then went on to write "Out of Their Minds," a story of somewhat lesser quality. In the first I brought the older mythical concepts into a future society; in the second I tried to show that even now we are creating the mythology of the future. And anyone who wants to argue against this should first take note of the present interest in old comic books. And at the time I wrote "Out of Their Minds," the interest was considerably less than it is today.

Certainly I am not advocating that every writer should mix ghosts and robots, but my

point is that we should not build up a hide-bound, self-imposed tradition which would prevent our doing so.

What of Simak, the Mystic?

I know that I have been called a mystic writer, but I must decline the honor. What I have done is to ask questions and attempt to make some rather quiet suggestions on certain basic factors of human existence.

I have asked at times what the purpose of life may be; I have tried to probe into the real meaning of intelligence, and I have at times wondered about the inevitability of death. These are all subjects that lie close to us and many of us, in our secret hearts, may have asked the very questions I have put on paper.

The mysticism that attaches to such questions and speculations lies in the fact that we do not understand them and that, in fact, we may never understand them, but I do think that as an intellectual entity, we must try. In most cases, we have begged the question and have allowed ourselves to be pacified or put off with what seems to me illogic.

What, after all, is the purpose of us? We were given a great survival factor in our intellectual capabilities. Does this rank no higher than the other survival values of the past? The trilobite had great survival value; it existed for hundreds of millions of years. We, as men, have existed for something less than two million years and our survival factor, intelligence, has made it possible for us, if we choose, to bring about our own extinction. If we do this, then intelligence is a feeble survival factor, indeed.

I would like to think this is not the case. I have suggested that our intellectual capacity may be a tool designed, in some distant day, to bring about a complete understanding of the universe, if not by us as humans, then by some other race of beings who evolve from us with an even greater survival factor than we have. Not a race of super-men, perhaps not even human at all, but a distinct new race which we cannot now

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imagine armed with a capacity we cannot now dream.

If this is mysticism, then I am a mystic. But I do not think it is or that I am. I am simply asking questions that any man could ask and which many men probably have.

This is the thing that attracts me to science fiction (or fantasy, if you wish). It allows such questions to be asked. They lie within its format. And I believe they are questions that need to be asked and that speculation upon them is a valid exercise of any intellectual being.

"The purpose of life"—In your work, I think you are saying that the glories of civilization and the wonders of technology are not worth the price of anxiety, greed, and nuclear terror. The material aspects of technology are good only in that they may give man an access to new spiritual realities in the universe. And if they do not, then technology is worthless; if not a menace in itself, an obstacle to human self-realization, to simple peace of mind.

I hear you saying that 'simplicity' is the ideal life-style; 'humility,' the ideal virtue for man to emulate.

When I talk of the purpose of life, I am thinking not only of human life, but of all life on Earth and of the life which must exist upon other planets throughout the universe. It is only of life on Earth, however, that one can speak with any certainty. It seems to me that all life on Earth, the sum total of life upon the Earth, has purpose. If the means were available, we could trace our ancestry—yours and mine—back to the first blob of life-like material that came into being on the planet. The same thing could be done for the spider that spun his web in the grass, and of the grass in which the web was spun, the bird sitting in the tree and the tree in which he sits, the toad waiting for the fly beneath the bush, and for the fly and bush. We all are genetic brothers. The chain of life, tracing back to that primordial day of life's beginning, is unbroken; the germ plasma still continues. Life forms have risen, evolved and become extinct, but the extinctions do not matter. All that matters is the chain of life and that chain still persists.

The fact that human life may have a better chance of achieving the purpose of life (no matter what it may be) does not matter. Any purpose achieved by any life is a triumph for all life and all life must be given credit. It all comes down in the end, so far as humans are concerned, to that brand of intelligence which has enabled us to build the culture we possess. But we must realize that our kind of intelligence (any kind of intelligence, in fact) may not be the final tool that will be forged to achieve the purpose of life. It is hard to imagine what might evolve out of intelligence, but the process of evolution so far has never been at loss to bring about new and better survival factors and this may be the case with intelligence. Intelligence may simply be the forerunner of some other factor that will achieve the purpose of life. As man may simply be the forerunner to some other kind of life that will carry forward the task of achieving the purpose.

I cannot bring myself to believe that life is purposeless. If it is, then the universe seems to make little sense. This, of course, is pitting our inadequate comprehension against the mystery of the universe and may be unrealistic, but if we believe in anything, we must believe in this.

At times I have idly wondered if the purpose of life may be the understanding of the universe—the eventual evolution of a creature that some billions of years from now will be able to say this is the way it is, and perhaps (but only perhaps), this is why it is. Just why the universe must be understood, why there is a necessity of it being understood, I cannot imagine. But in man's frantic drive to understand the physical laws of the universe there may be a clue; if man's going into space, if his delving into the atom, if his probing of the pulsars and the quasars have a meaning, this may well be the purpose of life itself. We may be on the right trace; I hope very much we are.

Whatever the purpose may be, I have a feeling that man may not be the life form to finally reach the goal. Nature takes out insurance by multiplicity and undoubtedly there are intelligences on other planets in the universe who are farther along the road than we. It might even be that somewhere in the universe the answer has been found. If this is true, I would hope that in time the answer may be given us.

But whether this is true or not, we still have intelligence and should use it in the best

way possible; I'm not sure we always have. A great deal of our intellectual effort has been misdirected. Our search for an understanding of physical laws too often is hung with dollar signs. We have been delinquent in not using our intelligence to understand ourselves. If the same effort and the same funding had been expended to understand social, economic and political concepts as have been used to build a bigger and more complex technology, we might now have not only a better life, but even now stand closer to an understanding of the purpose of life.

* * * *

Technology: I'm afraid you have misread me here. There is nothing wrong with technology; there often is much wrong with the uses to which it is put. Ideally, technology should be used for the betterment of mankind and to make life more meaningful. What it has been used for is to advance the cause of our commercial-industrial society, which is not the same thing as the betterment of mankind. It has, on the one hand, given us much more leisure than mankind has ever had. In the old days there was a leisured society built upon varying systems of slavery, but technology has given all the people of western society more leisure. But the other side of the coin is the nuclear weapon, the greed and the rat race pressure which is turning us into a race of neurotics. For this we cannot blame technology as such, but the uses to which it has been put. The blame lies in us, not in our machines.

You raise the question of technology giving us access to spiritual realities and in some ways, of course, this has been done, but I am afraid not too successfully, for that was never the purpose of technology. Its one purpose should be to make a better life for us and this has been accomplished, but it also has produced spin-offs that have made us a fiercely competitive and aggressive society and has compounded our capacity to do harm to one another.

"The meaning of intelligence"—I think you are saying that intellectual attainments are over-rated. Intelligence is, to a large extent, the ability to perceive our ignorance of the universe, our aloneness in it, and our helplessness before its power. Intellectual pride, *based on our technological prowess (i.e. our material achievements) is no measure of human progress; and pride itself is a prime obstacle to human progress.*

I find something very Christian in your work, although you suggest you are a staunch agnostic. Your attitude toward 'Pride' as a sin, your respect for simplicity and humility, your preoccupation with spiritual experience. You seem to be saying that the ultimate wisdom is humility and that the world of the spirit is superior to the world of the flesh or the intellect.

Agnostic? Atheistic? I have never suggested that I was either an agnostic or an atheist; this has been an interpretation that has been placed upon my writing by some critics because I asked questions rather than accepting situations on faith alone. The insistence that one must rely on faith and must not question it has a medieval twang. It says, in effect, that you need not try to understand, that in fact, you must not try to understand, for by doing so you lessen faith.

I think that basically I am religious. I cannot believe that the universe came into being by pure chance. Nor can I believe that by pure chance we have the precision and the orderliness that we see in the universe. Somewhere there must be a First Principle (for want of a better term) that started all of it and controls all of it and if you should want to call that First Principle God, then I could agree with you. We cannot be so provincial that we must insist God is for man alone and for this planet alone. God, if He is to be meaningful at all, must be universal. We have drawn our Deity on too small a scale in in doing so have done Him a grave injustice.

I cannot accept God as a kindly old gentleman with a long, white, flowing beard and I would rather not accept Him as a cold First Principle that is concerned only with the precision and the orderliness of the universe. I do have a strong feeling there is a concerned, perhaps compassionate, mystery and I hope very much that I am right. Otherwise we stand alone, all of us, not only here on Earth, but in the universe.

"The inevitability of death"—In your earlier stories, there seems to be an optimism about the future of man: Man Will Learn; Have Faith. In your later stories and novels, I

detect a darker vision, almost a pessimism, or a despair. Technology is a 'false god'; men are lost in their material world, blinded by materialistic, cynical doctrines. In "The Autumn Land," in Destiny Doll, *I find a man who has seemingly exhausted the real world with nothing to show for it and who leaves it for another world that approximates Death. I have the feeling they were written by a man who has considered the inevitability of his own death; considered it as the next logical step in his life, as the only Great Adventure he has left to him, and I see these stories, or things in them, as deeply personal statements. And I should add, mature and courageous ones at that.*

I have accepted the inevitability of my death and I have no fear of it. Fear of death is infantile. Dying at times can be terrible; death is not. At worst it is eternal peace; at best it is whatever immortality of the soul may mean. I'm not sure I regard death as the last great adventure; I should be most pleasantly surprised and gratified if it should turn out to be, for while there may not be fear of death, there is reluctance to accept the loss of all personal identity.

If there is despair and pessimism in my later work, it was not so intended and I was not aware of it when I wrote. I think that what has happened is that I have lost some of the exuberance and easy optimism of my youth, perhaps even some of my belief in mankind as the pinnacle of creation in the realization that man may not be the last word in evolution here on Earth. When this happened, as I am sure it did, I began to look or try to look a little more deeply into the web of existence for new significances and meanings. Not consciously trying to do this, for it cannot be done consciously, it defeats its purpose if done consciously, but as a natural result of a shift in viewpoint.

I refuse to plead guilty to despair. I have nothing to despair over, either for myself or mankind or the universe. I can't know, nor can anyone, what the end result may be; but even if it should be negation, even if the universe some day should come to nothing, we still have billions of years (we, the creatures of the universe) to arrive at something (perhaps more than once) that is significant and beautiful. I persist in the belief that so magical a thing as life cannot all have been for naught.

What of Simak, the Regionalist?

I am not a regional writer in any real sense of the word. Most of my stories, although not exclusively, have rural rather than urban settings and this is a matter of author preference rather than any attempt to be a regional writer. This stems, I would suspect, from my boyhood, which was spent in the rural areas of southwestern Wisconsin. The impression made upon me by that country has stayed with me throughout my life. It is a picturesque country, with great high hills, deep wooded ravines, a couple of good size rivers, the Wisconsin and the Mississippi, and any number of smaller streams running down almost every hollow or valley. As a boy and young man I hunted the hills and fished the valleys and was never happier than when tramping through the woods. There was a peace and an understanding there I have found nowhere else.

And yet I do not write of that land as it really is. I am, in a sense, an expatriate writer. When I go back to it now I find myself faintly disappointed and slightly alien, for the reality is not quite the same as the picture I have built up in my mind. What I did, I think, was to take the landscape of my early years and romanticize it, making it something other than it really is. I suspect that I can write of it as I think of it only when I am away from it; if I were to go back I would find myself limited by its actuality. Which is not to say it is not beautiful and wild and inspiring. It is all of these and there are places in it that match the fantasy I have made of it, which may even exceed the fantasy. But, taken in general, it is not actually the same land as appears in my stories.

For some reason, perhaps the imprint of my early environment, perhaps some unsuspected gene that makes me a country rather than a city man, I cannot abide a city. I have worked in Minneapolis for more than thirty years, and while Minneapolis has the charm and advantage of being, in many ways, a grown-up village rather than a city, I lived in it no longer than it took me to flee to suburbia, where at least a man can breathe and can imagine that he has more elbow room than is actually the case.

While I am no devoted gardener, with neither the time nor inclination to be one, there

are times when I feel irresistably the pull of the land. For that reason, I have a small garden where I grow a few vegetables and some flowers. In the spring of the year I am overcome by the sheer necessity to get my hands into the soil, to feel its texture and its warmth. There is for me something of a mystic experience in taking care of growing plants and in autumn there is a smug satisfaction in putting the perennials to bed and in getting the vegetable garden cleaned and spaded and ready for the spring. For me, I would suspect, returning to the land in this wise is a sort of mental and intellectual therapy.

Perhaps it is because I am searching for certain basic concepts to put into my stories that most of them have a rural setting. Writing about the rural scene is akin to the feeling that I have for sun and soil. It seems to me that in this way I can get closer to the basic nature of the world.

Some of the place names I use in my stories are actual places. There is a Bridgeport, as well as a Woodman and a Millville. Willow Bend, which I have used at times, is purely imaginary. But the actual places, as a matter of fact, bear only a casual relationship to the places that appear in the stories. Many of the characters, while not based on actual people, are based upon the kind of people one finds in the rural scene. If this is regional writing, then I am guilty of it; but it is not intended to be. It is simply the honest process of trying to write about people and places that I love and think I may be able to understand to some degree.

Many of your stories seem to begin with a rocking chair on a front porch. Any special reason? Also, I detect a great respect for 'idleness' and 'contemplation.' This is a peculiar respect for an American of any profession. What about them?

I can think, offhand, of four of my stories that began with a man in a rocking chair. Until you mentioned it, I had not realized I used the device so often. I don't think it has any real significance, at least any intentional significance—no one, not even the writer, can know what a writer's subconscious mind may be up to. Perhaps it's because I'm a rocking chair man, myself. For years Kay and I, after dinner, have sat out many summer evenings on the patio. We sit there and talk and watch the sun go down and the dusk creep in. The birds are at their best and a rabbit comes out to eat some clover and a plane passes so far overhead it is simply another flying bird, the clouds and the sky change color. No matter how the day may have gone, sitting out there puts peace into the soul.

Perhaps the idleness and contemplation are part of the rocking chair business. There is nothing wrong with either contemplation or idleness. Idleness has gotten and carried on a bad name from the time of the pioneers when a man had to bust his gut to earn a living and idleness was looked upon as a crime, if not a sin. Contemplation may have gotten a bad name at the same time, being equated with a dreaminess that could not be tolerated when there was real, he-man work to do. But today we don't have nearly enough idleness and contemplation. I'm not idle nearly as often as I'd like to be and if I allotted more time for contemplation I'd be a better writer. I'm afraid our society has built up far too much admiration and respect for the go-getter and the eager beaver, and God save me from either. I sometimes stand aghast at the utter cruelty of the prevailing notion that the only criterion for success is to get ahead—not just ahead, but ahead of someone else, or *anyone* else. I think the kids may be calling a halt to some of this and we may have a better world for it.

**Conducted January-June 1972*

The International Scene

by Mark Purcell

THE MIND NET by Herbert W. Franke. Tr. by Christine Priest. DAW UQ1136, 1974. 175 p. 95¢

In Miss Priest's good functional translation from the German, Franke's first (1961) novel is now in English. He is one of the great modern hard-sf writers. Unfortunately, in the modern American tradition, except for Frank Herbert 'hard sf' does not necessarily denote dynamic pace or ingenious plot agility. So the potential buyer will probably be happy to hear that *Mind Net* is also a showpiece of narrative construction. For an American reader, it also brings back the 1950's when Blish, Herbert, Clarke and Clement were much closer to educated, informed concerns than Capote, Mailer and Salinger.

Technically the flashiest, I suppose, is *Mind Net*'s final Chapter 6, a fancy detective-story switch in viewpoint. But a professional student of narrative might be more impressed with the overall construction, the way one chapter or sequence of chapters is used to frame another.

In future-history terms, *Mind Net*'s is a dystopian Earth, the land completely built up. To control its population, the theories of a revered, dead sociologist have been implemented. Aggressiveness and high sexuality are bred out; and the controllers are especially alerted to high I.Q.'s like the hero's, Eric's. Really, the whole social atmosphere fits any contemporary American corporate climate you can name at present. So does the bureaucratic in-fighting among the 4-man control group, so well characterized—the in-fighting, that is—by Professor Franke.

Eric and Janet, the leads, react against this social control. But their rebelliousness is structured into the plot to denote archetypal male-female responses. For instance, there's a long, well-written, chase-and-survival sequence among the 'free' human outcasts of the 'city's' underground river sewage system. This long sequence gives us a sociological background for the story, but it turns out to be an imaginative 'fiction' of Janet's. Franke is saying, that is, the realistic everyday novel is feminine; as the exploration-spaceship passages elsewhere denote the masculine.

If this seems too drily analytic for what is basically an action story, my point is, it's almost impossible to say anything concrete about *part* of the plot that remains accurate and not misleading. (DAW's blurb-writer, I notice, had the same difficulty.) It's not that *Mind Net* is unclear or slow in pace.

Of course it's extremely disheartening to contemplate such pictures of the human future by people as well informed as Franke, whose professional specialties include computer graphics, sf and speleology. His theme in *Mind Net* is the contrast between modern mechanized social 'rationality' and the counter-'anachronism' of older-fashioned survival habits, like either the domestic or the explorer's instinct. Writers like Franke remain psychically split on this self-chosen topic. I suppose that's why they write novels about it. What happens to Eric in the last chapter—I'm unintentionally misleading about the plot again!—is supposed to be at once horrific yet a stage in man's progress, etc.

It takes a mental effort for the reader of one of these glum, not unlikely projections, to stand back and realize that 'rationality,' social intelligence, is being credited and identified with the ordinary corporate bureaucrats, unimaginative and ill-informed, with whom we now daily struggle. Despite his 'theme,' Prof. Franke for example can't resist showing how the controllers' 'rational' control continually reduces itself to a primeval concrete-jungle fight for turf. If one of the boys is a little slow responding with his yes or no, you threaten to lobotomize him.

Franke's scientific politicians or civic scientists are, historically considered, no *intellectual* advance over some intellectual power class of the past, like the advisors round Queen Elizabeth or Queen Victoria. Franke is only projecting a mutation or adaptation of the historic Western bureaucracy. In the same way, Eric is only a futurized version of Hammett's Sam Spade, the brave but self-centered pulp hero who always loses or sacrifices the girl. Sam or Eric (or the baby at the end of *2001*) do not compete in sexiness,

competence, education or adaptive intelligence with an 'anachronistic' Elizabethan noble like Sir Philip Sidney.

For the LUNA readers with library posts, let me drop my argument with our dystopians; and instead recommend they search-purchase both the DAW Frankes, *Mind Net* and *Orchid Cage. Zone Null* is a recent from Seabury. Franke also has some standard non-fiction reference books in most good U.S. college libraries.

THE INVESTIGATION by Stanislaw Lem. Tr. by Adele Milch. Seabury (Continuum), 1974. 216 p. $7.95

By now, most fans could glibly rattle off the names of half a dozen sf books that are purist detective stories. But if they were pinned down by a non-fan to give a *model* for the sf mystery, such fans would probably still go back to Asimov or Tony Boucher.

The Investigation—translated from a 1969 Polish text of one of Lem's earlier novels—is an intellectually more ambitious stab at the theoretical formal problems of such hybrid stories. As a warning notice to the reader of his goals, Lem sets *Investigation* neither in his native land nor one of his future-fantasy worlds, rather London and its suburbs. Not Sherlock Holmes' London; but still an England that won't jar on the reader familiar with the old-fashioned British mystery. P.189 for example seems to acknowledge one of Chesterton's Father Browns as *Investigation*'s plot source.

So the reader is encouraged to settle in for a good old-fashioned riddle-read. But gradually the complications appear. The book's official mystery concerns the usual bodies, but instead of homicide, (temporary) resurrection! Instead of the traditional contradictions between different 'explanations' with their later refutation, Lem engages himself in reconciling all these solutions. And the usual gaggle of suspects—40,000 in one old Ellery Queen, I believe—is replaced by three main characters, all of whom double as chief suspects and investigating detectives.

Lem's crime plot explores the metaphysics of investigation. P.136 makes a careful distinction between what we and the crime news would call an 'investigation' and the actual verification of a hypothesis. The investigation becomes a criminological-scientific-religious exploration. (One main character is named "Sheppard." This has obvious Biblical resonances, though in this story it may be important to remember that it also spells the name of a very famous British highwayman.)

Poland is a traditional Catholic nation run by an officially a-religious government. Perhaps because of the formal demands of his plot, Lem seems more explicit about religion here than in his other available books. *Investigation* is what I call elsewhere a "kind of Platonic dialogue on the problems of theodicy" and it should incidentally appeal to many of those readers who bought the Western religious sf of Blish and Miller, Jr., about the time Lem was composing this novel.

HARD TO BE A GOD by Arkadi & Boris Strugatski. Tr. by Wendayne Ackerman. Seabury (Continuum) 1973. 219 p. $6.95 (paperback: DAW UY1141, 1974. $1.25)

Over here, *Hard to Be a God* (Russian, 1964) has been translated as part of the publisher's first package of European sf. So the reviewer's first point of emphasis is that the novel's merits are individual. Unquestionably, *Hard* should be a Hugo nominee, and not simply to encourage more English-language Strugatskis. Wendayne Ackerman's translation, barely acknowledged in the credits, is punchy. There are only a few failures in (English) idiom, one unfortunately on p.1 with 'sharkies.' No doubt she unobtrusively met many other challenges from the verbal drive of the original Russian.

Hard begins authoritatively with a splendid chapter about several Russian children spending a day in the woods: time, postwar; their woods contain a machine gun attached to a German's skeleton. This chapter, where 'nothing happens,' perhaps contains the novel's best writing. It seems a mere narrative frame for the main plot; which occurs about 20 years later, when the boys have become terrestrial galactic observers of a feudal state on another planet. But this opening frame is important structurally. It moves easily in and out of a danger-ward chicken game by the young boys that thematizes the main plot. Later there is the plot-impact on the reader as the Kids' identity 'leaks' through the adult masks of the

characters we have followed through the chief storyline. And the opening also establishes the book's important utopia-dystopia constast.

As adult heroes, the boys are assigned to be (mere) observers of the 'feudal' state I mentioned. But I oversimplify. Within 200 pages (15-216), the Strugatskis wish to compress several social eras which they consider culturally identical. You can recognize: Louis XIV's court (or its Russian czarist imitations); Nazi Germany, 1932-4, before the first public bloodbath simplified its political organization; pre-Reformation medieval Europe, when the clergy had a separate legal code not controlled by any centralizing king. So I won't have to come back to this point later, the Strugatskis are almost certainly wrong historically about the 'medieval' state (which Marx himself admired for almost the same reasons as a Catholic distributist like Chesterton, as socially workable). The attempt to use 'us' as a measuring rod for this imaginary, compressed feudalism, is of course meant as a diabolical joke on 'us': the Strugatskis' own Russia, true, but also America or the future UN that currently assigns observers under conditions like those in the novel. But despite this implicit irony, the authors still miss the world-of-if aspect of actual history (and of scientific thought) that denies social Progress with a capital P. Now back to their novel...

Its conflicting social forces are: an independent, castle-holding aristocracy, the 'dons,' of which our hero is one. There is a separate 'Sturmovik' force, with less social base in the nobility, more populist, like the KKK or the Nazis; finally, an official clergy, the 'blackbirds,' whom both dons and Sturmoviks unwisely bait yet underrate, politically. The hero tries (a) to record the social interactions of this morass through a portable TV on his forehead; (b) to extract the more valuable thinkers and technicians and, of course, one bourgeois maiden, and extradite them to safety across the state's border. Except for Kyra, technically the heroine, the bourgeois don't make the contribution to this rescued talent pool that one would predict statistically; they're mostly dons and clergy.

Under Stalin, the authors would presumably have explained *Hard* as illustrating orthodox Marxist historicism: that a culture can't jump stages socially or in economic complexity—at least if its people are to grow to full consciousness of their condition. The 'hero'-observers of the novel are, theoretically, its villains, trying prematurely to force 'progress' on unenlightened natives.

But just as the Strugatskis are being (at least partly) ironic in using terrestrials as models for their planet's barbarians, they also raise the nasty question for their readers whether 'progress' for the citizen-subjects of a state is merely the mastery of a new jargon, liberal or conservative. The hero's private rescue operation ends with a full-scale clerical revolution turning his observation-state into a backward theocracy. (For the Strugatskis, 'backward' is redundant here, but that's part of their problem in using the middle ages to illustrate their idea.) The evil clergy of the novel are of course to be identified with the post-1934 Nazis in Germany or other controlling party members closer to the Strugatskis' homeland.

Hard to Be a God is so well written and readable that it seems almost irrelevant to suggest that it's a good novel but not 'science' fiction in the Western purist sense. There is of course no question that the brother-authors, both intellectual technicians, could and presumably have written such sf. But *Hard* is more comparable technically to a Western adult historic fantasy like T.H. White's *Once and Future King*. For Slavic sf experts like Suvin and Rottensteiner, *Hard* is important in our field because it is a serious commentary on the utopian theme and therefore on the central mythology (technically speaking) of the modern revolutionary movement of the 'West.'

Since it's vigorously written and socially colorful, does *Hard* have any disabling flaws? Well, I think the authors' backgrounds fail them both at one vital point in characterizing the observer-boy-grown-man who becomes aristocratic Don-Juan hero, Don Rumata. There are certain types of books where a blank literary sexual experience doesn't matter. But to characterize the social class which the hero joins, you need more than a lively style or the Strugatskis' specialist learning.

No, I don't mean that *Hard* should be a hornier book. Rather, its authors underrate the moral professionalism of the sexual code of the aristocrat when he still functioned

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Have You Read?

Asimov, Isaac. "But What Use Is It?" (excerpt from The Greatest Adventure) Readers Digest, Nov., p.13
"They Don't Make Monsters Like They Used To." TV Guide, Nov. 23, p.13-15

Baker, John F. "Donald Barthelme" (interview) Publishers Weekly, Nov. 11, p.6-7
"Richard Adams" (interview) Publishers Weekly, April 15, p.6-8

Boiko, Claire. "We Interrupt This Program..." (space age Christmas pageant) Plays, Nov., p.45-51

Canby, Vincent. " 'The Little Prince' Is an Important Disappointment." New York Times, Nov. 17, p.D17

Carey, John. "Deadly Slapstick" (Mervyn Peake) New Statesman, July 26, p.121-2

Carroll, Kathleen. "A Funny Thing Happened to Frankenstein..." (Young Frankenstein) Sunday News, Dec. 8, p.9

Cheatham, Val R. "Goldilocks and Friends" (play) Plays, Nov. p.81-4

Clarke, Arthur C. "The Snows of Olympus" (Mars) Playboy, Dec., p.161

"Fanzindex: Main Title Index" (mostly British) Keith A. Walker (2 Daisy Bank, Quernmore Rd., Lancaster, England) 1974. 15p.

Friend, Beverly, comp. "Reaching the Future Through Paperback Fiction." Media & Methods, Nov., p.35-6+

"A German Laborer's Night Out with Dracula." New York Post, Oct. 23

"H.G. Wells' Son Denies He Was a 'Dirty Trick' " New York Post, Nov. 21

Hand, Judson. "Old Swords, Young Men and a Mystery in Brooklyn." (The Search for Joseph Tully) Sunday News, Oct. 27, p.20

Kellogg, Steven. "The Christmas Witch" (picture story) Family Circle, Dec., p.117-21

Kibel, Alvin C. "Logic and Satire in Alice in Wonderland." American Scholar, Autumn, p.605-29

King, Francis. "An Older Aldous" (Huxley) The Spectator, Sept. 28, p.404-5

Laurent, Lawrence. " 'Can't Miss' Shows Won't Be Missed" (Planet of the Apes) New York Post, Dec. 16, p.71

McHargue, Georgess. "Leaping into Fantasy" (childrens books) American Libraries, Dec., p.610-11

Moessinger, William. "He Won't Be Home for Christmas" (fantasy play) Plays, Nov., p.59-66

Muller, Hermann Joseph. "Science Fiction As an Escape" in his Man's Future Birthright; Essays on Science and Humanity (State Univ. of New York Press, 1973) p.8-22

Nye, Robert. "Over the American Rainbow" (L. Frank Baum) The Spectator, Sept. 14, p.xxii-xxiii

Pritchett, V.S. "The Vision from Limbo" (Aldous Huxley) New Statesman, Sept. 20, p.385-6

St John-Stevas, Norman. "The Varnished Truth" (C.S. Lewis) The Spectator, July 20, p.77

Salley, Coleen C. & Karen H. Harris. "The Bizarre in Children's Picture Books." Top of the News, Nov., p.95-9

Sarris, Andrew. "First Takes and Second Thoughts" (The Little Prince) The Village Voice, Dec. 9, p.81

Sheedy, Alexandra. "Persuade a Grown-up to Take You" (The Little Prince) The Village Voice, Dec. 9, p.90

Siegel, Larry. "The Ecchorcist." Mad, Oct., p.4-11

Spender, Steven. "The Literary Scene" (Aldous Huxley) New York Post, Nov. 21

Stanton, Will. "Out of This World for Christmas" (story) Woman's Day, Dec., p.72+

Steinberg, Carol. "What Is Essential Gets Lost in Space" (The Little Prince) Kingsman, Nov. 15, p.19

Sussman, Lesley. "Science Fiction Steps on Women!" Foxy Lady, Jan., p.39-40+

Topor, Tom. "Mel Brooks' Star Young Gene Wilder." New York Post, Dec. 28, p.15

Wilder, Gene & Mel Brooks. "Mel Brooks' Young Frankenstein" (excerpt from screenplay) Playboy, Dec., p.151+

Williamson, Jack. "Science Fiction: An Art of the Possible." Liberal Arts Review (Eastern New Mexico Univ.) Fall, p.3-18

RECENT RECORDINGS

Köhntarkösz, by Magma. A&M SP-3650. $6.98

Mekanïk Destruktïw Kommandöh, by Magma. A&M SP-4397. $6.98

Paul Walker: In A Critical Condition

AN INFORMAL REVIEW OF BOOKS

ICE AND IRON by Wilson Tucker. Doubleday, 1974. 181 p. $4.95

Charles Fort, in case you didn't know, was occult literature's major exponent of the theory that what comes down need not necessarily have gone up in the first place. In fact, it is Fortean theory that much of what comes down really belongs up—in a world above the sky. The theory suffered its most damaging criticism recently when three Apollo astronauts failed to bump their heads on bedrock, but defenders of the theory claimed that the astronauts had been brainwashed to observe nothing more than the Moon, and consequently had been perceptually oblivious to anything really interesting.

My reaction to the Fortean theory, as well as its history of mysterious droppings remains one of obstinate indifference, and it has always puzzled me why such people as Damon Knight (who wrote Fort's biography) and Wilson Tucker (who wrote this novel) find him worth writing about at all. *Ice and Iron* contains lots of Fortean droppings, although the solution to its mystery is even more preposterous. And, unfortunately, the word 'preposterous' best sums up Tucker's latest novel.

The story is in two not-quite-parallel veins. The first, "Ice," is the effect caused by the second, "Iron," the terms drawn from Stevenson's "Ice and iron cannot be welded"—whatever that means. "Ice" is about a future scientist studying the advance of the new ice age which has already virtually swallowed Canada and will probably cover the northern half of the US. In itself, done as hard sf, as Tucker does it occasionally, this is sufficiently interesting to make a good story, but Tucker has compounded the catastrophe with a mystery that is not one bit as interesting. It seems the scientists have discovered the bodies of primitive men, natives of a much warmer climate, dropped onto the ice from nowhere. And one of them is still alive.

The second half of the novel, "Iron," consists of a string of connected vignettes about the primitives stalking a team of Amazonian explorers in the far future. Although this leads to even more preposterousness than the first half, it is much better written. The "Ice" and "Iron" chapters alternate, fragmenting the novel and frustrating the Tucker fans, so desperately wishing to enjoy it.

This is an ambitious novel gone wrong in the most unforgivable ways. Ambitious because it attempts to depict two potentially fascinating eras of mankind: a world at the end, a world at the rebirth, of civilization. And unforgivably wrong, because Tucker fails at both eras. His ice age is not shown, but talked about interminably. Interesting talk, but inadequate to the task. His rebirth is simply inadequate. He does not tell us enough about anything except dirt-encrusted primitives skulking through the night. And the essential dramatic element of tragedy that is implicit in both stories is muted, if not stifled, by Tucker's insistence on distracting our attention to the silly issue of Fortean theory.

I have another paragraph or two of negative criticisms, but what Tucker fan worth his salt is going to pay any heed to me? None of Tucker's novels has been perfect, and some of his short stories have been awful, but Tucker has other qualities that reward the faithful. He can create the most likeable characters, and some of the most visual and suspenseful scenes in sf, and he has something intelligent to say about everything, even Fortean theory. *Ice and Iron* may be his worst sf novel, but there are familiar Tucker virtues in it. Enough such to make it acceptable to only the most loyal Tucker fans like myself.

SWEET DREAMS by Michael Frayn. Viking Press, 1974. $5.95

Sweet Dreams by Michael Frayn was published in the UK in 1973 and received, according to the back cover, good notices. The *Observer* critic called it "a brilliant excursion to the edge of Whimsy" and the *Guardian* critic said it was "brilliantly funny" and "very disturbing." Mr. Frayn is a reporter, satirist, and playwright who won England's Hawthornden Prize in 1967—another award I've never heard of, but which prejudices me against the author. *Sweet Dreams* is a short novel about a typical middle-class businessman who drives into heaven one day and finds he can create any world he wishes to live in.

Readers who are unfamiliar with the middle-class businessman genre of literature that has filled bookshelves, movie theaters, and stages for the past twenty years may familiarize themselves with the stereotypes in Mr. Frayn's book. It is pleasantly written, low-keyed, occasionally funny, and mercifully fast-paced. Personally, I got bored to a standstill by page fifty, but then, I had been reading those shelves of middle-class businessman literature for twenty years, and I wanted to save what little interest I had left to read Joseph Heller's *Something Happened.* No, I would not recommend *Sweet Dreams.*

A SHOCKING THING ed. by Damon Knight. Pocket Books 77775, 1974. 245 p. 95¢

A TIDE OF TERROR ed. by Hugh Lamp. Taplinger, 1973. 243 p. $6.95

NEBULA AWARD STORIES 8 ed. by Isaac Asimov. Harper and Row, 1973. 248 p. $6.95

CRISIS ed. by Roger Elwood. Nelson, 1974. 176 p. $5.95

Four anthologies beside me, and two on the dresser to be read. We reviewers do not go mad, we simply go numb. To begin anywhere, there is Damon Knight's *A Shocking Thing* which is very good, on the one hand, and pretty good, on the other. That is, if you haven't read the most famous stories in the book, such as "Fondly Fahrenheit," "Bianca's Hands," and "Lukundoo," it may be the best anthology you'll read all year; but if you have read them and are left with the pickings such as "The Hounds" by Kate Wilhelm, "The Cabbage Patch" by Theodore Cogswell or "Oil of Dog" by Ambrose Bierce, then this will be just a 'pretty good' collection. In this day of original anthologies, however, we could use more such collections, and Knight has proven his ability as an anthologer.

A Tide of Terror edited by Hugh Lamb, and given unnecessary respectability with an introduction by Peter Haining, is an anthology of unfamiliar horror stories by once famous, but now unfamiliar, horror story writers from the turn of the century until our own time. None of the stories is a lost classic, but all, except the Sax Rohmer nonsense, are good. And there are a few writers, such as Eleanor Scott and Hugh Walpole, who are worth more attention. Guaranteed delight for horror fans.

Guaranteed repugnance for sf fans like myself, and there are few of us at large, is *Nebula Award Stories Eight* edited by Isaac Asimov (of all people!). It contains such stories as "A Meeting with Medusa," "Shaffrey Among the Immortals," "Patron of the Arts," "The Fifth Head of Cerberus," and "When It Changed" by Joanna Russ. Of them all, I *liked* only the Clarke story and Anderson's "Goat Song"; I admired Silverberg's "When We Went to See the End of the World," but the others so literally alienated me from sf that I avoided it entirely for months. I won't say my mind is closed to modernist sf. Rather, it is a shunned room.

Repugnance is too strong a word to describe my reaction to Roger Elwood's *Crisis,* which he described to me as one of his favorite anthologies of original stories. Rather, I experienced an almost instant feeling of suffocation from the acute mediocrity that pervades all but two of these ten stories. I am disillusioned with Mr. Elwood at last. This may be the fifth of his anthologies that I've read, and I have praised two of them highly, and been left puzzled by the rest. Elwood claims he never accepts a story he does not like, but the impression I get from his anthologies is that he accepts the first acceptable thing that comes along, and his taste is worse than the stories. From long experience at reading the pulps, I never expect any such collection to be consistently good, but I do expect a few exceptions so superior they make up for the rest. From *F&SF* I have always expected two good stories per issue, and never been disappointed. From *Analog,* two good ideas. From *Galaxy/If,* well, one can never tell. I've read issues of both with two or three grand stories, and issues with not one, but at least I had the illustrations and book reviews for compensation. But with the exception of the two anthologies I liked, Elwood's have held the record for sustained mediocrity, and *Crisis* is the worst so far. It is so poor that I can only conclude that while Elwood may be the greatest hustler in sf history, he is the least talented editor in the field today.

Incidentally, the two stories that I liked were "The Day the Founder Died" by Silverberg and "Mommies and Daddies" by Leigh Brackett, neither one an example of their

authors' best work. Other writers in the book include Tom Godwin, Gordon Eklund, Edward D. Hoch, J.F. Bone, and Ray Russell.

FAR BELOW AND OTHER HORRORS ed. by Robert E. Weinberg. FAX Collector's Editions (Box E, West Linn, Ore. 97068) 1974. 151 p. $8.95

MODERN SCIENCE FICTION ed. by Norman Spinrad. Anchor A978, 1974. 540 p. $3.50paper

ANCIENT, MY ENEMY by Gordon R. Dickson. Doubleday, 1974. 226 p. $6.95

Like *Tide of Terror*, *Far Below and Other Horrors* edited by Robert E. Weinberg is a collection of unfamiliar horror stories, but unlike the former which were drawn from a variety of classic sources, these are all from *Weird Tales*, and except for Seabury Quinn (a Jules de Grandin story) and Robert E. Howard, the authors are more unfamiliar than their stories. I did not like this book. I could not read through any of the stories comfortably, and skimming didn't help. They are pulp relics, on the level of Robert A.W. Lowndes *Magazine of Horror* yarns—if you like those, you'll like these.

The Seabury Quinn story is "The Chapel of Mystic Horror," the Howard is "Out of the Deep." The title story is by Robert Barbour Johnson, and the worst in the book. To cite a few other titles and authors, "The Execution of Lucarno," almost science fiction, but pure pulp; "Thing of Darkness" by G.G. Pendarves, which reminds me of the old TV *Thriller* series, and "The Accursed Isle" by Mary Elizabeth Counselman, "Masquerade" by Mearle Prout, "Naked Lady" by Mindret Lord, and "Under the Tomb" by Robert Nelson. Nuff said.

For more contemporary, but equally blatant, horror, I suggest Norman Spinrad's abundant introductions to the stories in his *Modern Science Fiction*. A $3.50 paperback! intended, I'm told, for college sf courses, where I am sure it will be welcomed as definitive. As an anthology it is excellent thanks to the inevitable selection of such stories as "Nightfall," "The Enchanted Village," "The Cold Equations," and "The Marching Morons" as well as "For a Breath I Tarry," "Faith of Our Fathers," and "Nine Live," but who has not read those stories? And the remainder, if not very familiar, while worthwhile, are not worth $3.50 either. But what makes the book interesting is Spinrad's 'new wave' revisionist interpretation of sf history from the Age of *Astounding* to *New Worlds*.

Purporting to be a scholarly presentation of modern sf history, Spinrad says such things as "Speculative fiction is the only fiction that deals with modern reality in the only way that it can be comprehended—as the interface between a rapidly evolving and fissioning environment and the resultant continuously mutating human consciousness." and "...while science fiction drifted further into its own schizoid narcissistic reality, the world outside was going through a series of revolutions which, paradoxically, were loosing waves of consciousness-changing that were beginning to create a multiplex reality, a science fiction universe in realtime." Nuff said?

There are no introductions to Gordon R. Dickson's nine stories in *Ancient, My Enemy*, which is at least one point in his favor. They are very human stories—alas, too humanly flawed. They are not bad stories, just badly written and although I read every one of them as patiently as I could less than two weeks ago, this morning I cannot remember a single one. It seems to me that "Ancient, My Enemy" was the best, with a profound point to make about the relationship between the primitive and civilized, but I forget what it was. "The Odd Ones" was amusing as was "The Monkey Wrench" but neither did justice to its ideas, and the same could be said about the rest. Dickson is either too untalented to realize his potential, or he simply does not work hard enough. His ideas are good, his stories have a pleasantness about them, and he can be very witty, but the writing is too crude, his story and character development too slight. I am not going to read Dickson any more.

THE BEST FROM FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION: A Special 25th Anniversary Anthology, ed. by Edward L. Ferman. Doubleday, 1974. 326 p. $7.95

Periodically (no pun intended), Edward L. Ferman has published special issues of *Fantasy and Science Fiction* paying tribute to the likes of Sturgeon, Asimov, Leiber,

Bradbury, Anderson, and Blish, containing their latest story, an affectionate biography by one of their friends, and a bibliography of their work. Now, to commemorate *F&SF*'s 25th anniversary, Ferman has collected the stories, biographies, and bibliographies of their novels in his annual *Best from F&SF*, and it is a fine book.

The best story is Poul Anderson's award winning "Queen of Air and Darkness," a science fiction fairy tale that succeeds on two levels, and confirms what I've always said about Anderson: he is at his best when writing for *F&SF*.

Ray Bradbury's "To the Chicago Abyss" is middling Bradbury, but any Bradbury at all these days is welcome. It is one of his stories of social comment in which the sociology is shallow, the characters and atmosphere moving.

Theodore Sturgeon's "When You Care, When You Love" is about a rich girl who decides to clone her dead lover; an awkward idea, but as with the Bradbury story, saved by Sturgeon's delicate, sentimental touch.

Isaac Asimov's "The Key" is a hard science fiction mystery story that held my interest throughout, and now, a week later, is completely gone from my memory. It is about a device that makes telepathy possible, and the ratiocinative efforts of a scientist detective to solve the cryptogram left by its finder on the Moon, where he had concealed the device before he died to prevent it falling into the wrong hands. "Gold Bug" stuff.

James Blish's "Midsummer Century" is a fair, but not especially interesting, attempt to make an old pulp idea respectable by sheer force of Blish's good writing. Blish is disappointed that it did not get a better reception, as most readers were disappointed that Blish did not attempt something more ambitious.

Finally, there is Fritz Leiber's "Ship of Shadows," a story I have tried, and failed, to read several times, but its murky, odd-ball beginning alienated me every time. It did win a Nebula, but then "The Big Time" won a Hugo, and I could not understand that either.

The biographies make pleasant reading but none of them tells us as much as we would like to know about the writers. My preferences were for William F. Nolan's sketch of Bradbury, L. Sprague de Camp's affectionate memoir of Asimov, and Gordon R. Dickson's reminiscences about Poul Anderson. The others by Judith Merril, about Sturgeon and Leiber, and Robert A.W. Lowndes about James Blish are interesting.

"Pleasant" is the best word to describe the entire anthology.

THE SECOND EXPERIMENT by J. O. Jeppson. Houghton Mifflin, 1974. 240 p. $6.95

Besides the kitchen sink, J.O. Jeppson's *The Second Experiment* contains intelligent dinosaurs, telepathic robots, diverse alien cultures, the nature of hyperspace, galaxy-devouring super-computers, the amorphous master race, a heroine who is a flying dragon, the first humans to reach the stars, stasis fields, alpha-beta-theta waves, at least two parallel universes, a cosmic egg, black holes, and the secret of the origin of the universe, and all life therein. A pity Jeppson did not edit the kitchen sink.

J. O. Jeppson is a practicing physician, married to a biochemist, who lives in Manhattan, which is all the back flap tells me. Considering her novel in the most positive perspective, one could say that it attempts to be a pulpish tour-de-force, the definitive collection of *Planet Stories* cliches, ameliorated to suit the modern palate by a tightly-structured, sparsely worded plot combined with amusing and sympathetic characters. In fact, for the length of Part I, it succeeds admirably. The gimmicks come a page a minute: The mysterious amorphous Roiiss who hold the secret of the "second experiment" whose solution is supposed to guarantee their immortality; the Roiiss' super-telepathic-robot Tec, the most likeable, and human, character in the book who rescues an ancient Roiiss embryo from the enigmatic Tower of History, and raises it into the dragonlady heroine, R'ya. Their escape from the Roiiss world and their misadventure on the world of Wirzan, a would-be universe conquering computer, who becomes an admirable villain of the rest of the novel, and so on and on from adventure to adventure. Unfortunately, Part I leaves our hero robot and dragon heroine marooned on Earth, and rather than see them through their difficulties immediately in Part II, Jeppson introduces a whole new cast of characters who have a whole new series of adventures which lead them back to the events of Part I. It is just too much for a reader to bear. *Continued on Page 17*

New Books

HARDCOVERS

Asimov, Isaac. OUR WORLD IN SPACE, with paintings by Robert McCall. New York Graphic Society. $22.50

Bedford, Sybille. ALDOUS HUXLEY: A BIOGRAPHY. Knopf (with Harper & Row) $15.00

Bojarski, Richard & Kenneth Beale. THE FILMS OF BORIS KARLOFF. Citadel, Fall. $12.00

Carr, Terry, ed. WORLDS NEAR AND FAR: Nine Stories of Science Fiction and Fantasy. Nelson, Nov. $6.50

Carter, Lin. THE VALLEY WHERE TIME STOOD STILL (s&s) Doubleday, Dec. $4.95

Christopher, Joe R. & Joan K. Ostling, comps. C.S. LEWIS: An Annotated Checklist of Writings about Him and His Works. (Serif series of bibliographies and checklists no. 30) Kent State Univ. Press, June. $15.00

Clipper, Lawrence. G.K. CHESTERTON. Twayne. $7.50

Cummins, Roger W. HUMOROUS BUT WHOLESOME: A History of Palmer Cox and the Brownies. Century House Americana Publ. (Watkins Glen, N.Y.) $20.00

Eisenberg, Lawrence B. THE VILLA OF THE FERROMONTE (fty) S&S, July. $6.95

Ellison, Harlan. APPROACHING OBLIVION: Road Signs on the Treadmill Toward Tomorrow (coll) Walker, Dec. $8.95

Farren, David. LIVING WITH MAGIC (nf) S&S. $7.95

Halpern, Frank M. INTERNATIONAL CLASSIFIED DIRECTORY OF DEALERS IN SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY BOOKS AND RELATED MATERIALS. Haddonfield House, Nov. $7.95

Lafferty, R.A. DOES ANYONE ELSE HAVE SOMETHING FURTHER TO ADD? (coll) Scribners, Sept. $6.95

Nutt, Alfred Trubner. THE FAIRY MYTHOLOGY OF SHAKESPEARE (repr of 1900 ed) Norwood Editions (Norwood, Pa.) $5.00

Page, Thomas. THE HEPHAESTUS PLAGUE (marg, 4 ptg) Putnam. $5.95

Patrouch, Joseph F., Jr. THE SCIENCE FICTION OF ISAAC ASIMOV (nf) Doubleday, Dec. $6.95

Phillips, Robert, ed. MOONSTRUCK: An Anthology of Lunar Poetry. Vanguard. $7.95

Roueche, Berton. FERAL. Harper and Row. $5.95

Silverberg, Robert, ed. THREADS OF TIME: Three Original Novellas of Science Fiction (cont: Threads of Time by Gregory Benford, The marathon photograph by Clifford Simak, and Riding the torch by Norman Spinrad) Nelson, July. $6.50

Squire, Charles. CELTIC MYTH & LEGEND, POETRY & ROMANCE (repr of 1910 ed, orig: The mythology of the British Islands) Milford House (Boston) $40.00

Tolkien, J.R.R. THE LORD OF THE RINGS (collectors ed, 3v in 1, slipcased) Houghton Mifflin, Nov. $35.00

Zwerdling, Alex. ORWELL AND THE LEFT (nf) Yale Univ. Press, Nov. $10.00

PAPERBACKS

Akers, Alan Burt. ARENA OF ANTARES. DAW UY1145, Dec. $1.25

Aldiss, Brian W. BILLION YEAR SPREE (nf, repr) Schocken Books SB450, Sept. $2.95

Asimov, Isaac THE EARLY ASIMOV, Book Two (repr) Fawcett Crest P2323, Dec. $1.25

Ballard, J.G. CRASH (marg, repr Brit) Pinnacle 00423, Sept. $1.25

Brand, Kurt. PERRY RHODAN 59: Interlude on Siliko 5. Ace 66042, Dec. 95¢

Brown, Fredric. PARADOX LOST (coll, repr) Berkley N2656, Sept. 95¢

Browne, Gerald A. HAZARD (esp, repr) Pocket 78725, Nov. $1.50

Budrys, Algis. ROGUE MOON (repr) Equinox 20925, Dec. $1.95

Carnell, Lois Christian. THE HOUSE THAT LIVED AGAIN (supernat, bound with Who's been sitting in my chair? by Charlotte Armstrong) Ace 88595, July. 95¢

Carr, Terry, ed. UNIVERSE (repr) Popular 00234. $1.25

Daniels, Dorothy. THE EXORCISM OF JENNY SLADE. Pocket 78747, Dec. $1.50

Del Rey, Judy-Lynn, ed. STELLAR 1. Ballantine 24183, Sept. $1.25

Disch, Thomas M. 334 (repr Brit) Avon. $1.65

Ellison, Harlan. ELLISON WONDERLAND (coll, reissue) Signet Y6041, Aug. $1.25

Falk, Lee. THE GOGGLE-EYED PIRATES (Phantom) Avon. 95¢
THE SWAMP RATS (Phantom) Avon. 95¢
THE VAMPIRES AND THE WITCH (Phantom) Avon. 95¢

Farmer, Philip Jose. BEHIND THE WALLS OF TERRA (reissue) Ace 05360, Dec. $1.25

Ghidalia, Vic, ed. GOOSEFLESH! Berkley Medallion S2732, Dec. 75¢

Goulart, Ron. SPACEHAWK, INC. DAW UQ1149, Dec. 95¢

Green, Joseph. CONSCIENCE INTERPLANETARY (repr) DAW UY1148, Dec. $1.25

Hall, Hal W., ed. SFBRI: Science Fiction Book Review Index, vol. 4 1973. Author (3608 Meadow Oaks Lane, Bryan, Tex. 77801) $2.00

Harrison, Harry, ed. ASTOUNDING: John W. Campbell Memorial Anthology (repr) Ballantine 24329, Dec. $1.95

Hirsch, Phil & Paul Laiken, eds. VAMPIRE JOKES AND CARTOONS. Pyramid N3498, Sept. 95¢

Hoskins, Robert, ed. THE LIBERATED FUTURE: Voyages into Tomorrow. Fawcett Crest Q2329, Dec. $1.50

Hughes, Zach. SEED OF THE GODS. Berkley 02642, Aug. 95¢

Kahn, Joan, ed. SOME THINGS STRANGE AND SINISTER (horror, repr) Avon. 95¢

Le Guin, Ursula K. PLANET OF EXILE (4 ptg) Ace 66953, Dec. $1.25

Leiber, Fritz. CONJURE WIFE (reissue) Award AN1143, Dec. 95¢

McNelly, Willis E., ed. SCIENCE FICTION: The Academic Awakening. College English Assoc. (Centenary College, P.O. Box 4188, Shreveport, La. 71104), Nov. Distr. as supplement to The CEA Critic, Nov. 1974. $2.00

Mahr, Kurt. PERRY RHODAN 60: Dimension Search. Ace 66043, Dec. 95¢

Malaquais, Jean. THE JOKER (repr of 1954 ed, tr. from French) Warner Paperback 78-396, Sept. $1.50

Malzberg, Barry N. THE SODOM AND GOMORRAH BUSINESS. Pocket 77789, Dec. 95¢
UNDERLAY. Avon. $1.50

Mumford, Edwin. THE FIVE FLIGHTS OF THE STARFIRE: Collected Space Fantasies. Exposition, Nov. $3.00

Norman, John. IMAGINATIVE SEX (not sf) DAW UJ2246, Dec. $1.95

Pohl, Frederik & C.M. Kornbluth. THE SPACE MERCHANTS (8 ptg) Ballantine 24290, Dec. $1.50

Rheingold, Howard. WAR OF THE GURUS. Freeway Press. $1.25

Robeson, Kenneth. DOC SAVAGE 78: The Crimson Serpent. Bantam S8367, Oct. 75¢

Russ, Joanna. PICNIC ON PARADISE (reissue) Ace 66201, Dec. 95¢

Scortia, Thomas N., ed. STRANGE BEDFELLOWS: Sex and Science Fiction (repr) Pocket 77794, Dec. 95¢

Silverberg, Robert. EARTH'S OTHER SHADOW (coll, reissue) Signet Q5538, Oct. 95¢
(ed) NEW DIMENSIONS 2 (repr) Avon 21436, Dec. 95¢
(ed) OTHER DIMENSIONS (repr) Pinnacle 00422, Sept. 95¢

Sladek, John T. THE REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM (repr, formerly titled Mechasm) Equinox 20917, Dec. $1.95

Stableford, Brian M. THE FENRIS DEVICE. DAW UQ1147, Dec. 95¢

Sterling, Barry. THE TERRIBLE SEXY SECRET OF CASTLE McNAB (supernat spoof) Warner, Oct. $1.25

Sturgeon, Theodore. THE SYNTHETIC MAN (new ed. of The dreaming jewels) Pyramid N3344, April. 95¢

Thole, C.A.M. SCIENCE FICTION ART CALENDAR 1975. Scribner. $10.00

Travers, Peter & Stephanie Reiff. THE STORY BEHIND THE EXORCIST (nf) NAL J6207, Dec. $1.95

Vacca, Roberto. THE COMING DARK AGE (nf, repr, tr. from Italian) Anchor, Dec. $1.95

Waters, T.A. CENTERFORCE. Dell 6191, Dec. 95¢

Zelazny, Roger. THE DOORS OF HIS FACE, THE LAMPS OF HIS MOUTH and Other Stories (repr) Avon. $1.25

JUVENILES

Arnott, Kathleen. DRAGONS, OGRES,

AND SCARY THINGS: Two African Folktales. Garrard. $2.98

Causley, Charles, comp. THE PUFFIN BOOK OF MAGIC VERSE (repr Brit) Puffin Books. $1.25

Cutt, W. Towrie. SEVEN FOR THE SEA (fty) Follett, Oct. $4.95

Farmer, Penelope. WILLIAM AND MARY: A Story (fty) Atheneum. $5.95

Fisk, Nicholas. GRINNY: A Novel of Science Fiction (repr Brit) Nelson, Nov. $4.95

Freeman, Don. THE PAPER PARTY (fty) Viking. $6.95

Grimm Brothers. RUMPELSTILTSKIN: A Tale Told Long Ago, retold by Edith Tarcov. Four Winds. $3.95

THE SIX SWANS (abr., tr. by Margaret Hunt) McGraw-Hill. $5.95

SNOW WHITE. Freely trans. from the German by Paul Heins. Atlantic Monthly/Little Brown. $5.95

Hieatt, Constance. THE MINSTREL KNIGHT (fty) Crowell. $5.95

Ireson, Barbara, ed. HAUNTING TALES. Dutton. $6.95

Jeschke, Susan. FIREROSE (fty) Holt. $4.95

La Farge, Phyllis. A CHRISTMAS ADVENTURE (fty) Holt, Nov. $4.95. Age 8-12

Long, Ruthanna. WITCHES, GHOSTS, AND GOBLINS: A Spooky Search for Miranda's Cat (fty) Golden Press. $4.95

Mayer, Mercer. ONE MONSTER AFTER ANOTHER (fty) Golden Press. $3.95, lib bdg. $4.95

Newell, Peter. THE ROCKET BOOK (repr) Dover 22044, Oct. $1.50

Norton, Andre. IRON CAGE. Viking. $5.95. Age 12+

Nourse, Alan E. THE BLADERUNNER. McKay, Oct. $5.95. YA

Offutt, Andrew J. THE GALACTIC REJECTS (repr) Dell Laurel Leaf. 95¢

Sedgwick, Paulita. MYTHOLOGICAL CREATURES: A Pictorial Dictionary. Holt, Nov. $6.95. Age 12+

Spicer, Dorothy Gladys. 13 DRAGONS (fty, coll) Coward McCann. $5.86

Yolen, Jane. THE BOY WHO HAD WINGS (fty) Crowell. $7.00, $5.50 lib bdg. Age 4-8

THE GIRL WHO CRIED FLOWERS and other tales (fty) Crowell. $5.95. Age 8-12

*All books were published in 1974. No 1975 titles have been included in this list.

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THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE continued from Page 9

socially; of his rich, independent businessman-equivalent later on. Now in the book the hero is sexually sympathetic to only two girls, both under-age types: a boyish tomgirl in the prologue and then the maiden he later keeps as a ward, specifically not as a lover. The one adult female that our hero 'courts' is tortured to death after trying to sleep with him. Perhaps middle-class literary technocrats fear and therefore hate women more than did the old-fashioned patriarchal aristocrat or the Evil Capitalist. There are some experiences, even pleasant ones, a man has from paying Maria Callas' bills for ten years that are disappointingly unavailable, even in the best Russian technical schools. It's hard to be a god, sexually, even on the typewriter.

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IN A CRITICAL CONDITION continued from Page 14

I cannot imagine anyone surviving Part II of this novel, but the writing itself is disciplined, the characters interesting, the imagination epic in its ambitions. I look forward to Jeppson's next try, and wish her better luck.

—Contact: Paul Walker, 128 Montgomery St., Bloomfield, N.J. 07003

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ZPG CONTEST WINNER ANNOUNCED From the over 200 stories entered in Zero Population Growth's essay and science fiction contest, judges Isaac Asimov and Ben Bova selected a story written by Miriam Allen de Ford. The 86 year old writer did not know of her victory, however, for she died in San Francisco just days before the winners were announced.

Zero Population Growth plans to hold another essay contest on population issues, this time for junior and senior high school students. For information, contact ZPG, 50 West 40th St., New York, N.Y. 10018.

Lilliputia

THE SEA SERPENT OF HORSE by Susan Trott. Illus. by Irene Burns. Little, Brown, 1973. 117 p. $5.50. Age level: 12 up

Cynthia Horne, nicknamed Horse for her love of riding, escapes into the world of her own mind when she can no longer bear the real world. Her withdrawal is justified: normally a shy, sensitive child, she has a mother who drinks too much and a father who has too little time for his daughter.

A summer friend, Livvie, believes in her to the extent of accepting as fact Horse's fantasy that she takes rides on a sea serpent. Livvie, a bright 12 year old, is inconsistent in accepting without prejudice her strange friend's fantasy, which almost results in Horse's death. A local boy who has little use for either long words or fantasy comes through with a sensible plan of action and eventually the sad runaway is found.

Additional characters are a goat, a dog (who dies), a younger sister of the boy Rex and an incidental kitten. The illustrations are strong and lively.

Younger kids should enjoy the fantasy of the story but might be disappointed by the stunning reality of Horse's mental collapse, while older children could become impatient at the totally unexplained sea serpent episodes. True sympathy for Horse would have been gained if we had known the fantasy was in her beleagured mind. As it is, the ending is interesting but that is all.

—Gail C. Futoran

STAR DOG by A. M. Lightner. McGraw-Hill, 1973. 179 p. $4.50. Age level: 8-12

Holton Dane's collie bitch, Mitzie, escapes from home on the night that a strange object is spotted in Mr. Dane's back acres. The object disappears before it can be photographed, and several weeks later Mitzie is expecting. Holton does not connect the two incidents, even though Mitzie's litter consists only of one male pup with soft black fur and uncanny intelligence, resembling a strange six-legged dog Holton found a victim of hit and run near the UFO site. Then Mitzie is killed in an accident, and Holton finds the pup in his mind. Rov has true telepathy and soon he and Holton are conversing easily. Rov, a quickly growing, superintelligent dog, draws attention to himself and is stolen by an infamous dognapper. Eventually Holton not only finds his dog but clears up the mystery of the UFO and Rov's alien sire.

The author is dog-sympathetic; we feel Rov's youth and inexperience, his love for his master, and his lack of understanding of the evil motives of some humans; although when he does understand them he does his best to warn Holton about them. Star dog grows quickly in the novel, and we are aware of an intelligence matching, and perhaps surpassing in some ways, our own. At the same time we are never able to forget his alienness, the fact that he is a thinking dog, not human. I hope we hear more of Star Dog and his master.

—Gail C. Futoran

TEENAGE GHOST STORIES, vol. 1, by Tim Hallinan. Tiger Beat XQ2029, 1973. 127 p. 95¢

These stories all show promise, and that is the sad thing about them, for the promise goes unfulfilled in all three cases:

"Corilane" is a 'Brigadoon'-type story, but the main character's family situation is not really bad enough to make an adolescent girl walk into a disappearing lake in pursuit of a ghost-boy she has barely met. "The Possession of Beldrake" is pure Gothic, but no explanation is ever given of the hostility exhibited by the children's stepfather, even if he did murder his sister. "The Crystal Mirror" is almost good—until the last eight paragraphs—but it also never tells the 'why' of the creature who attempts to strangle young Amy.

Tim Hallinan has a good sense of story, but lacks the discipline required to flesh out characters and develop their motivations. Labelling a story "for teenagers" does not excuse poor writing.

—Charlotte Moslander

HALF-PAST TOMORROW by Ruth Christoffer Carlsen. Illus. by John Gretzer. Houghton Mifflin, 1973. 161 p. $3.95. Age level: 8-13

As a result of a head injury, Jimmy Nelsen is plagued by a peculiar type of double vision. He can read parts of tomorrow's newspaper stories superimposed on today's paper. This unusual power plunges Jimmy and his friend Beetle into adventures as well as problems. After years of Jimmy's practical jokes, adults are hesitant to believe his newly acquired ability. His doctor, however, has him rigorously tested for ESP. Possessing knowledge of events before they occur leads Jimmy to wonder if he can or should change the future.

This is an excellent book. Drama and suspense are carefully interwoven. The story is told in a humorous and fast-paced manner from Jimmy's point of view. Characters are developed in enough detail to reveal distinct, believable personalities. All in all, it's an enjoyable and exciting experience. —Marian Weston

A TIME TO CHOOSE by Richard Parker. Harper and Row, 1974. 151 p. $5.50. Age level: 12 up

Seventeen year old Stephen lives in a quiet English village with an indifferent family. His life has its ups and downs, like any teenager, but something unusual enters when he is given a glimpse of another world. Later he mysteriously enters this other world for a brief time and despite his natural confusion by events, he likes what he sees: people living together by choice, producing their needs by using nature carefully, instead of abusing her. A school friend, Mary, has a similar experience, and the two realize that they have a choice between two worlds.

The author is English, the writing very literate, the style easy and relaxed. The reader is not bombarded with the heavy 'we are destroying our world' theme, but the point is gently made. My only complaint is the treatment of two secondary characters from the parallel world. We are presented with a dynamic personal dilemma in their lives, yet we are never given a solution, or hint of a solution. Perhaps a sequel is in the works. Otherwise I found the book very enjoyable. —Gail C. Futoran

TIME TO GO BACK by Mabel Esther Allan. Abelard-Schuman, 1972. 134 p. $4.95. Age level: 12 up

A fumbling attempt to reach across the generation gap by means of an object-lesson, this novel contrasts the supposedly shallow-minded war protesters of our own generation with the youngsters of the author's own youth who bravely endured the bombing of England during World War II.

After Sarah Farrant becomes involved in some unexpected violence during a protest in Trafalgar Square and spends a night in jail, she returns home very ill and full of self-doubt. While aimlessly knocking about the house looking for something to read, she comes across a collection of poems by Larke Ellesmere, her mother's sister, who was killed in the bombing. She is deeply moved by the poems and learns them by heart. Later, while staying at her grandmother's in Wallasay, the site of one of Larke's poems, Sarah finds that she can transport herself back in time by thinking of one of Larke's lines at sunset. Posing as a stranger, she thus visits the girl who is to become her mother and the young woman who will be her grandmother. Her respect for them grows, and after a few more similar experiences, she eventually achieves an identity with Larke which helps her to achieve maturity.

This book will probably hold more appeal for teenaged female devotees of personal problem stories than for the die-hard fantasy fan. To the latter, it will seem that the time travel aspects are too subordinate to the plea for understanding from the older generation. Bridging the generation gap is not necessarily a bad use of time travel, but Ms. Allan's bridge is one-way. She withholds all compassion and empathy from contemporary idealists while building up the brave youngsters of her own youth as heroic figures. Both generations are done a disservice by this oversimplification.

—Kristine Anderson

Reviews

TO RIDE PEGASUS by Anne McCaffrey. Ballantine 23417, 1973. 243 p. $1.25

This contains four related stories about the founding, and development of The Parapsychic Center—a primarily residential research and public service facility involving all available varieties of parapsychics. The Center, in effect, leases the services of its members to individuals and institutions, and acts in its own, and in the public's, interest.

The stories are: "To Ride Pegasus," about the discovery of how to measure psychic brain activity, and the founding of the Center; "A Womanly Talent," about a woman with an extraordinary talent, who doesn't know what it is; "Apple," about the attempt to locate and control a girl with a very wild talent, which I think is the strongest story in the book; "A Bridle for Pegasus," about a girl and an ethnic rabble rouser with strong, uncontrolled talents.

The stories are written with McCaffrey's usual smooth professionalism. The ideas are not, for the most part, particularly new, but are interestingly developed. This is the sort of situation which might have given rise to the Esper society of *The Demolished Man*, presented without either Bester's word games, or emotional intensity. There's nothing profound here, but there is solid, stimulating entertainment.

—Leslie Bloom

THE HUBSCHMAN EFFECT by Thomas Patrick McMahon. Pocket Books 78403, 1974. 157 p. $1.25 (hardcover: Simon & Schuster, 1973)

The Hubschman Effect occurs in children who were born after their mothers stopped taking a certain oral contraceptive. The book is written in the form of records of a grand jury and court trial and, unlike many others of that style, is easy to follow as well as interesting. Even more interesting is the question that is raised and the solution given. And in addition to its other good qualities, it doesn't have even one monster or supernatural occurrence. $1.25 is a bit much to pay for a paperback book of this size, but in this case I would say it is worth it.

—Joni Rapkin

WANDOR'S RIDE by Roland Green. Avon 16600, 1973. 190 p. 75¢

There is little doubt that the resurgence of heroic fantasy has produced far more tripe than tenderloin for the palate of the gourmet fan. A superb new sword-and-sorcery novel is welcome, indeed. *Wandor's Ride* has the extra touches that produce the best in the field—the extra care in plotting combined with the essences of dark powers, high destinies and unremitting action.

When Bertan Wandor, House Master of the Order of Duellists, obeys the summons of his Grand Master to the royal city of Benzor, he launches a heroic career which may lead to the highest of destinies by way of the ultimate in perilous adventures. His weird leads him across the ocean to confront the sorcerous minions of Duke Cragor in the Viceroyalty of the East as the secret agent of his king. But more, his life becomes a test, a trial of worth laid upon him by the Sthi, the ancient poeple of the hills. Wandor may be heir to the Five Crowns of the High Throne of the hills, his claim to be proven by an epic quest. In the dark depths of the mountains he learns his geas:

> Go and win Firehair the Maiden.
> Go and win the faith of Strong-Ax and Fear-No-Evil.
> Go and win aid from Cheloth of the Woods.
> Go and seek these—the Helm of Jagnar, the Ax of Yevoda, the Spear of Valkath, the Sword of Artos, the Dragon-Steed of Morkol.

He must succeed or die.

If the author fails to provide a sequel to this most entertaining and sprightly heroic fantasy, may he be forever pursued by the foul and gibbering hordes of dank and slime-encrusted Yinn!

By all means, give yourself a treat with *Wandor's Ride.*

—B. A. Fredstrom

HUNTERS OF THE RED MOON by Marion Zimmer Bradley. DAW UQ1071, 1973. 176 p. 95¢

Hunters of the Red Moon may turn out to be even more of a treat for devoted Marion Zimmer Bradley fans than the books in her excellent Darkover series. The novel fits right into the old *Planet Stories* formula except it's far better written and more realistic than the pulps usually were. In short, *Hunters* is science fiction adventure in the grand tradition.

Captured from the deck of his small sailing craft in the Pacific, Dane Marsh is caged along with many other lifeforms aboard a spaceship of the proto-feline Mekhar slavers. A desperate attempt to escape turns out to be a test. Marsh and the handful of others involved are deemed worthy of being sold as Sacred Prey to the mysterious Hunters. Allowed to train and prepare with hand weapons of their choice, they are taken to the surface of the Red Moon to survive until its next eclipse. For eleven days they are prey of unknown hunters who can assume any physical shape at will. Marsh leads the vibrant, red-haired Rianna; the powerful but peaceful lizard-man Aratak; the beautiful and suffering empath Dallith, and the savage Makhar Cliff-Climber in a duel against fantastic odds that uncovers the secret of the Hunter race.

Recommended. —B. A. Fredstrom

THOSE WHO CAN: A Science Fiction Reader, ed. by Robin Scott Wilson. Mentor MW1236, 1973. 333 p. $1.50

This collection is so good that it was chosen for the recent science fiction pre-conference given at the national Council of Teachers of English Annual Meeting in New Orleans, under the chairmanship of Sheila Schwartz and Tom Clareson.

Wilson's purpose in this anthology is to present the work of accomplished craftsmen who are also teachers. Each contributor was asked to select one of his/her best stories which might have certain 'exemplary qualities' and then to comment on "its genesis, development, or aims under a brief essay. The essays thus generated are grouped under six topical headings: plot, character, setting, theme, point of view, and style." Wilson's literary introductions and the comments of the authors are as outstanding as are the stories.

"Jamboree" by Jack Williamson is used to discuss plot; "Pretty Maggie Moneyeyes" by Harlan Ellison, to examine character as the determinant of incident, "Sundance" by Robert Silverberg to examine the concept of setting, etc.

A fine collection: well worth its price of $1.50 and a valuable addition to all science fiction courses or to one's own library.

—Sheila Schwartz

STAR TREK 10, adapted by James Blish. Bantam Pathfinder SP8401, 1974. 164 p. 75¢

Judging from the list inside the front of this book, there seem to have been 11 Star Trek paperbacks, although perhaps only 10 are actual adaptations of the television scripts. Like anyone else who enjoyed Star Trek, I picked up *Star Trek 10*, the first of these adaptations I've seen, with considerable anticipation. But alas, a TV script is not a short story or novelette. It is written for, and based upon, *visual* effects, and these do not translate at all well into word pictures. Such a verdict is no reflection on Jim Blish, one of our better writers, who has produced sterling stuff for years. It is just that in faithfully attempting to describe what he either saw, or read in that TV script, he was forced into describing bits of business, and reproducing bits of dialogue that probably sounded all right, or at least acceptable, when you were watching the flow of action, but which *read* like pure Smithfield ham. Which proves, I suppose, that to watch TV for the most part, you very largely suspend judgment. So, on the whole, these Star Trek adaptations will retain considerable interest for devoted Star Trek TV enthusiasts, who would enjoy having some kind of record of the dear departed. But, judging them on their own, as stories, they just aren't that good. Yet they are popular, judging by the fact that Jim has now turned out at least 10 of them—evidently someone is buying them. And that's okay with me.

—Samuel Mines

BEYOND APOLLO by Barry N. Malzberg. Pocket Books 77687, 1974. 156 p. 95¢ (hardcover: Random House, 1972. $5.95)

I couldn't read this when it first came out two years ago, despite rave reviews from various new wave critics. I have since acquired a strange addiction to the Malzberg/O'Donnell prose style, and this time around read it straight through.

Malzberg has a tendency to write the same book over and over again—about the alien menace which may, or may not, exist only in the hero's mind. In most of his books, including this one, you never are given enough data to know what the reality is. Even if the alien menace seems real, the hero's mind also seems to be deteriorating.

Harry Evans is the surviving astronaut of the Venus expedition. The authorities refuse to believe him when he tells them the Venusians don't want to be bothered, and are prepared to take steps to maintain their privacy. Evans is confined for some time as a mental patient, is finally released, and then writes this book. Which presents quite a variety of answers as to what really went wrong with the Venus expedition, with Harry Evans, and with Mrs. Harry Evans.

Malzberg may be an acquired taste, but I recommend making the effort to acquire it.

—Leslie Bloom

RELATIVES by Geo. Alec Effinger. Harper & Row, 1973. 212 p. $6.95

Basically, this book is composed of three short novels with a common theme: a day in the life of an ordinary man living within the context of his society. However, the chapters of the three stories are interspersed among one another in a series of "Meantimes," and all the protagonists have similar names (Ernest Weinraub, Ernst Weinraub, Ernst Weintraub), which causes a certain amount of 'where are we now?' feeling each time one changes "Meantimes." Especially as they are not arranged in any sort of recognizable repeating sequence.

I am not arguing that the writing is bad—the three vignettes, episodes, or whatever one wishes to call them, draw clear pictures of three equally repressed men—one a factory worker in a terribly overcrowded urban setting who obediently commits suicide at the end; one an effete idler-in-cafes of the only inhabited city on the continent of Africa (Europe is hopelessly decadent; the Americas never colonized) who does nothing worth mentioning; the third a loyal Communist in a "Jermany" which evidently won World War I. The similarity of names indicates the similarity of personalities who accept their societal roles without question, let alone protest, and who make no attempt to even visualize any other way of life. Even the Communist is bound by his blind faith in the rightness of all his superiors' decisions. All three societies are chilling: two just barely missed becoming realities, and we may yet make it to the third unless we are careful.

Relatives would make an interesting movie, especially if the same actor played Ernst, Ernst, and Ernest, and the change in background scenery would make the transitions from "Meantime" to "Meantime" easier to follow and past events easier to remember.

—Charlotte Moslander

POLYMATH by John Brunner. DAW UQ1089, 1974. 156 p. 95¢

Proving what you can do with a simple space opera plot, Brunner takes a familiar idea—a shipload of voyagers crash landed on an unfriendly planet. To that he adds a "polymath." This is a man (or I suppose it could be a woman) specially trained for that exact job—to condition new settlers for a new world. Only there is a gimmick. Normally, the polymath spends years and years in training and studying. Then he has the advantage of analyzing and studying the planet to be colonized, so that he knows everything possible about it. Neither condition is true in this instance. The polymath is less than half-trained, so little in fact, that he doesn't dare reveal himself to his fellow castaways. And the planet is a strange one—he has never seen it and knows nothing about it. Yet even his skimpy training gives him such superior qualities that he gravitates to leader naturally, with all the troubles that such leaders inherit. This is nice smooth space opera—escapist but entertaining.

—Samuel Mines

THREE TRIPS IN TIME AND SPACE by Larry Niven, John Brunner and Jack Vance. Foreword by Robert Silverberg. Dell Laurel Leaf 8827, 1974. 235 p. 95¢ (hardcover: Hawthorn, 1973. $5.95)

The idea here was that Bob Silverberg said to himself, "What kind of world would we have if instantaneous transmission were indeed a reality?" Then he mentioned said idea (which has certainly occurred to a lot of other people too) to Larry Niven, John Brunner and Jack Vance, and suggested that they write each of them an original novella about what might happen. So they did.

Niven's story, "Flash Crowd" is about the problems of the news media and how instant transportation could produce instant riots wherever the teevee showed trouble starting and people (not hoodlums, just people) decided to go and get mixed up in the fun. Personally I would think they'd stay away, but Larry didn't. Incidentally, although these are all claimed to be originals, I'd swear I've read this story somewhere else. Anyway, story number two by John Brunner, "You'll Take the High Road," gets more esoteric with a world in which the past is something of a museum and it is illegal to go back and even photograph the remnants of life before the inevitable nuclear holocaust that changed everything. Like everything Brunner does, this is a meticulous job and an interesting one, although I'm not sure just where it goes. The Jack Vance story, "Rumfuddle," may be the best of the three. It shows a world where instant transport permits anyone to live anywhere he pleases, even on thousands of scattered planets, which one might have all to himself. And what are the consequences if a mischievous character decides to shut down the pathways by which someone could get home? Very well done. All in all, an interesting collection—not as smashingly successful as I'd hoped, but good enough to warrant your attention.

—Samuel Mines

INTERNATIONAL CLASSIFIED DIRECTORY OF DEALERS IN SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY BOOKS AND RELATED MATERIALS by Frank M. Halpern. Haddonfield House (300 Kings Highway East, Haddonfield, N.J. 08033) 1975. 90 p. $7.95

Truly, this is one of the best items of its sort to come down the pike in many a moon. The title is pretty descriptive. After an interesting introduction discussing collecting books in our field is the 44 page listing of dealers. The information was derived primarily from questionnaires sent out to dealers. The selection of dealers was made from other directories and from advertisers in various fannish and non-fannish publications. Each entry gives, where possible and appropriate, the name of the store, the proprietor(s), address, telephone number, store hours (when not strictly mail-order), a brief description of the services (search, catalogs, non-sf & fantasy specialties) and activities of the firm, and, in solid apitals, the specializations. In these listings, unless otherwise stated, the fields of specialization are to be considered used or out-of-print materials. That's why there are listings which may seem strange at first and even repetitive: i.e., ARKHAM HOUSE and ARKHAM HOUSE—NEW BOOKS are two distinct specializations though not necessarily mutually exclusive. Slightly more than half the book is devoted to the indexes (indices?) to this basic list of dealers. The major index is by subject specialization. There are lists of those dealers who specifically stated they accept want lists, offer a search service, and who appraise. The final index is a geographical one by country and city, an indispensable tool for the travelling fan. The jacket art and the frontispiece are by Tim Kirk.

In evaluating this compilation one could be petty and note that Holland is not a country or that many more dealers than listed in the special indexes will search, accept want lists, or appraise at least on a limited basis or that there are some known dealers not listed but such criticisms are exercises in futility. Whatever the deficiencies of the work (many of which are traceable to the response (or lack) from the dealers), this is a major reference work in science fiction. It will primarily aid the collector by putting him (or her) onto the proper dealer and it will be of much use to libraries and publishers. Now that this directory is published, many more dealers will "come from the woodwork out." There will have to be regular revisions. But as of this writing, it stands as the best such directory we have. Use it.

—J. B. Post

THE TENTH PLANET by Edmund Cooper. Putnam, 1973. 214 p. $5.95 (paperback: Berkley N2711, 1974. 95¢)

Man befouls his planet, killing thebiosphere, and the remnants of the race flee to the Mars colony. Centuries later internecine war again interferes with man's attempt at peaceful existence, and he flees to the tenth planet of Sol called Minerva. More centuries later and the Minervans have stagnated at precisely 10,000 of population beneath Minerva's surface. Violence has been bred out of them, but so has creativity and the urge to progress. Their life spans are decreasing, despite utopian conditions, and they cannot see that they are dying, the last of mankind. Into this rosy picture pops Captain Idris Hamilton, Earthman, killed while in space five millenia earlier and resuscitated by a Minervan scientist playing Ponce de Leon. Capt. Idris views his new world and finds it lacking.

There is a lot of the reader being told what Idris is (silver-plated hero and sexual fulfiller of women) and what he plans to do (save mankind from vegetating), when these things should be demonstrated. Action instead of talk. Any expression of emotions is flat and false. Idris' gigantic heroism is no more believable than the stilted dialogue he and everyone else speaks, and which you will find more difficult to wade through than Idris' attempt to leave Minerva.

The whole thing is plain uninteresting. I had to force myself to read it. If you are in a mood for the kind of thing Cooper writes best, go back to *All Fool's Day*, *A Far Sunset* or *Five to Twelve*. Skip this one.

—Gail C. Futoran

THE COMING DARK AGE by Roberto Vacca. Tr. from the Italian by Dr. J. S. Whale. Doubleday, 1973. 221 p. $6.95 (paperback: Anchor A982, 1974. $1.95)

Roberto Vacca is a systems expert and his theme is that our large institutions—business, government, the cities, technology, have all grown too large and are also inefficient, so the time is close that a series of accidental breakdowns will set off a chain reaction that will bring the whole business crashing down around our ears. In effect, Vacca takes off from the MIT study *The Limits to Growth*, which he says, quite rightly, has never been really refuted. He visualizes the breakdown of technology and a catastrophic decline in population, both of which will throw us back into a new dark age.

Now you would expect this to be an exciting book, wouldn't you? It isn't. Vacca is sound enough, and the translation is a very good one, but the book is neither dramatic nor exciting. It is plodding, if anything, and it's tough to read. Not because it is technical—it isn't at all—it's just plodding where it should have been scintillating. The subject is dramatic enough, but it doesn't rate as high drama. Too bad, for Vacca has good ideas, nor does he pander to the intellectual establishment, but draws his own conclusions. If you can stay with the book, there are things to learn—how easily our telephone network can be tied up solid, how close we are (and this was before the energy crunch) to major blackouts, massive and crippling traffic jams, and all the other horrors which would lead to swift destruction of our major cities. If we are as close as Vacca thinks, it behooves all of us to start hunting that special desert island.

—Samuel Mines

THE NARRATIVE OF ARTHUR GORDON PYM by Edgar Allan Poe. David R. Godine, 1974. xxv, 157 p. $15.00

This is one of those productions designed to be admired rather than read. The page size of 8"x11", the illustrations by Gerry Hoover, and the introduction by Richard Wilbur are all earmarks of the fancy book designed to impress people. Actually the illustrations are modestly competent and a few are grim enough to be worthwhile even if the artist shares Frazetta's inability to put the human anatomy together quite right. The introduction is moderately informative even if obsessed with the search for symbolic meaning. The story should need no lengthy description, having been around since 1837, but for those who have not read it, it is about the sea adventures of Pym culminating in the Antarctic. As a story it is really unfinished but what we do have of it is grisly enough. Worth reading, but in no way is this edition worth buying.

—J. B. Post

UNIVERSE 3, ed. by Terry Carr. Random House, 1973. 209 p. $5.95 (paperback: Popular Library 00234, 1974. $1.25)

Seven fine new stories, a perceptive preface, and story introductions by Terry Carr. And even a nifty jacket foto of Carr by Rotsler. Quite a book, as anthologies go. These stories are more 'new wave' than not, and I'm not a new waver. Which says something about the quality of the fiction that Mr. Carr is giving us.

In order of appearance the stories are as follows: "The Death of Dr. Island" by Gene Wolfe (the most readable story of his I've seen), about a severely schizophrenic child and his curious therapy, the longest story here and very moving; "The Ghost Writer" by Geo. Alec Effinger, details a future society in which creativity has metamorphosed into inspired plagiarism; "Many Mansions" by Robert Silverberg, about marriage and time travel, pitfalls and paradoxes; "Randy-Tandy Man" by Ross Rocklynne, about marriage, and hate, and a possible cure for the latter, wry and upbeat; "The World is a Sphere" by Edgar Pangborn, one of the post holocaust series he's been doing, the most conventional story in the book, about intolerance, corrupt institutions, and the scientific spirit; "The Legend of Couger Lou Landis" by Edward Bryant, wherein a young woman rebels against a society technologically much more sophisticated than Pangborn's, but equally corrupt; "Free City Blues" by Gordon Eklund, thematically similar to Bryant's story, much lighter in tone, is about a witch, of sorts.

If there is a theme to this anthology, it has something to do with the survival of integrity, the human spirit (whatever that may be), in a corrupt and corrupting world. The one story which doesn't quite fit is the Silverberg. The stories are well arranged to balance and support each other. In short, a good book. It should be noted that there is an SF Book Club edition as well as a paperback.

—Leslie Bloom

THE LEISURE RIOTS: A Comic Novel, by Eric Koch. Tundra Books (18 Cornelia St., P.O. Box 1030, Plattsburgh, N.Y. 12901) 1973. 219 p. $7.50

It's hard to describe this book. Oh, it's quite funny; not terribly subtle but not pie-in-the-face slapstick either. It's science fiction because the narrator is telling his story in 1980 and because it is social satire—sort of. I enjoyed it, but you all know I have odd tastes. It isn't as much of a burlesque as it would have been if Ron Goulart were writing it, but it leaves me with much of the same feeling I get from some of his works: an uneasiness at the glibness.

So much for visceral reactions. The story is the narration of Friedrich Bierbaum, lovable ex-Nazi (well, he was actually an a-political aide to Goering), director of the think-tank CRUPP (Center for Research on Urban Policy & Planning). He has fled to Canada after a Chinese Communist agent has infiltrated CRUPP and subverted it. He chronicles his and CRUPP's decline.

The problem which triggers the crisis is one of leisure time. Investigating a wave of strange vandalism (on a grant, of course) CRUPP discovers that executives are being retired early and forced into retirement activities when they would rather work. In reaction the retirees commit vandalism. Upon that thread of an idea Koch writes a funny story, one which will probably be missed and ignored by most people but one which is worth reading.

—J. B. Post

THE BODELAN WAY by Louis Trimble. DAW UQ1090, 1974. 158 p. 95¢

This is unquestionably one of the most confusing cloak-and-ray-gun stories I have ever read. What with the claims of being double agents, conflicting claims to power, more bugs than Watergate and a blossoming mind reader with poor integrative ability, keeping everything straight takes plenty of concentration. However, the story is also fast-moving and has some good ideas. The suspense is not over whether the bad guys will take over the galaxy, but over who are the bad guys (or bad gals—the women do the work and the men take the credit, as usual). On the whole, it is not bad, but don't read it if you are not in a mood to concentrate.

—Joni Rapkin

CASEY AGONISTES AND OTHER SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY STORIES by Richard McKenna. Harper and Row, 1973. 150 p. $5.95

I love Richard McKenna. There is no other way to phrase it—to me he was one of the finest authors of the past three decades, and most of his works are masterpieces. His major work, *The Sand Pebbles*, is one of the most powerful books I've ever read, and often I've tried to capture some of that sense in my own writings. The five stories offered in this collection complete his hardcover library of three or four books, all that are available—how sad! almost all that there are—and each story is excellent. The title story is singularly strange and marvelous, Kesey-ish with a Willis O'Brien touch. "Hunter Come Home" is poignant with the special McKenna flavor, the ability to portray 'natural' protagonists realistically, insights into simple souls not too simply portrayed.

The rest are each uniquely affecting, and with no qualms I call a few of them masterpieces. Which they are will be up to you. I am disappointed that Harper and Mr. Knight didn't include "Bramble Bush" (published in *Orbit 3* and one of McKenna's earlier works, slightly revised by Knight for lucidity).

—Greg Bear

THE WIZARD OF ANHARITTE by Colin Kapp. Award AN1156, 1973. 190 p. 95¢

The conflict of an ancient feudal society evolving into a new libertarian society is the basis for this story; and, as you might guess, the Wizard of Anharitte, who is one of the feudal lords, is a central figure in this underground revolution. Although the ending is pretty obvious, you will have a good time getting there as the universe here is well thought out and rather imaginative. All in all, an interesting, enjoyable book.

—Joni Rapkin

THE COMIC-BOOK BOOK ed. by Don Thompson and Dick Lupoff. Arlington House, 1973. 360 p. $8.95 (2d ed. to be published in 1975)

In Left-Wing circles, Arlington House is considered a Right-Wing publisher. I guess it's proper for a Right-Wing publisher to be concerned with nostalgia items. But whatever the politics of the publisher, we can be thankful they have seen fit to publish this memorable work. It is a 'sequel' to *All in Color for a Dime* (though I hope it is really only volume two in a multi-volume collection of essays and reminiscences about the comic books of yore) but one need not have read the first volume as, alas, I haven't—yet. The thirteen essays (articles?) flit randomly about the comic scene, touching many bases and, for me, awakening many memories. Surprising facts about Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck are revealed. Frankenstein's varied comic career is charted, as is Tarzan's. All in all, this book is a pleasure to read, and if one can afford the price, it will be a pleasure to own.

Now the cavils. Probably the best piece is "Of (Super)Human Bondage" by Juanita Coulson, dealing with lady superheroes (superheroines?). She has many perceptive remarks to make about Wonder Woman and her creator. But she does say a few unkind things about *Planet Comics*. Women may not have come out terribly well but there is a whole host of other things one can say about that mag. (Has anyone, for instance, compared American military strategy in Vietnam to Voltan tactics in the series "Lost World"?) She mentions ever so briefly Johnny Thunder: I would like to see someone study his evolution from bumpkin and dolt to a modestly competent detective (which probably caused him to be dropped—everyone loves a fool). In fact, most of the articles gloss over so much in passing that at least three more volumes could be filled by saying what was not said here. Perhaps the most annoying thing was two Johnny Craig covers from EC comics and no Graham Ingels. (By the way, did Ingels ever do one of the "Augo, Lord of Jupiter" episodes in *Planet Comics*?) On almost every page there are statements with which I want to quarrel—or at least have clarified (or my memory refreshed by actually seeing the comic in question), but all this is minor. Though I approve of expanded horizons ("Pigeon holes are only good for pigeons") it seems Chris Steinbrunner leans more on the radio aspects than the comic in his great piece about comic heroes on the radio and vice-versa. I eagerly await future volumes. My great hope is that someone will write about all the maps I remember seeing in the comics of my youth.

—J. B. Post

ASTOUNDING: John W. Campbell Memorial Anthology, ed. by Harry Harrison. Random House, 1973. 332 p. $7.95 (paperback: Ballantine 24329, 1974. $1.95)

The first *Astounding Stories* anthologies I saw, edited by Harry Harrison, were superb. I wish I could say the same for this one, which is composed of 13 original stories written especially for this volume, on the general idea that these are the kind of stories that Campbell would have bought. Alas, it is my feeling that he would have bought none of them—or few. Among the better were L. Sprague de Camp's little fantasy "The Emperor's Fan," Hal Clement's "Lecture Demonstration," and Ike Asimov's spoof "Thiotimoline to the Stars." The rest are better forgotten. Sorry, Harry, no one knows better than I that opinions on stories are personal and maybe I am doing somebody a grave injustice. But I knew John Campbell too, and I think he would have shown these stories no mercy.

—Samuel Mines

HIERO'S JOURNEY: A ROMANCE OF THE FUTURE by Sterling E. Lanier. Chilton, 1973. 280 p. $6.95 (paperback: Bantam Q8534, 1974. $1.25)

It's always premature to call a book a classic upon publication, a work can only earn classic-hood by standing the test of time and being readable years later after a particular fad has passed. I'll risk my reputation and predict we have a winner in this book. It has great flaws from a literary standpoint, but most are the flaws of the genre (Heroic Fantasy) rather than the flaws of the author.

After the atomic wars mutations spring up everywhere. By 7476 AD North America is heavily forested—nay, jungled—and many classes of animals are attaining human intelligence. Most humans are telepaths. Kanda (Canada) is the most advanced culture and is dominated by priest/scientists trying to recover the old learning. To the south is the land of the Dark Brotherhood, an inbred group of mental adepts who seek domination. Hiero Desteen is sent south to seek the secret of computers and other ancient weapons in the terrible dead cities. He no sooner finishes one mutated monster than another agent of the Unclean (as the Brotherhood is referred to by non-Brothers) attacks him. Starting with a Morse, a sort of mutant moose, he picks up a friendly bear and an unfriendly (at first) girl. After some adventures he meets an Elevener, an anti-machine mental adept who has power over animals and who represents a third power neither Unclean nor priesthood.

In many ways typical, but still written with a contagious gusto. There is room for sequels after Hiero finds the computer books. There is a rather poor map and a barely adequate glossary. Yet, for all the cliches and for everything one can find wrong, the book swings. Highly recommended to all those people who enjoyed Andre Norton's *Daybreak 2250 A.D.*

—J. B. Post

NAIL DOWN THE STARS by John Morressy. Walker, 1973. 244 p. $6.95

If a formula works, why not repeat it? This was undoubtedly Morressy's timeworn justification for sitting down with his previous novel *Starbrat*, squeezing out the plot elements, and producing—voila!—*Nail Down the Stars.* A host of authors have done it before him.

The truth is that very few have done it half so well.

Jolon, also a starbrat, flees the murderers of a disreputable father to join a 27th century circus. Becoming an interstellar opportunist, Jolon makes his mark as an actor, then travels the starways as a minstrel seeking his personal destiny among the sprawling worlds of man.

Morressy's cosmology covers a diverse range of super science and barbarism. His heroes may encounter pirates, slavers, gladiatorial combats, mad monarchs and strange races while planet-hopping in ultra sophisticated spaceships. Unlikely, perhaps, but it can be a whale of an entertaining combination.

If you refuse to frown at the term 'space opera,' love adventurous tales of likable rogues, and thoroughly delight in joyous escape—don't miss *Nail Down the Stars.* Or *Starbrat*, for that matter.

—B. A. Fredstrom

THE LUCIFER SOCIETY: Macabre Tales by Great Modern Writers, ed. by Peter Haining. Signet Y5568, 1973. 156 p. $1.25 (hardcover: Taplinger, 1972. $6.50)

By now the nature of Mr. Haining's anthologies is such that it hardly needs to be gone over again; in this case, it is a collection of modern authors of stature, many not associated with horror stories *per se*. The book is divided into two groups, British and American, and both representations are excellent. The most outstanding name in either group—Winston Churchill! Arranged by date, the Churchill story is the oldest, but still quite good, and the rest are certainly up to equally high standards. This is one of the better anthologies around, and rather than bore you with a list of titles and authors, I will simply recommend that you buy the book and enjoy not only the stories, but Kingsley Amis' introduction as well.

—Michael McQuown

VIEW FROM ANOTHER SHORE: European Science Fiction, ed. by Franz Rottensteiner. Seabury Press, 1973. xvi, 234 p. $6.95

Sf is traditionally thought of as a predominantly American genre. While there are grounds for such a belief, which the editor notes is common among European readers and editors as well, the major problem is language and the economic consequences which flow from this. Fortunately, things are changing: consider the Worldcon in Heidelberg, the various series of sf works from respected European publishers, and Suvin's 1970 anthology, *Other Worlds, Other Seas*, to say nothing of critical material appearing in academic and other journals. Rottensteiner, editor of *Quarber Merkur*, is especially well-qualified to assemble this excellent collection by authors whose names, excluding Stanislaw Lem, are likely to be unknown to even veteran fans. The introduction and author notes are especially valuable for readers who wish to explore further and for libraries wishing to support graduate seminars in sf.

Here are 11 stories by as many authors from eight countries. They originally appeared from 1963 to 1971 (sources are shown) but never in English translation. Lem's "In Hot Pursuit of Happiness" begins the book. This tale of the "cosmic constructors" Trurl and Klapaucius is faintly suggestive of the Gallagher stories of Lewis Padgett but is funnier, wittier, and has a sharp satiric bite, reminiscent of Voltaire. France's Gerard Klein contributes "The Valley of Echoes," a moving Mars short in the Bradbury tradition. In "Observations of Quadragnes" by J.P. Andrevon (France), the extraterrestrial studying humans in a zoo is familiar in theme, but its sexual frankness might still earn it a rejection from most American magazines. The contrast between the colloquial speech of the humans and the erudite speech of the alien narrator is not only striking but often hilarious. "The Good Ring" by Sveng Age Madsen (Denmark) has the simplicity and some of the appeal of a classic fable and is well worth reading. Herbert Franke of West Germany has a brief entry, "Slum," which depicts a post-ecocatastrophe world; a convincing story despite its brevity. Czechoslovakia's Josef Nesvadba has been widely published in translation abroad and here. "Captain Nemo's Last Adventure" is gently satiric and may annoy fans of Heinlein's *Green Hills of Earth*. "The Altar of the Random Gods" by Rumania's Adrian Rogoz reflects the author's interest in philosophy but never came alive for me. Lino Aldani is described as "one of the best Italian sf authors." His "Good Night, Sophie" has been widely translated and was adapted for French TV. This piece takes us beyond the 'feelies' of Huxley, where Oneirofilms have replaced reality, still defended only by a waning Anti-Dream League. Aldani's position seems much like that Orwell took toward 'prolofeed,' and is convincingly developed. The final three stories are by Russians. Sever Gansovski's "The Proving Ground" reminded me a little of Sturgeon's classic "Killdozer," but its intent is quite different, with a well-developed anti-militaristic theme. V. Ivanon's "Sisyphus, The Son of Aeolus," is engaging but to my mind outside even an elastic definition of sf. Vadim Shefner's "A Modest Genius" is in the classic tradition of Russian satire and is my favorite among the stories.

The translations, all by different hands, read naturally, marred only by a few typos. If I haven't made myself clear by now, an essential purchase for libraries and must reading for all fans.

—Neil Barron

TRULLION: ALASTOR 2262 by Jack Vance. Ballantine 03308, 1973. 247 p. $1.25

Trullion: Alastor 2262 is another fine novel from the fertile mind of Jack Vance who is rapidly becoming one of the foremost world-creators in the genre.

Trullion is a watery world of island, fen and marsh—one of three thousand inhabited worlds of the Alastor Cluster, The human Trills share the planet with the aboriginal merlings, enimical beings who largely avoid humankind. Trullion is a quiet and slow-paced world, with one exception—the passionate fondness of the Trills for the game of hassade.

This rough and complicated team sport becomes the only possible salvation for Glinnes Hulden. Returning home from a stint with the Whelm, the interstellar military police, he finds himself financially ruined by the machinations of his brother Glay and a strange new sect seeking to lead the people in disturbing directions. Only the glitter of hassade competition and the wealth it can bestow on winning teams offers a chance to recoup his losses. But Glinnes also faces treachery and a mammoth conspiracy as he is swept into an adventure with far more than a game of hassade at stake.

Vance's world has a ring of solid reality imbedded in the strangeness of an alien milieu—and the extraordinary game he creates as the human focus of his world is not the least element of its success. The novel's exterior blurb hails *Trullion* as the beginning of a new series. With 2,999 more planets of the Alastor Cluster for Vance to choose from among, readers can look forward to many more hours of prime entertainment.

—B.A. Fredstrom

MEMOIRS OF A SPACEWOMAN by Naomi Mitchison. Berkley Medallion S2345, 1973. 176 p. 75¢

First written in 1962, this is the first person narrative of a woman who is an expert in communications, specifically with alien races, although she can also communicate with the average earth animal: dog, wolf, horse, etc. There is no plot, but a series of episodes.

We have no idea exactly when these events occur, but probably a hundred or so years in the future. The subjective/objective time difference of FTL space travel is reality here. Children are not only accepted but desirable, and one can choose when to have a child and with whom. (Generally, one episode details the accidental parthenogenetic reproduction of the heroine, Mary.) The mother stays with the child for a year during its childhood, as a stabilizing influence, then takes off to let the child grow with his or her own peer group. Little else is shown of earth, or those who choose an earthbound career; the heroine cannot understand how the non-exploring Terrans can so limit themselves, but realizes it is all in one's point of view: "...the non-explorers... are mostly interested in power and pleasure which the rest of us cannot help considering to be of a rather worthless kind." Another choice of career mentioned, the 'back-time-explorers,' are of a kind with Mary and her colleagues, the space explorers, but we see nothing of them.

Because the speaker is primarily concerned with her feelings and thoughts, first as a woman and second as a communicator, external descriptions suffer. Aliens are rather well described, but not so their habitats, except in the case where the 'habitat' turns out to be a rather large inhabitant. Even the earth is ignored: the reader has no idea how and where people live, take their pleasure, transport themselves, etc. We know they are more stable socially and psychologically than we seem to be, their lives more fulfilled, their compassion for others real. Connecting all the episodes—in addition to the emotional and intellectual concerns and growth of the speaker—is the moral problem of making contact with alien beings: first comes observation, second interpretation of the alien actions, third the inevitable judgment. To guard from misplaced missionary impulses, Mary's society has a strict rule of non-interference. Interestingly, one of the best realized episodes is where a member of an expedition deliberately breaks this rule.

The journal is done very much from the woman's point of view, in a woman's voice, with men sketchily drawn, and additionally the sf is subordinate to the growth theme, so that the *Memoirs* will perhaps appeal more to the distaff side of fandom. However, when Ms. Mitchison is fully involved in being a communicator, she is at her best and has a product that all readers can respond to.

—Gail A. Futoran

VERUCHIA by E.C. Tubb. Ace 86180, 1973. 190 p. 95¢

Demetrius and the Gladiators! No this isn't a sci-fi sequel to *The Robe* but there is a colosseum of sorts. In the Victor Mature role is our hero, Earl Dumarest, who has chosen to fight the crell in the arena. After slaying the bird, he wins the admiration of the lady Veruchia, a rival for the throne.

To prove her claim, Veruchia must find proof of her lineage. The papers she needs supposedly lie in the first ship which colonized Dradea centuries ago. Earl and Veruchia search the planet methodically and discover a likely-looking specimen beneath the sea. Divers explore the remains and are attacked by giant eels and feel earthquake tremors. The ship slips to a lower shelf, trapping Veruchia. Earl rescues her, Veruchia finds the documents, and inherits the throne.

E. C. Tubb has woven a very lively tale for readers of all ages. His characters are singularly original and his plot keeps you going right to the end. The author's creativity is well illustrated by the Oriental cyber plus the unique concept of affinity twins. All in all a book well worth the money.

—Karen Ludwig

THE BOOK OF RACK THE HEALER by Zack Hughes. Award AN1149, 1973. 184 p. 95¢

A biologically dying world and four humanoid species comprise the backdrop of this unusual offering. Unusual because the talent of Zack Hughes offers readers much more than a few hours of some good sci-fi entertainment.

Hughes' story centers on the survival of the four symbiotic species—Keepers, Far Seers, Power Givers and Healers. The hero, Rack the Healer, is gifted with the extraordinary ability to heal himself from the deadly effects of pollution while also having the capacity to heal others—especially the Power Giver he loves, Beautiful Wings. She is able to lift them physically and fly into the upper atmosphere. Together they defy the tradition of their world and search for evidence of the 'Old Ones,' a previous race on their planet. This quest is halted in mid-stream when they discover their world will be totally incapable of producing foodstuffs in the immediate future. Flying to a satellite in hopes of finding a better world, Rack and Beautiful Wings discover only another dead planet, with remnants of an earlier colony. Beautiful Wings dies from lack of food and heat and Rack refuses to live without her. However before he dies, men from an explorer ship find him and learn what he was trying to accomplish. At the end, the men are trying to save Rack's fellow species.

Despite the concluding note of promise, the book left me with a bittersweet feeling. I became very attached to the characters of Rack and Beautiful Wings which, I suppose, is a good example of the writer's talent. Hughes' skill is also illustrated strongly during the soaring with Beautiful Wings—I could experience the freedom of flight. The author's framework parallels a biblical style while his ideals spiral off between Oriental subtleties and esoteric fantasies. Because of Hughes' depth, I'd advise this book for older readers who will fully grasp his thought and the beauty of his imagination. It's superlative.

—Karen Ludwig

BEYOND JUPITER, paintings by Chesley Bonestell and text by Arthur C. Clarke. Little, Brown, 1973. 89 p. $12.95

Both Bonestell and Clarke have achieved grand reputations, and both deserve them. Bonestell's paintings established a high-water mark for astronomical art, not only in technical accuracy (which often fades with time's reversal of theory) but artistic conception. Some of his paintings are stunning and can stand up against the great landscape artists of terrestrial limitations. And at his worst, he can provide a technical insight into astronomical situations which is very helpful.

This is essentially a coffee-table book, elegant and pretty, but not remarkable in its speculations or its freshness. Clarke's text is competent and interesting, but more as autobiographical detail than astronomy. Most of it can be had elsewhere, in more detail, with more surprises. Still, this is no real criticism considering the intent and audience for the book. It will attract and inform and entertain.

Bonestell's contributions are also interesting and attractive, but to me they lack the spark of drive and imagination that Bonestell has at his best. His conception of Mars (fig. 13, p.34) is far too old-fashioned and inaccurate to pass when direct photos are now available. The cover painting is a reworking of one of his most famous pictures—Saturn from Titan—but again, it offers no new view, and this is disappointing in light of current speculation about that moon's nature and characteristics.

In all, the book is adequate, but coming from two figures such as Clarke and Bonestell, that in itself is a condemnation. Gentlemen, my respect remains, but my breath is still held. Drop the other foot and show us what you really have to say.

—Greg Bear

THE EDGE OF NEVER edited by Robert Hoskins. Fawcett M590, 1973. 287 p. 95¢

This collection is subtitled "Classic and Contemporary Tales of the Supernatural" which is not quite accurate, as there is one ESP story I consider plain sf. The best of the 17 stories included are: M.R. James' "Lost Hearts," his first story, and one of his best, about a reclusive old man, his orphan nephew, and some revengeful ghosts; Robert W. Chambers' "The Yellow Sign," about an artist, his model, and their very disturbing dreams; John Masefield's "The Sealman"; Fredric Brown's "Armageddon," or why the end of the world didn't come off; Robert Bloch's "The Cheaters," those magic spectacles again, but very imaginatively done; Isaac Asimov and Frederik Pohl's "Legal Rites," the funniest ghost story around; and Barry N. Malzberg's "Elephants," about the last carnival, by far the best thing of his I've read.

The one sf story is Poul Anderson's "Journey's End," an esper story which I've read too many times. It's a good story of the isolated telepath looking for another telepath type, but it doesn't really belong here. Dean R. Koontz's "Nightmare Gang" is also an ESP story, about a teen gang, but it has a ghost in it.

Most of the stories here are worth reading. If there's not too much overlap with what you've read, this is a solid anthology to have.

—Leslie Bloom

THE BROMIUS PHENOMENON by John Rankine. Ace 08145, 1973. 207 p. 95¢

Here is a good, action-packed space opera about how the invulnerable hero, with the help of a little ESP (but, to be fair, also with the hindrance of a lot of ESP) saves a planet for the good guys and wins the girl. It ends up exactly where you know it is going and it keeps moving every minute until it gets there. Characterization is virtually nonexistent, but then all invulnerable heroes look alike to me. There is a little bit more in the way of plot, but the main thing is action and, after all, that is all you need for a space opera.

—Joni Rapkin

CONSCIENCE INTERPLANETARY by Joseph Green. Doubleday, 1973. 230 p. $5.95 (paperback: DAW UY1148, 1974. $1.25)

This is an elegant idea, and a kind of moral goal. Man the spoiler, the ruthless exploiter, finally develops an ecological conscience. The conscience is a highly trained specialist who visits planets where colonies have been established, and investigates the native life. If he finds indications of intelligence he has the power to end colonization and exploitation and order the humans off the planet. Naturally, in doing so he is going to run into some nasty opposition from those whose toes he treads upon, and that is the theme of the book. It seems to be a collection of shorter pieces, all around the central character and his adventures on strange worlds, now re-written and tied into a novel of sorts. The quality of imagination and inventiveness is excellent, particularly in synthesizing new forms of life on strange worlds. You'll have to make allowances for the usual run-of-the-mill villains and the general literary level which tends to be a little stiff and stereotyped, but you can well overlook this as minor in the greater values of the story—the imagination and originality. And the basic idea, of an ecological conscience, is excellent, and long overdue.

—Samuel Mines

ALSO RECEIVED:

Behind the Walls of Terra, by Philip Jose Farmer. Ace 05360. $1.25 (reviewed LUNA Monthly 26/27)

The Best of Fritz Leiber, by Fritz Leiber. Introd. by Poul Anderson. Ballantine 24256, Nov. $1.75

Cap Kennedy 13: A World Aflame, by Gregory Kern. DAW UQ1144, Nov. 95¢

Deep Space, ed. by Robert Silverberg. Dell 3264, Nov. 95¢ (hardcover: Nelson, 1973. $4.95. reviewed LUNA Monthly 53)

The Devil and Dr. Noxin, by Burton H. Wolfe. Wild West Publ. House, 1973. $2.50 (play modeled on Faust)

The EM Discoveries, by Robert Gibbons. Exposition, Dec. $6.00

Edgar Rice Burroughs: Master of Adventure, by Richard A. Lupoff. Ace 18771, Dec. $1.25 (orig. 1965)

The Early Asimov, book two, by Isaac Asimov. Fawcett Crest P2323, Dec. $1.25 (hardcover: Doubleday, 1972. $10.00. reviewed LUNA Monthly 41/42)

Exterminator! by William S. Burroughs. Viking Compass C575. $2.45paper

Fuzzies: A Folk Fable for All Ages, by Richard Lessor. Argus Communications (Niles, Ill.) 1971.

The Guns of Avalon, by Roger Zelazny. Avon 20032, Aug. 95¢ (hardcover: Doubleday, 1972. $5.95. reviewed LUNA Monthly 49)

The House That Lived Again, by Lois Christian Carnell. Ace 88595. 95¢

Imaginative Sex, by John Norman. DAW UJ1146, Dec. $1.95

Invisible Horizons, by Vincent Gaddis. Ace 37177. $1.25

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