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# ALIEN THOUGHTS BY THE EDITOR

## THE FUTURE SNEAKS IN...

on us with quiet little feet. We don't quite notice it in the corners of our vision. Then---WHAM! Television. CRASH!---space-flight. THUD!---cloning and gene-splicing. KABLOOIE!---robots.

The Japanese have developed robot factory 'workers'. They don't look human, but they out-perform humans in their narrow fields. These robots are only smart machines...with a limit to their smarts...so far. But the cunning Japanese are into giving machines the ability to understand a limited amount of human speech... about 100 words so far...and of course they can talk, too.

So what we have here is the likelihood of a factory full of various grades of robots, serviced by robots, monitored by top-of-the-line robots who are in turn managed by a small cadre of humans.

All this made possible by micro chips and the related computer technology.

It's an extension, the progression of labor-saving machines. Insidious.

We have (and will have much more of) dozens of world-wide super corporations controlling thousands of other corporations in every mixed economy in the world. These super corporations think big: a billion dollars saved is a billion dollars earned. People don't count except as tools, as conduits for transmission of wealth and power. Super corporations think of people in masses---in millions. On that level a carefully disguised holding company in New York (let's say) which controls ten conglomerates, each of which controls thirty diversified or specialized manufacturing companies or financial institutions... That innocent-appearing holding company and the man or family or small group which controls it, will easily order a conversion to robotics for this division, that sector....and will not be bothered with tiny local consequences.

The intent is to cut costs and increase profits. The intent is to increase market shares, to gain selling leverage, to gain ever more control! To eliminate competition and to minimize X-factors---to create a smooth-running, all-powerful money-making organism of linked agents, employees, organizations and machines.



These super corporations which really, now, rule our planet, are the Genghis Khans of today. They are utterly ruthless, utterly merciless in their savage competition among themselves and in their treatment of those inconsequential humans who suffer when these gods do battle.

The future in our future is not being created for your benefit or mine. If we prosper it will be because of chance or because we happen to live in the right corporate sector...or because we perceive the masked reality behind the facade of "government" and "nation" and adjust our thinking---and allegiances---to that reality.

In the future planned for us, your mission will be to buy as you are told, work as you are forced, and think as you are convinced. If you choose to accept that role you'll be a victim of the future.

If you realize the significance of the coming wave of robotics and "artificial life" created for commercial use, and if you can "see" the gigantic, interlocked power structures behind the corporate sector called government, then you possibly can turn those insights to your advantage...mostly by getting out of the way of onrushing "adjustments" and titanic power struggles. It might even be possible to take advantage of the surges and eddies of the tides of power...and disaster.

Disaster. Yes, Virginia, that little holding company in New York controlled by a few people and their high-priced advisors---and the dozens of other key holding companies

throughout the world---often make dumb mistakes, miscalculate, screw up. They are controlled by humans and their snafus are as inevitable as yours and mine.

Only theirs cost more---and while they pay in loss of multi-billions of dollars...losses of markets...losses of sectors (nations, sometimes)---the resulting damage in local financial and social terms can be and usually is devastating and often fatal.

The basic message of this editorial is that the future is not in our control and we have to understand that. The future is not being designed for our benefit, and we have to realize that. The future is dangerous as hell, and we damn well better know that---or suffer the consequences.

In the world we live in now we bet our lives our fortunes and our honor, and it's best to know the who-what-when-where-why and how of the bet and the game and the house.

I'm not saying these gigantic corporate octopi are wrong or evil. They have been growing and developing through the centuries since the end of Medieval times. With the growth of technology, populations and the exploitations of the planet's mineral wealth, the concentrations of financial/ownership power have also exploded in size.

They exist. They manipulate. They struggle for domination. It is to their advantage that the masses of people they control directly and indirectly not realize the true flows of power and control in the world. That has always been the case above the tribal level of societies.

The super, 'transnational' corporations are natural and inevitable given our level of civilization and economies. And I'd say the present "mix" of socialism/capitalism, democracy/dictatorship in the world is also natural within a cycle, within instinctual social limits.

Mankind is natural. Our works and organizations and desires are natural. And the constant deep tidal shifts of social, cultural, psychic---instinctual---forces is natural on every level.

It's a great show.

And we're all actors. And if you really want to, you can choose your role (within limits) and how long your part lasts (within limits.)

So it goes.

MEANWHILE, WHERE THE TIRE MEETS THE ROAD....

A new product report. As many of you know, I'm a dedicated bicy-

clist, and I've pissed and moaned for years off and on about the cretins who throw bottles out of cars (presumably to hear the nice tinkle as the bottle breaks, but actually as an act of aggression, an expression of hostility to society and in a malicious hope that some poor bicyclist (or car with very bald tires) will get a flat).

I've had more than my share of flats, I think.

And I've prayed for a company to develop an airless bicycle tire.

Some one has. Sears now sells an airless tire in three sizes--- 27" for racing bikes, 26" for your basic three-speed or one speed touring bike, and the 20" for those imitation-motorcycle designed bikes with the banana saddles.

And just in time, too, with cities and counties cutting back on street-cleaning budgets, leaving that broken glass to accumulate and spread (it's a malignant social disease) for an extra week or two or three...

It has reached the point now that every curbside area of every major street is a glittering minefield that traffic forces the bicyclist to ride through. And this situation will only get worse.

How good are these airless tires? How are they made? What do they cost?

They're made of polyurethane and have a nylon-reinforced bead. They have a compartmentalized inner structure to keep the shape of the tire and to resist flattening by the weight of the bike and rider.

They give a harder ride---you feel bumps more and you have to work a little harder. The bike won't coast as well. The tires are heavier than regular tubes-and-tires.

They cost \$12.99 each for the 26" size. I presume that price holds for the other sizes, too. They are supposed to last twice as long as a regular bicycle tire. And they cost twice as much as a regular tube-and-tire.

The trade-off is flat-free riding against a harder, more effortfull ride.

Pay your money---take your choice. I tried two and liked them well enough to buy two for Paulette's **bike**. If she doesn't like them I'll save them for replacements on my bike.

Now I know if I ride five miles downtown I won't ever have to walk back part or all the way.

Peace of mind is worth a little extra work.

By the way, getting these things on a rim is a helluva job.

HI-HO, THE R.E.G. IS DEAD, ONE-TRACK R.E.G., BORING R.E.G....

This will be essentially a repeat of the last entry in REG, so REG-subscribers may wish to pass onward.

Briefly, because of a dissatisfaction with REG---A Personal Journal, I've decided to stop trying to make it be a personal journal, retitle it, and, with the collaboration of a friend (and letter-writers) create a new publication more suited to my current (and growing) interests.

REG began a couple years ago with a fairly large personal-experiences content. It wasn't like the naked psyche REGs 1-2-3 of 1971-2 before it metamorphosed into THE ALIEN CRITIC, but it was okay.

As the issues passed it became more and more an opinionzine, a commentzine...and more and more devoted to dismal economics and doomsaying politics. Or vice-versa.

I made terrible personal vows to make it more varied, more personal. I failed. I failed. And so, with #23, I bowed, scraped, and genuflected to the inevitable.

I might not have capitulated so soon had not a young man entered into my life who is markedly intelligent, with astonishing curiosity, memory and "linkage" abilities---a phenomenal store of knowledge, and an incredible array of sources of information. Basic info. Behind-the-scenes info. He has a psychic nose for buried bodies in the news.

So it was natural that our complementary interests and slants-of-mind be joined in unholy labor to write, edit and publish the bloody child of REG.

Behold, shrieking in anger, hanging by its feet: CONSPIRACY NEWSLETTER.

CONSPIRACY NEWSLETTER will be in the REG format: eight pages, [but always offset], mailed first class in #10 envelopes. And CONSPIRACY NEWSLETTER will be monthly.

Indeed, the first issue should be published and available by the time you read this.

The price will be \$1. for a sample copy. \$10. per year.

Current REG subscribers will receive CN at their original REG rates through their subscriptions. Renewals will be at CN rates.

My co-editor and co-writer has some sensitive Washington D.C. and New York (and other areas) sources. He does not wish to be identified. Nor, for that matter, do I. There will be no credit lines in CONSPIRACY NEWSLETTER. We'll be publishing a few letters per issue, if appropriate, and all letter writers to CN should indicate if the letter is for publication, and if the writer's name should be used (and address?).

We want letters containing solid information and a credible conspiracy angle. Pure opinion, dogma and vituperation letters will find the round file.

We will be trying to show our readers the news behind the news, the lies and management of what-is-revealed. The underlying forces.

These days, the paranoid mind is the sane mind.



## CONSPIRACY NEWSLETTER

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# THE ENGINES OF THE NIGHT

BY BARRY N. MALZBERG



Selected Essays From  
THE ENGINES OF THE NIGHT: Science Fiction in the Eighties  
To Be Published By DOUBLEDAY

PART TWO

SON OF THE TRUE AND TERRIBLE

There is no way in which a contemporary audience -- even the contemporary audience for quote serious unquote fiction -- can understand the degree of humiliation and self-revulsion many science fiction writers suffered until at least the early sixties. Phillip K. Dick in a recent introduction to a collection has written movingly of this; all through his first decade it was impossible for a science fiction writer to be regarded by writers in other fields or in the universities as a writer at all. College professors of English regarded the genre as sub-literate, the timeless man-on-the-street thought it was crazy. Word-rates were low, the readers were limited and one operated from the outset in the conviction that work of even modest ambition would live and die within the same walls that the debased work did. Dick remembers meeting the literary writer Herbert Gold at a party in the mid-fifties and asking for his autograph; Gold gave him a card inscribed "to my colleague, Phillip K. Dick" and Dick carried this around for years because it was the first acknowledgment from a literary person that his work had any existence.

Phillip Klass has an anecdote even more horrible in his essay "Jazz Then, Musicology Now", published in a 1972 FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION "college issue". (At that time courses on science fiction at the university level were in the first flush.) In 1945, Klass and a graduate student in English friend of his met Theodore Sturgeon in an automat; Sturgeon (whose "Killdozer!" had just about then been published in ASTOUNDING) talked passionately and at length of the artistic problems of science fiction, the particular challenges of the genre, the demands of a medium in which expository matter was of central importance to a story yet could not be permitted to overbalance it. After Sturgeon left them, Klass's friend said with an amused laugh, "These science fiction writers, they really think of themselves as writers, don't they? I mean he's talking about this stuff seriously as if he were writing literature!"

A writer who came into this field after 1965 cannot really know what it must have been like for Sturgeon and Dick, Kornbluth or Sheckley. At no time has it ever been easy to attempt serious work in this form but after 1965 science fiction's audience had increased, there was some crossover of that audience and the audiences for literature of other sorts and because of Sputnik, the assassinations, the Apollo Project and

the employment of the cliches of the form by certain successful commercial novelists -- Drury, Wallace, Levin all had bestsellers which were thematic science fiction -- the form had a certain grudging cachet; people might not know what you were writing (or care about it) but at least they had heard of it. In the nineteen-fifties the only people other than crazy kids who would even admit to knowledge of the form were a few engineering or scientific types and they kept the magazines well hidden.

There must have been a lot of rage in these fifties writers, rage and recrimination and (most commonly) self-loathing for even being involved in the form and, after a while (because you fell into the habits and also because you became labeled) being unable to write anything else unless one was willing to repudiate the totality of one's career, adopt a pseudonym and start all over again. That rage was fueled by low advances, capricious editors, predatory publishers, policies in the book markets which consigned any science fiction novel to a defined audience, printed or overprinted a given number of copies and after throwing them into the market out-of-printed the book. (And then cheated on the royalty statements.) It was fueled yet further by the perception of most of these writers of the disparity between their work -- galaxies, world-conquering, heroes, superheroes, galactic drives, the hounds of heaven -- and their lives which were limited, entrapped, penurious and often drenched with alcohol. Even a moderately intelligent writer could see the disjunction and its irony, some dealt with it by writing witty and highly ironic science fiction but others went deeper into megalomania and fantasy and their promise was lost. None of these writers were helped, either by the fact that television and the movies were appropriating their work to make cheap, mass-market pap of it; sometimes they paid low rights fees (Campbell got \$500 for the movie rights to WHO GOES THERE?) but most often they simply plagiarized. The fifties science fiction writer was a true Van Vogt protagonist: surrounded by vast, inimical, malevolent powers who regarded him without compassion, struggling to reach some kind of goal which he could not define. But unlike the Goseyns the fifties science fiction writer had no weapon shops of Isher, no Korzbysonian logic, no seesaw, no secret plans, no occasionally helpful overlords. He had only his colleagues to help him along and they were in as much trouble as he. Under these circumstances the body of work turned out by the best twenty or thirty writers and its astonishing quality are a monument to the human

spirit (or its perversity) perhaps unparalleled in the history of the so-called arts.

###

"What you have to do with this stuff, a science fiction writer/editor warned me a long time ago, "is just to sit down with an outline and crank it; reel it out the same way that you'd do pornography or a sado-masochistic suspense novel. Otherwise it doesn't pay; if you really get involved with it, try to have original conceptions or work them out in an original way; you'll slow down to the point where you can't possibly justify the word-rates. If you're going to write science fiction for a living or even try to make it work as a sideline you have to do it fast. You can't take it seriously like so many of you guys nowadays are trying to do."

Without making a value judgment on the remarks (which are obviously correct for most of us; even in the decade of five-figure advances for genre science fiction, the average return for a science fiction novel is about five thousand dollars), they function as explanation of why no science fiction writer has published more than two or three books of the first rank. In 1960, reviewing Budrys' *ROGUE MOON*, James Blish stated that no science fiction writer had ever written more than one masterpiece (he felt that if Budrys were able to go on he would break the pattern) and even two decades later there is not much evidence in contradiction: Silverberg has done five or six novels which are very strong and so has Phillip K. Dick now but even, as we regard the LeGuins or Delany or Wolfes, even if we regard James Blish himself (who was a strong writer who died untimely in 1975 at the age of 54) who can be said to have published more than two?

The economics of the business may change but other exigencies are not. Science fiction is, if taken seriously, a difficult, rigorous, exhausting form demanding at the top the concentration and precision of the chess master and the skills of the first-rate literary writer. How often do these qualities occur in one writer ... and how often can they be reproduced?

Fortunately for most of us, science fiction on the chapter-by-chapter level can be cranked, can fill space, can be mechanically conceived and rapidly written ... it is a genre, it has recourses to devices and a handy stock of the familiar, a well-mapped universe. But here too the schism at the center of the genre is manifest: there has never been a science fiction novel so bad that

breathing in its center was not an idea which had once had merit, there is never one so good that it cannot be seen at the bottom to repose (un-easily but positively) on the cliches and assumed clutter of the form. There ain't nothing so good that we cannot get a glimpse of the worst, ain't nothing so bad that it doesn't show a little of the good ... there's the best in the worst of us, worst in the best, all of us dummies of varying workmanship and attractiveness in the case of the Great Ventriloquist who do, he surely do, give voice to us all.

1980: New Jersey



## THE CUTTING EDGE

Everyone plays with ten best lists; science fiction people are no exception \*\* but here is a proposal for a different one: the ten best science fiction short stories of all time. Whether it is possible to define a ten (or even a hundred) "best" is arguable of course; the qualifications and the criteria of the compiler are pressed every step of the way but that the job should be done for the short story is beyond dispute.

Science fiction, at the cutting edge, has always existed in the short story. Perhaps the genre by very definition will sustain its best work in that form; here a speculative premise and a protagonist upon whose life that premise is brought to bear can be dramatically fused in their purest form. Novels tend to be episodic or bloated; even novellas tend to either say too much or too little but the short story -- commonly defined as a work of prose fiction of

\*\* I have a novel list elsewhere in this book and Harlan Ellison riskily attempted to name the ten best living writers of science fiction in a book review column in the 5/74 issue of *FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION*. In fact, Ellison ranked them.



less than 15,000 words -- has from the outset composed most of the best work of science fiction. While the field in its modern inception has produced perhaps ten novels that might be called masterpieces it has produced no less than a hundred short stories that would justify that difficult label. Henry James defined the short story as in its purest state being about one person and one thing and it is within that compass that science fiction achieves rigor and its proper form. (It should be noted that almost all of the disputed masterpieces that would appear on most of the ten-best-novel lists were expanded or assembled from short stories ... Budrys' *ROGUE MOON*, Miller's *CANTICLE FOR LEIBOWITZ*, Sturgeon's *MORE THAN HUMAN*, for instance. Although one is dangerously surmising author intention it would be a fair guess that these were originally conceived as short stories and only worked *obiter dicta* into novels lending further justification to the view of science fiction as a short story form.)

Too, it is in America in the twentieth century that the short story has reached its apotheosis; our one great contribution to world culture might be the American short story which has become a wondrous and sophisticated medium. The confluence of the American short story and that uniquely American form modern science fiction would result in a ten-best list with which anyone would reckon.

Herewith this list with the usual qualifications and cautions: The stories themselves are not ranked in order of descending merit (it is foolish enough to find a top ten without going on to arrange them), the judgment is based upon literary excellence (seminal stories such as Weinbaum's "A Martian Odyssey" as influences upon the genre have had far greater effect than most of the stories on this list but the work is being judged *sui generis*) and, of course, as a single if informed opinion it is liable to challenge and dispute, not least of all from the list-maker himself who a year or two

from now might want to change three-quarters of it ... or ten years from now might agree that work yet to be written has displaced several of these stories. Whether or not our best work is ahead of us, a lot of good work is still ahead:

1) *VINTAGE SEASON*, by C.L. Moore (*ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION*, 1946). Published as by "Lawrence O'Donnell", the second most important (after "Lewis Padgett") of the Kuttner's pseudonyms, this story is now known to have been one of the very few of their 18-year-marriage and collaboration to have been written by Catherine Moore alone. The vision of future cultural decadence imposed (through time-traveling researchers who specialize in attending plagues, torment and disasters of history) upon an earlier (undefined) period that in its own decadence foreshadows this version of the future; its languorous pace, concealed but artful and manipulated erotic subtext and stylistic control probably distinguish it as the single best short story to emerge from the decade. It has been rewritten endlessly, has served as direct influence of hundreds of short stories and at least two dozen novels but none of its descendants have improved upon the basic text. Its only flaw -- as Damon Knight pointed out twenty years ago -- is a denouement that carries on too long between the revelation and the flat, deadly last line; it is bathetic and overextended and for form should have been severely cut. It is not a serious flaw because it enables the reader only to marvel at the spareness of this 18,000-word story to that point; it has the density and emotional impact of a novel.

2) *HER SMOKE ROSE UP FOREVER*, by James Tiptree, Jr./Alice Sheldon (*FINAL STAGE*, 1974). The judge must plead his own problem at the outset and throw himself on the mercy of a higher court; I commissioned this story for an original anthology co-edited with Edward L. Ferman and published it first. *FINAL STAGE* was a written-to-order anthology in which various writers were asked to write a story on one of the great themes of science fiction; Tiptree/Sheldon was asked for an End of the World story and delivered one of the very few masterpieces that did not originate with the writer. (Editorial involvement or the assignment of theme often results in good stories and sometimes improves good stories to better-than-good but masterpieces almost necessarily have to self-generate and will themselves through.)

This post-apocalypse story in which the end of the world becomes

a metaphor for the shocks and injuries of existence which prefigure and replicate death (and make the state of death their eternal re-enactment) is almost unknown today; it appears only in the out-of-print *FINAL STAGE* in hardcover and paperback and out-of-print Tiptree collection, *STAR SONGS OF AN OLD PRIMATE*. It will reward the most careful study and Tiptree's afterword to the story -- also commissioned as were all the afterwords in the collection -- is a brief but beautifully written essay on the real meaning of science fiction on whose ideas I have based the title essay of this book.

3) *PARTICLE THEORY*, by Edward Bryant (*ANALOG*, 1977). The protagonist a physicist, is dying of cancer, his emotional life is in decay and the astronomical phenomena which he observes clearly foreshadow the end of the world ... all three levels of destruction here fuse, echo one another, are bound together in a story of astonishing excellence which fully meets the criteria of a great science fiction story; its science and scientific content are bound into the text and grant the emotional force; without the scientific element the story would collapse yet it is this speculation's shift into individual pain and consequence which clarify it scientifically. The seventies were science fiction's richest decade in the short story; although more good stories were published in the fifties, the top one or two percent of the latter decade's output far exceeded the equivalent top percent of the fifties and in this decade Bryant's story might have been the best.

4) *THE TERMINAL BEACH*, by J.G. Ballard (*NEW WORLDS*, 1965). Rejected by every American market of its time as eventless, internalized and depressing, this mysterious and beautiful work was the key story of its decade, the pivot for science fiction; its importance lay not only in its depiction of "inner space", the complex and tormented vistas of the human spirit in the post-technological age, but in its use of science-fiction technique to convert its ambiguous landscape and by implication the century to "science fiction".

5) *PRIVATE EYE*, by Henry Kuttner and C.L. Moore (*ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION*, 1949). A puzzle story, a futuristic mystery -- how can the protagonist make a premeditated murder look accidental when the forensic pathologists and the prosecution have time-scanning devices that can follow him from birth and put him on-stage all the time? -- that in its horrid denouement indicates exactly where the Kuttners thought the paraphernalia and technological wonders of the future would take us and why;

cleanly written, paced to within an inch of its life and although still anthologized always underrated as the masterpiece that it is.

6) SUNDANCE, by Robert Silverberg (FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION, 1969). A complex, multiply-voiced, shifting point of view (employing among other technical devices, second-person narration for a time) the story would have been self-conscious, a display of virtuosity for its own sake were it not for the pain of the American Indian protagonist attached to a genocidal mission and the clarity of its plot development which not only justify but incorporate all of the stylistic trickery and make them implicit in the theme. The most brilliant of many Silverberg excellences in the short story form between 1968-75 and in its subtle fashion one of the most powerful anti-Vietnam, anti-war stories of the period.

7) ANACHRON, by Damon Knight (WORLDS OF IF, 1954). A story which, because it did not sell the top magazines of the period, fell into obscurity although it does appear in the recent THE BEST OF DAMON KNIGHT. A time paradox story of the most elegant construction it sets up and explodes its desperate conclusion with a remorselessness and rigor characteristic of the very best of the GALAXY school of science fiction of which Knight in turn was the best and most rigorous example. Naturally Horace Gold rejected it but ANACHRON was only one of many distinguished stories published by James Quinn in WORLDS OF IF, an editor who -- by the standards of science fiction perhaps rather foolishly -- asked first that a story be literate and readable and only second that it be suited for the nebulous "science fiction audience".

8) THE MEN WHO MURDERED MUHAMMAD, by Alfred Bester (FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION, 1954). Bester is best known for his two fifties novels which appeared first in GALAXY, THE DEMOLISHED MAN (1952) and THE STARS MY DESTINATION (1956) but in that period he published more than a dozen stories in FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION which are generally felt to be the finest and most consistently brilliant body of shorter work by any writer in the history of the form; here is Bester using the device of the paradox to destroy the time paradox and some of the shibboleths of science fiction itself ("you are your past ... each of us lives alone and returns alone"); the many-voiced, restless, surgically probing style is beyond the level of the best "literary" writers of Bester's time. (It was the late nineteen sixties before the so-called mainstream in

the persons of Robert Coover, a latter-day Norman Mailer, Donald Barthelme, Robert Stone caught up to Bester by finally evolving a style which crystallized the fragmented, tormented, transected voices of the age.)

9) FONDLY FARENHEIT, by Alfred Bester (FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION 1954). Silverberg has called this perhaps the single finest short story ever to come from science fiction; it may be that, it certainly is with due respect to SUNDANCE (which was written a full decade and a half later!) the most technically brilliant. An alternating first and third person, a maddened protagonist and the crazed robot who has become his alter-ego and doppelganger, perfect demented control and a trapdoor ending. There has been nothing like this story in modern American literature; that it was published over a quarter of a century ago and is still unknown outside of science fiction is an indictment of the academic/literary nexus for which in the very long run if there is any future for scholarship at all, they will pay heavily.

10) E FOR EFFORT by T.L. Sherred (ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION, 1947). A.J. Budrys writes that Campbell published Sherred's first story on its astonishing merit, spent the next ten years thinking about it and decided that he didn't like what it really meant at all. A viewer that will enable its possessor to view any one at any time in the history of the world, once seized (as it would inevitably be) by the government will be so obviously dangerous to all other governments that an end-of-the-world war will be launched as soon as the word gets out; technology in its purest form will always be appropriated for the purposes of savagery and destruction. Sherred has published only a scattering of short stories and a minor novel (ALIEN ISLAND) over the succeeding decades; his reputation in the field on the basis of this one story remains as secure as that of any writer in the history of the genre.

The second ten, all close runners-up to be sure, listed once more in no particular order and with the understanding that any one or all of them could probably be traded in for any one or all of the top ten to the same conclusions:

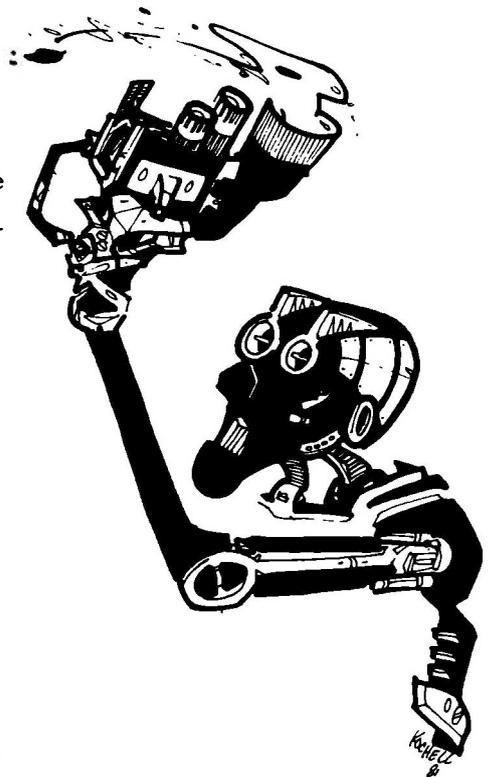
BABY IS THREE by Theodore Sturgeon (GALAXY, 1952), THEY DON'T MAKE LIFE LIKE THEY USED TO, by Alfred Bester (FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION, 1961), THE DEAD PAST by Isaac Asimov (ASTOUNDING, 1956), THE NINTH SYMPHONY OF LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN AND OTHER LOST SONGS, by Carter Scholz (UNIVERSE, 1977), THE EVE OF THE LAST APOLLO by Carter Scholz (ORBIT, 1977),

THE PSYCHOLOGIST WHO WOULDN'T DO AWFUL THINGS TO RATS by James Tiptree/Alice Sheldon (NEW DIMENSIONS, 1976), PARTY OF THE TWO PARTS by William Tenn/Phillip Klass (GALAXY, 1955), THE CHILDREN'S HOUR by Henry Kuttner & C.L. Moore (ASTOUNDING, 1944) and TIMETIPPING by Jack M. Dann (EPOCH, 1975).

1980: New Jersey

#### MEMOIR FROM GRUB STREET

I edited AMAZING and FANTASTIC STORIES, both bi-monthly magazines, from 4/68-10/68. It was not the best of times but it was hardly the worst either (although in my youthful exuberance I thought that it was). I was the magazine's only employee, edited it from my bedroom, delivered the copyedited, blurb-ed manuscripts by mail to the printer, proofed the galleys. Art and layout were handled by the publisher from his home in Bayside, Queens, the publisher assuming more expertise in these areas (he was right) than I. Eventually a dispute over control of the art -- I commissioned a couple of covers but the publisher did not want to use them and I threatened to quit if he did not and was in return fired over the phone on a Sunday afternoon just as the Giants were about to score a touchdown (they fumbled) but that is not the subject of this





I admit it. I'm only after you for your body.  
Now shut up and get on the plate.

essay nor is my salary (\$100 a month to begin, merit increases up to \$150 before the end) nor is my self-image at the time as the logical successor to Hugo Gernsback, T. O'Connor Sloane, Raymond Palmer and Paul Fairman. AMAZING, after Ziff-Davis precipitately abandoned it in 1965 because of declining sales (although the last Z-D editor, Cele Lalli Goldsmith might have been one of the five finest magazine editors in the genre) had fallen upon desperate times; the publisher had picked it up, if not for a song, at least for a medley and it was his hope to float it along by access to the magazine's backlist (Z-D had almost always purchased all serial rights granting unlimited reprint). Herrph Wrosz was the first stopgap editor, Harry Harrison discontentedly the second and I was the third; only when Ted White began his ten-year editorship and began to make real inroads on the publisher's prejudice against original material and graphics did the publication or its companion begin to have any impact at all.

No, my editorship was of vanishing significance and although I was able to find and publish some expert work (Lafferty's "This Grand Carcass, Yet", Wodham's "Try Again", Richard C. Meredith's stunning "We All Died at Breakaway Station") I never thought of myself as much more than an adequate editor; I was able to separate the good from the bad and publish the better; this seemed to be the minimum requirement of an editor but I have subsequently learned that in contemporary publishing it is the last. My tenure was obviously too short to have any value and the circulation of the magazines -- perhaps 24,000 apiece at that time -- would guarantee that whatever I did would be at the far margins of even

the more limited science fiction of the late sixties.

The only point of this reminiscence has to do with the submissions I faced and how they were handled and it is only this which might have some significance at this date. Consider the situation: AMAZING and FANTASTIC were magazines at the bottom of the extant market, unlike all the others they paid on or after publication and never more than two cents a word (which Fritz Leiber got and in one extraordinary case Tom Disch exceeded just barely because of the efforts of his agent). For any professional or amateur writer they would have to be on the tail-end of the list: I would only see what PLAYBOY and ANALOG and GALAXY and WORLDS OF IF and FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION and VENTURE and NEW WORLDS had rejected.

Nonetheless, the magazines, which at that time were publishing only 12,000 words of original material an issue -- three average-length stories or a long novelette and a short one -- received through the six months of my tenure an average of one hundred manuscripts a week. The scripts came from unknown and unpublished writers in the majority, of course ... but at least twenty-five percent of them, week after week, were signed by recognizable names, some of them like Leiber or Lafferty at the top of the market as then constituted, others like Wodhams or Koontz or Meredith or David R. Bunch in the strong middle range.

Most of the manuscripts were, to be sure, not publishable but fifteen percent of them (and close to ninety-percent of those turned in by the professionals) were and at least a third of that fifteen percent or an

average of five manuscripts a week were outstanding. It is no exaggeration to recall that AMAZING and FANTASTIC received through my editorship sixty stories which by any standard that I could ascertain were as good or better than anything published in the competing magazines.

I was able because of space pressures to buy perhaps twenty of those stories and perhaps another fifteen which were of lesser standard (which means for various reasons that I rejected in full consciousness about forty stories which were better than some I bought but that is another essay). The word-rate in all cases but that of Leiber and Disch was a penny a word on publication and all of the writers were glad to accept the terms. The stories were published, one of them (the Lafferty) was one of the best-of-the-year collections and a couple of them eventually wound up in author collections. The remainder vanished.

I think of this now and then, think of it in a time when the magazine market is even more constricted than it was at the time and when there are now close to a thousand (instead of the close to five hundred) American and British writers eligible for membership in the Science Fiction Writers of America and at least some definition of professionalism. If fifty-five publishable short stories a month were of necessity being rejected by a bottom-line, penny-a-word market at that time exactly what is going on now? WORLDS OF IF and GALAXY have collapsed, AMAZING/FANTASTIC under a new ownership are producing half as many issues a year, VENTURE is gone, PLAYBOY no longer does science fiction. OMNI and ISAAC ASIMOV'S have appeared of course but the market is still in debit and there are almost twice as many professional writers to say nothing of the hordes of creative writing majors of the seventies driven toward science fiction simply because the quality lit market no longer exists ... along with the usual host of science fiction fans/readers led naturally through adolescence to attempt publication.

What is being lost now? How many stories in oblivion, how many careers non-existent?

What can there be for all of these writers?

And what is the price not only to the persons but the field of all those lost careers?

1980: New Jersey

ESSAYS FROM ENGINES OF THE NIGHT  
WILL CONTINUE NEXT ISSUE.

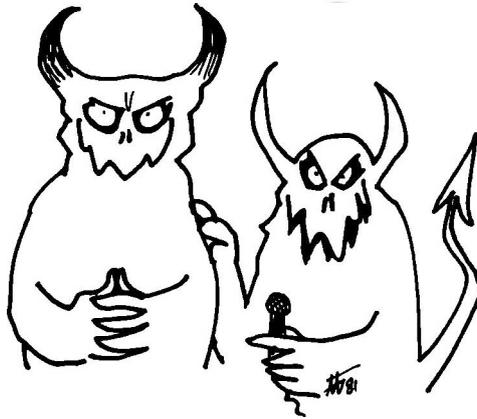
# THE TWO TRACTATES OF PHILIP K. DICK

A rough-hewn cedar beam stands on a museum floor. It is three feet high and four inches on a side. It is surrounded by a velvet rope and lit by discreet track lighting. A small brass plate identifies it as a work of sculpture. The intent of the artist in this, and in many similar pieces, is to force the viewer to confront the validity of the term "sculpture" in an age when art is seen as a bought and sold commodity legitimized solely by its price tag and its placement in a museum. This is an interesting but fragile concept. What happens when the artist becomes a commercial success, his work shown worldwide, commanding four-figure prices? The viewer is then no longer confronting an assault on his definitions of art, he is merely seeing the work of a famous artist: "Ah, the new Billington". Therefore, the artist, to remain true to his premise, must go to ever more elaborate lengths to create that necessary doubt in the viewer's mind. He begins to hide his art in the museum's bathrooms and under stairwells, hoping that the unwary viewer will see, not a new Billington, but instead something inexplicable, something that sets up that all-important moment of confusion without which Billington's art is simply a chunk of wood. Paradoxically, the more accepted the artist becomes, the more difficult his job of creating new art.

Philip K. Dick is certainly no minimalist: if anything, his rambling, crowded novels are the work of a maximalist. Yet, after a long and prolific career in which he has established himself as SF's master illusionist, Dick has reached a similar dilemma. In his 31 published novels, Dick has consistently taken his readers' preconceptions of objective reality and shattered, twisted, side-stepped, ignored, transmuted and permuted them. By now Dick's audience expects the world of a Dick novel to become a shifting matrix that can bend and flow into any shape. We anticipate this before we open the cover. Like Billington, Philip Dick must go to increasingly greater lengths to set up a reality his readers will believe in, so that he may modulate it into something different.

In VALIS, Dick has upped the ante by using himself as the constant that defines the book's reality. In this novel, Philip Dick is the first-person narrator, identified not only by name, but as the author of several well-known Dick titles. He introduces the protagonist, Horselover Fat, as another reflection of himself: "I am Horselover Fat and I am writing in the third person to gain

AND HERE HE IS, FOLKS,  
THE DEVIL THAT MADE  
JUDAS DO IT!



much-needed objectivity".

For the first 120 pages of VALIS, we witness Horselover Fat's gradual descent into a chillingly realistic madness. He cannot bear the thought of a random world, accidentally created. Yet, as he sees the people around him living in pain, tormenting themselves and each other, Fat cannot believe in a benign deity. He is drawn to the inescapable conclusion that this deity must be irrational at best, actively malevolent at worst. Each new suffering he witnesses adds fuel to this conclusion, a conclusion he cannot face for what it tells him about his own worth and that of the human race. Fat hunts for solace and enlightenment in the writings of the Judeo-Christian mystics.

This section of the book is dense and difficult to read. The author, Philip Dick, leads Horselover Fat, the character Philip Dick and the reader ever deeper into an elaborate philosophical maze as Fat amalgamates every scrap of mystic thought he can find into a whole that hovers on the edge of logical synthesis, but never quite achieves it:

"We did not fall because of a moral error; we fell because of an intellectual error: that of taking the phenomenal world as real. Therefore we are morally innocent. It is the Empire in its various disguised polyforms which tells us we have sinned.

"The Empire never ended."

By placing himself directly into the narrative, and in a manner consistent with the picture of the pri-

vate Philip Dick, that a reader of his correspondence and the interviews would have developed, Dick begins to convince his most hardened and sceptical fan that he or she is reading what amounts to thinly-disguised autobiography. The reality that the author, Philip Dick sets up through the persona of the character, Philip Dick becomes that of the world outside the covers of the book, the "phenomenal world".

Then, after 120 pages of often tedious philosophical soul-searching, VALIS slips into narrative. Fat and his friends see a movie which seems to answer some of Fat's theological questions. They track down the filmmakers (members of a rock group known as Mother Goose) and confront the literal God in the form of a two-year-old girl named Sophia. This encounter demonstrates Dick's capacity to be both frightening and funny simultaneously. It is funny in the very idea of the Second Coming issuing from a rock star, and in Sophia's silly death -- cut down, not by a Judas, but by a poor deluded soul who meant well -- before she had a chance to go forth and confront humanity. It is frightening in Sophia's cold and relentlessly logical statements, and in the moment when she peels away the facade of Horselover Fat from the character Philip Dick, showing him that Fat never existed -- that Dick's friends have been humoring his schizophrenia for years. We laugh, but it is an uncomfortable laughter; the intensity of the character, Philip Dick's delusions make us feel as if we were witnessing a very private moment in the life of a respected public figure.

The book ends with the character Philip Dick, locked tightly to his madness, scanning Saturday morning TV programming for messages from God, buried deeply in cartoons and commercials; a scene both harrowing and ludicrous for what it appears to say about the author, Philip Dick.

The complementary second half of this double novel is THE DIVINE INVASION. This is a book written, not by the author, Philip Dick, but by the character Philip Dick, last seen staring at his television. The character, Dick, has written the book to fictionalize his confusions and conclusions regarding the nature of God. Given the irrational God in VALIS, TDI is a novel of redemption, not only of the human race, but of God Itself.

The book opens with an odd note of *deja vu*. A short story by Dick, "Chains of Air, Web of Aether", was published in STELLAR #5 last year.

**BY STEVE BROWN**

This story concerns the relationship between Leo McVane and Rybus Romney, who live in neighboring domes on a methane planet. They are both losers and loners; Leo is distracted by an infatuation with a popular singer and dislikes contact with people; Rybus is foul-tempered and is dying of multiple sclerosis. The first half of this story is contained almost verbatim in the opening sections of THE DIVINE INVASION, with tiny differences (Leo McVane has been renamed Herb Asher in the novel, Rybus' name has been changed to Rybys).

The novel diverges from the short story when God manifests to Herb Asher, and when he and Rybys are visited by Elias, a four-thousand-year-old being known in the past as the Prophet Elijah. The short story contains no mysticism, and remains a painful and realistic tale of two unlikely people interacting. When the novel opens, Herb Asher is lying in a cryogenic tank, waiting for years for a needed organ to become available. While he lies frozen, his memory replays his past life with Rybys on the methane planet in real-time. Thus he cannot tell if he is remembering these events, or if he is actually living them. The Dick reader who has encountered the short story months before reading the novel has the same problem; the events seem as strangely familiar to the reader as they do to Asher. The publication of the short story adds a resonance to the novel that perfectly mirrors Asher's own problem in differentiating reality from memory. At one point Asher cries: "I had the strangest most weird sensation for just a second there. It's gone now. As if this had all happened before". I felt exactly the same as I read that passage; I didn't recall the short story until much later. It is also possible that the story, where God takes no active role, and where Herb/Leo and Rybys/Rybus never leave their domes, is actually "real", and that all of the event in THE DIVINE INVASION are Herb Asher's fevered visions as he lies in his cryogenic tank.

Dick has done this several times in the past. I recall feeling the same sense of *deja vu* when reading THE THREE STIGMATA OF PALMER ELDRITCH and finding out months later that Dick had published a short story called "The Days of Perky Pat" almost ten years before publication of the novel that contained most of the characters and the seeds of the situations in the book.

In the far future of THE DIVINE INVASION, Earth is under a "zone of evil" placed around it by Belial, the Adversary. God has retreated to the outer colonies where he manifests Himself to the hapless Herb Asher,

and Immaculately Conceives the Second Coming (or Third, if you count Sophia) into the dying body of Rybys. Elias/Elijah walks into Rybys' dome from the methane, filthy, wearing beggar's robes, sent by God to shepherd Herb, Rybys and the Infant through their destinies. The three return to Earth (ostensibly seeking help for Rybys' multiple sclerosis), smuggling God back to Earth in fetal form. God is born as a boy named Emmanuel, but it is a rough birth that kills the mother and leaves the divine child brain-damaged.

The rest of the novel is a pot-pourri of the thought-provoking, the mundane, the frightening and the hilarious as Emmanuel debates the fate of Himself and humanity with a mysterious quasi-divine being manifesting as a young girl named Zina. Emmanuel, in his brain-damaged state, has a lot to (re)learn:

"When Masada fell," Elias said, "all was lost. God did not enter history (before Masada); he left history. Christ's mission was a failure."

The debate between Emmanuel and Zina is acted out in Herb Asher's personal reality. The unfortunate Asher is carried into and out of several versions of what he perceives to be true, his memories sometimes altered, sometimes left untouched. Philip Dick masterfully blurs the distinction between what is true and what is hypothetical, leaving the reader no reality to cling to but the actual existence of Emmanuel and Zina -- which is, of course, debatable.

The book is fast, funny, convoluted and an absolute joy to read -- a journey into a sunny backyard after days spent in the murky, filthy basement of VALIS. The surrounding cultural milieu is that of a totalitarian world government composed of an unlikely but funny alliance between the Catholic Church and the Communist Party. The minutiae of future life is as complete and as amusing as in most of Dick's novels, like the plasma-powered home stereo speakers for which you have to keep buying tanks of helium. Herb Asher's lust for a popular singer -- Linda Fox, used as a Joblike lever by Emmanuel and Zina -- is pathetic, funny and warmly real, qualities which remain with the relationship no matter how twisted the events become; as when dead characters return, events happen before their causes and Asher's own memories lose their continuity.

If the ambiguity of the relationship between the author, Philip Dick

and the character, Philip Dick in VALIS (who becomes the author of THE DIVINE INVASION) was calculated, as Dick states in his letter elsewhere in these pages, then Dick has outdone himself and produced a double-lobed masterpiece, and one that ends on a rare (for the author) upbeat note of salvation. But then, as many Dick fans who have read VALIS believe, he could be quite serious about all this, and the accompanying letter is simply disingenuous rationalization, and there is no real distinction between the author Philip Dick and the character Philip Dick.

Then again, several completely different versions of the "truth" could be equally valid. It is the essence of Philip K. Dick that an actual truth does not exist, that interpretation and subjective opinion is the only reality, a reality that differs for everyone -- the phenomenal world is merely a sometimes useful fiction.

For now, I prefer to take Dick at his word (in the letter), and that's my personal subjective reality. A brilliant author has found a new place in the museum to display his chunk of wood.

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#### SIDEBAR

VALIS and THE DIVINE INVASION have had a strange history in the PhilDickian world of the book industry. VALIS was submitted to Bantam several years ago. Bantam held onto the manuscript until two years had elapsed, thus reverting the rights back to the author. Apparently, they didn't know what to make of it. Then the book, and its thematic sequel (THE DIVINE INVASION, in proposal form) ended up in the hands of David Hartwell at Simon & Schuster. At that time, THE DIVINE INVASION was entitled VALIS REGAINED. Hartwell loved THE DIVINE INVASION (critic and publisher Paul Williams came up with the new title), but didn't care for VALIS. So VALIS went back to Bantam, which had a new editor by then, and it was accepted and published as a paperback original in February, 1981 -- and with a beautiful John Berkey cover. **VALIS REGAINED** THE DIVINE INVASION will be published on June 5, 1981, as a Simon & Schuster Timescape hardback. It all makes you wonder. Which version of which book was "supposed" to be published when. Was it all calculated as a further confusion by the author? Or are the "actual" books you hold in your hand (the phenomenal actualization of the subjective concept "book", as it were) merely disguised reflections of something else?

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# AND THEN I SAW....

BY THE EDITOR

## BLOOD BEACH (R)

destroys credibility by the gallon with each idiot who goes out onto the Santa Monica beach where they know damn well others have been sucked down into the sand by a Thing.

In the end, after massive police irresponsibility and incompetence (required by the plot to allow more deaths), the "nest" of a mutated or heretofore unknown sea/sand monster is discovered and rigged with TV cameras and explosives.

An idiot detective with a terminal case of Crude who goes for final solutions disobeys orders and pushes the bomb button (plunger) and the creature is blown to bits. Well, it had this habit of collecting mementos of its victims---a head, a torso, an arm...

There is the ritual scientist called in to speculate and be helpless, who warns of Consequences and wants to keep it alive for study... There are the ritual pretty girls who disappear... There is the tension as the beach patrol hero's girl friend (and real love) flirts with death on the sand... (His stewardess transient interest is a victim. Tsk.)

And unanswered is howcum the creature has this uncanny knack for being directly under people all the time, and howcum it can move at all through dense, dry sand hundreds of yards from the sea.

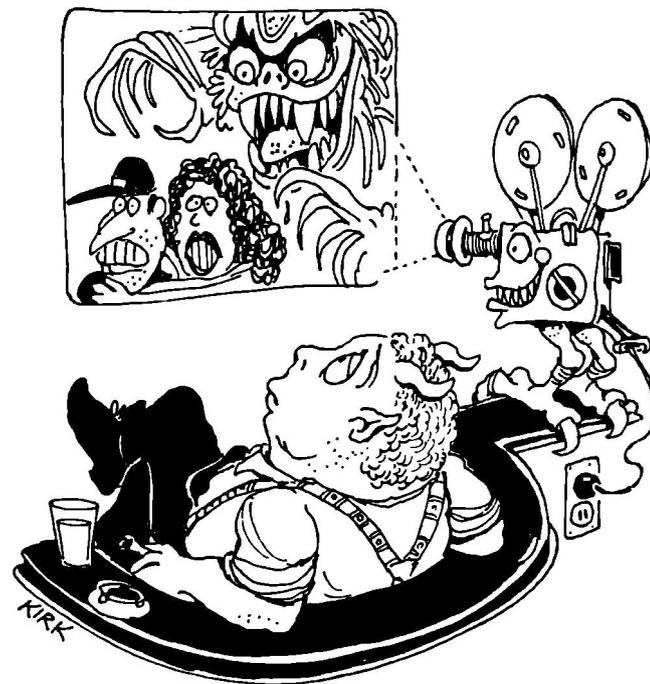
John Saxon plays the frustrated police chief with some intensity.

[Note: the locales are Santa Monica Pier and the remnants of the old Ocean Park Pier which supported the Ocean Park Amusement Center before the Park went broke and before a big ballroom (name forgotten) burned down many years ago in the Sixties. These locales are "merged" in the film.]

Stay away from this film---it's a lousy horror effort.

## FIRST FAMILY (R)

is an occasionally funny derision of politicians, the presidency, the military... It is about five years too late. But the writer-director, Buck Henry, is a knee-jerk cynical Liberal, so this mostly inept, contemptuous and contemptible film is bombing out at the box office.



Bob Newhart plays the moronic, egotistic, incompetent president. Madlyn Kahn does her whining-voiced schtick, and Gilda Radner is their 28-year-old virgin daughter who will do anything to get laid. Actually, in Africa, on a state visit, she loses it to a fertility god---a stone statue with a huge phallus.

There is some inane fantasy concerning a secret fertilizer which grows gigantic fruits and veggies which the president secretly deals for with the black chief/leader of a tiny African island nation.

The movie visibly deteriorates before your incredulous eyes. The ending sweeps all before it in a tidal wave of bad taste. This may be the worst film of 1981--already.

## MIDDLE-AGE CRAZY (R)

tries to make the audience feel sorry for a successful contractor just turned 40 who goes mildly hysteric at the prospect of growing older, losing hair, accepting more responsibility and living with a lush wife played by Ann-Margaret who likes lotsa sex.

He rebels by leasing a 40,000 dollar Porsche, buying some urban cowboy clothes and chasing a sweet young cheerleader who digs sex on a purely non-involvement plane.

Oh, he also rebels by nearly losing his biggest customer and his key to a fortune.

This asshole with the perspective of a 14-year-old kid, abruptly sees the error of his ways and saves

his marriage, his family, and (one assumes) his business and the fortune. Bruce Dern plays the part and almost gets away with it. The problem is that no actor alive could triumph over the script and the upper-class environs which make the emotional problem seem the pathetic, childish tantrum of a spoiled brat.

## ANY WHICH WAY YOU CAN (R)

is a sequel to Clint Eastwood's ANY WHICH WAY BUT LOOSE. This one is cruded-up with too much Clyde humor (the orangutan likes to shit in police patrol cars) and a straining to top itself by resorting to exaggeration and self-parody. Eastwood, Ruth Gordon, et.al. are very good. The overblown, impossible events they inhabit bring down the film.

And, too, the resort to The Mob trying to force Eastwood to fight a bare-knuckle fighter who has killed people in matches is so cliché-ridden and dumb it is painful to watch.

## MOTEL HELL (R)

sticks its tongue in your cheek and makes sport of horror films, compartmentalized morality, and the secret ingredients in a small business's sausages.

As the blurb says, "It takes a lot of different critters to make Farmer Vincent fritters." [There is no meat in fritters, by the way; a fritter is a small quantity of fried batter or batter-covered fruit, corn,

etc. But is it fair to ask a Hollywood publicity man to know (or care) what he's writing about? Naw.]

Farmer Vincent is played straight by Rory Calhoun--now in his sixties it looks like--whose sausage and smoked meat business needs human flesh to give it its special tang and fame.

To assure a goodly supply of human ingredients he waylays cars on a local road and sinks the vehicles in a convenient swamp.

To keep the victims fresh until needed he and his sister plant them upright in the ground in a special, walled "garden", and cut out their vocal cords. The victims are fed a gruel and bags are placed over their heads.

But Farmer Vincent takes a shine to one waylaid girl and takes her home. Ah, but he won't kiss her or have extra-marital sex with her even though she is liberated and really likes him. He insists they be married first! Old-fashioned man.

Inevitably his younger brother (played as a retard) finally catches on to what's going on, and one of the voiceless planted victims gets loose and helps the others from their holes and... The climax of MOTEL HELL is so horrible in its casual use of human bodies and so lighthearted and unabashed in its use of hoary suspense cliches (would you believe the heroine tied to a moving cutting board which is tracking toward a running bandsaw, as she screams for rescue?). Would you believe a duel with chain saws?

There's a bit of naked breast photography. Mostly the R is for violence and grue...and the full implications of cannibalism.

I suspect this will become a cult film in a small way. It is often funny.

#### TIMES SQUARE (R)

is an idealistic, age-old story of two girls--16 and 13--both with massive emotional problems, who meet and become friends and, in the squalid, perverted, dangerous lower-class jungle that is Times Square and environs in New York, work out their problems and heal each other...emerging from their experiences, their successes, their failures, as better, more whole personalities.

They are innocents in spite of the 16-year-old's street wisdom and foul language. Somehow they exist unharmed in the dirt and evil and in spite of the fears of the establishment, straight world.

Yeah, it's a fairy tale, but it could happen, and its picture of scavenger living styles in the lowest levels of the underculture is fascinating. There are echoes of ancient Rome's street people...of Cairo's street people....

Well worth seeing. If you're young the anti-establishment, let-me-be-free theme will strike a natural chord in your psyche.

#### FAME (R)

in spite of cliché, stereotype and set-up has a great vitality and power as it shows in semi-documentary/dramatic style the lives of some talented (and some untalented, or not talented enough) teen-agers in New York who first must audition for places in the city's high school devoted to music, dance and drama and who then must stick it out for four years...changing, learning, growing.

Their teachers are dedicated and long-suffering. The five or six students whose lives we follow from auditions to graduation are confused, uncertain, vulnerable/defensed, tough, soft... All of the young people in his film, and all the adults are excellent actors and actresses as well as skilled dancers, and/or musicians.

A fine movie that combines realism with idealism. The dance sequences are great!

#### LA SALAMANDRE (PG)

is a French black-and-white film by a young director which tells the story of two writers of low sales and high artistic integrity who accept money to write a movie script and in the end don't deliver.

The movie idea centers on a real incident: a young woman was accused and denied shooting her uncle with a rifle.

The two young writers get to know her---a rootless, neurotic, self-destructive girl---have sex with her, visit her family, the uncle...and in the end decide not to complete the script. Everyone goes separate ways.

The quality is in the acting and in the life-style of these very true-to-life characters. Of equal interest for me is the life-style of the French people, the farmers, the small businessmen with whom these three interact.

#### ANGI VERA (R)

is the story of an honest, sincere young woman who, during the communist take-over of Hungary in the mid-to-late 1940s, is chosen to be trained for leadership at a communist party school.

The acting is excellent, and the personal, emotional involvements (and communist indoctrination) are the surface interest. Lurking in the background, constantly, are the soul-de-

stroying, ruthless, cruel methods of the party/government as it weeds out non-conformists, "deviationists" and those with residual non-communist attitudes and pasts.

The end is always justified and rationalized by the means by those in power.

And in the end the girl is chosen for a high position and instantly feels the gap between herself and the common people; she is now of the elite, a full party member.

The film is in color, is well paced, well directed. Made in Hungary, it includes an all-woman communal shower scene that unhesitatingly shows full frontal nudity, as well as, later, a pretty explicit love-making scene.

It would appear the party in Hungary is feeling very secure to allow this film to be made and exported. Or that the director and script writer put one over on the government bureaucracy.

#### HANGER 18 (PG)

uses a documentary style to tell an increasingly incredible story. It isn't hard to swallow a satellite launched from the space shuttle, or that a nearby observing flying saucer could be hit by the accelerating satellite... or that the U.S. government would spirit the crash-landed saucer into a special space testing facility camouflaged as a hanger on an Air Force base...or that two dead aliens are found in the saucer along with specimens of Earth life, including a young woman.

And it is credible that stupid Presidential assistants and military men would try to con and freeze-out and double-deal the two NASA astronauts who saw the alien craft from the space shuttle.

What is not credible is that these Presidential assistants (including the White House Chief of Staff) would order the astronauts killed because they feared the story of the saucer would defeat their President in his re-election bid (with the election only days away) and---in extremis as they realize they are about to be exposed---order an "accidental" plane crash into the secret facility and order it loaded with only incendiary bombs. The saucer could not be counted on to melt down to slag. Nothing less than an atomic bomb (that would unfortunately take out the entire base) would be effective and a sure destroyer of all the key, knowledgeable personnel and physical evidence.

But ordering an atom bomb into a small private plane...that would

be extremely difficult given all the safeguards and paperwork involved...

What was very well done in the movie was the really convincing saucer, inside and out. And the revelations of mankind's origins revealed by the computer-assisted translation of the alien language "books" found in the saucer.

What was also inexcusable was the casual, cavalier exploration of the saucer and experimentation with its controls. Every move, every word of the first-in people would be recorded and filmed/videotaped. Every bit of searching, opening of receptacles, of pushing buttons would be recorded. None of that happened in this movie.

So I rank this film as a good try, but flawed---spoiled---by the suspense-danger-chase exaggerated plot elements. Overkill in more ways than one. Another example of (this time relatively mild) contempt for the audience and the material. They never learn!

#### SPHINX (R)

wastes good actors and actresses in a trivial, formula greed-in-the-Near-East story involving the theft of Egyptian artifacts from ancient tombs.

Lesley-Anne Down as a beautiful woman Egyptologist of English origins who studied in Boston defies common sense and elementary cowardice by persisting in attempts to trace a golden statue and to find the tomb of a little-known Pharaoh.

Frank Langella as Egypt's chief of its ancient artifacts protection department is wasted as he is required to fall instantly in love with Downs and constantly save her from ruthless international thieves.

Only John Gielgud as a cunning Egyptian dealer in stolen goods is credible---up to a point. He seemingly walks into a situation he knew was deadly--and is gorily killed. The plot is stupid and motivation, action, dialog is too often dumb and inept.

Gielgud was employed in his five-minute sacrificial role only for his name in the advertising.

And the Sphinx is nowhere in the movie.

This is a second or third-rate film. Don't waste your time or your money.

#### ASHANTI (R)

is another action adventure with some virtues. It tells the story of Michael Caine as the husband of a beautiful black woman who has been kidnapped by a small slaver team in west-central Africa.

William Holden as a seemingly callous mercenary helicopter pilot who decides to help Caine follow the slavers is quickly killed (another Name for the advertising), and Rex Harrison as an official of the Anti-Slavery Society spends ten minutes on-camera to lend his name to the credits.

He turns Caine over to an Arab whose wife and children were killed by the slaver Suliman a few years previously and who is thirsting for Revenge.

But here the movie--already on weak legs---falls on its face. Suliman opts to force his fifteen or so slaves to trek across the Sahara as if this were medieval times and airplanes didn't exist. He does use a covered truck to reach the Sahara, though.

The worst casting mistake in decades is using Peter Ustinov as Suliman. His whining accent and inability to restrain his comedy talents turns the film into a joke. His many comedy roles in the past are too much for the audience--or him--to overcome.

The standouts in the movie are the beautiful black woman and the Egyptian actor playing Malik, the revenge-seeking Arab.

The violence and ruthlessness of the slavers (and their pursuers) is very realistic.

The lovely black woman has an obligatory nude scene in the beginning of the picture as she bathes in a lake. Small tits, great ass.

Worth seeing, but don't expect too much.

#### MY BLOODY VALENTINE (R)

has the virtue of the gritty realism of a small mining town, its young, crude workforce, and some good acting.

But the movie soon reveals itself as just another sloppy variation of the psycho-killer-on-the-loose formula, with a family resemblance to HALLOWEEN.

Twenty years ago on Valentine's Day a maddened miner killed two other miners responsible for his entombment for weeks after a cave-in. He was committed to the state hospital for the insane.

Now, on the eve of a Valentine's Day dance, the killings resume, with the victim hearts delivered to others in Valentine candy boxes.

Has the old, insane miner escaped?

Gruesome murders continue apace, with the miner---dressed in a mine breathing mask and clothes---an impersonal killing machine who uses a pickaxe with horrible efficiency, picking off old and young alike, es-

pecially at the dance held clandestinely at the mine recreation and diningroom.

There is a particularly effective sequence down in the shafts where three couples go on a lark. The lark is fatal for all but the hero and heroine.

The revelation of the killer miner's identity is predictable and his motivation unbelievable.

Don't bother with this unless you're a gore freak.

#### GODSEND (PG)

is a British film, slow-paced, nicely done, well-acted, with no gore or sex.

A strange pregnant young woman is invited into the rural home of a successful artist by his wife, for tea. The weather turns nasty, the strange woman goes into labor, and gives birth to a girl child.

The next morning the woman has left and the couple--who already have four small children--adopt the abandoned infant.

As the years pass the couple's children die---apparently accidentally, although the artist comes to suspect strongly that the adopted child is responsible, that the child is an amoral, jealous monster.

This suspicion and the death of the last natural child of the couple destroys the already strained marriage. The monster-child (physically a beautiful blonde little girl) has won, has claimed the artist's wife and the mother of the four children it has killed.

At the end the artist, divorced, spots the mother of the monster child across a park pond as she is just going off with another young mother....

Good to fine acting, and the film sustains interest, but it somehow doesn't pay off. Apparently these children the young woman gives birth to are by nature a different breed of humans, and she is "seed-ing" them all over England. But no real answers or solutions to this danger are given.

#### ALTERED STATES (R)

is a superior film until it degenerates into just-another special effects extravaganza at the expense of plausibility, credibility and science.

It starts with a young scientist experimenting with his body/mind by use of an isolation tank---depriving his body of sensory contact---no feel, no hearing, no sight, no smell---in order to induce hallucinations and an exploration of the deepest levels of the human psyche and brains.

At first he is interested in the religious experience---finding God---but in later years, at Harvard, after



The witch's mother enters the struggle and helps neutralize her daughter's black magic long enough for the good girl to escape the flames and long enough to throw herself and her evil daughter into the inferno.

A let-down ending.

#### ORDINARY PEOPLE (R)

turned me off instantly as it began to detail the emotional problems of an upper middle class family. Why are we supposed to care about the problems of the privileged?---these nice, clean, neat, well-dressed, well-fed, plenty-of-money families who live in luxurious \$300,000 homes....

Yes, despite all their money and cars and good schools---ah, the poor things have guilts and uptight moms and fears and attempted suicides and baffled papas. They also have fine Jewish psychiatrists to see them through the rough times and make them well.

That off my chest, let me say that ORDINARY PEOPLE is a fine film with intense, finely delineated acting by Mary Tyler Moore as the rigid, hating, unforgiving, unloving mother, with Donald Sutherland as the baffled, unhappy, finally resolute father, and with Timothy Hutton as the guilt-ridden, suicidal, socially inept son. Judd Hirsch was a fine psychiatrist. All others were excellent in their supporting roles.

#### GLORIA (R)

is a fine, well tensioned chase film, with Gena Rowlands giving a remarkable performance as an ex-girlfriend of a Mafia biggie abruptly trying to keep herself and a six-year-old boy alive because they both know too much about underworld finances.

The parts that wow an audience into cheering and clapping are when she pulls out a .38 and blasts away at Mafia/Mob soldiers. She knows the score and isn't afraid to pull a trigger. She's tough, and vulnerable, loving, and has had it up to here with Mob final solutions.

The ending of the film is completely dishonest, of course, but happy endings usually are.

#### RESURRECTION (PG)

tells the story of a woman who, after a car crash, died on the operating table for a few minutes, then was revived. While "dead" she experienced a long, white, foggy tunnel, encountered (silently)

dead people she had known or heard about, and was moving joyously toward her dead husband who waited for her there in the far radiance...

Crippled by the crash, she returns home to the family farm in Kansas.

There she discovers she has the power to work miracles of healing by laying-on-of-hands. She cures her own paralyzed (nerve damage) legs. Soon she is drawing crowds--and the sick and lame.

Ellen Burstyn was perfectly cast for this role (or is a magnificent actress) as she shows love---pure altruistic love---for the afflicted. The healing scenes are convincing.

Her problems come from local religious fundamentalists who demand she acknowledge her gift comes from God or admit it comes from the Devil.

She attracts the notice of scientists and goes to L.A. for testing and demonstrations of her gift. The scientists and professors are confounded.

But she doesn't want all the problems inherent with Healing. She resolutely refuses to say she is an agent of God. Her solution to her problem is just right and is foreshadowed earlier in the film.

Again, Burtyn is very fine in this, and everyone involved does a great job in supporting roles.

As you leave the theater you'll wish that such Healers existed, and that there really is an afterlife as shown.

#### FT. APACHE, THE BRONX (R)

is, under all its surface of topicality and social concern, just another cliché-ridden cop film. We have all the crummy junkies, the amoral pushers, the thieves...we have the cop-with-a-conscience who is torn and anguished by stupidity, police brutality, death in the streets. We have his nurse girlfriend who is a secret junkie and who is overdoed by her shitty dealers and who dies. We have this Good Cop's loneliness and decision to resign... We have the new, by-the-book chief of the precinct.

We have blood and guts and some bad words and some nice tits.

But aside from a few words about the Fort Apache aspect, and aside from showing a crummy slum neighborhood, there is nothing about street gangs, about the Mafia, about the wholesale arson endemic in the South Bronx.

Paul Newman is the "Liberal" cop. He did his best with a flawed role.



MOVIE REVIEW: BREAKING GLASS  
United Kingdom, 1980

Reviewed by Andrew Tidmarsh

Set in Britain in the not-too-distant future, this film is more a showcase for the songs of its star, Hazel O'Connor, than a diagnosis of the nation's ills. It is of interest because she mentions "1984", "Big Brother", "The Eighth Day" and because by its end she has become a robot of which she sings.

O'Connor is a talented outsider who is determined in her own way, in her own time, to change the world. She is picked up by a seedy record promoter (who buys the records that are to become hits) and, managed by him, acquires a band: guitar, bass, drums, sax. She writes; they play. Step by step, the group BREAKING GLASS force themselves, are forced into the spotlight from pubs to clubs to the largest venues. They sign away their publishing rights for two years and win a record contract. Money comes with fame, but the words begin to change. It is a familiar story, no better done than before.

In the background, Britain grinds to a halt: a rail strike, mounting unemployment, increased police powers of arrest. But the film ignores these items. O'Connor is the focus of attention, with her white face and black or blue lips and fingernails; her thick mop of red-blonde hair, cut straight at her jaw-line or swept back behind her ears; her voice so like Bowie's yet more harsh, bitchy. To begin with, she is critical of her audience, who won't perform as she performs, "because you are a programme"; then she notices that blackmen are different from white; then is disdainful of big brother, whose petty repressions she will "kick up his arse"; then she dresses in white with stuck-on silver strips and jerks as though a clumsily-strung puppet (in her words "a robot"), to describe how man has marked the world and with his machines replaced himself.

To end, the contradiction is revealed: a human who is human -- who loves her manager -- cannot also be a machine. The enlightened mind flickers and dims.

By no means a great film, but one to look out for.

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CONDUCTED BY

JOAN GORDON

Gene Wolfe is perhaps best known for his collection of three novellas, *THE FIFTH HEAD OF CERBERUS* and for the first volume of his new tetralogy, *THE SHADOW OF THE TORTURER*. He has also written many fine short stories, some of which are collected in *THE ISLAND OF DR. DEATH AND OTHER STORIES AND OTHER STORIES*; a beautifully-crafted mainstream novel called *PEACE*; an adolescent novel, *THE DEVIL IN THE FOREST*; and a science fiction novel, *OPERATION ARES*.

One of his novellas, "Seven American Nights", which appears in the short story collection, illustrates the special nature of Gene's writing. It is a mix of Oriental arabesque and sordid realism, of dreams and reality, speculation and character development, ambiguity and clarity. No one else could have done it. If I tell you the plot concerns a traveler to the future America after it has fallen, you may think of all the after-the-holocaust SF novels you have read -- it is nothing like them. America here is not a charred wilderness peopled by solitary rugged individualists learning the lay of a new land. Instead it is a decaying city filled with subjected souls and haunted by the ghosts of its former strength. The metaphorical and literal worlds of "Seven American Nights" are equally alive, to us and to the protagonist.

I wanted to be told the secret -- how does Gene write these stories that shine on long after being read? Though he never answered that question, he has answered others in our extended epistolary interview. Over the last three years Gene and I have conducted an interview by mail. The topics have been Gene Wolfe, his writing, writing in general and life in general. And that is the organization of what follows here.

\* \* \*

SFR: Tell me about your childhood.

WOLFE: My childhood was fairly normal for my place and time. I was raised in Houston while it was still a Southern city. Mother -- whom God bless -- was a Southern Belle, very energetic, very soft on the outside and very hard on the inside. Do you know the type? Some artistic talent (she used to do Japanese-style brush

paintings and I wish I had some of them), a championship-calibre bridge player. I've never really known what she wanted me to be, but I'm fairly sure it was none of the things I've been. A lot of my childhood was by Tennessee Williams, if you know what I mean.

SFR: Did you serve in the army?

WOLFE: I was in combat for four months or so during the Korean War; I got the Combat Infantry Badge. It was trench fighting almost like that in World War I. I was shelled a lot but never bombed or strafed. I suppose the main effect the army had on me was to make me see once and for all that regimented systems both do and do not work in the way their designers intended. It's something like doublethink, something like hypnosis. Regimentation succeeds brilliantly when everyone involved wants it to -- which is to say, it succeeds best where it is needed least: the paratroops, the Special Forces. Combat showed me that the people who act bravely when there is no special danger are not the people who act bravely when there is. I didn't know that.

SFR: What are your beliefs, religious and political?

WOLFE: I am a Catholic in the real communion-taking sense, which tells you a lot less than you think about my religious beliefs ... I believe in God, in the divinity of Christ and in the survival of the person. I don't mean by that that I think I will not die, or that (for example) my parents are not dead; the protagonist in *THE BOOK OF THE NEW SUN* carries a sword inscribed with the words *terminus est* ("This is the dividing line"). Like every thinking person, I am still working out my beliefs.

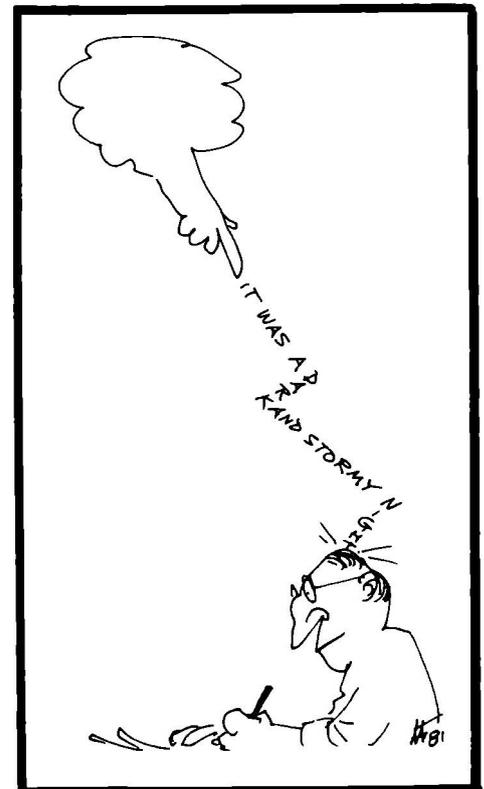
Politically, I am a maverick. I agree with the far left on many issues, with the far right on others, with the center on still others. I distrust concentrations of power, whether political or economic. I am a strong environmentalist. I believe that we are higher creatures than we think we are, and that animals are closer to us than we believe. (I should have said the higher animals.)

SFR: Were you an only child?

WOLFE: Yes, I was an only child. It's a wonderful and terrible thing -- terrible because one ends up being the last of the tribe, the only one who remembers the customs and teachings of the now-sunken land of Home. I remember how we used to sit in the living room, my mother and my father and I and my dog, Boots. The couch and the chairs and the big library table and the radio and the floor lamps are all gone; the house is sold; I am the only one left, the only thing left; if I had to, I could not prove it was not all a dream.

SFR: What you said about being an only child seemed very true to me. When the ritual of Home lies in the hands of only three people, it is subject to frequent change and I resist it, substitute my own rituals, fabricate old ones to insert in my memory.

WOLFE: Sooner or later you're going to ask how I started writing, so I'll tell you right now that I started because my bride and I were living in a two-room furnished apartment and I had hopes of raising en-



ough money to make a down-payment on some furniture so we could move out. Twenty-some years later I still need money.

SFR: Do you have a certain routine for writing?

WOLFE: No, I have no routine for writing -- I can't afford one. I write when I can, when I have the energy and the time and the opportunity. I write the piece all the way through, then start again at the beginning, then start again at the beginning ... Everything gets at least three drafts. Most things get four. A good many get 4+. I continue to revise until I begin to wonder if the changes I'm making are really improvements ... then I stop and send out the piece. Whenever possible, I allow at least a week between revisions and I usually use that week to work on something else.

I do each draft on the typewriter -- including the first -- then mark it up with whatever pencil or pen I have handy. I've tried working to taped music (classical, the only kind I like) and it just doesn't make any difference -- if I'm working well I don't hear it. Coffee helps. So does iced tea, hot tea and skimmed milk. I drink more coffee than I should and take more aspirin. When I'm through for the night, I take a three-mile walk if the weather lets me. That's usually sometime between nine and eleven.

SFR: Gene, what parts of being a writer are a real drag?

WOLFE: I wasn't going to bring that up, but since you insist ... People who ask what name I write under as if they had heard of every author in the world except me. A little questioning usually establishes that they have never heard of Saul Bellow, Erica Jong or Norman Mailer.

People who assume that every writer has thousands and thousands of copies of everything he has ever done, all provided free by the publisher. (I once asked Doubleday for two copies of an anthology, because I had two stories in the book. No dice and they thought the request was quite humorous.) People who quite seriously ask how much I pay the publisher to "print" my books and stories. People who assume that since I write science fiction I love every trashy sci-fi monster flick ever made. Plus SPACE 1999, LOST IN SPACE, STAR TREK (which actually wasn't always terrible) and the Saturday morning kiddie cartoon. (I do admit to a soft spot for ROCKY AND BULLWINKLE.) There are more, but that's enough for now.

SFR: What authors do you admire?

Whom have you learned from? With whom do you feel you have something in common?

WOLFE: The list of authors I admire, whom I've learned from, and with whom I feel I have something in common is almost endless. Damon Knight, Kate Wilhelm, Joanna Russ, Ursula LeGuin, R.A. Lafferty, Saul Bellow and John Updike, with many more among the living. Poe, Proust, Dickens, Chesterton, Flaubert, Orwell, Thurber, Twain, Melville, Irving, Van Gulik, Kafka, Borges, Dostoyevsky, Bulgakov ...

SFR: In what ways do you feel your writing breaks new ground?

WOLFE: I find it's almost impossible to say, "I'm trying to break such-and-such new ground ..." without sounding like an ass. I'm trying to express a view of the universe while working it out, of course, but then all serious writers do -- that's what makes them serious writers. I am trying to bring good writing (my definition) and whole people to a type of writing that has not been overburdened with them, but that's hardly new ground.

SFR: You marked a bibliography of your stories for me with checks to indicate which ones were "pivotal". What do you mean by "pivotal"?

WOLFE: A pivotal story for me is one in which I feel I have succeeded in doing well something I have never really done well before -- fairy material in "Thag", a certain religious viewpoint in "Westwind", the use of second and third person in "The Island of Doctor Death and Other Stories", the progression from realism to fantasy in "The Eyeflash Miracles", even the primitive inventions no one ever actually invented (and which no one now notices) in "Tracking Song". Just as "Tracking Song" is about unvented inventions of the stone age, "Straw" is about (partly of course) unvented inventions of the middle ages.

"Tracking Song" is a wolf totem story, by the way. The protagonist gets his original orientation from a wolf tribe, then lives in a world in which the roles of moose, lion, deer, mink and so on are taken by semi-human beings. Wolves are winter symbols, of course, and birds symbols of spring.

SFR: Do you use your own life in your stories?

WOLFE: Weer (the narrator of PEACE) is a man very much like me -- I don't mean that the same things have happened to me, but that we have similar souls. Tackie (in "The Island of



Doctor Death and Other Stories") is pretty much the kind of child I was, lonely, naive, isolated. Nicholas (the boy in "The Death of Doctor Island") is the boy I might have been and in some ways would like to have been.

SFR: I thought the idea, in "The Woman Who Loved the Centaur Pholus", of technology bringing back (and destroying) mythology, was an especially nice one.

WOLFE: The idea of technology "bringing back" the fauna of myth is more than just nice. It is going to happen. The ability to create centaurs and so on will be widely available within our lifetimes. When I tell people that, they say, "Oh, no. Maybe a few high-powered scientists could, but --" How'd you like to take an undergraduate course in gene-splicing? (No pun.) Columbia will offer one next year.

SFR: But will people bring back mythical fauna or will they instead create kitsch and corn? Have you ever gone into a craft shop and seen the feather and pipe cleaner art that is spawned there?

WOLFE: Some people will create their own designs (in monsters) of course. But the challenge will be to do good work within a set, "classical" design. Obviously, we will see dinosaurs as well as dragons. Anyway, it's surprising how hard it is to come up with anything really original. I just made a quick stab at it and came up with a "centiger" and a woman with the head of a cat. But my woman would be Bast of ancient Egypt, and my centiger very close to a sphinx.

SFR: I'd like to ask the next question the way my students do when they ask me about, say, Borges. Why do you make your stories so hard to figure out? Why all those ambiguities, those surprise endings and un-endings

("The Adopted Father" has sort of an un-ending -- the story ends with implied ...), those places where you can't tell what happened?

WOLFE: Why do I make my stories so hard to figure out? I don't think I do. Certainly I try to make my stories as pellucid as I can, without actually changing the story to another story. Are you seriously saying that Borges' stories are difficult to understand? Some are pedestrian ("Rosendo's Tale"), some are brilliant imitations ("Doctor Brodie's Report"), some are original masterpieces ("Tlon, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius"), but all are clear as glass.

You say, "Why all those ambiguities, those surprise endings and un-endings...?" and you instance "The Adopted Father". Ambiguities are absolutely essential to any story that seeks to counterfeit life, which is filled with them. Today my wife and I went to a music store, and I heard her tell the clerk that she thought she had seen some prominent performer (I know little about music and do not recall his name) in another store playing the piano. The clerk said there was a local performer who closely resembled the man she thought she had seen, and suggested she had seen this local man instead. My wife is near-sighted but seldom wears her glasses and so is as likely to mistake identities as anyone alive -- in fact, she had done just that in a book shop a few minutes before. I was not paying much attention to what she and the clerk were saying, although they were only a few feet away; and in any case, I am slightly deaf. Had she seen the performer she named? Had she seen the local performer the clerk named instead? Had she seen some third party, a good amateur player? Did I perhaps misunderstand their conversation? (Parts of it were inaudible.) Am I creating all this -- spinning a fiction to make my point? This much is certain: you will never know.

What is it that bothers you about the ending of "The Adopted Father" anyway? Mitch has found the father he needs, Parker has discovered a reason to go on living. Their stories are not over, obviously, but the story I was telling, the story of how they found each other, is over, which is why I stopped typing.

SFR: What qualities of your writing might make you more a writer's writer than a fan's writer?

WOLFE: I doubt that I am, but in general the practitioners of any art appreciate its difficulties more. To a child a juggler who juggles red, blue, gold and green balls is as good (I suppose) as one who juggles a knife, an ax, a torch and a champagne

bottle. The second juggler is a juggler's juggler, though -- someone a good juggler watches to learn from.

SFR: The ambiguity I associate with your writing seemed especially controlled in THE SHADOW OF THE TORTURER, as if you were relaxed about space, had a long enough journey to really stretch your legs. Of course, you were very mischievous at the end. I appreciate your architectural need to stop at the gate, but you purposefully made me very curious about what was beyond (and inside) the wall. Anyway, the characters, the world, the atmosphere all got me. Triskele and Baldanders had little to say but they lived as much as Severian.

I don't think the cape of the torturer on the cover was fuligen (I admit that would be tricky) but the balcony he stands on, straight out of Gaudi, is right.

WOLFE: I could pick several nits about the dustjacket, the worst one being that the executioner there seems to be wearing a shirt. But the important thing about a dj is that it reflects the spirit of the text, and I think that one does.

SFR: Why did you pick a torturer for a protagonist?

WOLFE: I don't know how to answer when you ask why I made Severian a torturer, except by saying that I chose to write the book I wrote. If he had been a sailor or a policeman, that would have been a different book.

Torture doesn't seem violent because there is no element of struggle. Believe me, I have thought for hours and hours on the subject of torture while writing these books. The tough part is drawing the line between punishment and torture. If I were to spank my 14-year-old son would that be torture? Nonsense. If I were to give the same spanking to a grown man (assuming I could) surely that wouldn't be torture either -- he can stand it better, if anything, than the boy. But if I were to hit harder and harder (again, assuming I could) eventually what I was doing could be called torture by any standard. Thus, the two shade into each other. And, of course, torture can be purely mental, with no striking, crushing or burning at all.

SFR: Would you give me a few tantalizing hints about the rest of the tetralogy, THE BOOK OF THE NEW SUN?

WOLFE: I could give you better tantalizing hints if I knew what sort of thing you want. All four books

will be told in the first person by Severian -- does that help? SHADOW took place entirely within Nessus; most of the action of the other three books takes place outside it. Jonas, the man on the merychip Severian encounters near the Piteous Gate, is a fairly important character in THE CLAW OF THE CONCILIATOR, and so on.

SFR: How close is the tetralogy to completion?

WOLFE: I'm doing the final (or perhaps the semi-final) draft of the fourth book (CITADEL OF THE AUTARCH) now. CLAW is to be published this coming March. The third book (SWORD OF THE LICTOR) hasn't been sold yet, so I can't say when it will appear. Certainly it will be over a year from now. (Note: "Now" is November, 1980.)

SFR: How do you feel about academic study of your work?

WOLFE: It scares me to death. The colleges have killed English poetry -- which flourished as long as they confined themselves to Greek and Latin -- deader than last year's bacon pig.

SFR: I wonder if some of the power of SF for its readers lies in the fact that it is disapproved of.

WOLFE: It does, of course, and that makes me feel guilty about writing all these letters and cooperating with you generally. I have always derided and discouraged academic study of SF in theory, and nearly always cooperated with academics who sought my help. The thing is that although I believe any Establishment contact with SF is a bad thing, a thing detrimental to the genre, I also believe that the harm done by the academic wing of the Establishment can be mitigated. I admit I am beginning to see that attitude as hypocritical.

There are two main mechanisms at work here. The first is the realization (practically a definition of intelligence) that Establishment-approved mediums are uniformly untruthful, well and good. But if, as now seems much more likely, it is



merely perceived as having such approval, it will lose many readers it deserves to have. In a dim, half-witted way, that was what the "New Wave" was all about. (I was claimed as both a New Wave and an Old Wave writer by various critics and commentators, as many of us were.) In order to fight off that approval we have to be more or less anti-science, anti-business, anti-government and (of course) anti-establishment. It also helps to be violent and mystical, and I think you'll agree that most of us tend to be.

The other mechanism is the radically negative effect of school-assigned reading. Most kids HATE whatever they are made to read. (For some weird reason perhaps related to left-handedness, I did not; I even liked THE MAYOR OF CASTERBRIDGE, though as far as I can recall I was the only one in our English class who did; but it has taken me 40 years to outgrow the distaste for athletics I developed when I was forced to take part in them.) Many are now being made to read SF. My own story, "Eyebem" is already in one high-school text and I think is going into another. So you see.

SFR: Since I started as an SF fan and later made my enthusiasm my scholarship, it's hard for me to see academic study as necessarily deadening. I know it can be, and I've read plenty of criticism that is (especially criticism about criticism or about literature as if it were just illustration of critical theory). But I don't think criticism needs to be poisonous. Learning about something is exciting, and sharing and developing knowledge can be exciting too. Isn't that what scholarship should be?

WOLFE: I don't think the profs have to be deadly (I hope I didn't say that); it's just that most are.

SFR: As a literature of ideas, is SF important educationally?

WOLFE: Yes, though it does not necessarily follow that it should be made a part of some particular curriculum. Your question goes to the heart of my preference for the term speculative fiction. Of course we both know that no one coined the sacred term SCIENCE FICTION and then went into his study and wrote the stuff. "Science fiction" was a purification of old Gernsback's "scientific fiction" -- scientific fiction -- which he made up to describe a type of didactic story he published in magazines derived from a magazine for radio amateurs. That type of story hasn't been around for a long time; it failed because it (I mean in its pure form) engaged only the mind. If

one wants to teach a student something about the nature of an atom, one can do it much better in a few paragraphs in a textbook.

The educational virtue of speculative fiction is that it engages the imagination and emotions as well as the mind, and of course, its thrust need not be scientific in any sense except one so broad as to be meaningless. (Academics sometimes talk about the "science" of history, the "science" of comparative religion, and so on, but these subjects are not sciences in any meaningful sense of the word.) If T.B. Swann can write well enough to make me (in the famous phrase) suspend my disbelief in Greek mythology he will teach me some very important things about Greek mythology I could not learn by reading half a dozen textbooks. Swann's work has nothing to do with science, but it is SF as defined by our culture -- we talk about him as an SF writer, shelve his books in the SF section and so on.

Swann was speculating about what it would be like to live in the mental world of people who believed the stuff of Greek myth, just as C.S. Lewis, in the Narnia books, speculated about people who believed in the cosmology of the Middle Ages. It is obviously possible for another author (or for that matter the same author) to speculate again and reach different conclusions, but we can learn from both. And the speculation need not be concerned with past beliefs or erroneous ones -- no student, perhaps, believes in Relativity in his heart unless he has read some book that makes him understand something of how it would feel to approach the speed of light.

SFR: How is SF so well suited to the discussion of ideas?

WOLFE: Well, to begin, it is only suited to the discussion of certain types of ideas. SWANN'S WAY is a psychological novel -- one of the best -- and SF is not particularly well suited to discussing the types of psychological ideas with which it is concerned.

With that cavil aside, let me say that your question is like the old theological puzzler, why do great rivers choose to run through most of Earth's larger cities? If a study or novel is largely concerned with a discussion of scientific or sociological ideas, it thereby "becomes" SF whether so labeled or not in the minds of many publishers and many readers. For example, unless my memory is playing me false, Winston Churchill once wrote a piece called, "What if the North had Won

at Gettysburg?" This was, obviously, a parallel universe story: In this case a story about a universe in which the South had won (Hurray!) and a military historical theorist was speculating about the results of what we know actually happened. It was, clearly, speculative fiction -- and most of us would so classify it, although we don't think of Churchill as an SF writer.

But of course, conventional -- ANALOG-and-Ace-Books SF does have advantages when a writer wants to speculate on the types of ideas it handles well. It gives him an audience that is accustomed to such speculation -- an audience whose mind is already stretched. That's an immense advantage, because he knows he does not have to baby them into it. They know, for example, that a society doesn't have to be based on commerce -- we just happen to have lived all our lives in one that is. They know that it is accidental that Florida's climate is warmer than Maine's, and that a shift in the poles could reverse the gradient. And so on.

Second, SF gives the author who is already familiar with the field (but only to him) a ready-made language of conventions -- mechanical human beings with emotions (thanks to Lester Del Rey), time travel (thanks to H.G. Wells), starships that can rove the galaxy at will (thanks to E.E. Smith). None of these things exist outside SF, and many reputable scientists say all three are utterly impossible. (It is easy to program a computer to act as if it possessed emotions, but quibbles aside, that clearly isn't the same thing as having them. To me, the interesting question is whether a computer that had developed consciousness would feel the programmed emotions as real.)

Third and most importantly, the conventions of SF permit the writer to set up alternate worlds that are logical rather than fantastic. Before SF, Shakespeare might write of the kingdom of the fairies, but that kingdom was governed (and could be governed) only by whim -- what Titania wanted she did, unless the greater power of her husband stopped her. (It is surely no coincidence that that play is laid in ancient Greece -- its "logic" is exactly that of pagan Greek religion, in which T. was Juno, O. was Zeus and so on. I suspect strongly that the Greek setting is the remnant of an earlier draft using the Greek gods that Shakespeare was too rushed to change completely.)

Anyway that framework can be used very effectively in much the same way beast-fable is used: Hermes/fox, Ares/bear and so on, with each god or fairy or animal representing a human passion or concern. But it

cannot be used at all to speculate about real external human societies. Real rulers act because of political and economic constraints and only rarely by whim. Oddly enough, it was because of the king's whimsical desire to marry his lovers that the man who did most to get us out of that mess -- St. Thomas More -- was killed.

The voyage to a fantastic country had been used often before, of course, but so far as I know, he was the first to revive the then-long-dead Platonic idea of a fictional country that was not fantastic but interesting and instructive. He was not the founder of modern SF; I would give that title to Wells. But he is almost more important than the founder. We owe him a monument.

SFR: What is good writing?

WOLFE: To begin with, good writing is grammatically correct except when it is intentionally incorrect. A good reader quickly senses the difference between that kind of writing and writing in which the writer does not know (or perhaps care) that his subjects and verbs do not agree in number and so on.

Similarly, good writing is only intentionally ambiguous. Good writing is interesting to read, rather than easy. People like Rudolf Fleisch would like to see every sentence as short as possible, because that kind of writing is easy to read, but it bores and exhausts the reader by its easiness. Did you ever know of anyone who backpacked on level ground? In good writing, the length and structure of the sentences are varied. Many are short. A few may take eight or ten lines of type.

Good writing is concrete. That's why our businessmen and bureaucrats can never be taught to write well -- it is against their best interests. A bureaucrat says economically disadvantaged; a good writer says poor, and an educational bureaucrat says someone has a learning disability; a good writer says the same person is stupid or lazy; a businessman (or woman) says competitively priced; a good writer says cheap. You'll note that good writers are almost never elected to public office. Both Norman Mailer and Wm. F. Buckley have tried and failed. (In fact, the only good writer I can think of offhand who ever won a major election was Winston S. Churchill, and he was overwhelmingly defeated as soon as the war was over.)

Good writing is rich in tropes without being pretentious about them. It says, for example, that English society around 1850 was like an October day (I am, of course, quoting H.G. Wells), and it says it in such a way that your understanding of

both is increased. Furthermore, you feel that the comparison was perfectly natural. Do you remember Partridge (I think it was) in TOM JONES, who went to see Garrick play Hamlet and said that if he had seen a ghost too he would have started in just the same way? Like that.

And lastly, good writing is multileveled, like a club sandwich. Savants talk of writing being linear -- one thing at a time. But a good writer is often saying two things at once, and sometimes three or even four. When Fielding wrote that bit about seeing HAMLET he told us something about acting and something about Partridge at the same time.

Please understand that I would never claim that all my writing is good. I do claim, however, that I try to make it good, always.

SFR: What is your cure for writer's block?

WOLFE: My cure for writer's block is to cut out all unnecessary communication. Don't read, watch TV, write letters or talk more than is needed to get through the essential business of the day. Instead, take long walks alone or do manual work -- paint a room or dig in the garden. The cure usually takes only three or four days.

SFR: I've been thinking about photography of late, especially the big argument -- is it art or document?

WOLFE: "Art" and "document" aren't mutually exclusive. Photos can be documents (all this is just my opinion, of course), although not all of them are. I don't really think that they can be art. A lot depends on craft, a lot depends on equipment (if you ever see a book called BORNE ON THE WIND, pick it up -- it contains the most wonderful photos of insects in flight ... and I could not have taken them because I don't have the stuff) and a great deal depends on opportunity. The most beautiful picture I can remember was taken by a 19-year-old sailor who had never owned a camera before he was sent to the South Pole, and who never saw



what any of his pictures looked like until he got back to the U.S. and could get his film developed. It showed the sun over Mt. Erebus.

The thing that keeps photography from being art is that it is a mechanical reproduction of a pre-existing scene. I certainly agree that there are photographers who treat themselves as artists. There are even some who are treated as artists by other people. But those things prove nothing. There have been a million people who have thought they were artists and been wrong, and probably most of them were treated as artists by at least one other person. There have been a million people who actually were artists but didn't think they were and weren't treated as artists by others. The people who made the cave paintings are examples; so are those who carved the facade of Notre Dame.

The use of techniques -- and especially in photography, where "technique" is almost precisely the same as "trick" -- is not art. A salesman uses techniques to close the sale. A master of the martial "arts" uses techniques to break your neck, but he is no more an artist than a football player is. In five minutes I could teach you five techniques that would let you come up with pictures far removed from snapshots. (For example, smearing a little petroleum jelly around the edges of your lens to give a softened border.) But they would not make you an artist. Even if you invented a new technique -- and people do almost every day -- you would be an inventor, not an artist.

SFR: Why are we born only to suffer and die?

WOLFE: You may choose your favorite answer from the selection below ---

// We are not born only to suffer and die. Only you. We have kept this from you until now, but it's time you were told.

// We are not born only to Suffer & Die. Other firms have children too -- Goforth, Kilburn & Robb, for example.

// You are born to die so I can get a word in edgewise. I suggest until I do.

// We suffer because if we could not, French fries would have no place to go. We die to keep from suffering.

// We die so we don't have to suffer and suffer because it beats dying.

// All of the above.

SFR: Thank you, Mr. Wolfe.

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# THE NUKE STANDARD

BY IAN WATSON

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We are privileged to print here for the first time a startling address which was delivered behind locked doors at the recent meeting of the International Monetary Fund in Barbados. It will be recalled that Russian and Chinese observers were present by invitation for the first time in the history of the IMF. The speaker remains unidentified but is believed to belong to a well-known Think Tank.

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Gentlemen, and perhaps I should add, Comrades: In this time of inflation, recession and international crisis two main disaster scenarios menace all our futures. One of these is the likelihood of a nuclear war. The other is the imminent collapse of the world monetary system.

The second of these two events -- even if it didn't automatically trigger off a global conflict -- certainly wouldn't limit its effects to the so-called Capitalist World. I see you all nodding agreement. We are realists here. The world is far too interlinked nowadays for "our" system to collapse without "yours" collapsing too -- or at least degenerating into a pitiful shadow of its present self. Must I mention the massive investment loans by the West in the Communist blocs? Or the urgent need for Western technology to spearhead development: technology which must be sustained by profit feedback?

Yes, it's no secret that the whole Western money system is in grave danger. How can you plan ahead on an international scale when currencies fluctuate wildly against each other?

In the Communist blocs the economies are said to be planned scientifically, by contrast with our own reliance on free market forces. But we all know that there is little genuinely scientific in the true sense -- if at all -- about Marxist economic theory. Marxism is just a product of the industrial revolution phase of human development. And here we all are now in the midst of the third phase: of global electronic and cybernetic revolution.

It's crystal clear that we need to adopt a genuinely technological

and scientific basis for our money dealings to keep in pace with this new phase.

We've had to do it for the measurement of time values. We could still measure time well enough till quite recently by the old industrial revolution clock methods. But when computer decisions occupy only millionths of a second a unit of time like a "second" is hopelessly out of date. So instead we have developed the atomic clock -- which, as you know, defines one second as 9,192,631,770 vibrations of the microwave radiation emitted by caesium-133 atoms organised in a particular way. That is electronic, cybernetic time -- the today time.

We need something as basic to the world of physics -- as constant and unchanging -- for the new standard of our money system too.

And what do we have? Like some barbaric king three thousand years ago, we still have a crazy reverence for ... gold. Fort Knox is filled with barbaric gold, notionally to back our currency. Oh, I know that many of us talk in terms of "weighted baskets of currencies" and "reserves of convertible currency", but still people feel this yen -- if the Governor of the Bank of Japan will pardon the expression -- for a tangible basis to currency.

Gold! People are mystically attracted to it. Look how you French hoard private stocks of gold. Look at the market for Kruger Rands.

Yet what inherent use-value has gold got? Compared with a pellet of uranium? Or a pint of oil? (Oh, I know the oil is running out -- so any Arab notions of an oil-backed currency are a dead duck.) Well, gold is fine for filling teeth, and it has its other uses. But its monetary value is irrational.

And precisely this kind of irrationality has helped to dump us into the present recession.

Of course, there's one great historic cure for recession. I refer, gentlemen, to war. War was how we climbed out of the trough of the Thirties. War boosts an ailing economy like nothing else. Full employment, new weapons systems that force breakthroughs in technology with commer-

cial spinoffs ... just you name it!

Unfortunately we don't believe that we can simply simulate a global war footing, without the shadow boxing leading to real bloody blows. And unfortunately, unlike 1940, the world would be entirely destroyed by a genuine conflict.

Still, please bear in mind that money and the tools of war do fit into the same economic equation ...

Okay, then, we can't spend our way out of recession, but neither can we safely fight our way out of it.

And this brings me back to my previous point: We have to develop a standard of value for the world economy which is as physically demonstrable -- as atomically guaranteed -- as the units of time are by the behaviour of the caesium atom. Instead of something like gold as the standard of value, we must have ... an atomic standard, with the equivalent of a Fort Knox to back it up.

Gentlemen, don't you see? We already have this in our various countries -- already partly regulated by treaties which fix the exchange rate.



I speak of nothing less than our nuclear weapons -- in the Fort Knoxes of their missile silos and submarines.

A kiloton or a megaton can't change its value. One kilogram of Plutonium will always have an energy value of  $10^{14}$  joules. That value remains the same all over the universe. It's defined by atomic physics.

Gentlemen, to turn a recent military saying inside out, I propose to you: Better bucks -- and francs and rubles and yuan -- per bang.

Are you worried that radioactive decay will eat away at the new wealth as inflation eats away at paper money? Do you fear the reverse alchemy whereby the new "gold" will eventually transmute into lead? Just consider the half-life of Plutonium: 24,000 years! Consider, too, our proven ability to top up the new Federal Reserves to the agreed level.

Or do you fear a new gulf developing between rich and poor nations? Don't worry: Nuclear proliferation is already well under way. I assure you that there'll be a far speedier dispersal of nuclear currency to the Third World than there would ever be of old-style assets.

Gentlemen and Comrades, let me propose for your consideration: The end of irrationality. Let me propose the scientific successor to the old Gold Standard. I give you: The Nuke Standard.

Adopt this and we gain one other immediate boon to add to the benefit of perfect currency stability.

Under the new economic order -- with currency backed by our nuclear weapons, with the thermonuclear-dollar and ruble and pound -- who would ever wish to start a war? It would be just like burning money.

It's been said, flippantly, that nuclear weapons have no use -- unless they're used. No longer true, friends, no longer true! With one stroke of the pen -- with the adoption of the Nuke Standard -- we can change all that. And ensure prosperity, plus peace.

Thank you all for your attention.

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# LETTER FROM NEAL WILGUS  
Box 25771  
Albuquerque, NM 87125  
March 23, 1981

'I was surprised recently when I opened up the Jan/Feb STAR LINE, the newsletter of the Science Fiction Poetry Association, and found a review of Roger Zelazny's collection of poetry, WHEN PUSSYWILLOWS LAST IN THE CATYARD BLOOMED (Norstrilla Press, Australia, 1980). I was surprised because Zelazny didn't mention the book when I interviewed him for SF REVIEW last year, even though I asked him a couple of questions about poetry. I was doubly surprised, though, when I read the review and discovered that Zelazny and I have independently invented the same poetic technique -- what I call "right-justification" and what he must call "lines irregular to the left" since one of the poems in the collection is titled "I Used to Think in Lines That Were Irregular to the Right". Whatever you want to call it, the device consists simply of justifying (or lining up) the lines of poetry to the right side of the page instead of the traditional left-justifying. Zelazny undoubtedly came up with the idea first since the book is dated 1980 and the poem was probably written a year or more before that -- but I independently developed the idea in early November of 1980, four or five months before I saw the STAR LINE review, and the first of my poems using the right-justified format was "Lefty's Escape", published in the January, 1981 issue of MENZIA, the newsletter of New Mexico Mensa. A second poem, "Up Yer Evolution", was published in the February, 1981, MENZIA and more will follow, there and elsewhere, since the device fits my poetic needs very well. The purpose of this letter is just to set the record straight on who "invented" the idea -- we both did, and probably a lot of other poets too, since it's a simple and obvious idea and there are countless poets bouncing around this planet. Anyway, it's a good device and I hope to see it more widely used.

'Related to this is my general interest in lefthandedness and left-handed people, an interest that recently led me to obtain a sample copy of LEFTY, the magazine of Left-handers International. I was surprised when I opened LEFTY too, for there in "Letters to Lefty" was a letter from a lefthanded SF writer, Juanita Coulson, a loooong-time fan whom I know of mostly from the legendary YANDRO. It was good to see Juanita's letter and her revelation that her sword-and-sorcery series which includes WEB OF WIZARDRY and THE DEATH GOD'S CITADEL is in fact a "left-handed fantasy world". I'd be interested in knowing how many other SF/fantasy writers are lefthanded -- and how many fans are too. Any leftys who want to make themselves known can write me -- or reveal all in SFR, for that matter.'

## Lefty's Lament

I drank a lot of coffee,  
didn't eat too much --  
the food is only fuel  
and the coffee's just a crutch.  
But my other half is hungry  
and needs a lot of work.  
Poetry is food for thought --  
just see my rightbrain perk.  
My leftbrain is lazy --  
it needs the caffeine kick.  
I always have to lead it  
with a carrot and a stick.  
But my rightbrain's religious  
about what to eat and drink.  
It knows that what you eat right now  
is later what you think.  
O, the leftbrain's all right  
in its own way, I guess,  
but being too lopsided  
can become an awful mess.  
So what can you do --  
the right is all that's left.  
Try to get it all together --  
you know, a gift is not a theft.

---Neal Wilgus

# THE VIVISECTOR

BY DARRELL SCHWEITZER

THE SHADOW OF LOVECRAFT LOOMS  
LARGE, PART I

## DARK FORCES

Edited by Kirby McCauley  
Viking Press, 1980, 551 pp., \$16.95

There's no sense in denying that this is an impressive book and it will almost certainly win the World Fantasy Award for best collection. Simply, as a book, it's a good buy, quite reasonably priced for its size and printed on good paper with sewn signatures and bound in full cloth. (One of those few cases where it does make a difference if you get the regular edition rather than the book club.) The table of contents is incredible: new stories by Ray Bradbury, Theodore Sturgeon, Robert Aickman, Robert Bloch, Isaac Bashevis Singer, Joyce Carol Oates, Russell Kirk, Richard Matheson, Ramsey Campbell, Manly Wade Wellman and a longish novella by Stephen King ... in fact, virtually every major contemporary horror story figure is present, excepting those who only do novels, like Peter Straub. McCauley expresses regrets in his introduction that he couldn't have Bernard Malamud, Jack Finney, Julio Cortazar and a few others. Borges would have been an important addition. The most conspicuously absent are Harlan Ellison and Fritz Leiber. Still, I don't imagine there's a single editor in the whole field who isn't envious of McCauley's achievement.

And yet when I finished this book I stopped and asked myself if I might not be getting bored with horror fiction. Most of the stories are well written. Many are downright elegant. They have good characterization. They are good stories by most standards, but they failed to horrify me. Or even move me very much. I concluded that I am not getting bored with horror fiction. If that were the case, the two stories that really grabbed me (the Russell Kirk and the Stephen King) wouldn't have. I concluded that there is something profoundly wrong with the way most of the stuff is being written.

A lot of the problem can be traced back to Lovecraft. Now Dennis Etchison said in an interview recently (in the March 1981 FANTASY NEWS-LETTER), that he feels that Lovecraft

has held back the development of the modern dark fantasy story more than anyone else, the same way that Pound and Eliot have held back the development of poetry. I think this is true, but maybe not in the way Dennis intended. Pound and Eliot did some brilliant work. They also did some very difficult work and Pound especially tended to lose his readers.

One paragraph aside for my Ezra Pound story. A professor I once knew told me about a professor he knew, who had spent years and years writing a vastly complicated explication of Pound's Cantos. He had never met Pound and finally, very late in the poet's life, he was ushered into the August Presence, having been granted a fifteen-minute interview. He spent 14 1/2 minutes in a nonstop explanation of his theory of the meaning of the Cantos, after which Pound remained silent as precious seconds ticked away, and at the very last instant exclaimed, "You've got to be kidding".

Now, then, I suspect that Pound was simply tired of dumb academic theorizing, but if he really was pulling our legs all that time, he was at fault for what happened to poetry because of his influence, otherwise, no. Poetry became formless and obscure and lost most of its audience. The point of all this is that no artist should be blamed for the excesses of his imitators, particularly those who carefully mimic all his superficial faults without discerning any of his real strength. If someone says, "Oh, this seems formless and obscure, so all I have to do is be formless and obscure and it's real poetry", that isn't the fault of the original poet. Probably not anyway.

Similarly, if someone says, "Oh, all you have to do in horror fiction is have a long build-up, drop a few hints and then give one tantalizing glimpse of The Thing before ending the story", the results are not necessarily H.P. Lovecraft's fault. More likely they're August Derleth's, since in his Lovecraft pastiches (some say parodies), such as THE TRAIL OF CTHULHU and in his so-called



'posthumous collaborations' ('The Shuttered Room' is the purest example), he enshrined the Aborted Beginning.

An aborted beginning is a story that ends about the time it starts getting interesting. Derleth wrote them far more often than Lovecraft did. As Dirk Mosig, Richard Tierney and others have shown, Derleth never really understood Lovecraft. Considering how Lovecraft insisted that plot is not important, that atmosphere and the unadorned phenomena are everything, I suspect that Lovecraft never really understood Lovecraft either. His best fiction doesn't follow his own rules.

A major problem endemic in post-Lovecraftian fiction is an inability to get on with it, to go beyond the introduction of the premise. In other words, right where the story really starts, the author stops. This wasn't a problem in Victorian times. DRACULA does not build up with a bunch of hints and end with the ultimate shocking revelation, "My God! He's a vampire!" No, it has a plot. Vampirism having been established, Stoker gets on with it. Lovecraft, in his roundabout way sometimes, does the same in, say, "The Colour Out of Space", "The whisperer in Darkness", "Dreams in the Witch House", CHARLES DEXTER WARD -- any of the good stuff. (I don't include "At the Mountains of Madness" in the good stuff for this very reason. It is the only aborted beginning in existence long enough to have been serialized -- abridged, no less -- in three parts in ASTOUNDING.)

Another aside. I will ask you, for purposes of reading this review, to accept my basic premise -- that Lovecraft is too towering a figure

in the weird/horror field to get away from. He is far more widely read, far more influential than any of his contemporaries. After Poe, he is probably the first horror writer any reader encounters and usually he is encountered early. I suspect that a whole generation of horror writers has grown up on Lovecraft the way a generation of science fiction writers has grown up reading Heinlein. His stamp is on virtually everything that came after him, even if sometimes it's in a negative way. Of the contributors in this book, Wellman was a contemporary contributor to WEIRD TALES, Bloch was a Lovecraftian disciple, Campbell began as an imitator and later broke away, Bradbury grew up reading Lovecraft and has paid tribute to him in "The Exiles" and Campbell and Grant have reacted strongly against the Lovecraftian tradition, which, of course, means they're keeping it in mind.

The biggest failing of most of these stories is, yes, indeed, an inability to get beyond the beginning. The most outrageous example is T.E.D. Klein's "Children of the Kingdom", which goes on for 66 pages slowly intimating that there just might be this other race of froglike, fishy beings out to snatch the Earth away from us. It's a very Lovecraftian theme, but more typically of a Cthulhu Mythos story by someone else than a true Lovecraft story; nothing happens until the very end, when during the famous New York Blackout, the critters manifest themselves. Before that a character, whom the narrator takes to be a crackpot, explains the origins and history of the things at some length. Of course the reader knows it's all real. These things always are in horror fiction, so the author can't delay too long, lest the reader become impatient. But Klein does not get on with it. He spends the entire novella establishing his premise. One asks at the end, "And then what?" I suspect a more interesting story would be one that started in about the last ten pages of this one, and went on for about the same length. The only reason "Children of the Kingdom" is readable is that Klein has an un-Lovecraftian interest in character and he depicts his setting very well. I suspect there's a good mainstream story hidden beneath the Lovecraftian (or post-Lovecraftian) millstone.

None of the stories in DARK FORCES are overtly Lovecraftian, you must understand. Cthulhu does not appear. Nobody reads the NECRONOMICON. But the inescapable Lovecraftian influence is present in virtually all the stories, except a couple which are not really horror stories. (The Joyce Carol Oates

story is powerful, but it is about humiliation and embarrassment. The character's problem is making an utter fool of herself.)

Clifford Simak's "The Whistling Well" is either a tongue-in-cheek attempt to incorporate as many Lovecraftisms as possible without being horrifying or an attempt to write a traditional horror story, which misfired and became a traditional Simak story. Get this: A man of an old family returns to the home of one of his ancestors (a place sinisterly spoken of, and the locals don't think well of the ancestor, either), which is located in a remote rural region (Midwest rather than New England, because that's what Simak knows), and while camping overnight at the haunted spot near the still clanking windmill and the well of ill repute, the hero becomes aware of ancient, alien presences, non-human creatures from the age of dinosaurs. A strange talisman with pre-human writing on it draws them to him .... And the meeting is friendly. "Brother, I am glad to know you", he says. "I am glad I found you. Glad to carry the token of your faith." (p. 262). Another possible interpretation is that it is a deliberate statement by Simak that the standard Lovecraftian theme of Horrifying Aliens is invalid, and there's no reason why two intelligent species shouldn't have enough in common to get on well together. (Lovecraft himself got to this point late in life. He all but fell in love with the creatures in "At the Mountains of Madness". The horrors in that story are considerably less convincing.)

"The Whistling Well" is strong on atmosphere, short on conflict, but fairly good Simak. It isn't going to horrify anybody. I don't think it's trying to.

Another story which takes its own good time getting to the beginning is Karl Edward Wagner's "Where the Summer Ends". This, like the Klein, has very good characterization and well-realized setting, but at novelette length, it is essentially saying that yes, there are Creatures, rather than doing something with this premise after having established it.

Dennis Etchison's "The Late Shift" has moments of effective atmosphere, but is really a horror story rendition of a joke: What if there really was a "graveyard shift"? C.L. Grant's "A Garden of Blackred Roses" finally lets us know that yes, the magic flowers are causing all these things to happen and You'd Better Not Pick Them, but never gets beyond that point.

I don't think you can have a

truly memorable horror story by merely presenting an idea any more than you can have a science fiction story that way. You have to do something with it.

Ramsey Campbell's "The Brood" reacts against Lovecraft's tendency to explain everything by explaining nothing. This gives it a feeling of helpless nightmare, but ultimately it's unsatisfying.

I think the reader has to have some idea of what's going on and why.

We are now brought to the subject of theme. The other major Lovecraftian legacy, besides the tendency to stall until it's too late, is materialistic subject matter. Lovecraft did not believe in ghosts and goblins, you see. A character of his would not be motivated by a fear of damnation. These things meant nothing to Lovecraft. With his fiction we have a definite break from the mystically-rooted tradition which precedes him.

Not surprisingly, when Algernon Blackwood read Lovecraft, he complained of a complete lack of "spiritual terror".

Lovecraft gave us cosmic terror. His stories are about man's place in the universe. This is his great theme. His conclusions were pessimistic, that mankind is a trivial



accident of creation, wholly unimportant in the overall scheme of things. His characters come into contact with that impersonal vastness, which is both fascinating and terrifying. The result is transcendence and/or destruction. This, I submit, is a materialist version of "spiritual terror". It is more in tune with our age than the more traditional variety. This is why Lovecraft is more widely read than Blackwood.

The curious thing is that for all they may or may not imitate his mannerisms, post-Lovecraftian writers rarely reach for the essential core of his subject matter.

The other unfortunate result of Lovecraft's influence is that, while the traditional subject matter of the weird tale has been demolished, nothing has taken its place. Not only do most writers not get on with it, they have little to get on with.

The consequence is the story which is merely an elaborate buildup for killing off the protagonist in the most horrible way possible. It is really not about anything at all. Thematic content, zero. (I don't know if we can blame Clark Ashton Smith for these, but he wrote them. About 75% of his output could be entitled, "The Death of Zorfsnodek" or whatever. The phenomenon is too widespread. Pointless buckets-of-gore movies are a product of the same lack of anything to say.) If the reader can legitimately ask, "So what?" afterwards, the author has blown it, no matter how skillfully he may have written the story.

Thus, Joe Haldeman's "Lindsay and the Red City Blues" yet again has excellent characterization and depiction of setting (Marrakesh, this time), but boils down to the hero's being victimized, then killed in a grisly fashion, without his having done anything significant to deserve this fate or learned anything from it. It ends with a man being made pregnant. So does Edward Bryant's "Dark Angel". In Haldeman's story, Arab rip-off artists are responsible; in Bryant's, a vengeful woman. Actually, he did deserve it in Bryant's, but in both cases, the character's doom simply comes upon him, irresistibly, without any complication or struggle. Good drama, I think, needs more than that.

"Where There's a Will" by Richard Matheson and Richard Christian Matheson (father & son) is one of those "Oh, no! I'm dead!" stories made so familiar by CREEPY-type, and earlier E.C. horror comics. It contains useful technical information for those who wonder just how one gets out of a buried coffin.

"Where the Stones Grow" by Lisa Tuttle, is one of the few stories

in the book I really don't like. It's another "Death of \_\_\_\_\_" and a rather dumb one. A man who is afraid of stones buys a stone house and, sure as an eldritch gibber, They Get Him. Actually, Tuttle had a far superior story in the December F&SF which would have done DARK FORCES credit.

Gahan Wilson does the rats-out-to-get-me routine for laughs in "Traps", and he does it well.

But still, one has not been truly horrified. We are at the back of the book. We have come to Stephen King's short novel, "The Mist". This one finally does it. King inhibitedly grabs you with everything in his power and doesn't let go. You won't find any philosophical profundities here, but you will discover why King's books shoot to the top of the best-seller lists, enthralling millions while so many others get remaindered.

He gets on with it. There is a slow build. In a story of this length (132 pp.) there is room for it, but the bulk of the story takes place after the premise has been established. He is not as elegant as some of the other writers in this book. His characters aren't as subtly drawn, but dammit, he answers the question "And then what?" and goes right for the gut. This story is terrifying where virtually none of the others are. They have their moments. King is able to keep it up. I'm sure he's aware of Lovecraft, but he has enough sense to keep the story moving rather than hint and hint until all becomes tiresomely obvious without ever quite getting around to it.

The premise doesn't sound like much from a description. Right out of a monster movie. "Atomic testing" or something of the sort pushes the world into "another dimension" covering everything with a mist, out of which come hordes of monsters, often with tentacles and not excluding giant spiders, slugs and flammable pterodactyls. Recently Spider Robinson took King to task for his "anti-scientific" attitude, but I don't think real science enters into his work at all. When King writes about "atomic testing", "radiation", "other dimensions", etc., he is writing about folklore.

The nuclear energy of modern folklore, of common belief, only relates to that of science by coincidence, but it is a source of genuine anxiety to a lot of people who could not give a damn (ahem!) about eternal damnation. So horror-from-mythological-atomics is just as valid in 1980 as the horror of the Devil was when Marlowe was writing DR. FAUSTUS. The story isn't just a pointless ex-

ercise in killing people. It is, in a less than complicated way, about something. The real horror is that science or what people believe to be science, will irrevocably change the world in some terrible way. This is just as valid a theme as anything in Lovecraft, and just as timely. Some of the most effective moments in "The Mist" come at the very end, when a few survivors drive far away from where the phenomenon began, and find no people, and lots of monsters. They realize that the change is quite probably everywhere.

This may not be a classic to go ringing down the ages, but King has, structurally, and in his subject matter, escaped that paralysis wrought by the more unfortunate aspects of the Lovecraft legacy.

To wrap up: A few stories are outside the modern tradition in various ways. "The Peculiar Demesne" by Russell Kirk is a superb exercise in "spiritual terror" of the old variety. There is a lot of mechanism, first an atmospheric framework in which the story is told, then elaborate circumstances by which the hero, a colorful worldly-wise adventurer, comes to be hosting an aging sorcerer who tries to escape impending death by swapping bodies. The hero's soul is at stake as well as his body and the story works by transporting us into something different from the traditional hereafter, a surreal otherness. It also works because both protagonist and antagonist are vivid personalities. "The Detective of Dreams" by Gene Wolfe is exquisitely written, filled with startling imagery. (Who else would compare a flowering tree seen by moonlight to a giantess in her wedding gown?) The detective of the title must track down that which is manifested by three dreams, two of which have clear parallels in the Gospels (the parable of the improperly clad wedding guest and the servant who was forgiven a debt and didn't do likewise), and in the end he goes into a church and finds the answer at the communion rail. In other words, the disturbance is a miracle. Not horrificing unless you are a devout non-Christian. It's a beautiful story in many aspects, but the ending is a bit too pat.

Ray Bradbury's "A Touch of Petulance" is a fairly standard time travel/twist-of-fate exercise. It reads like a minor effort of his from the 40s. "The Stupid Joke" by Edward Gorey is another of his deliciously macabre graphic pieces. "The Enemy" by Isaac Bashevis Singer is minor Singer, about a Jew fleeing Hitlerian Europe, persecuted by an embodied spirit of hatred. The problem is that the story does little more than present the idea. (Now

Singer, I'm quite sure, is beyond the reach of Lovecraft's influence. I am beginning to suspect that the ideal length for the horror story is the novelet, not the very short story.)

There is one story which draws its horror from strictly human evil, without a supernatural element and this is Robert Bloch's "The Night Before Christmas". This story is terrifying only for a moment and that moment comes, not at the gimmicky shock finish, but in the middle, when one becomes aware of the intensely cruel nature of one of the characters. (The narrator is cuckolding a very macho South American type. The horror comes when the husband tells what his brother did to somebody else, and it's horrifying, not because we believe it, because we don't, but because it shows that this guy is capable of such enormities.) Theodore Sturgeon's "Vengeance Is" is about exactly that, a woman with a terrible power to wreak vengeance. It is essentially a bad-guys-get-theirs story, but more intense than most, because it doesn't waste any wordage. (Cf. above parenthetical aside. There is something to be said for brevity after all.)

This book probably does represent the best in current horror fiction. Speaking of scaring, don't let me scare you away from it. There is a lot of good writing in it. Most of the stories are worth reading, for various reasons. None are unreadable. But very few are going to horrify anybody.

#### THE SHADOW OF LOVECRAFT LOOMS LARGE, PART II

#### H.P. LOVECRAFT: FOUR DECADES OF CRITICISM

Edited by S.T. Joshi  
Ohio University Press, 1980  
247 pp., \$15.00

While we're on the subject, let us have a look at the present state of Lovecraft criticism and the past. This is an enormously informative book. You'll find out where the famous, apocryphal "black magic" quote probably came from, why most Cthulhu Mythos writings have nothing to do with Lovecraft and why the famous quote from the Spanish critic, who listed H.P.L. among the ten greatest writers ever produced by the human race, is probably equally apocryphal.

The book is a critical anthology.

It interests me particularly because it is what my ESSAYS LOVECRAFTIAN might have turned out to be, given a more competent publisher, a higher budget and more scholarly resources than I had at my command. One item of the contents overlaps, Fritz Leiber's "A Literary Copernicus". Joshi has gathered significant art-



icles on Lovecraft from a variety of sources and arranged them to give a good historical survey of the ups and downs in Lovecraft's reputation, leading up to his current worldwide acceptance. He has also footnoted everything, usually to supply additional information, rather than to disagree, showing good editorial sense.

This is not to say the volume is without bias. Scholarly works seldom are. One has only to encounter psychologists of one persuasion completely ignoring all others to understand that. A reader new to Lovecraft scholarship might be a little confused if he didn't understand the book's orientation. It is of what I would call the Orthodox, or Conservative school of Lovecraft criticism, which is to say that group which grew out of Lovecraft fandom, but took on scholarly/academic airs very quickly. Lovecraft is close to deified at times, or at least never blamed for any fault in stories or in life. (One of the major critics, Dirk Mosig is a doctrinaire Behaviorist, who holds that HPL was compelled to do and write what he did by his environment. I can see how the Lovecraftian vision of an impersonal cosmos would appeal to a behaviorist.) You can tell what kind of company you're in by what is said about Sprague de Camp's LOVECRAFT: A BIOGRAPHY. Here is it referred to as "inadequate" and then ignored as much as possible. Orthodox Lovecraftians don't like Outsiders intruding, you see. They are, however, quick to embrace any favorable mention from beyond the SF/fantasy field. In fact, the one article which I find of dubious value is from the MINNESOTA REVIEW. (It tries to put Lovecraft in a so-

cial context in a muddled, quasi-Marxist way. I can't claim to have understood it. The author, Paul Buhle, doesn't write clearly.)

The orientation being taken into account, this being an Orthodox Lovecraftian book (we are told that Kenneth Faig and R. Alain Everts are the "foremost Lovecraft biographers", mostly on the basis of unpublished work, apparently), it is the most useful single guide to Lovecraft yet published. It is not a book for the uninitiated, really, but for the informed Lovecraft reader who wants to learn more.

Edmund Wilson's "Tales of the Marvelous and Ridiculous" is of definite historical interest, since it delayed general acceptance of Lovecraft for decades. It is one of Wilson's most spectacular blunders in the area of fantasy, his other being his review of THE LORD OF THE RINGS. (Lovecraft and Tolkein, are of course, now read by uncounted millions more than you ever heard of Edmund Wilson.) T.O. Mabbott's appreciation won't tell you anything new, but he was the first academic to review Lovecraft. Fritz Leiber's "A Literary Copernicus" is essential, a clear explanation of Lovecraft's cosmic vision, and his "Through Hyperspace with Brown Jenkin" deals with HPL's innovations in science fiction. Mosig's "H.P. Lovecraft, Myth-Maker" sets most of the distortions perpetrated by August Derleth to rest for good and further expounds Lovecraft's philosophy. J. Vernon Shea's "On the Literary Influences Which Shaped Lovecraft's Work" is a bit too tenuous for me, but there is useful information in it. And so on.

Robert Bloch on the similarities in outlook between Poe and Lovecraft is very good. Dirk Mosig on the psychological allegory of "The White Ship" may be stretching things a mite and at the same time ignoring that story's overt imitation of Dunsany's "Idle Days on the Yann". The articles on Lovecraft's poetry still fail to convince me that he was an interesting poet. Yes, "The Fungi From Yuggoth" sequence is at least readable and there are a few striking lines and images. Barton St. Armand deals with Lovecraft as a regionalist (a reprint from RHODE ISLAND HISTORY) and his reading of Charles Dexter Ward is considerably at variance with mine. (As I read it, Ward resurrected his ancestor bodily, who then murdered him and impersonated him. St. Armand says possession.)

A worthy effort overall. And for your next project, Mr. Joshi, how about an anthology of foreign Lovecraft criticism? If H.P.L. is generally accepted as a great writer overseas, I want to see it.

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# AND THEN I READ....



## BY THE EDITOR

### THE RINGWORLD ENGINEERS

By Larry Niven  
Ballantine 26009, \$2.50

Louis Wu and the kzin, Speaker-to-Animals are kidnapped by an insane puppeteer, Hindmost, and taken back (after twenty years) to the Ringworld---that immense spokeless wheel in space with a sun at its hub and land area enough for millions of Earths. Hindmost wants a device or technology the Ringworld builders must have possessed, in order to regain power on the puppeteer worlds. He intends to force Louis Wu and Speaker to do the dangerous seeking.

But the Ringworld is unstable and swinging closer and closer to its sun.

While conning Hindmost along until he can take control of the expedition, Louis Wu (with Speaker's help) must discover why the Ringworld is spinning into its sun and find a way to reverse the process.

Larry has the ability to make the unimaginable vastnesses and wonders of the Ringworld real. He is a very good sf writer: he weaves plot, character, background and science into a tight, ever-moving story that satisfies---like a good steak dinner---at the end. He hooks you with his first sentence:

Louis Wu was under the wire when two men came to invade his privacy. and he doesn't let you loose.

By the way: all the questions about the Ringworld's origins, who built it and peopled it, how it works, etc., are answered in this book. RINGWORLD and THE RINGWORLD ENGINEERS are a classic sf series now, and will probably last forever.

### MOCKINGBIRD

By Walter Tevis  
Bantam 14144-9, \$2.95

In many ways an if-this-goes-on novel of mankind's ruin and almost extinction at the hands of its own

creations---automatic machinery and manlike robots of varying low intelligences.

There is a god in this future world---the one Make Nine robot of superior intelligence who alone of all the Make Nines was unable to kill himself. He keeps trying.

Mankind is in its last generation as its drugs keep the few millions left alive in mindless unhappiness. No one can read, think, create---do anything but watch idiot and porno/death TV shows, eat slop and wander around in a daze. Quick, impersonal sex was programmed into their minds from childhood. No one talks because Privacy Laws prohibit social intercourse.

But one man, inexplicably, learns to read by using ancient kintergarden picture books and aids.

And one woman, a rebel from childhood, living in the New York Zoo, is able to have a child.

They discover each other...and come into conflict with Robert Spofforth, the Make Nine.

From that point the novel should not be encapsulated. Highlights that impressed me: the suicides by fire of small groups of people...the prison...the thought busses...the isolated "Christian" enclave...the final, glorious death of Spofforth...the ironic reason why mankind was nearly extinguished.

The warning buried in every page of this novel is impossible to avoid and think about.

But. This is not a great sf novel in theme or execution. It's been done before, perhaps better, by past and present career sf writers. And the \$2.95 price on this softcover has got to make anyone pause. Three bucks? I suspect the publishing industry is suiciding before our very eyes. Reading is on the way to becoming the passtime/hobby of an elite.

### THE CITY IN THE GLACIER

#### THE DESTINY STONE

By Robert E. Vardeman and Victor Milan

Playboy Paperbacks 16754, 16763, both \$2.25 each.

These are volumes 2 and 3 of a six-volume War Of Powers saga. I reviewed the first book, THE SUNDERED REALM, in SFR #37.

These two books continue the adventures of Fost Longstrider and Princess Moriana as they struggle to reach the glacier-covered ancient city where in lies the magic talisman The Amulet

of Living Flame. The possessor can rule the world. Moriana wishes to depose her evil sister from the throne of the floating city, and Fost desires the immortality it promises.

The randy genie in their possession desires a human body again.

The payoff is surprising. So is the glacier.

THE DESTINY STONE continues their adventures along separate paths, as they battle Moriana's sister's agents and armies, as Fost struggles to reunite with Gloriana.

At the end of this book a looming, final struggle for the floating city is in the works and an even more terrible danger as an evil, long-chained alien force is about to be released again upon mankind.

These novels have action, tension, sex, realism. Damned good sword and sorcery, because it is disciplined; magic isn't easy. It costs. There is always a price.

This saga was originally conceived as one volume. Sharon Jarvis, Senior Editor at Playboy Paperbacks, thought it could be published in three volumes. Upon receipt of the first volume she decided that it could be split in two...

Thus six volumes in the saga. The final three volumes of the War of Powers series will begin this December. They are:

THE FALLEN ONES  
THE SHADOW OF OMIZANTRIM  
THE DEMON OF THE DARK ONES.

### LANARK

By Alasdair Gray  
Harper Colophon CN 862, \$8.95

A strange, somewhat inexplicable novel set in Scotland and in...what? a parallel universe? An alternate Earth?

Lanark as a young man enters a city which never knows daylight. Why this is is never explained. Strange, gargantuan events are hinted at...

He is a man without a past. He meets a group of intellectuals and hangers-on, but is too private, clumsy and antisocial to fit in. He seeks death---

---and falls into a giant gullet in a graveyard...down into a subterranean Institute which seeks to treat and dispose of those who come down the tubes.

He discovers an oracle who tells him his life (which he cannot remember) before he entered the dark city above.

The bulk of the book recounts his life in 1930-40s Scotland, from childhood, through art school, to young adulthood. He fails, is in social/emotional agony, and suicides. [And appears in the dark city, as an amnesiac, as Lanark.]

The cities and nations in this Other World are separated by space-time warps of some kind, and each time they are penetrated a person is aged about ten to twenty years.

Lanark returns to the dark city from the Institute, is taken in by old friends now powerful in government, marries, becomes a father---in a flash!---and is sent to a world council to plead for his city.

He screws up, returns to the city and is an old man...yet subjectively has lived (it seems) only a few short years!

This is not a true sf novel. It is a long metaphor about life and living through it. It is a savage commentary on schools, government, politicians, doctors, God... Nothing is left unbloodied.

This is a very well written, endlessly absorbing novel. I liked it. But don't expect it to answer obvious questions. The obvious doesn't matter.

#### THE REVOLUTION FROM ROSINANTE

By Alexis A. Gilliland  
Ballantine 29265, \$2.25

This first book of a trilogy is standard space-colony vs. evil Earth government. The good guys are smarter, anticipate well, and seek only freedom and the chance to make a fortune.

The baddies are stupid, rigid, selfish, obsessed with private imperatives and public politics and force.

Yet this is not a ho-hum sf novel. First because the space colony is a strange, huge 'Mudito' structure which looks like two side-by-side contra-rotating cones with immense central cylinders in the cones linked by a main frame across the wide ends of the open cones.

The living spaces are in the cylinders, and their size permits farmlands, towns...

Also not ho-hum is the inter- and intra-government politicking that goes on (and in which Alexis is well-versed), the genetic goings-on vs. the fundamentalist religious forces opposed to Tampering, and the impressive state-of-the-art of robotics in the form of Skaskash Inc. and Corporate Susan Brown---robots with citizenship and all rights thereof.

The novel moves fast, ends young and seems too sketchy. It could have used another 10,000 words of deep intrigue on Earth and some really severe possibility of death and destruction on Rosinante. As it is Charles Chavez Cantrell and his keen-minded associates handle all crises with ease.

Alexis has finished the second Rosinante novel and is just beginning the third...as of mid-Feb.

#### A SENSE OF SHADOW

By Kate Wilhelm  
Houghton Mifflin, \$9.95

This new novel sets up a classic situation---a dying old tyrant of a father who has commanded his children to him to await his death and to endure a strange test to determine who will inherit the bulk of his huge estate.

The test seems to imply that one of the four heirs will be taken over by the spirit of the old man, and that heir will be the 'winner'.

Attendant are a local psychology professor who set up the test, a family doctor, a crusty lawyer.

And the heirs (and a key persona in the drama, a wife of one of the heirs) and the psychologist do begin to have visions, blackouts, telepathic communications, segments of the old man's memories...

The novel is set in the southern Willamette valley in Oregon and has great authenticity.

As the psychic manifestations mount in frequency and intensity the novel becomes highly gripping.

Alas...the ending is not what the reader expects. The whole thing is left up in the air with all the air gone.

Were those supernatural experiences real? Was the old man a cunning trickster or a crazy? Did the psychologist lie about the brain wave tests? Did he commit suicide?

I'm not sure. And, damn it, I should be! I feel cheated.

#### NIGHT SCREAMS

By Bill Pronzini & Barry Malzberg  
Playboy Paperbacks 16788, \$2.75

Somebody is brutally killing the members of a small clairvoyants group. Two down, five to go...

The remaining members are gathered in a hotel in a small New England town and the killer strikes again and again.

On hand are two FBI men who step in to help. One of them falls in love with one of the clairvoyants.

There is a lot of padding in the form of switching viewpoints from character to character. The first half of the novel drags.

But the characters are real people, the fear/tension/danger closes in nicely, and the real killer's identity is masked beautifully. And the climactic scenes at the end will rivet you.

These clairvoyants really do have the Power...but it doesn't do them much good.

Some of the characters' swampy interior monologues were far too long.

#### THE CHANGING LAND

By Roger Zelazny  
Ballantine 25389, \$2.50

A new, fine, exciting, full-of-wonder fantasy novel by Roger Zelazny is celebration time. So drink your fill of it. It's superb, disciplined sword and sorcery---mostly sorcery---and Roger's word magic is at full flower.

Yeah, I liked the book.

With Jelerak, Lord of Castle Timeless missing (if not dead, then terribly weakened), his overseer, Baran of the Third Hand and the resurrected Queen Semirama attempt from inside the Castle to keep rival, power-hungry sorcerers from entering to bind the power of an Elder God to their will. The Queen has bidden the half insane God to make the surrounding lands a shifting madness of warping reality and strange, treacherous deaths.

Into this wild landscape enters Dilvish, swearing to kill the arch sorcerer Jelerak, who sent him to Hell. Enter the lovely and ambitious woman sorceress Arlata... and enter Jelerak, disguised, too weakened to take direct command of his Castle.

And let the spells, sorceries, enchantments begin! Let cunning, treachery, death and disaster follow!

There's a gripping, time-consuming climax.

You'll love this novel; Roger has a winner here.

#### TWO CAME CALLING

By Nancy and Frances Dorer  
Manor Books 23226, \$1.95

This is a Nice story, unmarred by danger, suspense, logic, plausibility or remotely possible science.

It is (to the point I threw the book across the room in utter disgust) about two creatures discovered in a flying saucer in a wheat field by two children. The creatures who resemble at first beach balls are taken to the rural home of the kids' father and begin to grow up into humans...and soon are remarkably handsome young human males. But they are ignorant of Earth ways, and....

Seems they really are humans ---from Jupiter. Their original beach ball appearance was due to having acclimatized to Jupiter's gravity....

I lost heart. I lost patience. I lost my suspension of disbelief. I realized the authors and the editors didn't know what absurd asses they had made of themselves.

# LETTERS

# LETTER FROM PHILIP K. DICK  
408 East Civic Center Drive  
C-1 Box 264  
Santa Ana, CA, 92701  
February 20, 1981

'I'm gazing at a recent letter to me from Michael Bishop. Michael likes my new novel VALIS, but learned that Ursula LeGuin had been tremendously upset by it, "not only for its examination of perhaps unresolvable metaphysical matters (into which she seems to fear you are plunging at the risk of never emerging again) but for its treatment of female characters -- every one of which, she argued, was at bottom (I cannot remember her exact phrase) a hateful and not-to-be-trusted death figure ... that evening, after her talk at Emory University, while questions were being asked, she responded that her reading of science fiction these days is rather selective but that she had the utmost admiration for the work of Philip K. Dick, who had been shamefully ignored critically in this country and who appeared to be spiraling into himself and going slowly crazy in Santa Ana, California". Her dismay, Michael says, "Results not solely from anger but from a genuine human concern about your intellectual and emotional well-being".

'It is probably self-defeating for me to assert timidly that, "Don't worry, Ursula, I'm not slowly going crazy in Santa Ana, California", but I will make a feeble effort to confront this outpouring of genuine human concern. Ursula, VALIS is a picaresque novel (the first-person viewpoint, the wandering about of the protagonist, the very name he has: Horselover Fat, which is on the order of Smollett's Peregrine Pickle, the fact that the protagonist is decidedly an outsider, the style of the novel, which is vernacular English, not formal English -- but I digress). The female characters in VALIS like the male characters are picaresques and that is that. This is a type of novel that goes back centuries; it has been revived recently as a protest against the more formal bourgeois novel. It is, in fact, a protest on my part against what I regard as official art, official culture, especially that connected with or written to please the academic community. I deliberately made my protagonist a madman, the narrative style that of the street ... but as to your concern for my sanity (God,

it is weird sitting here defending my sanity to a person who has never met me!), especially in regard to the fact that I am examining unresolvable metaphysical matters -- well, have we now got a standard by which we determine the presence of dangerous ideas?

'This is what I hear you saying: Phil Dick is involving himself in dangerous ideas that may undermine his sanity. That they are "unresolvable" has yet to be determined. And even if they are in fact unresolvable, perhaps they are still worthy of being investigated. I have never drawn the line between ideas that could and could not -- should and should not -- be looked into. That, to me, is a dangerous idea: that some ideas are better left alone, for the good and the sanity of all concerned.

'VALIS is, by and large, a work of fiction. It centers around a fictitious movie (called VALIS) and it ends with the protagonist going off to France, Luxembourg, Germany, Turkey, Japan and, finally, Micronesia (in the tradition of the picaresque novel). I've myself been to France and Luxembourg, but none of the other places. Horselover Fat is not a science fiction writer. In VALIS Phil Dick is the science fiction writer, and this is explicitly clear within the novel itself. Although on page three I say, "I am Horselover Fat, and I am writing in the third person to gain much-needed objectivity" it is clear from internal evidence in the novel that Phil Dick and Horselover Fat are two people. Ursula, you have fallen victim to a fictional device by which I establish at the beginning of VALIS that this is a picaresque novel. The fault is largely mine; I chose the device; I chose to blur the distinction between myself and Horselover Fat -- this is the penalty an author pays for writing in the first person.

'Henry Miller discussed this problem years ago. "Who is this I?" readers ask. Miller's answer was, "Me. Henry Miller". I am greatly influenced by Henry Miller, but my purpose was to achieve a new kind of prose, a new kind of blending of the ancient picaresque form with certain modern elements associated with Hunter S. Thompson and William S. Burroughs, as well as my own 1977 novel A SCANNER DARKLY, based on my experiences with the drug subculture.



Now, in A SCANNER DARKLY, the protagonist is an undercover narcotics agent. I'm sorry, Ursula, I wasn't that either. It would have saved me a lot of anxiety and trouble if I had been. But I am, after all, a writer of fiction. However, I will concede that VALIS is autobiographical (so was SCANNER; so was CONFESIONS OF A CRAP ARTIST; so was FLOW MY TEARS, THE POLICEMAN SAID -- so are many, many novels). The fact that my protagonist, Horselover Fat, is a madman does not prove that I, the author, am a madman even if I say, "I am Horselover Fat", because this is the way you write certain kinds of books. There are scenes of violent arguments between Phil Dick and Horselover Fat in the novel.

'One other point that Michael Bishop brings up. He says of you, "She was also concerned that nowhere in your self-characterizations is there any discussion of what it means to be an artist, of the redemptive force that art itself may have". My answer: My novel is my justification, not anything that I arrogate to myself as a person, as a novelist. The justification is the work; the work must stand on its own merits. I hold no special brief for the transcendent value of the artist, only for the art per se. I am no better than the merest person who plies the merest craft -- as a person. I do not hold the mystique of the Great Artist loftily gazing down on puny mortals. As Kevin, a character in VALIS, says to Phil Dick, a character in VALIS, "Call Jamison and tell him -- whatever. You're full of it", meaning of course, that I can sling the shit, which is to say, verbally articulate (God, how

I hate formal English). This talent, which is almost in a sense a defect -- it certainly has gotten me into a lot of trouble in my life -- does not make me superior to people who repair shoes or drive buses. This was, by the way, an element about Stanislaw Lem that distressed me: his inflated notion of the role of the critic, the artist, the Great Thinker and Creative Genius. I'm sorry, but I am not a part of that world. I live in a humble town (Santa Ana) in what Charles Platt correctly called "a plain, modest apartment, with two cats, some slightly run-down contemporary furniture, heaps of reference books" and what excess money I earn I send to an organization in New York that works with street kids, runaways in trouble. This is my life.

'The characters in my novels are picaroons (rogues, in other words) because (1) most of the people I've known and loved have been rogues and (2) I am one myself. Let me finish by saying, "Never trust what a rogue tells you", which is to say, "There is a built-in self-cancelling paradox at the heart of VALIS; it is a tale about a madman told by a madman, a puzzle within a puzzle. Ursula has not solved it. But many readers will ... and from the mail I am receiving, some already have."

#### # LETTER FROM URSULA LE GUIN February 26, 1981

'Oh, I hate this sort of thing where one is quoted without knowing it (though I know Mike Bishop meant no harm at all) and letters that one did not get are printed and so on -- am I the only person in science fiction that does hate it? --The only thing I know to do is get all my cards face up on the table and then drop out of the game.

'Card one -- Phil wrote me a short letter, I guess, at the same time he wrote you the long one, explaining VALIS as an exercise in mystical paradox, like the Cretan paradox, or a koan. He ended it, "This only makes sense if you assume something very strange: we are asleep but do not know it. At least not until we wake up".

'I didn't know why he wrote me out of the blue, but pretty much assumed it's because he is psychic and somehow or other knew that VALIS had troubled me. So I immediately wrote this letter back (I hope he doesn't mind my giving it to you): Card Two:

""Dear Phil,

""OK -- Right -- God knows I have never wakened, only dreamed.

Or been dreamed, or whatever.

""And I don't care if you're crazy, or crazy like a fox, or the sanest man in California, or all three, with a great artist these distinctions are irrelevant -- a real artist -- and that you are, I know that much.

""But I get scared by your recent books & stories, and especially VALIS, because it seems like you hate women now, and the part of you that is woman is denied and despised. It's all yang and no yin, all heaven and no earth, all Word and no matter. And I'm not at home there, I'm shut out, I can no longer follow your art, which has been such a joy & solace to me.

""But I keep trying!

""Love, Ursula."

'The day after I mailed it I got the copy you sent me of his letter to you. So I sent him a card saying:

'I guess I said anything I have to say in that postcard to you. I can't answer your arguments & stuff, I am just sorry that anything I said upset you, & if some aspects of your book upset me, what the hell, it isn't Cream of Wheat after all, & I wouldn't have read it if it was."

'That's Card Three, and I'm out, boys. Just not my night.'

*((I read VALIS soon after receiving a review copy and found it a bit of a drag...a self-indulgent, obsessive digging into, picking at, poking of questions that have haunted certain minds for thousands of years. Since all this has been explored before by thousands of writers, the question becomes how well X does the job this time.*

*((Phil adds a flavor, a style all his own, and the book is readable because of that. But I get the impression that Phil Dick, like Robert A. Heinlein, is sinking, or has sunk, lately into a Self trap. Maybe as death creeps inevitably closer we all are subject to these types of snares? Especially all us Heavy Thinkers.))*

#### # LETTER FROM URSULA LE GUIN January 28, 1981

'I feel a bit misquoted on page 31 of SFR #38. I didn't write Bruce Gillespie that I "don't read science fiction any more". As I read anything I can get hold of by Gene Wolfe, Mike Bishop, Vonda McIntyre, John

Crowley, Phil Dick, etc. etc., I certainly do read SF, and with immense pleasure.

'What worries me and what I was discussing with Bruce, is that there now seems to be a lot of it I can't read, and what I can't figure is, -- is it it, or me? -- So much of it seems the same thing over and over. Reconstituted Cheese Product. But maybe that's just because I ODD on it when I read so much of it for so long. I have the same problem with fantasy. Spent years trying to find real fantasy novels -- roaming through libraries like the Questing Beast -- Now every paperback rack has ten of them; and they're all either Three Brave Children Win the Battle Between Light and Darkness, or something written around a Boris Vellejo cover with big tits, whoopee.

'But I did want to point out that there's a difference between reading SF and fantasy selectively and not reading it at all. If I didn't read it I certainly would not feel justified either in teaching workshops in writing it or in writing it myself.

'There aren't very many rules-for-writing-SF, but one of them surely is: If you wanta write it you gotta read it. GIGO. How to be a Garbage Monster -- (live in a cookie can?)'

*((Ursula, I'm in the same boat; I simply cannot read a lot of the sf and fantasy that comes in for review. I depend on others to touch those bases and sink those ships.*

*((Part of our problem is the truth (in some applications) that familiarity does breed contempt...because the wonders are now ho-hum to us and we now demand more from writers than does the average, younger, less jaded reader.*

*((As time passes I fully expect to find my reading narrowing and narrowing until---if I live long enough---I may end being able to only read five or six writers (other than myself, of course!) and will be useless as a reviewer.*

*((This increasing selectivity even now bothers me since I suspect I'm often too hard on some authors and especially fan publishers. But wotthehell, I rather enjoy the "Tough--but fair--old curmudgeon" image.))*



# LETTER FROM HANK STINE  
SENIOR EDITOR, STARBLAZE ED.  
THE DONNING COMPANY, PUBLISHERS  
5041 Admiral Wright Road  
Virginia Beach, VA, 23462  
February 10, 1981

'I think Christopher Priest misses the whole point entirely. The Nebula is not fatally flawed. It does excellently what it is supposed to do.

'It gains us publicity and attention which the field, SFWA and books in general need desperately.

'That such attention is gained Norman Spinrad proved conclusively in his LOCUS column when he said that a Nebula or Hugo award guaranteed significantly increased sales for a book and publishers knew it (has anyone ever told Chris about the escalator clauses in Greg Benford's contract; does he think they are just pro forma, that publishers ever do anything pro forma?).

'No award is now or ever has been (anywhere at any time in the past) given purely for excellence and achievement. If that were true, they would have been given secretly without anyone else knowing it.

'They have always been given to bestow public recognition on both the recipient and the giver (when an emperor has a ceremony he's just as prominent as anyone he honors -- after all it is the emperor honoring).

'When people want humanitarian deeds encouraged or their own organization more widely known, they create an award to be given to draw publicity to one or the other.

'Being human, we all know there is no absolute standard (although we acknowledge relative ones) by which a single best can be judged. I, for instance, find THE DISPOSSESSED too polemical to be good novel writing.

'However, we all recognize that nominees are generally some of the best, while at the same time accepting that an occasional clinker slips past.

'Meanwhile, some attention that ultimately benefits everyone in the field to some degree, gets attracted to SF and many top SF writers and books as a result.

'That's the point. That's what happens.

'The Nebula works.

'Bright-eyed idealists may want more, but I'm afraid they'll have to find it in the pages of each other's novels and not in the real world.'

# LETTER FROM RONALD R. LAMBERT  
2350 Virginia, Troy, MI, 48084  
January 25, 1981

'You have undoubtedly heard a lot of complaints about SFWA. Well, here's another one. I've had three short stories published in ANALOG, so I qualify to join. Back on June 16 I sent in my application along with a check for \$40 and the other material required. For long months I heard nothing. Finally in November I got my check back, with October 30 as a cancellation date marked on the check (it took 4½ months to deposit my check?!). Now it is almost February, and I still haven't heard from Sotow or SFWA.

'I still don't know if I've been accepted. Shouldn't I receive a membership card, membership directory and stuff like that? Maybe this is all some kind of fraternal initiation. I admit, it is a very novel initiation to let you die of old age before they let you join.'

*((Fear not; your letter in these dynamic pages should provoke some reaction. Hmm. I wonder what they do to malcontents nowadays?))*

# LETTER FROM JERRY E. POURNELLE  
J.E. POURNELLE AND ASSOCIATES  
SCIENCE FACT AND FICTION  
12051 Laurel Terrace Drive  
Studio City, CA 91604  
February 9, 1981

'I'm sorry to continue to bring up unpleasant matters.

'Regarding Busby's note, I thank him for his kind remarks about the thrust of my letter (in SFR #37), but I didn't really miss on my facts. The Treasurer who ruled Lem ineligible for honorary membership on the grounds that he was eligible for regular membership was Andrew Offutt, and he damned well was aware of what he was doing. He called me in some triumph to report on what he thought was a clever solution to the problem. The problem, for those who just came in, was that after Lem's publications regarding American science fiction and SFWA, a number of members complained bitterly about subsidizing Lem's honorary membership.

'I hadn't known that Lem replied declining Fred Pohl's offer of regular (voting) membership with dues to be subsidized by Fred himself, although I knew the offer had been made. Lem's reply ought to dispel any doubt that Lem quit the organization. He was not thrown out.

'Regarding Priest's letter, I

repent it that I did not thank Mr. Priest, who indeed was our long-suffering European charge d'affaires for many years at a time when our publications were singularly unreliable, and that I did not make it clear that it was not during my administration of SFWA that the incident of the delayed ballots took place. I confess I was reporting second-hand information, albeit from a reliable source.

'His other charge is more serious, but it's just plain wrong. Priest says "We, the people who stick up for Lem, would probably forgive them if only they'd confess". If that would do the job, I'd step up and recite. The trouble is, there's nothing to confess to. I told the story at tedious length in the last issue, and no one to date has contradicted a single important point.

'If it makes Lem's supporters feel better, I will "confess" that many members were very pleased to find a reason why Lem should not remain an honorary member subsidized by their dues.

'Further than this we can't go, nor would we want to.

'Priest says that I am remarkably defensive. As often happens, he has misread me. I am trying to be restrained. Lem has many friends among academics. More to the point, I very much regret that the Lem affair cost us at least one very valuable U.S. member, and I refrain from taking the offensive lest I give additional offense. My motive in that should be obvious. I've put a lot of time and work into SFWA, and I think it a very valuable organization; the only one of the half-dozen or so writers' organizations I pay dues to that I think worth far more than what I give it. I would very much like to settle this ludicrous affair once and for all, and if some kind of public apology would be sufficient to heal this breach and get all SF writers together again, I'll make it.

'This is no time for squabbling. The economics of SF publishing have not been worse for many years. If we are to continue to make progress in matters that SFWA can affect: contracts, indemnity clauses, royalty statements, division of shares of subsidiary rights, the "blockbuster" mass media approach of many publishing houses -- if we are to affect those, we better damned well hang together. The question of whether Lem is or is not the world's greatest SF writer can be left to academics and critics, and my views on the matter are of little importance.

'So: Chris, thank you for the work you did for SFWA. I should have acknowledged your work when I



was President, and I can only plead boorish oversight for not doing so. In your time as overseas agent you had more than a little ground for complaint.

'Second, I at least will "confess" what everyone must know, that Lem wouldn't have had his honorary membership cancelled at that time had it not been for his essay on American science fiction -- so long as it is clearly understood that he was not eligible for honorary membership, and that he was offered and declined regular membership at no cost to himself.'

*((Let me take this opportunity to thank SFWA for sending me a very useful copy of its Membership Directory, and for its invitations to SFWA events. I don't go, but I appreciate the offers.))*

# LETTER FROM SHELDON TEITELBAUM  
Rehov Harari 3/16  
Ramat-Gan, Israel  
20 December 1980

'Shopping for books this week, I came across a copy of your porno tour de force, ABANDON, at a Tel Aviv second hand shop. It is amazing how far depravity will travel. The book was horrible -- well worth paying more for it than it was worth in the first place. That triple-digit inflation does it every time.

'Mr. Pournelle's efforts to combat pirating in Israel seem to have paid off. I have yet to find any bogus translations on the racks. Aharon Hoffman, co-editor of the Israeli prozine FANTAZIA 2000, tells of the courts having clamped down on this kind of thing, although I suspect that a great deal of the pornography and Westerns sold here are still trefe.

'Fandom in Israel is moving once again, after several false starts during the past two years. The ISRAEL SF ASSOCIATION joined the choir invisible owing to the military situation here. The executives were, to a man, members of the IDF, and prone to disappearing at the most inopportune times. Janice Gelb, a fan so true that she left the country not because of the job market, inflation, military situation or dearth of adequate housing, but because of the lousy state of fandom, tells of a Jerusalem-based club.

'Those interested are advised to contact Neil Weiss, POB 12078, Kiryat Hadassah, Jerusalem. Rumour has it that they plan to run a con in June, 1982. Should this indeed come to pass, visitors will, within reason, find many of us willing to put them up for the duration.'

*((But---I've never had a novel of mine published in America under the title ABANDON...to my knowledge. Could you quote the first few lines? I could probably identify it that way. In a way it's a compliment to be chosen for reprinting, pirating, foreign sales, etc. without your knowledge.))*

# LETTER FROM STEVE BROWN  
January 25, 1981

'(Quote from a Holt, Rinehart & Winston ad in PUBLISHER'S WEEKLY, listing Spring and Summer releases):

'SCI-FI (Title of book)  
A Rinehart Suspense Novel  
William Marshall. Sixth mystery in the wild adventures of Hong Kong's Yellowthread Street Cops: Murder and chaos amidst the annual all-Asia Science Fiction Convention, \$10.95/August/  
ISBN: 0-03-047486-8'

# LETTER FROM STEVE BROWN  
817 N. Irving St, Arlington,  
VA, 22201  
January 9, 1981

'I would like to clear up some faulty information in Elton Elliott's column regarding John Shirley. He has not released, nor even recorded any singles, from "Park Avenue Records" or anyone else. The name of his band is not FirsTongue (that is the name of the fictional band in John's recent Dell novel, CITY COME A'WALKIN'). The name of the band is Obsession (formally John Shirley's Obsession, but they thought that was too cumbersome). He has not been signed by "the same man who 'discovered' Bob Dylan and Bruce Springsteen". That man, John Hammond, Jr., of Columbia Records, heard a demo tape of John's, liked it enough to call John into his office and tell him how much he liked John's music. But no papers were signed. Hammond said that he was thinking of leaving Columbia and starting his own label soon, and that at that time he would like to sign John. Meanwhile he told John, and wisely, that John should forget the conversation and go forth and pay dues in dozens of little clubs and hone the music down.

'John has sold "The Brigade" to Avon, though it in no way fits the description of "Mainstream/occult/horror" -- it is about a small town in Oregon without a police force that is taken over by bad guys. The townspeople form a vigilante group

(the Brigade of the title) and the plot ensues from there. "Cellars" does fit that description, but not only hasn't been sold, but is still being written. John tells me that he is putting into this one very horrible image that occurs to him. Every time he walks to the store in the Lower East Side, he encounters enough human flotsam that he returns home with another couple of chapters envisioned. Thus the book grows. It is a huge manuscript at the moment, with no end in sight.

'Regarding your review of THE DEAD ZONE -- I agree with you totally in your opinions, but you must remember that you have read the least of King's novels, and the most contrived. Try FIRESTARTER.'

# LETTER FROM NORMAN FINLAY  
Caltonview, 125 Lochend Rd.  
Edinburgh, EH6 8BX, Scotland  
December 18, 1980

'With reference to last issue's letter from Bob Leman -- John Updike's first novel was THE POORHOUSE FAIR, first published in the USA in 1958. Recently I read the UK Penguin edition, published in '68. From the intro by Updike: "THE POORHOUSE FAIR was written in 1957 and was supposed to take place twenty years hence -- that is, around 1977. I meant the future it portrays to be less a predictive blueprint than a caricature of contemporary decadence".

'The point is, JU's first novel was science fiction.

'Four days ago I had a bad experience. About twelve-fifteen seconds of main current at 5 amps delivered through my right hand first finger. I thought I was dead. I screamed and screamed then my chest froze up and all I could make were noises. It was pure accident, bad luck, carelessness or fate. I could call it all of those. What I'm leading up to is that you started me on all this conspiracy theory stuff, the naked greed of human nature, the kill-or-be-killed-eat-and-eaten philosophies as expressed by yourself in SFR. Can I add some observations of my own?

'I suppose whatever happens to you varies with conditions. Wounds on a battlefield are different to accidents in the home. I can tell you that the same night of my accident I did not pray, I did not thank God that I was alive. Shock or confusion -- I don't know which had expropriated by belief in Him. In fact, I was crying and terrified of sleep. Though I'd been to hospital and given an ECG and assured that I

would not die I didn't like the idea that I still might one bit. My wife had to keep the bedroom light on, I couldn't bear the dark. When I was undergoing the shock I believed I was dead. I could feel the current killing me. That's what I remembered in bed but the feeling was gone. So that now I know what it's like to die I can't recall it, exactly. I suppose it's just as well.

'I can tell you that what I underwent was dreadful. Even worse were the what-ifs that followed later. Weeks before I had been arguing with my wife. Yet it was she who pulled the plug for me. She who literally saved my life. So now I'm left with confusion and a terrible fear of death that isn't really present in normal humans. I think I left normality behind after feeling what it was like to be dying. My outlook isn't one of serenity and acceptance of death -- I don't want it. I don't want my wife to die -- ever. I don't want people to die. It's horrible and somehow final and bearing in mind what you say about DNA imprinting I'm not sure that there is Life After Death. I feel I don't know anything any more for sure.

'Anyway, I've been left with a lack of feeling in my left arm and sometimes my left leg and a tendency to think about crying and feeling sorry for myself.

'Well, what I wanted to say is that I do agree with you -- sort of (It's okay, I'm well aware that you don't care what I believe) but I hope you really aren't enjoying the Iraq-Iran war and doomsaying. But you're right about one thing, the other side of doom is very much the same if you can survive it.'

*((I'm sure we can all agree that dying is a traumatic experience, and usually fatal. I am continually astonished at the risks people take in everyday life, and the behavior of groups and nations which leads me to suspect that in actuality most people seek secretly or unconsciously to kill or be killed.*

*((The frenzied dictum, "KILL FOR CHRIST/NATION/RACE/CREED/MONEY" has the unstated and real corollary "DIE FOR CHRIST/NATION/RACE/CREED/MONEY." That ancient devil (known now as our hindbrain) has us in its spell, and will continue to dictate from its fortress for eons.*

*((As for my enjoyment of doom-saying: I have this character-tilt toward pessimism and prediction, thus I enjoy doing my thing. My only sadness and disappointment is that the dooms I see coming are taking so goddamned long to arrive. I'm basically solipsist, you see, and would prefer huge, history-*

*making events to occur in my lifetime...with the ideal finish a planet-destroying catastrophe on the day of my death by natural causes. AHA-HA-HA-HA-HA.....))*



# LETTER FROM GENE DE WEESE  
2718 N. Prospect  
Milwaukee, WI 53211  
February 3, 1981

'Tell Paulette thanks for the WANTING FACTOR review. After what PW said about it, this was a more than welcome difference, and it'll probably sell more copies in fandom and at cons than a good one in PW would anyway. She's the first to have picked up on the identity and problems of the villain and the fact that, whether the writing is all that great or not, it is most definitely not anything like your "standard occult novel". (There are some shortcomings in the book, but being "standard/conventional" isn't one of them.) Incidentally, it's gone into a third printing, though they're calling it the second, since the real second was just to bring the quantity up to what they originally ordered because the printer shorted them ...

'Glad to see that someone else liked THE AWAKENING despite some of the inherent idiocies. When I saw in the credits it was based on something by Stoker, it must've put me in the mood for something old fashioned like that and made me overlook things like his taking after the tomb door with a sledgehammer. Incidentally, if you haven't seen RESURRECTION, do so immediately. It's the best picture, SF/fantasy or otherwise, that I've seen in many months. A quiet but dramatic (not melodramatic like most of the hokier ESP pictures) story of a healer who doesn't have any idea where her newly-acquired "power" comes from and refuses to bow to the pressure of her fundamentalist friends and say it comes from "God". SCANNERS, on the other hand, is pure, gory hoke and only moderately entertaining now and then.'

*((We did see RESURRECTION. Thanks for the tip. We'll see SCANNERS probably for the pyrotechnical gore.))*

# CARD FROM ROBERT A. BLOCH  
2111 Sunset Crest Drive  
Los Angeles, CA 90046  
February 7, 1981

'Barry Malzberg has done it at last! He may be quoting someone else, of course, but if so, the words are new to me---and they constitute the mot juste, or unjuste, I've been searching for all these years. I refer to his use of the term, "street science fiction": it says it all, and I salute Mr. Malzberg even if I don't necessarily agree with his evaluation of the ENCYCLOPEDIA or his spelling of "Borogroves". Having thus alienated everybody at one swell foop, it remains only to say that I think you deserve an annual Hugo for SFR, or just for being REG. Pay no attention to Alter; he's the Stanislaw Lem of the subconscious. Hoping you are the same --- Bob.'

*((You are, of course, my Ghod, Bob. I might even say you are my Cholb. So I am sure that when You call for a Hugo for me and/or SFR, all fandom and prodrom will obey.*

*((Perhaps you can clear something up for me: a few weeks ago I received a phone call from a man who said he was Bob Tucker! And he said I should keep all the postcards you write to me---and maybe even the letters (but there hasn't been a letter for...about thirty years now?) because all your writings will be invaluable in the future because you will be viewed in future as a literary giant. He even said he knew you! Is this true? Should I save your postcards?))*

# LETTER FROM BRUCE D ARTHURS  
3421 W. Poinsettia  
Phoenix, AZ 85029  
4 February 1981

'I like Malzberg. I really do. I've had a number of occasions where I've found myself in the midst of a deep, black, hopeless depression and lifted myself out by going to the bookshelf and getting down a book of his stories. It's so cheerful to find that there's someone in the world who's more depressed, wretched and angst-ridden than I am. (I wonder what Malzberg reads to cheer himself up?)

'I had a serious thought about Malzberg, though, while reading his essays in this issue. Let us take it for granted that he is an excellent writer. (Most people's objections to his writing, I think, have to do more with what he writes about than how he writes it.) But he's

never been popular, despite his skill. Why? Because he is so skilled, I speculate. Malzberg reached his peak early in his career, very early, and maintained that peak, writing story after story at that same high peak of skill. He didn't improve. This explains why I don't particularly faunch for new Malzberg stories; I know he's not going to surprise me with anything new, anything that he hasn't done just as well before. The details, the characters, the words may be different, but the story, the skill used in presenting it is basically the same. I can get the same results by merely re-reading his old stories rather than any new ones.

'I can think of two other writers who've reached much the same point in their careers. One is Harlan Ellison; when I first discovered his writing, I devoured it like crazy. This sunuvabitch was good! But he reached a peak in his writing, I feel, about five or six years ago, and I haven't found anything new in his work in any of the things I've read since then. It's still good, still marvelously intense gut-level writing, but he seems to have settled into a niche in which he may be one of the best, but isn't challenging himself to strike out into new niches.

'And the other writer who comes to mind is Philip K. Dick. Like Ellison, I splurged on his work after first coming across it. A month or so ago I read one of his works from the mid-60s, "Counter-Clock World", which was the first thing of his I'd read in several years. To me, CCW was just as good as anything I'd read in several years. To me, CCW was just as good as anything of Dick's work in the 70s that I've read, and better than a few.

'So what am I trying to say? Part of the excitement of the SF genre is that there are so many new writers constantly coming into the field, and it's a fascinating hobby to watch and see which ones are constantly improving their own work, trying new things, new ideas, new techniques. Skill by itself is not enough. There has to be a constant effort to improve that skill still further, beyond anything you've tried before. Two writers who come to mind as doing this very thing are John Shirley and James Hogan. Shirley's work, I think, is obviously the work of a deranged or genius mind, I'm still not sure which, but boy, I sure don't know what he's going to do next! People might be surprised that I list Hogan in the same sentence, considering his old-fashioned super-science plots and cardboard characters. However, "Thrice Upon A Time" has, in addition to his usual fascinating spec-

ulations and extrapolations of scientific theories, characters that are a quantum leap forward from his earlier works. Sure, they're still a bit too sinless to be true, too pure of heart, but they're fairly well-rounded, feeling, warm human beings. Hogan is improving his work, and it's great to be able to see this taking place.

'Benford's "A String of Days" was excellent. A few scattered comments:

'Page 15: "The day's second mail delivery". What? I didn't know there was anyway that still got two mail deliveries a day. Certainly not in Phoenix, at any rate.

'Page 17, May 21st entry: I recall from my own classes in physics that most of the writing in people's labbooks was trying to explain how come the results from an experiment never seemed to fit what theory predicted for it. (To this day I am still convinced that acceleration in free fall is not predictable.)'

*((To me, skill-levels refer to how well a writer can deliver to the reader what he sees in his mind. You seem to be talking not of fiction technique but of what the writer dishes up to the readers. Most of us have a mindset, a repertoire, a pantry shelf of themes and ideas from which we draw when "Showtime!" comes upon us. This is also restricted by basic character; the oral personality isn't going to write the same kind of stories as the anal-retentive, for instance. Instead of ragging certain writers for not expanding into alien story areas (alien and impossible for them, that is), maybe it would be better to seek out other writers with different basic approaches and mindsets.*

*((Ten years from now you'll be impatient with Shirley and Hogan for having exhausted their pantry and repeating themselves. Lifelong, intelligent readers do have this problem---exhausting favorite writers. Could it be that readers have limited tastes and fictional enthusiasms? Life is certainly difficult.))*

# LETTER FROM CHARLES PLATT  
9 Patchin Place  
New York, NY 10011  
February 8, 1981

'I recently signed a contract with Berkley to do a sequel to DREAM MAKERS, and will soon start writing to people whom I want to include in this second volume. Yes, Dick,

there will be more female writers this time. Another aspect of my naivety is that I didn't even think about the gender of my interviewees, in the first book, until someone pointed out to me that almost all of them were men. By then it was too late to include extra women, because the book was already longer than Berkley wanted it to be. Well, I thought, the selection of names was so idiosyncratic and illogical anyway, why should anyone complain about the male/female ratio, when there were so many other imbalances? (The excessive number of young writers and ex-new-wave writers, for instance.) In reality, I guess, the issue of sexual equality still carries more weight than other issues, even in a field where, so far as I have seen, there is almost completely equal opportunity.

'The new book will be much wider-ranging than the first one and may well include profiles of movie directors, rock stars, writers from the avant garde and scientists, if I go as far as I want to go. Meanwhile, I have already written the introduction, which includes a mildly expressed diatribe against the whole idea of categories in fiction, and a complaint against the rise of fantasy as a separate genre of pure escapism. The latter piece may end up in Heavy Metal, whereas the former is certainly available to you, Dick, if you are interested. My line is that science fiction is best when it surprises us, whereas the effect of category-limitations is to eliminate surprises. And modern publishing is rooted in categories, for reasons which are valid to distributors and retailers but are not necessarily liked by editors and writers. Incidentally, as you might conclude from these remarks, I am very pleased to see you widening the scope of your small press reviews; and I was delighted by William Gibson's book reviews, especially his mention of THE FLUTE PLAYER, truly a wonderful book by D.M. Thomas.

'I left my literary agency recently -- not because of their shortcomings (they just got me a very lucrative four-book deal) but because I couldn't bear the paternalistic attitude any more, which classifies writers almost as children who should be unseen and unheard while the grown-ups (i.e. editors and agents) decide on the size of their monthly allowance. Moreover, the details that matter most to an agent are often those that I find totally unimportant.

'So I'm representing myself for now, and negotiated my new contract with Berkley, for DREAM MAKERS II, as an individual. The process was quick, painless and simple. I got the ad-

vance that I wanted and Berkley made all the changes I asked for in the contract. An agent might have screwed a slightly higher advance out of Berkley -- but the bit of extra money would, of course, simply have gone as agent's commission, and thus the publisher would be, in effect, supporting a service industry which produces no tangible product whatsoever. At a time when American productivity is declining (and, perhaps not coincidentally, litigiousness in general keeps escalating) it pleased me very much to conclude the deal amiably, with good feelings on both sides and to hell with the possibility of an extra thousand dollars or so. You once challenged my outlook on wage demands, Dick, by suggesting that as a writer I certainly wouldn't settle for a smaller advance if there was the possibility of negotiating for a larger one. At the time, I had no reply to your challenge, because I just didn't know how I would act under those circumstances. Now, however, I can say that you're wrong -- given the choice of hard bargaining versus settling for a reasonable offer, I prefer the latter. Many writers are overpaid, anyway, for what they do, and at this point publishers are not exactly thriving at our expense. Much as I value the work of SFWA in fighting genuine cases of fraud, sometimes their all-purpose militancy seems misapplied.

'I'll leave you with a joke (of my own invention, I hasten to add): How many people does it take to write a Carl Sagan novel for two million dollars? The answer is: Only one. But his name isn't Carl Sagan.'

*((I suspect that categories in fiction exist not for the convenience of the publisher or distributor or retailer---any extra staff and extra effort in keeping books separated for any reason is a 'waste' of time and money---but for the reader, the purchaser, who wants to be able to find what he's looking for! That's also why we have organization of books in libraries, why catalogues are arranged just so, and why dept. stores have departments---for the convenience of the buyer.*

*((And I think publishers hire editors well versed in given categories for good reason---the hard-core readership of westerns, sf, mysteries, etc. will soon avoid the output of a publisher whose mss. are chosen by people not expert in that field. Look at TV science-fiction, fantasy and occult movies and series for examples of ignorant choices and idiot editing.))*

*((Isn't it ironic that Sagan, a man who doesn't believe in the supernatural, will probably have to hire a ghost? And a very high-priced one at that!))*

# LETTER FROM EDWARD L FERMAN,  
Publisher  
THE MAGAZINE OF FANTASY AND  
SCIENCE FICTION  
Box 56, Cornwall, CT 06753  
February 11, 1981

'There is a lot of gloomy news and gossip about magazine and book publishing in SFR #38, which I suppose led you to predict on page 5 that "at least two SF magazines will fail in 1981-82" one of them F&SF.

'You really should not jump to such a silly conclusion. The fact is that the two magazines that folded in 1980 did so because of inexperienced management, not because of any new problems that face the magazine business. Another fact is that the cash flow problems experienced by book publishers in 1980 should not normally be a problem for a well-run magazine. This is because magazines receive income from several sources rather than one, and also because subscription income is received up front.

'I'm sure you will be happy to learn that 1980 was a very good year for F&SF, that our cash position is extremely strong and that we will be around through 1981 and 1982 and beyond.'

*((Glad to hear that F&SF is so strong and that your personal plans include continuing to publish and edit it.*

*((My comment that I expected AMAZING and F&SF to fold in 1981-82 was premised on a severe recession/depression which would drastically cut readership and subscription renewals as well as encourage very slow distributor payments of what was sold, and a feeling that you might be thinking of retirement and would decide to pack it in.*

*((Time will tell, of course.))*

# LETTER FROM PATRICIA MATHEWS  
1125 Tomasita St. NE,  
Albuquerque, NM 87112  
February 1, 1981

'Comment to Ian Covell: Just as twenty years ago racism was a weakness common to whites, so today male chauvinism is still a weakness common to men. Go ask Alexei Panshin who first leveled the charge against Heinlein.

'Spider Robinson dealt with the charge at great length, badly. I was reviewing Spider's article ((In my ANALOG review column)). I am not going to avoid a subject simply because speaking of it may lay me open to name-calling.

'Ironically, I like Heinlein, and was defending him against Panshin's charges by placing him in temporal and cultural context. On the other hand, it is certainly a reviewer's right to point out that a scene won't work, and why; I couldn't picture even Edith Bunker at that banquet! It was, quite frankly, silly.'

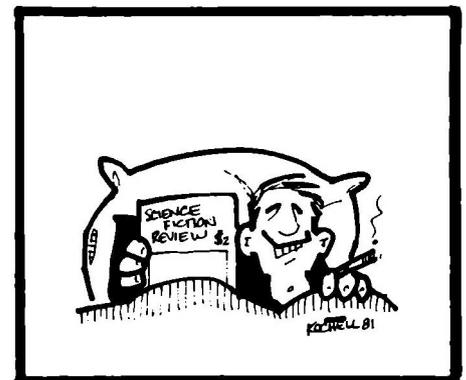
*((If I may intrude... I do not believe racism (an aspect of xenophobia---hatred and distrust of strangers) is a weakness. It is actually a virtue in the make-up of mankind as a species and has served him well through the eons. Mankind learned very early-on that his worst enemy was other men from different tribes/nations who came upon him and his tribe/nation to loot, rape, and kill. It paid to be wary of strangers and foreigners---aliens. Xenophobia may be a survival trait carried in our genes. It is still of value, and as mankind either sinks slowly back into city state civilization and tribalism or leaps out into space, we will need fear-of-different people in our guts to help save our selves, our families, our tribes, our nations, our colonies and our planets.*

*((Male chauvinism, too, is part of the human male's nature. It, too, is probably a survival trait which works best in a less technological, wealthy civilization.*

*(("Chauvinism" is the wrong word to use, by the way, since it is defined as: 'from Nicholas Chauvin of Rochefort, a soldier of the First Republic and Empire, whose demonstrative patriotism and attachment to Napoleon came to be ridiculed by his comrades. Also: Vainglorious or exaggerated patriotism.'*

*((The feminist movement's use of the word is flawed. I'm not sure what word fits the unconscious (perhaps instinctive) mind-set of men regarding women.*

*((I don't think male "chauvinism" is much subject to change by 'education', laws, or guilt-trips.))*



# LETTER FROM A.D. WALLACE  
306 East Gatehouse Dr. H  
Metairie, LA 70001  
February, 1981

'Publishing Gregory Benford's "String of Days" was a small stroke of genius on your part, quite the neatest piece of writing I have seen in any hemisemidemi prozine in recent days, or quasi-fanzine for that matter.

'The article does not answer my question -- How can one man do so much? His fiction that I have read (including TIMESCAPE) is at best mediocre and indeed turgid and garrulous, a composite of mainstream and some "neat ideas". TIMESCAPE includes a rehash of some rather old academic scandal, going back to C.P. Snow, and some of more recent vintage. The reader could have excused the Jewish momma who wants her son to marry a nice Jewish girl -- this has been investigated in too many novels and stories, for too many years. It is now stale, flat and unpalatable, along with much else in the novel.

'From what I know of academic life: research and publication, directing doctoral research, committees and related busywork, wooing the foundations, and others ... is a full-time job.

'I greatly admire Benford's energy, cleverness, as implied in the article, but not (so far) his fiction. It may be, of course, that he is directing his novels at a select group, a special clientele, who will find it of greater originality than I did.'

# LETTER FROM KIM SMITH  
February, 1981

'A good issue, your #38. I especially enjoyed John Brunner's report on his trip through eastern Europe. His closing comment on the value of realizing what it is like to have American and NATO nukes aimed at one was just too trite to let pass in silence. Why should it be "educational" to think of those missiles as being aimed at oneself (presuming you live in the West)? Damn-it, all of those missiles are always aimed at all of us. What kind of significance does the national "character" of a bomb make? What is the difference if a loaded pistol put to your head is Russian or American? Shit, every day in this part of the world there are just as many Soviet nukes aimed at us as there are Western ones aimed at them. Why doesn't Brunner point this out as being equally "educational"? Terror-

ism is terrorism. Whether it is on the level of a sweaty-palmed kid with a machine-pistol and twenty pounds of gelignite, or the level of silver-haired "statesmen" with their fingers on buttons.

'As for Brunner's stated wondering at what might happen if the NORAD computer were to screw up again and not be caught in time, well, bad as that is, consider this: Soviet command and control systems for their nukes are much less reliable than those in use by the West. They are fifteen to twenty years behind the West in the sort of computer and radar technology that goes into such systems. If there were ever to be a repeat of the early twentieth-century Tunguska explosion, the Soviets would almost certainly interpret it as a nuclear attack and retaliate. Our own systems would probably distinguish between such a natural event and an attack. But that's nothing to feel proud of. Oh, welll....

'I once heard Harlan Ellison respond to a fan who had said that the existence of nuclear weapons on Earth was the greatest single piece of evidence arguing for the essential irrationality of the human race, that he thought they were perhaps the greatest evidence for human rationality, since we (at the time) had had these damn things for thirty-five years and still had managed somehow to keep from blowing ourselves up. I wonder who's right? I wonder if it really matters?'

*((Harlan is right until he has been proven wrong--at which point it really doesn't matter.))*

# LETTER FROM STUART SCHIFF  
WHISPERS/Whispers Press  
70 Highland Avenue  
Binghamton, NY 13905  
February, 27, 1981

'I am pleased to note that my MAD SCIENTISTS anthology just resold to Tokyo Sogen Sha for a Japanese language reprint. The money involved, alas, is small, but I cannot wait to see my name in Japanese! I am also proud to announce that I just signed a contract with Playboy Paperbacks for a horror anthology tentatively titled DEATH (catchy, huh?). While my primary wants are originals under 10,000 words, I am considering reprints if they have not been generally available for at least five years.

'Payment will vary from 1-4¢ per word, depending on length, author and whether they are reprints or ori-

ginals. The manuscript is due in June. I have also been offered a contract from Doubleday for WHISPERS IV. Although no schedule has yet been worked out on that one, I am always considering submissions to WHISPERS magazine as potential inclusions for my anthologies. If you do mention this as a market report, do give my new address.'

# LETTER FROM MIKE GLYER  
14974 Osceola Street  
Sylmar, CA 91342  
February 16, 1981

'Had you dropped by the Noreason II business meeting, it would have amazed you to discover that those who bitch about SFR's prozine qualities (to borrow your phrase) in that congress not only don't publish crudzines, which they eagerly trade for SFR -- they don't publish at all.

'Perhaps that's why they have less trouble distinguishing between a hobby and a career, than those who get all snarled up in the definition of a fanzine.

'I had to vote against the motions which proposed methods to rule SFR, LOCUS and STARSHIP out of contention for the fanzine Hugo -- primarily because the measures were unenforceable. For example, one proposal would have ruled out any fanzine which was the primary source of income for its editor. The proposal was untainted by any scheme for its enforcement. In fact, the only way to "enforce" such a rule is to audit the books and records of fanzine publishers. Hey, what fun...

'The only proposal that really made sense was the idea to amend the WSFS constitution specifically eliminating these three publications from Hugo eligibility. It made sense in that it directly accomplished the object of this whole exercise.

'Of course, the weakness of all these proposals, which never gets digussed, is what kind of credibility can the Hugos enjoy afterwards? The Hugos are an award selected by popular vote -- vox pupuli vox dei, and all that jazz. To drop the three dominant award-winners puts the Worldcon committee in the position of being selectively deaf to the will of the voters.

'There is also the problem -- who is the Hugo being "saved" for?

'An examination of the 1980 Hugo statistics shows only ten magazines received 18 or more nominating votes. This out of 318 nominating ballots

and 1088 final ballots, who voted in the category. Of the ten, SFR, THRUST and STARSHIP are semi-pro genzines. LOCUS, FILE 770 and SCIENCE FICTION CHRONICLE are newszines, and not a showcase for fanwriting or very much fan art. JANUS and RUNE are representative fanzines. PYRO-TECHNICS and FUTURE FOCUS I have never seen copies of, although I believe the former is a specialty zine for fanciers of technical novelties.

'At least in 1980 a rule that chopped out semi-prozines would still have left unrecognized the fanzines I personally consider best. Therefore, it hardly seems worthwhile to me to risk the credibility of the Hugos merely to break the monopoly of expensively-published, high-circulation fanzines. Very few fanzines have any degree of name recognition. Even LOCUS, which circulates more than 3500 copies each issue, was nominated by less than 2% of its readers. Without SFR or LOCUS, the average Hugo voter has no idea what is happening in fanzines. (But then, that was the argument for creating the FAAn awards and I don't recall you being a supporter of them.)'

*((I applaud the FAAn Awards with the sound of one hand clapping. Especially since I and SFR were excluded out by the rules (by design).))*

*((I often wonder what contortions would be required to keep me away and out if I were to publish a real, non-profit, 500-limit faanzine? But have no fear, I'm too busy.))*

'The injustice I always considered to be at work in the Fanzine Hugos was that the awards were established to recognize quality among SF hobbyists -- and what they wound up recognizing was the willingness of three fans to spend more than \$1,000 an issue in publishing costs. The economics at work eliminated all but three fanzines from a serious chance to win the Hugo. Various zines have managed to squeeze onto the final ballot due to the low number of nominating voters, but almost none of them resemble the average fanzine. JANUS and RUNE, which are good genzines, require the economic and production help of large science fiction clubs and in that aspect are not typical fanzines. Given their print runs, they obviously are not cheap to produce.

'In sum, I don't consider the fact that SFR isn't making you rich to be a very strong defense for keeping you eligible for the Hugo award.'

*((Actually I'm unwilling to spend more than \$1,000 in production costs per issue...but fans keep subscrib-*

*ing and renewing...and printers keep insisting on being paid for their work....*

*((But seriously, we've all seen fanzines that had heavy gloss stock covers, four-color artwork, lotsa pages...and which failed. Didn't get nominated. Through most of its lives PSY/TAC/SFR has been mimeographed or printed on newsprint. It got nominated. It won Hugos. I suggest the reason is not format or even especially circulation---it's content and style. As long as I'm publishing you're going to have the Geis Problem (no matter how you try to disguise it.))*

*((It may be that, technically, my fan writing and SFR publishing is a career...mutated from hobby. Getting to this point was not a conscious choice, however. Certainly not a rational choice. I am a victim of Strange & Morbid Compulsions, Little Understood by Fan nor Beast. I deserve to be pitied for this lifelong performance, not scorned or reviled! Applause! For pity's sake, a little applause! (With an occasional Hugo on the side.))*



# LETTER FROM I.G. PENHALL  
POB 463, Kingston, ACT,  
Australia, 2604  
January 14, 1981

'I write to thank you for assistance in resolving the situation which had arisen with regard to my attempts to subscribe to DELAP'S F&SF REVIEW and EMPIRE SF.

'Your publication of my letter in SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #36 has completely resolved the most worrisome of the two problems in that I have now satisfactorily commenced a subscription to EMPIRE SF. It turned out that I had been using an out-of-date address for EMPIRE and that the on-forwarding of mail to a new address is either not provided by the US Postal Service or did not work in this instance. Whatever the case, EMPIRE did not receive my earlier letters attempting to establish a subscription; moreover an exchange

of correspondence between EMPIRE and myself last year was successful, I have my subscription, and the first two issues have arrived.

'For the record, EMPIRE's current and correct address is:  
EMPIRE SF  
POB 967  
New Haven, CT 06504  
United States of America

'In that you published my letter fairly prominently in SFR #36, I believe there is now an obligation on us to publish the fact that the situation has now been resolved. I would accordingly appreciate publication of this letter as well.

'I still wish I had heard something (almost anything; particularly a current address) from DELAP'S; it seems I just will not be able to subscribe to the magazine.

'I am sending a copy of this letter to Mr. Kevin O'Donnell, Jr., (Managing Editor of EMPIRE) for his information. By the way, this has been written on my own initiative; no one at EMPIRE requested that it be written.'

*((Okay, glad it's all settled. By the way, DELAP'S SF & F REVIEW is now defunct, and has been for about a year, at least.))*

# LETTER FROM WAYNE N. KEYSER  
1111 Army-Navy Drive #A-710  
Arlington, VA, 22202  
February, 1981

'Walt Disney Productions has released 20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA and several other features, including classics of fantasy like MARY POPPINS and ho-hum features like THE APPLE DUMPLING GANG, along with several cartoon compilations, on videotape for home use. Long ignored by critics, Disney's traditionally spectacular print quality pays off in videotapes that are technically among the best I have seen. Interestingly, the tapes are prefaced by almost a full minute of legal warnings concerning copyrights and forbidding rentals of those cassettes designed for sale.

'One grating note is that the 127-minute length of 20,000 LEAGUES stretching just a bit too long for the standard length of a single cassette, has been compressed to 118 minutes by copying at a higher frame rate. Viewers will just have to get used to hearing Kirk Douglas's voice take on overtones of Donald Duck at times, but on reflection a modest compression is probably preferable to the excision of several minutes by editing.'

# LETTER FROM JAMES VAN HISE  
10885 Angola Road  
San Diego, CA 92126  
February, 1981

'In your feature, "Ten Years Ago In SF," Robert Sabella mentioned THE NAME OF THE GAME episode "L.A. 2017" as being significant because it was written by Philip Wylie. What makes it doubly significant is that it was directed by a young man named Steven Spielberg.

'The reference to ((Captain)) Kirk supposedly dying in Vonda McIntyre's upcoming Trek novel has garnered a lot of attention. What fringe-fans on the Trek experience don't realize is that in STAR TREK fan fiction the concept of a character dying is quite common as this allows the writers to explore the other characters more deeply by examining their reactions to the death of an old friend. So it may seem like a revolutionary idea to some people, but it's old hat in STAR TREK fan fiction. You may not realize that ST fan fiction is an entire sub-genre of its own now, with many people buying it who read little else, and believe me there is enough to keep them satisfied, and some of it is even surprisingly good. Many ST fans are, in fact, angry that much of the fan fiction is superior to almost every one of the professional ST novels from Bantam (and especially better than VULCAN! which, although written by a woman, has a leading character that's an insulting derogatory female stereotype. I know of one documented case where a letter sent to Bantam complaining about the poor quality of this book received a snotty reply.).'

*((How dare ST fans complain? Theirs is but to buy and read, not to bitterly complain about an ill-written screed! And how can Bantam and Roddenberry and Paramount make money if these upstart fans buy and sell their own ST fiction, instead of drinking from the official fount?))*

# LETTER FROM DWIGHT R. DECKER  
16 King Arthur Ct., #7  
Northlake, IL 60164  
15 February 1981

'In the mailbox with SFR was a letter from a German friend, and some of his comments may be of interest (translation mine):

'My son Robin (and every other kid in Germany) is becoming more and more of a science fiction fan. That is the fault of Captain Future. The unbelievable productive Japanese an-

imators have made a cartoon series out of Edmond Hamilton's hero and cohorts and every Saturday every German child from three on up is glued to the TV screen, watching it. My wife and I took our two children out sledding the other day and noticed that all the dozens of other children around us suddenly disappeared at virtually the same time. We were puzzled until we remembered it was Saturday and about time for Captain Future. Now Robin plays only space station and rocket, talks constantly about planets and space ships and is fascinated by 'Otto, the rubber man' (as he calls him). My wife was at first opposed to letting Robin, who after all is only a little more than three, watch the show, but then it turned out that he was the only kid in his nursery school who wasn't watching it. Anyway, TV certainly has an effect on children's fantasies: You can see it with Robin, who spends hours building space-ships out of his Lego blocks.

'Last Saturday evening, the theatrical version of BATTLESTAR: GALACTICA was shown on TV. My wife wasn't going to watch it ("What utter nonsense!"), but then got interested and sat with me in front of the tube until well after midnight. Bad as GALACTICA was, it seemed to entertain quite a few people who otherwise have no interest in SF, as I found out at the office the following Monday. Why the TV moguls don't just run the TV series itself instead of these patched-together theatrical jobs, I don't know.

'BAVARIA III, which I can now get with my new antenna, is currently broadcasting the 1934 13-part serial version of FLASH GORDON, with Buster Crabbe. What fun! The new version is supposed to be in the theaters here shortly. Meanwhile, the BUCK ROGERS movie is scheduled to be shown on TV in three weeks, in choice prime time on a Friday. So, as you can see, SF is gradually getting a foothold on German television.'

# LETTER FROM CHESTER TWAROG  
SOLAR SYSTEM EXPLORATION FUND  
1943 Paris St., Aurora, CO, 80010  
February, 1981

'On February 15th, 1981, I sent a \$500 check to NASA's General Services Fund from the Solar System Exploration Fund. That represented 100% of donations received.

'There are several pro-space groups but the SSFF is directly contributing to NASA. The SSEF's pur-

pose is to aid NASA in its increasing inflation-shrinking budget and to support it in spite of the probable planetary sciences cutbacks by the Reagan Administration.

'If you want to contribute to NASA, please make your donations to the Solar System Exploration Fund, C/O Chester Twarog, Chairman, SSEF, 1943 Paris Street, Aurora, CO 80010. Include a SASE for acknowledgment plus a short letter supporting NASA and why. Letters will be sent to President Reagan.

'A quarterly newsletter will go out to each donator. The success of NASA's planetary sciences, spacecraft and eventual space industrialization depends on your active support of a dynamic and progressive space program. Thanks for your support!'

# LETTER FROM DOUG HOYLMAN  
5480 Wisconsin Ave., #311  
Chevy Chase, MD, 20015  
17 February 1981

'In SFR #38, Darrell Schweitzer mentions the theory that Ronald Wilson Reagan is the Antichrist because there are six letters in each of his three names. Personally, I find it a bit difficult to imagine the Antichrist starring in "Bedtime for Bonzo", but I thought your readers might enjoy the following bit of intelligence: On Election Day, 1980, the winning number in the Maryland daily lottery was 666.'

# LETTER FROM DARRELL SCHWEITZER  
113 Deepdale Road  
Strafford, PA, 19087  
February 10, 1981

'Two curious typos in my small press mags column. The columnist for ETERNITY is Karl Pflock, not 'Mark'. The Warner Munn story in FANTASY TALES is from UNKNOWN (Oct. 1939). What is UNICORN?

'There is certainly enough material at hand to do a small press column next issue. The SF issue of TRIQUARTERLY is the major item. Let us see if I have time. I think so.'

*((Apologies for any and all typos. Late-night typing does things to the eyes and brain.))*

# SMALL PRESS NOTES

BY THE EDITOR

**EVENT HORIZON #2** Winter 1980-81,  
Edited by Garrett Oliver [\$1.50]  
500 Park Drive, #2  
Boston, MA 02215

Basically an outlet for not-quite-good-enough sf, fantasy fiction by amateur and neo-pro writers, with art and illustrations of roughly equal merit.

The logo is hoked-up to look like heiroglyphics and is at first and second glance impossible to read...a drawback, I'd say.

In this 54-page offset effort there is one story, "Salad Days" by Jeff Grimshaw, which is of high professional technique and fascinating content. It needs more story and explanation of the who-what-when-where-why of the out-of-body characters and their cassette-operated, robot? bodies. But any editor would encourage Jeff to work hard on his craft; if he isn't now he could easily be a selling pro.

**FANTASY NEWSLETTER #35** April, 1981  
POB 170A, [\$1.95]  
Rochester, NY 14601

This issue is highlighted by an interview/profile of Harlan Ellison. Harlan is compulsive listening/reading for me and most sf/fantasy/writing enthusiasts. Perhaps most valuable of all, he is an education.

**SCIENCE FICTION MONITOR #4** Feb. 1981  
Edited & Published by Eddie Abel  
521 East 14th Av., #18,  
Denver, CO 80203

This issue contains parts 4&5 of Eddie's serialized book, **PORNOGRAPHY: THE MENACE THAT NEVER WAS**. His writing continues as uninhibited, engrossing and enlightening as ever. This book is as much or more biography and streetwise philosophy as about porno.

SF MONITOR costs \$1. Get it.

**RIME OF STARDUST**  
**DANISH S.F. STORIES, VOL. FOUR**  
Edited by Jens-Chr.Kjaer [\$4.50]  
Ravnbanneret  
Torvegade 7,  
DK-7330 Brande,  
DENMARK

Flawed by imperfect translations to English and by strange uses of punctuation, and misspellings, this attempt to bring Danish sf to the English-speaking fan is admirable if unrealistic.



Especially unrealistic is the price asked for this 105-page small softcover book.

The volume contains three stories and one fable and three poems. Plus a cover drawing and seven interior b/w scratchboard illustrations by Ole E. Petterson, who graces SFR almost every issue.

The first story, "Notre Dame de Paris," is of basic professional calibre, dealing with secret undersea robots directed by acute, precise linkage with human brains thousands of miles away.

By Steen Knudsen, this story could be sold to ANALOG or ASIMOV'S if it was Americanized in spelling, punctuation and occasional phrasing.

The other stories are cliché amateur Dire Warnings about the evils of computers and technology. The fable is a pathetic wish that mankind would go away and leave the universe for Nice Creatures.

The poems by Erwin Neutzky-Wulff deal with Satan and a pessimistic view of Mankind.

**AMANITA BRANDY #1**  
Featuring weird fantasy poems.  
Weirdbook Press [\$1.50]  
POB 35, Amherst Branch,  
Buffalo, NY 14226

A mimeographed booklet of 32 pages. I found two poems I liked: "Author, Author!" by Brian Lumley, and "A Ballad of the Doe" by J.R. Christopher.

**OVERLOAD #4** Fall, 1980 issue.. \$2.50  
ppd. and autographed by Don Chin,  
the editor-publisher. 1951 Quaker  
St., Eureka, CA 95501.

It bills itself 'the adult fantasy/humor magazine.'

No. It's a juvenile comicszine whose most professional aspect is the four-color Fabian cover. The

50 interior offset pages are filled with amateur comic and adventure strips of sf/fantasy nature. Oh, there's an interesting interview with artist John Pound.

**DRAGONFIELDS #3** [\$5.00]  
Edited by Charles R. Saunders and  
Charles de Lint  
Triskell Press  
P.O. Box 9480  
Ottawa, Ontario, CANADA K1G 3V2

A quality package of art, editing and fiction featuring tales of fantasy. Some poetry, some non-fiction.

Darrell Schweitzer reviewed the fiction in his Small Press Reviews in SFR #38 and neglected to provide the address.

This is a special interest story magazine of first-rate offset softcover (large--7"x9-1/2") format. Many professional contributors. Worth the money if your interest lies in its arms.

**WOMAN OF THE ELMOUNDS** [\$4.00]  
By Paul Edwin Zimmer  
Triskell Press [as above]

A 63 page chapbook, offset, with illustrations (very good amateur work) by Barry Blair. Introduction by Evangeline Walton.

This story, of novelet length, deals nicely with the conflicts of humans and elves in ancient Ireland, and of an ordeal of divided loyalties and divided love. Zimmer writes well.

**SIX DRAWINGS FROM THE HARP OF THE GREY ROSE** By Donna Gordon [\$3.00]  
Triskell Press [as above]

Six postcard-size prints in a decorative folder. Ink renderings and damned good, too.

**HOW TO COLLECT UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**  
By H.R.D. \$4.95

**HOW TO BURY YOUR GOODS**  
By Eddie the Wire, \$4.00  
(with Alexis Gilliland cartoons)

**HOW TO FIND MISSING PERSONS**  
By Ronald George Eriksen 2 \$3.95

**HOW TO BUY LAND CHEAP**  
By Edward Preston \$4.95

**THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO LOCK PICKING**  
By Eddie the Wire \$7.95

**JOB OPPORTUNITIES IN THE BLACK MARKET** By Burgess Laughlin \$9.95

All from: Loompanics Unlimited,  
POB 264, Mason, MI 48854

The thrust of HOW TO COLLECT UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE begins with the assumption you are not eligible.

There are paper structures possible to build which as far as state records will be concerned, qualify you for a year or more of workless pay. There are risks.

**HOW TO BURY YOUR GOODS** is an excellent how-to manual. What to bury, what not to bury, what materials to use, how deep, where... It delivers. Five funny Gilliland cartoons.

**HOW TO FIND MISSING PERSONS** is valuable two ways: finding--and knowing how to avoid being found if you ever want to disappear.

**HOW TO BUY LAND CHEAP** is easy, just write letters to local govt. officials and buy or bid on lots and parcels going up for auction to pay taxes. Good buys in rural land exist and ways of finding them are pointed out in this booklet. Good technical detail in here.

**THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO LOCK PICKING** makes me uneasy, wary, insecure and paranoid. This book is illustrated and technical. A must for any young, would-be thief.

**JOB OPPORTUNITIES IN THE BLACK MARKET** provides info on various black market manufacture-distribution-retail businesses such as dope, gambling, moonshining, sex, smuggling...whatever is illegal and people want.

This book is valuable to the professional writer for its glossary and various organizational charts, its treatment of illegal businesses as businesses.

#### **SHAYOL #4**

Published by Arnold Fenner  
Edited by Patricia Cadigan  
Address: Flight Unlimited, Inc.,  
1100 Countyline Road, 8 #29, Kansas City, KS 66103.

Yeah, this slick sf/fantasy magazine is worth the \$3.00 cover price. From the superb Roger A Stine cover to the full-page inside bacover Fabian...from "The Change" by Ramsey Campbell to the excellent profile of Leo & Diane Dillon.

A collectors item. A Must-keep.

#### **EMPIRE SF #23**

Edited by Mary Kittredge  
Published by Kevin O'Donnell, Jr.  
and Copyrighted by Mark J. McGarry.  
Address: Box 967, New Haven, CT 06504.

A zine devoted to helping the beginning or would-be sf/fantasy writer find his way through the shoals of editors, publishers, agents---and bad writing---to the safe harbor of accomplished professionalism. Well, why not?

#### **RUNE #62**

Edited by John Bartelt  
POB 8253, Minneapolis, MN 55408  
\$1.00 per copy.

A new editorial staff have taken over RUNE...and runed it. The cover by Becker is repulsive, frankly.

The interior features show a lot of sprawl and vaguely juvenile humor, layout and choice of material.

Well, the zine is certainly lively now....

#### **FANTASY #8**

Edited by Kathy Hammel and Kipy Poyser.  
Address: Box 5157, Sherman Oaks, CA 91413. \$2.00 per copy.

All about fantasy art, including an article about the art of Clark Ashton Smith (painting and sculpture) with photos; an interview with Michael Whelan (curses!); a four-page display of Joe Pearson's drawings; advice to artists...and a lot of fantasy artists' illustrations scattered throughout.

The magazine is published by the Fantasy Artists Network, and the zine has improved considerably, though I feel they print too much bad amateur work.

#### **NYCTALOPS #16**

Edited and published by Harry O. Morris, Jr.

Single copy \$2.50 from Silver Scarab Press, 502 Elm Street, S.E., Albuquerque, NM 87102.

A very high quality offset production---a mix of eldritch horror fiction and articles/features/reviews. Very effective art/photography. Poetry to match the quality level.

#### **SHAVERTRON #8**

Edited and published by Richard Toronto, 309 Coghlan Street, Vallejo, CA 94590.

This zine, mimeographed with the help of an electronic stencil machine, is a disorganized paste-up of bits and pieces---newspaper stories, clips, editorials, letters, ads...

Toronto and his readers believe Richard Shaver was onto something with what is known as The Shaver Mystery---remnants of a master race living in caverns far below, able to affect human minds on the Earth's surface by means of ancient evil machines... Etc. One could say if you're an anal-retentive paranoiac this is right down your hole.

I had trouble even finding Toronto's name, and his single copy price and/or subscription rate are apparently a secret he doesn't share.

#### **FOUNDATION #21**

Edited by David Pringle  
Features Editor: Ian Watson  
Reviews Editor: John Clute  
Address: SF Foundation, North East London Polytechnic, Longbridge Road, Dagenham, RM8 2AS, UNITED KINGDOM.

Editorial correspondence only to: David Pringle, 21 The Village Street, Leeds, LS4 2PR, UNITED KINGDOM.

After all that address material, I'm pooped!

This is THE British sf discussion/review zine. Literate, keen-minded, and readable.

Dave Pringle's editorial, however, seems to cast a pall of possible demise over FOUNDATION, due to drastic budget cuts by the government. However, the staff of FOUNDATION have optimism and heady plans for the magazine, so perhaps there is hope.

Material this issue by Gregory Benford (his "A String of Days" which appeared in SFR #38), Christopher Priest, Naomi Mitchison, Robert A.W. Lowndes, Gene Wolfe, Brian Stableford, Michael Bishop... John Clute and Ian Watson, too. And others. A Heavy lineup.

Heavy price, too: three issues for \$12.00 by ship mail, \$17.00 by air. Of course it is a 110 page softcover book.

#### **BOONFARK #4 (formerly ENEMA FUN!)**

Edited and published 'from time to time' by Dan Steffan, 823 N. Wakefield St., Arlington, VA 22203. \$2.00 per copy.

What we have here is a good old fashioned faanzine...dedicated to fans, not sf or fantasy or any professional writer. This is good-buddy, friendship, in-group stuff, the classic stuff that lingers in the mind for generations---if you are one of the insiders, one of the annotated Trufans.

Anyone can join. But it often takes time to absorb the arcane knowledge and fanhistory and like that.

Alas, BOONFARK is not mimeographed! Not even done in purplish spirit duplication...or hektograph. It is \*horrors\* offset!

But it has interlineations, reprints from glory days of '50s and '60s fandom, columns, funny art and cartoons... an Atom cover! Even a Flinchburgh bacover!

Truth to tell, BOONFARK is just plain superior to any of the legendary faanzines of years gone by.

Whathell, get a copy. You may get hooked.

# OTHER VOICES

## WILD SEED

Octavia E. Butler  
Doubleday, \$10.00

## KILL THE DEAD

By Tanith Lee  
DAW Books, \$1.75

## THE BUG WARS

By Robert L. Asprin  
Dell, \$2.25

Reviewed by Gene DeWeese

Doro, 3,700 years old when WILD SEED opens in 1690, survives by trans-migrating from body to body, killing whoever possessed the bodies before. Anyanwu, 300 years old, does not age, is a healer, has the strength of a dozen men and is able to take the shape of anything or anyone whose flesh she has tasted. Doro, looking on humans as breeding stock, has for centuries been enslaving and experimentally crossbreeding thousands of "special" people in hopes of coming up with truly superior beings gifted with controllable telepathy, telekinesis, etc. Anyanwu, taken by Doro from her African homeland to one of his breeding colonies in colonial America, hates Doro for his insensitive cruelty, and he comes to hate her for successfully rebelling against him. Even so, he cannot bring himself to kill her, the only other immortal he has ever found. WILD SEED follows Doro and Anyanwu through 150 years and is not unlike a good family saga with two of the characters remaining young through several generations. As in THE ORPHAN, the characters are fully developed and largely sympathetic, even the seemingly villainous Doro. Unfortunately, WILD SEED is a prequel to three of Butler's earlier books, PATTERNMASTER, MIND OF MY MIND and SURVIVOR, and now that I've found out how good the series is, I'm going to have to go back and read them, too. Besides I want to find out what happens to Doro and Anyanwu over the next few thousand years.

\* \* \*

## KILL THE DEAD:

In a world just a bit different from a medieval earth, ghosts -- the deadalives -- are very real. If allowed to exist, they gain strength and solidity by feeding on the energies of the living and only a few people have the psychic power to resist and destroy them. One such is

Parl Dro, a Ghost-Killer searching the world for the legendary city of the deadalives, Gyste Mortua, created centuries ago when an entire town was destroyed in an earthquake.

The world of KILL THE DEAD, with its dark forests and mountains, is described so vividly you can almost feel it around you, and all the characters, including some of the deadalives, are so real you really care what happens to them and understand why they are the way they are, good or bad. There may be a bit too much explanation condensed in a single chunk near the end, but that's a very minor flaw in an otherwise excellent book.

\* \* \*

## THE BUG WARS:

BUG WARS chronicles the interstellar war of extermination between the Tzen Empire and the Insect Coalition a million or so years in the past. Both sides use the technology left behind by the long-vanished First Ones, but the Tzen, highly intelligent, stoically logical reptilians, are able to understand and improve that technology while the Insects are not. The story is seen through the eyes of a rising Tzen of the Warrior Caste and is told in a severely understated but extremely effective style that, for someone who, like myself doesn't normally enjoy straight adventure stories, makes the book not only readable but thoroughly enjoyable. Besides, it's the only book I know of that was inspired by a science fiction song, and a pretty good one at that -- Reminder, by Robert Coulson.

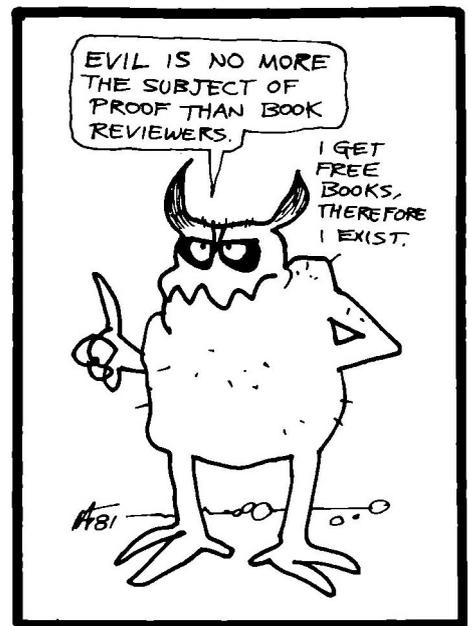
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## A TOLKIEN COMPASS

Edited by Jared Lobdell  
Ballantine, June, 1980, \$2.50

Reviewed by Michael Vernon MacKay

Criticism at its best enlightens and entertains. It makes the reader say, "Hey! I never saw it that way before!" It increases his understanding and appreciation of the work. At its worst, criticism merely bores. Often, it leaves the reader wondering whether he and the critic read the same book. This particular book, A TOLKIEN COMPASS is literary criticism at its best.



Virtually every type of literary criticism is represented: from textual criticism to psychological examination to archetypal probings. Even some writing by Tolkien himself is included (probably just to sell copies, since it seems inappropriate). Each essay is a fine example of its type. In "The Psychological Journey of Bilbo Baggins", for example, Dorothy Matthews sticks to basic psychological assumptions -- or human nature. Her essay remains modest -- she doesn't launch any tirades or polemics -- and is therefore successful and enlightening.

The key to this book is variety. What is new and original to me may be old hat to you; but there are so many different views in A TOLKIEN COMPASS that I doubt any one person could be familiar with them all.

Some essays are epic in scope; some intend only to illuminate a small corner of Tolkien's world. Not all are perfect. "'The Scouring of the Shire': Tolkien's View of Fascism" begins with a fallacious assumption and ends with an ill-thought-out introduction, but it is an exception. Others, like "The Interlace Structure of THE LORD OF THE RINGS" and "Narrative Pattern in THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING" certainly shed new light instead of cursing old darkness.

A TOLKIEN COMPASS is, easily, just that.

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THE CATALYST

By Charles L. Harness  
Pocket Books, \$1.95  
181 pp., 1980

Reviewed by John DiPrete

A wonder chemical called tiraline, a corporate tug-of-war, patent rights, biological jargon and various "transformations" form the basis of THE CATALYST. Charles L. Harness, the author and a patent lawyer, has written a 21st Century tale about a myriad of events, such as DNA pneumonia (a mutated virus killer), holographic computers which project images of dead people and a quasi-religious ballad/archetype/mythology entitled, Donnator's Song.

Throughout the book, Harness's talk-prone people wrestle with these and other future oddities. His characters are basically holographic creations; three-dimensional, but not quite substantial. The protagonist is a strong-willed, introspective chemist/lawyer, likeable -- but not overly endearing. Paul Blandford (the name fits -- he is rather bland) doesn't invite the reader's identification. Still, he suffices.

The "off-camera" cast is considerably more engaging: It includes Dr. John Serane, a jocular, daring genius -- the missing link to the mystery element in the novel; Dr. Mary Derringer, a mischievous and sensitive clone with a birth patch instead of a naval (and whose personality is individualistic, not clonish); Dr. Kussman, the villain, a stuffed-shirt who dislikes people because of his jealousy of them.

The book's scientific gobbledegook contains little real interest unless you happen to be a chemist and understand it. With such terms as "vapor tensions", "di-pole moments", "silica bases", "dehydration temperatures", etc. etc., certain passages resemble, gloomily, Chemistry lectures.

Suspense -- a plot's adrenaline so to speak -- has its ups and downs in CATALYST. Primarily, the novel's plot, about a legal race for trialine patent rights, lacks impetus and is, for that matter, barely fantastic or science fictional, although this changes later on.

There are several nice touches, authentic scenery brushstrokes in the form of "Euthanasia, Inc.", a manufacturer of suicide items; 3-D holographs that come alive and a gibbon-Kussman hybrid, among other things.

From page 80 on, the story's biology turns into story, and emotion enters. Pathos. Feeling. We are finally introduced, first-hand, to the dramatic wonderment of trialine.

The drug's weird twist-effects become unveiled as they unfold. It's startling and delightful. Harness writes well; the drama and tension build in the latter half of the book. Surprises appear.

Readers of "hard" SF, who like a dash of fantasy, might enjoy this -- but it's not for veterans or even the slightly jaded (unless you are a Chemistry Major or love this stuff). For the beginner or moderate SF reader, the book will entertain (whether or not you enjoy Chemistry). It's competently written.

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ALIENS!

Edited by Gardner R. Dozois and Jack Dann

Illustrations by Jack Gaughan  
Pocket, 305 pp., \$2.25  
Cover by Michael Whelan

Reviewed by Steven Edward McDonald

A collection of short stories and novelets on the alien theme; nice cover by Michael Whelan and good interior illos by Jack Gaughan (some of them reprinted directly from COSMOS).

This is a good, but vaguely un-inspired collection of stories by name and semi-name writers, all of them reprints. Dann and Dozois have apparently spent little enough time assembling this collection, taking fairly well-known stories rather than searching out and investigating less well-known stories. Damon Knight's readily-available "Rule Golden" gets a placing over a story rarely seen such as the infamous "The Great Pat Hoax"; Larry Niven's "Four Vignettes" appeared in 1977 and 1979 in COSMOS and DESTINIES, and since then in CONVERGENT SERIES -- "Handicap", which appeared in the sixties, might have been a better choice. "We Purchased People" has been appearing all over the place of late and since it appeared has turned up in numerous anthologies, not to mention THE BEST OF FREDERIK POHL.

Certainly, the stories are all good ones but they're far too familiar to most readers who would pick up this book -- a more adventurous selection (including many of the stories listed in the "Guide to Further Reading") would have been better.

However, if you haven't read Budrys' "Be Merry", Pangborn's "Angel's Egg", or "Rule Golden, it might be worth the time to check out this book.

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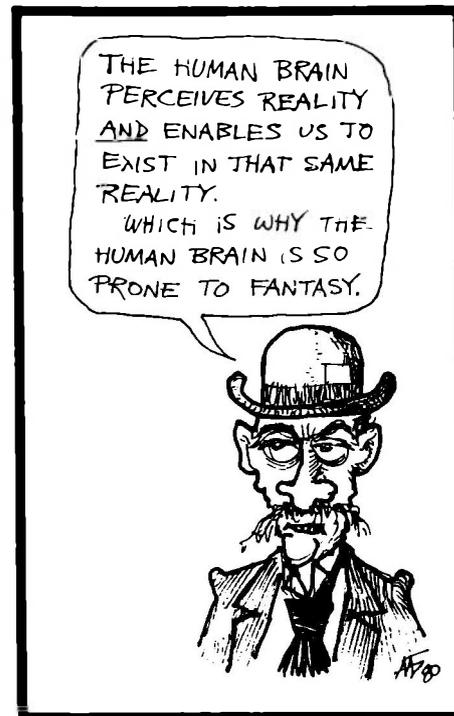
BLACK HOLES AND WARPED SPACETIME

By William J. Kaufmann III  
Bantam, 224pp. + 16 pp. color photos  
\$3.50

Reviewed by Steven Edward McDonald

Science fact pertaining to black holes and space time and various facets of cosmology in between. Kaufmann, as a party guest, is likely to be found lighting jumping jacks in corners: his writing is full of zest and zip, with a penchant for taking apparent tangents that lead up to something even bigger and wilder than the last huge and wild thing he outlined. In short, this book is a clear, entertaining discussion of cosmology, relativity, spacetime and the black hole concept (taking in quasars, pulsars, neutron stars, bursters, the birth and death of the universe and a bunch of physics along the way), all in layman language -- Kaufmann has a knack of making something complex understandable without also making it dry and uninteresting (a point on which I find Asimov often fails, despite his famous intros). This is a fascinating little book which gives spectacular information on a lot more than black holes; if you like science, check it out; if you write SF, or want to, check it out. This is highly recommended (as are many of Bantam's science fact books -- A HOUSE IN SPACE, THE HIGH FRONTIER, Luman's THE MYSTERIOUS SIGNALS FROM OUTER SPACE (aka MAN AND THE STARS, which is amazingly helpful for space fiction writers, Ferris' THE RED LIMIT, and Weinberg's THE FIRST THREE MINUTES.) It also has the advantage of a lovely cover.

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## THE VISITORS

By Clifford D. Simak  
Ballantine/Del Rey  
Selection of SFBC, June, 1980  
250 pp., \$2.49

Reviewed by Sue Beckman

Thousands of "biologic" black boxes arrive from outer space and begin settling down all over North America. These 200-foot-long visitors commence to eat hectares of timber, a few houses (unoccupied, of course, because the beasties are nice) and a smattering of used cars. Along comes Jerry Conklin, a forestry student on a fishing vacation in Lone Pine, Minnesota. He is chosen, presumably because he shares the aliens' affinity for trees, to be "swallowed" and briefly psychoanalyzed by the big mama of the black boxes. This contact gives Jerry a rapport with the aliens and he alone is able to divine their ultimate intentions. These intentions constitute the story's surprise ending, but this morsel of mystery is poor reason to plod through the rest of the book.

Consider this: The visitors consume millions of board-feet of potential and actual lumber, destroy scads of private property, disrupt commerce in numerous ways, proliferate like weeds and are invulnerable to attack. And does anyone get very upset? Naw. Kathy, a newspaperwoman and Jerry's girlfriend, thinks they're "cute" (p. 102), and most people adopt a wait-and-see attitude. One newspaper calls the whole event "a cosmic picnic" (p. 133). The bigwigs in Washington pussyfoot around, endlessly formulating a "national stance". The authorities, as is usual in Simak stories, ain't got no horse sense. When they finally start talking about "pest control", it is revealed that the visitors have come bearing gifts, and the gifts are just what the natives have always wanted. It ends with the president contemplating "-- a new kind of world and a new way to live in it". The visitors have launched the classless society and the whole world is going to have to learn to like it.

Midway through the book comes this remark: "The Earth had been invaded by creatures out of space and none of the things had happened that science fiction writers, through long years of scribbling, had foreseen as happening" (p. 133). This may have been true 30 or 40 years ago but the idea of alien benefactors was certainly not originated with this story.

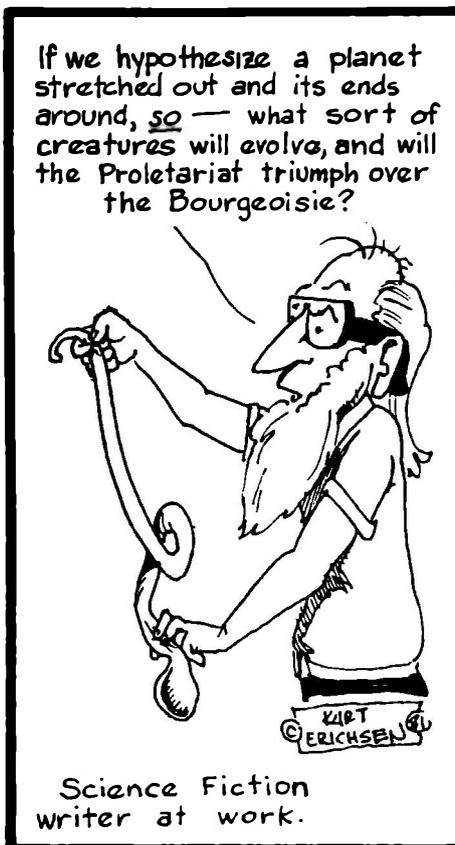
A sub-theme of THE VISITORS is White Man Invades Indian Land. However, the parallels of the Europeans' wide-awake imperialism with the vis-

itors' naive beneficence are dubious and the theme is not well developed.

Much of THE VISITORS concerns the activities of the journalist working for the Minneapolis Tribune. These reporters might just as well have been working for the Daily Planet; Jerry, Kathy and her boss would have been at home in an old Superman episode. Simak spent his life in the newspaper business but he has managed, nevertheless, to make cartoon characters out of the kind of people he should know best. The portrayal of the president and his advisors as a bunch of deceitful knuckleheads is more credible.

First published as a serial in ANALOG (Oct., Nov., Dec., 1979), THE VISITORS might have made an entertaining short story, but inflated to novel-length, it is boring and stale. Simak can do much better than this.

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## SCHRODINGER'S CAT: THE UNIVERSE NEXT DOOR

By Robert Anton Wilson  
Pocket Books, 256 pp., \$2.50

Reviewed by Neal Wilgus

Robert Anton Wilson took two giant steps forward with ILLUMINATUS! (1975) and COSMIC TRIGGER (1977) but, alas, SCHRODINGER'S CAT is a half-step back. CAT uses many of

the same characters and techniques found in ILLUMINATUS! and many of the ideas found in the non-fiction TRIGGER, but somehow it just doesn't jell.

Wilson is a master of satire and caricature and there are many funny and insightful passages scattered throughout CAT. The problem is it doesn't go anywhere. There's little in the way of a plot and almost any scene could be deleted without the reader even noticing. Significantly, half-way through Wilson kills off the whole human race and starts afresh in that universe next door and it's as if nothing had happened.

Always a "message" writer, Wilson's main point seems to be that we can opt for a better future by making positive and optimistic decision because two alternate universes are created at each decision point -- which is the jist of the Schrodinger's Cat parable. Unfortunately, Wilson often strays into negativism himself with anti-environmentalist tirades that only reflect his own prejudices. Together with an ironic style that is too close to Vonnegut for comfort, such ranting and raving only detracts from the book's already dubious value.

Wilson is definitely worth reading and has the potential of becoming a major writer. It's unfortunate that he's wasting time repeating himself when he should be getting on to something new.

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## THE HOUSE THAT STOOD STILL

By A.E. van Vogt  
Pocket Books, #83158-5, 1980, \$2.25

Reviewed by Tom Staicar

First published in 1950, and unavailable since a Paperback Library edition in the 1960s, THE HOUSE THAT STOOD STILL is a combination mystery/suspense and science fiction thriller. Most of the background material is surprisingly modern, with a California cult and a sexually aggressive young woman getting the protagonist into tense situations. The woman, Mistra Lanett, is an immortal who is introduced to the reader only after being stripped to the waist and whipped by cult members. Allison Stephens tries to get the cult arrested but fails when Mistra defends them and refuses to press charges. She then seduces Stephens and drugs him, finally offering him immortality. She returns to his bed several more times during the novel, pleading her side of the complicated story which ensues.

The book began with a man being aware that he was helplessly watching

others conduct his funeral, close a coffin with him inside and lower him into a fresh grave. He isn't dead of course, as in typical van Vogt fashion, he wakes up in a hospital bed later on. Two murders follow, a house confers immortality upon those who dwell in it, and the evidence of a space alien visit over 1,000 years ago is uncovered.

If you had any doubts that this was a pulp tradition van Vogt SF puzzle up to that point, consider the following question posed on page 116: "Mr. Tannahill, have you any idea why a man would want to pretend to die, give up a huge inheritance tax and then move back into the estate pretending to be his nephew?"

This is good fun and a lot more intriguing than most of the sophisticated novels written recently.

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#### ANTINOMY

By Spider Robinson  
Dell Books, 1980, 312 pp., \$2.25

Reviewed by Andrew Andrews

Obviously the noted fantasist, Theodore Sturgeon, has influenced the writings of Spider Robinson, whose first collection contains stories wrought of a deft imagination comparable to Sturgeon's own.

But Spider does his readers good in this, his first collection of short stories containing his "life-work to date", as he welcomes readers to his "Antinomy Mine", a collection of stuff published in ANALOG, GALAXY, COSMOS, etc.

The whole collection is a largely diversified magazine of material from all sides of his creative life, and includes puns, songs, interleafs, cartoons, illustrations -- not to mention introductions and, would you believe, a weapons list.

In the title story, "antinomy" is defined as a "contradiction between two propositions which seem equally urgent and necessary". Virginia Harding wakes up from cryogenic sleep (where she existed, frozen, until a cure was found for her leukemia) and cannot remember anything up to six months prior to her being "frozen". The real crux is when she discovers that, in the course of those six months, she was in love and now another lover comes into her life and she must decide ....

There are some real treats here, including "Satan's Children", about the unleashed new wonder drug, "The Whole Truth" (TWT). It renders everybody unable to tell a lie or to be dishonest in any way. The story is about the two people selected by

the drug's assassinated creator who is fleeing from the narcotics agents and dealers who seek him and the drug at any cost. However, the two receive the drug and they decide they must "test" it first, by distributing it randomly to unsuspected test subjects around the world ....

From Spider's grim, earlier days, comes "Nobody Likes to be Lonely", a poignant, Ellison-type conscience story of horror and helplessness.

"No Renewal", a story of olden times and bitterness toward a changing world of cruel modernism, is about an old man who is losing his identity, and his last-minute attempts to remember it all.

"Overdose" is an alien-invasion story, the type of story built around an unsung albeit "high" hero who



saves us all. (This story reminds me of Keith Laumer's "Test to Destruction" in Harlan Ellison's first DANGEROUS VISIONS.)

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#### GENESIS REVISITED

By Glenn G. Strickland  
Dial, 1979, 183 pp., \$8.95  
ISBN: 0-8037-2828-X

Reviewed by Ronald R. Lambert

GENESIS REVISITED deserves to be read by anyone interested in the evolutionary origin of intelligent life on Earth and in the possibilities for the evolution of intelligent life on other planets. Writers of SF should especially consider the explanations of this book for how and under what conditions intelligence can evolve.

Although Strickland is an "outsider" to "establishment" anthropology and appears a little overly defensive about that fact in his introduction, he has nonetheless put together a hypothesis of considerably persuasive weight. There are surprises, too.

He holds that most of early human evolution took place in the dried-up Mediterranean Sea basin, during the period when the Strait of Gibraltar was dammed, in verdant oases located on the otherwise desert-like slopes of the basin. Here it was that the forerunners of man were compelled to leave the trees, learned to walk erect, lost most of their body hair and acquired a profusion of sweat glands to enable them to survive the dry, hot climate (even today, the sauna baths we enjoy would kill any of our simian relatives; our adaptation to dry heat is unique). Our forerunners got down in those basin oases because they were driven by population pressures to follow the rivers down into the basin. Before too long, the rivers eroded their beds to the point where they were difficult to follow back out from the basin again, and surrounding the basin were vast deserts.

Perhaps even more surprising is Strickland's claim that the second phase of human evolution -- specifically the evolution of high intelligence -- took place while our direct ancestors were marooned on Mediterranean islands after the sea reflooded. It was in these small, closed environments that evolution really accelerated, for the pre-sapient had to compete among themselves. As Strickland puts it: "Intelligence does not appear in a species by combat against the forces of nature or other animals ... Intelligence evolves by combat against entities with slowly increasing intelligence of their own -- in short, by intraspecies combat". The limited size of the population imposed by geography made it possible for new, advantageous genes to spread rapidly throughout the population.

Strickland's hypothesis explains many puzzles of anthropology, such as: why human evolution from Proconsul to modern man broke all previous speed records; why humans evolved into precisely the form they have today; why so many fossil "links" in human evolution are missing (they are underwater in the Mediterranean, or undiscovered in Mediterranean islands); why australopithecus appeared all of a sudden in Africa with no fossil evidence of intermediary ancestors; why similarly there were successive waves of homo habilis, neanderthal, Cro-Magnon and modern man which burst upon the world -- again without any evident intermed-

iaries. If Strickland is right, fossil remains of some of these intermediary species might be found if we look on the right Mediterranean island(s) -- provided that it (they) have not since sunk through volcanic action.

Perhaps disquieting is the implication that the evolution of human intelligence was an incredibly chancy thing. As Strickland declares: "Our own intelligence evolved as a result of rather rare geographical accidents plus the coincidence of an animal species at the sites both smart enough and dumb enough to profit by those geological accidents".

If this is true, then the likelihood that some other species on some other planet has had similar luck may not be very great. Strickland speculates that there may be no more than a dozen sapient species in our entire galaxy. If so, then they may be scattered too far apart ever to meet. There may be millions of worlds out there populated by animals, but we may never encounter any true sapients other than ourselves. As Strickland admits, it is a lonely thought.

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**WAY STATION**

By Clifford D. Simak  
Del Rey, \$1.95  
1980 (reissue of 1963 work), 236 pp.

Reviewed by John DiPrete

Clifford D. Simak, a top-notch writer, journalist and winner of the Hugo and International Fantasy Award, has written hundreds of short stories, a fair share of novelettes and over a dozen paperback books (CITY, COSMIC ENGINEERS, THEY WALKED LIKE MEN, etc.). His most popular book (with the exception of CITY) won the Hugo Award for 1964, and is considered a top-rung sample of the genre's finest.

WAY STATION combines the usual Simak elements -- human drama, poetry, alien wonder -- and blends them into a highly thought-provoking mixture. The novel centers around Enoch Wallace, an Earthling, who -- as Keeper of Earth's Way Station -- meets all sorts of weird and wonderful visitors. Enoch resides in a

small Wisconsin town, where old-fashioned yokels pass the time with farm chores and gossip -- mostly gossip. Not surprisingly, Enoch's Dark Secret makes him a fitting target for a tidal wave of rustic prattle -- and eventually results in his Public Discovery.

The events which follow suddenly explode into bedlam -- made worse by run-amuck aliens, eerie lurkers and a monster or two. Enoch's world threatens to disintegrate and the reader's pulse is gripped by the feeling of encroaching Doom -- until -- The Final Resolution.

As a tour de force, WAY STATION penetrates the heart and soul of human relationships, the compassion underlying acts of courage and the nature of loneliness.

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**HAN SOLO'S REVENGE**

By Brian Daley  
Published by Ballantine Books of  
Canada, 5390 Ambler Drive, Mississauga, Ontario, L4W 1Y7  
1980, 198 pp., \$2.75

Reviewed by W. Ritchie Benedict

Brian Daley wrote an earlier book, HAN SOLO AT STAR'S END that was largely overlooked by STAR WARS fans.

However, it would be a great error to overlook this book, Heavy science fiction it is not, but vastly entertaining it is. Mr. Daley has taken two of the lesser characters from STAR WARS -- Han Solo and the Wookiee, Chewbacca, and has fleshed them out further. In addition, there are new ones such as the computer Blue Max and his partner droid Bollux, as well as new humans and non-humans, such as the girl Fiolla and the slave trader Zlarb.

In this sequel (there are references to the first book which tie in nicely), Solo accidentally gets involved with slave traders while on a ferrying job, so he must find out who is behind them in order to recover the 10,000 credit fee he has been promised. The girl Fiolla is an enigma -- is she with the slavers or is she an undercover agent? In either case, she spells trouble for Solo.

This book gives indication of promising things to come, in terms of a series. The plot basically is pulp SF, but it is executed with skill. There is non-stop action all the way, and STAR WARS fans should be delighted with it.

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**DRINKING SAPPHIRE WINE**

By Tanith Lee  
DAW, 1977 (Reprint, 1980), \$1.75

Reviewed by Pat Mathews

Tanith Lee's imagination explodes like a fireworks factory in her two books DON'T BITE THE SUN and DRINKING SAPPHIRE WINE, for a joyous reading experience. For those readers who have read DON'T BITE THE SUN, it's enough to say that the publisher's blurb on DRINKING SAPPHIRE WINE is absolutely accurate. The heroine of this pair of stories has finally managed to outrage the system, in a way that makes you want to stand up and cheer.

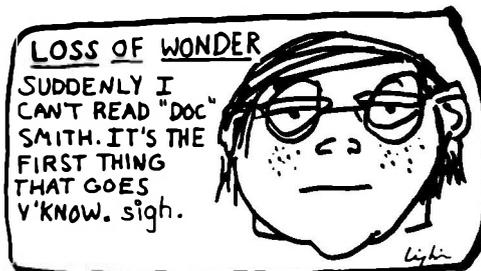
For those who haven't, there are three domed cities with a technology advanced enough to keep the human population bathed in luxury and to sustain a complicated, sophisticated and possibly decadent civilization, ruled by paternalistic, kindly robots and androids. The rest of the planet is desert, inhabited by strange but loveable creatures; nobody looks beyond.

The heroine of the stories, nameless in Tanith Lee's irritating fashion, is a member of the Jang - Gilded Youth, a phase which lasts half a century in this culture. Like her counterparts in other civilizations, she and her circle frequent entertainment centers, seek thrills and try to annoy the robots and the adults, shop, eat, drink, party, gush in exotic slang, indulge in an endless round of romantic permutations and an endless round of idle gossip and in general, amuse themselves.

They drink, take pills, smoke exotic substances, steal, sabotage the domes or the city machinery and obtain new bodies with a spectacular suicide or two. The Jang change bodies as often as they do clothes, and change their sex whenever they feel like it; alien, non-human or mutant bodies can be had on request, though one girl's request for a purring mechanism was considered a bit much.

The only thing the city does not supply is depth, meaning, value or anything beyond the endless round of Jang amusements. In DON'T BITE THE SUN the heroine has applied for adult status (and has been refused), has tried to work, to have a child and to go on an archaeological dig as a volunteer without success and with tragic results at least twice.

Now, in DRINKING SAPPHIRE WINE, she has discovered history and poetry, and in a male body for now, has set up as a poet. Unfortunately, she has also discovered the duel and in a city that lives for fads, it's inevitable that someone should challenge her to one. She accidentally kills him and finds herself on trial,



for the city's robot government knows of only two ways to handle offenders: minor restrictions for common rule-breakers, a choice of personality obliteration or permanent exile for those rare few who have gone berserk. And she is now considered to be one.

Much to the chagrin of the robots, exile suits her perfectly -- and in a fad-happy city, she becomes, to her disgust, a cult leader.

This book is hilarious, whether we are watching five gushing, overdressed, doped-to-the-ears Jang descend on our heroine offering to share her exile, or the perils of having love with a friend who has too many cats, or an acquaintance who turns up at the duel looking and acting like Conan, the Conqueror, and then, via body change, comes to the trial as the most fragile flower of fair womanhood ever cloned. (Our heroine's comment: "I wish to interrupt this trial to say that if she doesn't cut it out I am going to puke".)

The resolution is extremely satisfying, and even plausible. For \$1.75 you couldn't do better.

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#### THE JULES VERNE COMPANION

By Peter Haining  
Baronet, pb, \$6.95

Reviewed by Tom Staicar

This is an 8 1/2 by 11 inch illustrated paperback which brings together pieces about Jules Verne drawn from disparate origins. Articles from newspapers and magazines of various dates are included, written by such people as H.G. Wells, William Golding and George Orwell, and illustrations from movie stills, comic book covers and engraved illustrations from Verne novels are scattered through the book.

"Scattered" is the right word, as there is no cohesive framework underlying the surface of THE JULES VERNE COMPANION. It is a book for browsing and relaxing, which could never be considered scholarly or logically ordered in its presentation of information. It has the appearance of a random scrapbook with early and recent articles mentioning Verne, a photo from a first edition book jacket followed by a photo of Vincent Price in MASTER OF THE WORLD, a film of the 1960s.

The funniest article is "My Spirit-Telephone Conversation with Jules Verne" by Erich von Daniken, in which the author lays to rest any dream of scientific credibility he cherished up to now.

Oddly enough, I like this book. There are times when it is nice to

have a simply-presented piece of recreational browsing material like this. The drawings of wild types of submarines, flying machines and floating cities on barges are enjoyable, and some of the articles supply interesting facts about Jules Verne and his life. I wish the publication information were provided for the writing and illustrations in all cases instead of about one-fourth of them, but Haining obviously was not interested in the R. Reginald or Neil Barron type of reader.

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#### THE DEMETER FLOWER

By Rochelle Singer  
St. Martin's Press, 1980  
224 pp., \$9.95  
ISBN -0-312-19194-4

Reviewed by Paulette Minare'

This promising first novel by Rochelle Singer is about Demeter, a secret female society of all races, who have survived the Twentieth Century collapse caused by nuclear leaks, famines, plagues and water shortages, because of government reluctance to convert to solar and/or wind power. These women learned to live for 40 years without the men who had dominated women by superior strength which they termed "superiority".

In their isolated community they, except for the Elders (older women), know nothing of the outside world. The Elders had earlier found the secret of parthenogenesis. Without men, they produce only girl-babies, at will. All women of the community work and eat together, although each has a specialty. For example, Morgan is the historian; Freedom operates a small cafe, The Little Flower; Firstborn is an agriculturist; Athena and Angel dispense health care; Caliope is power-generator supervisor.

It puzzles me how a handful of women could survive this pervasive collapse without preplanning and recruiting selected specialists.

A man named Bennett with his wife Donna, who was bought from impoverished parents, arrive unexpectedly in Demeter, causing immense curiosity, as only the Elders have seen a man. They are held in Demeter because they would likely reveal its secret location. Bennett feels at first that he is master of this situation -- they are only women, but he finds he is very mistaken.

An interesting dialogue (p. 70):

"Athena smiled at my wit, which I thought was very kind, and said to Redwood gently, "She (Freedom) may



be attracted to him (Bennett), you know."

"That's disgusting."

"It is possible," Diana said.

"How?" Redwood (Freedom's mother was incensed. "I used a perfectly normal flower. And there's certainly nothing wrong with me!"

Some of the younger women, led by Luna, agitate to start a new expansion of Demeter. Scouts go out ahead, disguised as "extra sons" to find a site. They find the world still in chaos -- bridges and highways unrepaired, ruined cities, fields grown up to weeds and some ruined cities governed by "yellow-robots" or priests, landholders, who rule by extreme fear. Runaways are caught and severely punished. Starvation-thievery is punishable by death. Fear is the rule everywhere -- there is no protection from thieves and murderers for travelers, who must travel by primitive means. They have many adventures and dangers in their quest.

Change is inevitable. The young daughters are interested in that "other world". How will Demeter cope with the encroaching "alien" danger? I was disappointed that the book did not answer this question.

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#### ENGINE SUMMER

By John Crowley  
Bantam 13199-0; c. 1979, 209 pp.  
Hardcover edn by Doubleday, Bantam  
edn, March 1980, \$1.95

Reviewed by Steve Lewis

Crowley has and here he demonstrates, a superbly fine sense of language. In no way is this a book for those who dote on STAR WARS space opera only. In no way is this a book that grabs you with the first line or the first paragraph and refuses to let go.

That is, not in the sense that that favorite cliché of hack reviewers usually implies. There is a

plot, a slow, serpentine one that twists back around upon itself until suddenly, with perhaps the second reading of the final chapter, all is at last made crystal clear.

With sparkling and glittering revelations of exultant triumph, one might say, if one were so inclined. I won't. It would be a lie, an exaggeration. The revelations, the triumphs are both inner ones. The future is still murky and uncertain.

Rush That Speaks (that's his name) lives in a post-holocaust world in a honeycombed warren called Little Belaire. He has grown up there -- he tells the story as of age 17 -- has learned the art of truthful speaking and has already ventured into the outside world with the ambitious intent of becoming a saint.

It is doubtful that he knows it, but by the time that his story has concluded, that is what he has become. Telling more is impossible without a mere repeating of the story and I can't improve upon it. Nor in fact is all the story explained or explainable and if you'll allow me a purely personal reaction, I admire Crowley all the more for it.

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SPACE WARS -- WORLDS & WEAPONS  
By Steven Eisler  
Crescent Books, 1979, 96 pp.  
Reviewed by Nicholas Santelli

SPACE WARS is one of several large format (9 1/4 x 12 1/2) SF volumes to appear in the past couple of years. It contains 95 color prints and eight schematic drawings depicting various aliens, space ships and weapons. Printed in Hong Kong on medium weight, glossy stock (NOT acid free), the quality of the prints vary from grainy but passable, to excellent. They range in size from one-eighth page to full two-page spreads. Examples of the work of most of the popular artists in the SF field, such as Vallejo and DiFate are included.

The text of SPACE WARS (which unfortunately takes over 40% of the book) is a rambling, often inane commentary on the development of contemporary science fiction. In contrast, the paragraph-long caption which accompanies each print, attempts to bestow an aura of reality and continuity to the pictures. These captions build a "future-history", complete with intragalactic wars, federations and empires. This schizophrenic approach is distracting. Another minus factor is the laughable lengths the caption writer goes to in order to force some of the prints to conform to his "fu-

ture-history". In one case a skeleton, clad in the remnants of a space suit, is referred to as a disabled robot. In another, a "beam" weapon's rate of fire is given as 400 "pellets" per second.

Since SPACE WARS has been out over a year, it is beginning to show up on some bookstore's bargain tables for less than \$6. Sometimes for considerably less. Any prospective buyer should forget about the text and the captions. Flip through the book and decide for yourself if the prints alone are worth the price.

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DUNCTON WOOD  
By William Horwood  
McGraw-Hill Company, 1980, \$12.95  
ISBN 0-07-030434-3

Reviewed by Dorn Vicha

DUNCTON WOOD offers a strong narrative focus on the life and times of two Duncton moles, Bracken and Rebecca, whose love affair, were it simply summarized, would read like something out of Savage Romance. This comparison has more to do with scenes of incest and infanticide and the sex drives of moles than with a weak treatment of females, however, because Rebecca is a very courageous and powerful heroine. She is the daughter of Mandrake, a large, malevolent mole who quickly and violently assumes power over the moles of Duncton Wood. Bracken, on the other hand, is the runt of a litter of tough moles and learns how to avoid the fights that are inevitable among molekind for securing mates and burrows that are not worm-scarce. Rebecca and Bracken face their separate and often desperate trials of mind and spirit in the foreground of a story filled with harrowing journeys, inspired acts of bravery, horrifying acts of treachery and a whole burrowful of memorable and original characters.

The first half of DUNCTON WOOD involves the progressive decay of the Duncton mole society under the influence of the enigmatic Mandrake which is later revealed as a mere reflection of the decay of other mole systems that were, in times long past, unified by six great stones which mark off their territories. The stones also serve as monuments under which moles congregate to celebrate rites of passage and to give thanks to the earth and sky whose marriage is symbolized in the stone. In the second half of DUNCTON WOOD, it becomes clear that the stone marking the Duncton system is the long-sought-after Seventh Stillstone whose power may be able to reunite all of the mole systems.

Throughout the book, Bracken and Rebecca grow and their relationship becomes more and more complex, tightly bound to the fate of all moles, not just the ones of Duncton Wood. The story never falls into a predictable course and at times moves so quickly as to leave you breathless and unable to turn the pages fast enough. The revelations that never seem to end are brilliant and startling; and whether dealing with tragedy or joy, the story never sentimentalizes its themes or its characters. DUNCTON WOOD touches base with such a wide variety of emotions, you will hesitate a long time before putting this book down -- even when the last page is turned.

A grand story written by a master of molethology, DUNCTON WOOD is also a very handsomely produced book. Although there are no maps which are usually a part and parcel of this subgenre, there is just the one illustration on the part-title pages: a snoozing mole rendered by E. Lawrence Palmer, but the overall design is delightful and easy to read. The quality of the book's construction reflects well on the publisher's pride in making it available: a book that physically as well as spiritually can bear repeated readings. In other words, DUNCTON WOOD is a book (and a joy) all too rare.

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ENGLAND INVADED

Edited by Michael Moorcock  
Star Books, U.K.; 1980

Reviewed by Andrew Tidmarsh

I bought this book for its title expecting to read how Englishmen at the turn of the century thought they might react to the invasion of their nation. However, from the -- brief -- introduction I learned that the book was the second of a series intended to "show the development of the scientific romance from the mesianic warning pamphlet, though commercialisation into a popular genre and, ultimately, to a sophisticated moral fiction" (exemplified in this volume by Saki's "When William Came"). (The first volume, BEFORE ARMAGEDDON, does contain several stories about the invasion.) Therefore, I was not too disappointed that the title was justified by one of the six pieces.

This piece, by Saki is the longest in the book and to me the most interesting. It was first published in 1913 but concerns what happens in England after its (off-stage) conquest by Imperial Germany. The King of England flees to India; at least half of the upper -- ruling -- class migrates to the colonies; the British Empire loses its head. What is shown to be at stake is the survival of the "season", the round of events by which -- at which -- "society" is entertained. The behaviour of the mass of the people, the Germanisation of the country, the import on trade and industry are ignored. The story is more amusing than instructive ... if one finds funny such a sentence as: "Cicely was not one of those ill-regulated people who treat the first meal of the day as a convenient occasion for serving up any differences or contentions that have been left over from the day before or overlooked in the press of other matters". I do.

Saki's vision is incomplete (and implausible) because he writes from above rather than within, he does not convince that he understands how the nation works. (Perhaps this is an unfair criticism. The social class of writers has changed since 1900. Is it any wonder that the nature of fiction has changed? If I compare "When William Came" with "Fugue for a Darkening Island" -- and prefer the latter -- I am not comparing like with like. Priest may seem wiser than Saki only because he knows and shows more.)

The book contains another four -- short-- stories, which are similarly narrow. Their characters act before they think; motives are stated but not explained; backgrounds are not described. The prose is so broad that I couldn't keep a straight face. The names -- Prof. Blyde Mud-

dersnook, Tristram Crutchley, Fred C. Smale -- suggest the possibility of parody. An outdated essay fills six pages.

Moorcock is doing what he set out to do. But the book also demonstrates that it was not always the case that science fiction -- "the scientific romance" -- was as well-written as any other fiction. This is an "English" book which Americans might find difficult -- and boring -- to read.

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THE SPACE MAVERICKS

By Michael Krings  
Leisure Books, \$1.75

Reviewed by Pat Mathews

Some of the Albuquerque Science Fiction Society have set themselves to bring back the good old Golden-Age-of-SF-is-13 adventure novel, the Planet Stories story. Mike Krings has done a competent job of it in THE SPACE MAVERICKS.

Two spacegoing cargo haulers -- interstellar truckers -- on shore leave rescue a damsel in distress from a thoroughly nasty and well-realized inner city gang, and suddenly the entire police forces of the galaxy are after them. Since Krings has established very early on that the central government and its colonial arms are corrupt, brutal and not too bright, this is reasonably plausible if you assume that she holds the key to some sort of secret the government wants badly. She does.

There are alien worlds with alien and deadly customs, a lost city, a few monsters and the requisite chases and fights. Although the Damsel in Distress is very young and Somebody's Daughter, according to the convention of these stories, she is presented as reasonably bright and reasonably human; although the author remarks, with some irritation, at the childish behavior she exhibits at one point (described in terms more applicable to a two-year-old), he seems to be dimly aware that a teen-aged civilian under stress of that sort might very logically break down and act like a baby once or twice. The prose is not purple, the plots have some plausibility and the two leading characters have no desire to imitate Raymond Chandler, nor does the author.

Give it a C for execution and a C-plus for trying.

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THE BARBIE MURDERS AND OTHER STORIES

By John Varley  
Berkley, 1980, 260 pp.

Reviewed by Andrew M. Andrews

Varley delighted readers with stories from his "Eight Worlds" in his collection, THE PERSISTENCE OF VISION, and does so again, but with more emotional impact in THE BARBIE MURDERS AND OTHER STORIES.

Humans were forced to migrate to the habitable "eight worlds" when they were driven from Earth by aliens during the Invasion. Varley postulates a future where people undergo sex-change operations and have new bodies genetically engineered about as often as we go to the dentist. However, Varley has a unique way of showing the heartfelt thoughts and emotions of people trying to adapt to a new sex, to brain transferrals, to organ replacements, or to computer interfacing. How people grow stronger as a result of giving unrestricted "free birth" and how they emotionally adjust to being both a father and a mother is explored.

There are nine stories in all.

In the title story, "The Barbie Murders", Lieutenant Anna-Louise Bach is Municipal Police Chief of New Dresden. She investigates the death of several Barbies -- sexless, identitiless clones that form the "standardist" cult, who look like your typical Twentieth-Century dolls. The first story, "Bagatelle", features a cyborg, claiming he is a nuclear bomb, who threatens to blow up on the Lestrasse, New Dresden, Luna colony on his birthday, in protest to a machine-run society. "The Funhouse Effect" is a romantic space adventure inside a comet converted into a spacecraft that meets near-disaster . . . until Quester awakens. In "Equinoctial", the Church of Cosmic Engineering sends out 'engineers' -- future 'hippies' who want to paint Saturn's Ring Beta red. However, the Consers fight a repainting war against the Engineers. In "Manikins" a 'man-hater woman' charged with murdering a man is locked up as a schizophrenic in a mental institution and examined by a student. The student finds out some very fascinating things about the parasites called men.

Varley's most consciousness-raising story about sex-change to date is "Beatnik Bayou", about a Missis-



issippi Bayou on the moon, in a very large moon colony, where "the mud is just plain old mississippi mud, suitable for beating your feet", and about the amusing, involved characters that live there.

In "Good-bye, Robinson Crusoe", Piri, a young boy maturing past his second childhood, is surgically adapted to life under water. He comes to grips with who he really is. In "Lollipop and the Tar Baby", Xanthia, with her single partner, Zoe, in the big ship Shirley Temple, roam the space beyond Pluto, searching for energy-rich black holes. They're secluded and bored . . . until Xanthia finds a hole that evades capture, changes velocity and talks to her.

Customs and ideals must change as society changes, and this point is made very clear in "Picnic on Near-side". Failure to adjust is death. Varley shows this in the character Lester, whom Fox (a female changed male) and Halo (a female changed male) meet outside their home in King City, Luna, as they picnic on Nearside. Lester is a very old man with decrepit superstitions and Old Earth philosophies/morals, a man who has fled Earth (after the Invasion) and King City as well to live out his years and to do the unquestionable old-fashioned thing: to die, an old man, "a likable old fool, but a fool all the same".

Don't miss this collection.

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#### THE HAUNTED MAN

By Colin Wilson

Borgo Press, POB 2845, San Bernadino, CA, 92406. \$2.95

Reviewed by Lee Weinstein

This is Volume 20 in this series of critical works on contemporary popular writers, and is subtitled THE STRANGE GENIUS OF DAVID LINDSAY.

Wilson's book is an unusual one in the series, in that Wilson himself is a more well-known writer than Lindsay, his subject. Wilson has written non-fiction such as THE OCCULT (1971) about psychic abilities and THE STRENGTH TO DREAM (1961) about creative imagination in fantastic fiction, as well as several science fiction-horror novels. Part of this book appeared in the essay collection THE STRANGE GENIUS OF DAVID LINDSAY (John Baker, 1970).

Lindsay was a British writer who lived from 1878 to 1945. He had four fantasy novels published during his lifetime. Of these, only A VOYAGE TO ARCTURUS (1920) has achieved any real recognition. It

has been available for some years now in paperback from Ballantine Books. THE HAUNTED WOMAN (1922) was reprinted by Newcastle Publishing Company, Inc., in 1975, and may still be in print. DEVIL'S TOR (1932) is now in print in a rather expensive edition from Arno Press. A fifth fantasy novel and fragments of a sixth were published as THE VIOLET APPLE AND THE WITCH in 1976 by Chicago Review Press. The contents of this last volume are not covered by Wilson. Neither is Lindsay's mainstream novel, ADVENTURES OF M. DE MAILLY, which has not seen print since 1926. However, he provides some interesting material on SPHINX (1923), the only fantasy which has never been reprinted.

Lindsay's fantasies are stiffly written and slow going. They are really philosophical works disguised as fiction. Lindsay was attempting to show the ultimate truth hidden beneath the shams of mundane life.

Wilson attempts, successfully I think, to show the immense vision behind the clumsy prose. He analyzes ARCTURUS in detail, and traces the philosophical threads through the other works, building a coherent picture of what Lindsay was trying to say. He compares Lindsay to other writers and philosophers, and tries to show him in the perspective of his time and in the broader picture of English literature.

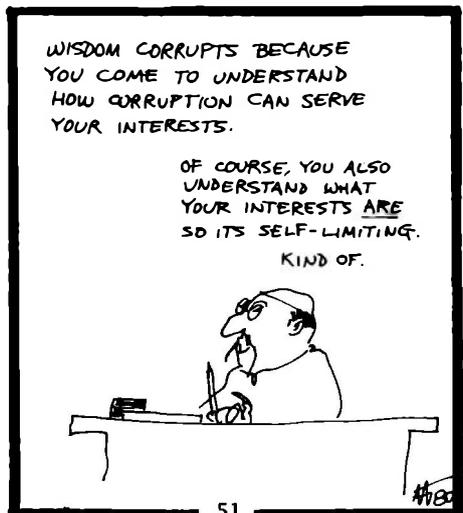
Perhaps this book will draw more attention to this little-understood writer and visionary.

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LAST ISSUE THE HEADING OF FRED PATTEN'S review of THE FORBIDDEN FOUNTAIN OF OZ was mis-typed. The full heading should have been as follows:

THE FORBIDDEN FOUNTAIN OF OZ  
By Eloise Jarvis McGraw & Lauren Lynn McGraw. Illus. by Dick Martin. Map by Lauren Lynn McGraw. Kinderhook, Ill., International Wizard of Oz Club, 1980. 104 pp. \$7.00.

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#### THE CROOKED COMPUTER

By William G. Shingler, Jr.

Manor Books, 432 Park Ave. South, New York, NY 10016, \$1.95, paper.

REVIEWED BY GENE DE WEESE

Though only marginally science fiction, this shouldn't be missed by any SF reader or by anyone who has ever been curious about -- or grotched by -- a computer. Basically, it's one man's search for "The Truth" about computers, and it's one of the funniest books I've read this year. Not only that, it's pretty accurate and whether you want to or not, you will probably learn quite a bit about computers and those weird people who build and operate them.

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#### THE MUDHEAD

By Josephine Rector Stone

Atheneum, NY, 1980, 140 pp., \$8.95

ISBN: 0-689-30787-x

REVIEWED BY FREDERICK PATTEN

Young teenager, Korby McNaughton, a self-proclaimed "space brat", is bored in the enclosed exploration base on the planet Sigma. But when he disobeys the rules and ventures outside alone, he is captured by the primitive natives and carried far into the jungle. First he is beaten almost to death, then he is treated as a good-luck charm and squabbled over by two savage tribes. Finally he stops whimpering and resolves to escape back to base with the aid of Rala, the kindly but weak-willed shaman who had adopted him. However, once the escape is begun, Korby realizes that he has acquired a moral responsibility toward Rala since the gentle native cannot return to his own people and he is both physically and mentally unfit to join human society. For the first time Korby has someone besides himself to think about, and he resolves to find a solution that will not require the sacrifice of his friend.

THE MUDHEAD is well-written in a technical sense, and it vividly portrays its jungle setting. Unfortunately, it fails the "Bat Durston" test, to cite the old "You'll Never Read it in GALAXY" advertisement. Minus its interstellar trappings, the novel could be any frontier adventure about a spoiled civilized youth who is kidnapped by primitives and who matures while he comes to understand (if not appreciate) their superstitious, disease-ridden society. The jungle setting and Rala's mud mask scream "New Guinea" to anyone who has read a NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC photo-article about the tribal societies there.

Even worse, the story's basic nature will make it mildly repugnant

to readers who are looking for light entertainment and it does not offer rich enough characterizations or sufficient inventiveness to be worth reading for deeper values. It's essentially about an unpleasant protagonist who undergoes a thoroughly miserable and not especially interesting experience. There are any number of better-written "rite of passage" novels, both inside and outside the SF field. Korby undeniably matures as the result of his experience, but it's never really clear whether this has made him a more likable character. Most readers simply won't care what happens to him.

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**ARMADA**

By Michael Jahn  
Fawcett, 1981, 221 pp., \$2.25

REVIEWED BY DEAN R. LAMBE

Yet another mystery/suspense writer has decided that SF is an easy lay, and has offered us a real whiz-bang space opera. Captain Broadsword and beautiful co-pilot Margot zip around Earth, Moon and Habitat 5, blasting asteroids and cutting wheelies in vacuum until the monstrous alien starship appears to spoil their violation of Newtonian laws. Though mercifully we never learn whether the blue meanies in their Boomerang fighters are blue, bug-eyed or slimy-tentacled, all too much is made of their liquid protein diet and the raygun conversion of Earth people thereto. After many space dogfights, smoky explosions on the "dark side" of the moon and the odd H-bomb failure to dent the aliens' appetite, Broadsword finds their Achilles heel (clearly so labeled for the terminally dull).

It seems that ... ah crap, somebody shackle this clown to an introductory physics text before he moves to Hollywood with this "battlestar". In these hard times, that a legitimate new SF writer's work was aced out by this garbage is a real tragedy.

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**THE NORTHERN GIRL**

Berkley/Putnam, c. 1980; 382 pp.  
\$13.95

By Elizabeth A. Lynn

REVIEWED BY STEVE LEWIS

When the first two volumes in Lynn's fantasy trilogy "The Chronicles of Tornor" were published back in 1979, reaction within the ranks of hardcore fans was overwhelmingly favorable. This, the third book in the series, has been anticipated with more than an ordinary sort of interest ever since.



For example, WATCHTOWER, the first of the series, has just received the 1980 World Fantasy Award for best novel of the year. If you missed it, however, both it and its sequel, have now been published in paperback. The happy result of all this publishing activity is that here you have, those of you who have waited, the splendid opportunity of reading all three at once, without the agonizing wait between books that successful trilogies always manage to inflict upon their readers.

All three novels take place in the imaginary land of Arun. In WATCHTOWER a castle on its northern border is overthrown, not by enemies from without, but at the hands of a rebel leader from the south. Prince Errel's first task is to survive, then to escape. Once accomplished, his next obligation is to restore his family's rule to Tornor, or to die in the attempt.

The elements of traditional fantasy are actually the strongest in THE DANCERS OF ARUN. Some of the inhabitants of that world have "gifts" of extra-sensory powers, and in the town of Elath there is a school designed to train these "witches" in their specialties. The story itself is of a young lad as he comes of age, coming to learn at the same time of his powers, and what responsibilities they entail.

As between the first two books, there is another span of a hundred years or more which passes before the events of THE NORTHERN GIRL begin. Without a doubt, here is the most ambitious of the three. It is much longer than either of the first two, for one thing, and for another there is involved a much subtler treatment of its main theme than is ever common in works of its type -- those which are usually lumped together under the heading of "swords-and-sorcery" fantasy fiction, in which subtly is customarily laid on as with a bloody bludgeon.

The subject is politics, pure and simple -- the politics of power. In particular the main objective is the control of Arun's southernmost city, Kendra-on-the-Delta. In treatment, however, any resemblance of this tale to the over-muscled sagas of Conan the Barbarian, to pick an obvious example, is the same that might be spotted between Agatha Christie's mild-mannered Miss Marple murder mysteries, say, and the bosoms-babes-and-booze approach to detective fiction possessed by Mickey Spillane's worst imitators.

Instead of a story about gun-control, would you believe sword-control?

The story is told from the viewpoint of Sorren, a female bondservant to the ruler of one sector of the city. The ruler is also a woman -- Lynn very definitely has strong opinions about the Equal Rights Amendment -- and it is her brother, denied the right to power, who betrays her, busily making alliances with other city rulers behind her back, with outside chieftains and even with the leader of the city's small enclave of witches.

Sorren has clairvoyant dreams of her own, however. By books's end they have brought her back north, to the towers of Tornor where the cycle began, two books before.

Lynn's plots tend to wander. There are occasionally puzzling gaps in structure, questions about the land of Arun that are never resolved. As well, one might say that political maneuvering and infighting in an imaginary land would tend to be as dull and uninteresting as it is in our own.

Or as interesting, depending on your point of view. Lynn more than compensates for these various deficiencies of sorts, however, by creating characters one learns to care for. They control the novels they appear in as strongly and as well as they eventually work out their own destinies. Lynn gives them full rein to do so, and surprisingly enough, this is precisely what it is that gives all three of these oddly-paced, but strongly compelling works

of fantasy their greatest strength.

Even after reading all three books within a week's time -- or, maybe because of it? -- I can safely say that I, for one, would not mind in the least if Elizabeth Lynn changed her mind and decided that a tetralogy it was that she was writing all the time.

And if it were not also clearly the wisest decision for her to stop right here and begin work on the next facet of her writing career, still in its early stages -- there is only one book which came before these three, after all -- that is precisely what I would have left as the last line of this review.

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**THE HUMAN ZERO: THE SCIENCE FICTION STORIES OF ERLE STANLEY GARDNER**  
By Erle Stanley Gardner  
Edited by Martin H. Greenberg & Charles G. Waugh  
Wm. Morrow & Co., Inc., 105 Madison Avenue, NY, NY 10016.  
1981, 444 pp., \$12.95.  
ISBN: 0-688-00122-x

REVIEWED BY FREDERICK PATTEN

"Fans of Erle Stanley Gardner will be surprised and delighted to discover in these long-unavailable stories that he was one of our earliest science fiction writers -- and science fiction readers will regret that he did not write many more".

Well, not really. Erle Stanley Gardner was, of course, the author of the world-famous Perry Mason detective stories which he wrote from 1932 until his death in 1970. Gardner became so well-established as a mystery author that the modern public never knew he had once tried his hand at pulp Westerns and SF as well. THE HUMAN ZERO collects all of Gardner's SF stories: seven novellas which appeared in ARGOSY between 1928 and 1932.

How are they? Dreadful! But not more so than most pulp SF of this period. Those were the days when stories about mad scientists with beautiful daughters were fresh and innovative; when handsome, dynamic heroes regularly rescued demure maidens from fiendish subhuman (i.e. non-White) villains; and when Earth-shattering melodramas were built around a single facet of elementary-school science, extrapolated to physically impossible extremes.

Literary quality? "The face was only partially visible through the narrow peephole. But there was a section of wrinkled forehead, shaggy, unkempt eyebrows, the bridge of a bony nose and two eyes.

"The eyes compelled interest.

"They were red-rimmed. They seemed to be perpetually irritated, until the irritation had seeped into the brain itself. And they glittered with a feverish light of unwholesome cunning."

That's the mad scientist who has the city in a grip of terror in THE HUMAN ZERO, threatening to kill its richest businessmen with his mysterious death ray unless they ransom themselves for tremendous sums. The dense police are helpless until the wise-cracking newspaper reporter solves the case for them.

The most dramatic story is "New Worlds", a tale of global cataclysm. Phil Bregg, a cowboy, is visiting New York City during a spell of torrential rains. Suddenly the waters start rising. Phil and a girl flee the subway and enter a building. The waters continue rising. They climb floor after floor. An earthquake rocks the city and skyscrapers begin toppling. Phil, the girl and a conveniently on-hand scientist (mad but benevolent) find a motor cruiser on the 8th floor (in the demonstration room of a motorboat company) and launch themselves from the crumbling building. A tidal wave sweeps them halfway around the world. The next thing they know they're on a South Seas island fleeing from savage cannibals and a maddened White Killer. The scientific rationale for all this is the theory of the changing of the earth's axis and the shifting of the poles, which Professor Parker explains to Phil and Stella in a manner remarkably similar to that in which Dr. Zarkov was to explain to Flash Gordon and Dale Arden how the world was being threatened by Mongo, in the first FLASH GORDON comic-strip page many years later.

The other five stories involve a secret cult of monkey-men in India (there are things which White Men were never meant to know), a species of intelligent ants in Africa, a chemical accelerator which speeds up the human body to 50 times normal velocity, reincarnation and a hidden tribe of savage Indians in New Mexico, and the first space flight (by a mad scientist, his beautiful daughter, a kidnapped wise-cracking newspaper reporter and a maddened White Killer) in an anti-gravity spaceship to Venus, where they are attacked by savage cannibals ...

There is a very informative scholarly foreword on his SF by editors Greenberg & Waugh, though I wonder if they kept a straight face when they wrote that one of Gardner's motives for giving up SF was that " ... he may have decided that the amount of time he had to put into

researching a science fiction story exceeded the amount he needed for a mystery or Western". There is also a recommended bibliography and credits to the original appearances of these stories.

What is the value of THE HUMAN ZERO? It's a worthwhile purchase for academic and research libraries. It contains some early and otherwise-inaccessible writings of a popular author and it contains samples of a popular fiction genre from a period earlier than those covered by most SF reprint volumes. But the stories are so primitive by today's standards that their only value to the general public will be as curiosa or as camp humor for their comic-book plotting in a serious literary format. At least they can't be accused of dullness.

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**HIDDEN PLACES, SECRET WORDS**  
Edited by Anita Loreta Anderson  
Northwoods Press, Box #249, Stafford, VA, 22554.  
Paperback, 62 pp., \$2.95

REVIEWED BY NEAL WILGUS

Despite the awkward, unrememberable title, this little booklet of fantasy poems is sure to appeal to a small but devoted audience. Rhymed verse and balladry are largely taboo in the poetic realm today, but both survive in the fantasy field -- alive and well and thriving like hell, I was almost tempted to say.

Not all the 22 poems (by 16 poets) in HIDDEN/SECRET rhyme or are ballads, but the majority do and are. Poems by Steve Eng, Walter Shedlofsky, Michael Fantina, Stephanie Stearns and Yours Truly are all rhyming ballads, and even non-rhyming verse by William R. Borrow, W. Paul Ganley and John Taylor qualify as balladry.

The anthology is imaginatively illustrated by Nick Forrest Evangelista and Editor Anita Anderson, who also collaborate in some rhyming stories which are among the best in the collection. Most of the material is new, although three poems by Lucile Coleman and one by Steve Eng are reprints from earlier publications.

Not an earthshaking event in either the fantasy or the poetry worlds, nevertheless HIDDEN PLACES, SECRET WORDS is a good anthology and deserves a wider reading than it is likely, in this non-poetic time, to get.

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## THE MANY-COLORED LAND

By Julian May  
Houghton Mifflin, \$12.95

REVIEWED BY ELTON T. ELLIOTT

Excitement. If I had to sum up in one word what most recent SF novels too often lack, that would be it. Excitement is one ingredient which THE MANY-COLORED LAND, a new novel by Julian May, has in abundance. THE MANY-COLORED LAND is unique since it has much more going for it than its spellbinding plot. It is a many-layered, multi-faceted tale filled with consummately-drawn characters, wit, humor, irony and pathos. It is the first book of what promises to be a series of such scope and complexity that it will eventually rival THE LORD OF THE RINGS, THE FOUNDATION TRILOGY and THE LENS-MAN SERIES as among the best that SF has to offer.

The main storyline opens with humanity recently admitted into a federation called the Coadunate Galactic Milieu in a time of peace and prosperity such as the human race has rarely known throughout all its long and bloody history. Nevertheless, there are humans who are unhappy in this new "Golden Age". Some pine for a simpler time when society was not so mannered; others are unsuited by psychological problems to exist in the highly-structured galactic civilization; still others are criminals or potentially dangerous sociopaths. In most cases, such misfits would be imprisoned, "reoriented" (some humans have developed various and sundry psychic powers) or executed. However, thanks to another scientist's invention, another option is available: exile through a time portal which opens to a period six million years in Earth's past, the Pliocene Epoch. It only operates one-way, however; anything returning through the portal turns into dust, making it the perfect exile. It is voluntary and there are many volunteers.

The story follows eight timefarers as they journey into the past. What they find there surprises and shocks them greatly, for unknown to future humanity, an intergalactic alien race has settled Pliocene Earth and promptly enslaves all who come through the time portal. Our eight protagonists are captured and the story follows their various adventures as they try to extricate themselves and the rest of humanity from alien domination.

One of the most delightful and compelling things about THE MANY-COLORED LAND is the rich characterization. Unlike most recent science fiction, it presents people (humans and nonhumans alike) as separate,

complex individuals. They have their points, good and bad, as do most of us, but in contrast to most SF, they are treated in a humanistic fashion. Even the antagonists (villains would be a misnomer) are treated in a sympathetic manner.

THE MANY-COLORED LAND is a tremendously literate novel. Where most of SF simply gives us the bare bones of characterization with no room for nuance or subtlety, this is replete with fully-realized individuals who grow and change as the story progresses. May does not violate T.S. Eliot's objective correlative: each individual has a past, as well as a present and the motivation for the characters' actions are shown the reader. No slipshod straw figures permeate the novel, only full-bodied individuals who act from the same dark compulsions as do most of us.

Another impressive aspect of THE MANY-COLORED LAND is the pace with which the characters and plot are controlled. The story doesn't slow and wallow in self-conscious interior monologue as does some "serious" SF; rather, we come to know the characters through their actions and watch them grow almost unconsciously. It is only when a particular moment hits, when you suddenly think, "Yeah, that's right; I've felt that way, too", that you begin to realize what a masterful job the author has done. Characterization is probably the hardest aspect of a story to carry off, but May does it in style so that whether you like or dislike his characters, you will remember them -- and isn't that a rarity in SF?

THE MANY-COLORED LAND is also noted for the sly wit and variety of humor (from esoteric to bawdy), especially in the character Aiken Drum, who has a penchant for playing outrageous pranks. Various amusing anthropological and historical references are slipped in throughout the narrative. The author also takes subtle and not-so-subtle potshots at a number of sacred cows: sports, the SCA, Celtophilia, Dungeons and Dragons, Sword-and-Sorcery, back-to-nature types and L-5 Colonies.

The real power of the book for me, lies in its many levels of meaning. Readers can, if they wish, simply read on the exciting surface level of action, adventure and suspense; or they can enjoy the literary feast of quite deliberate deeper symbolic meanings which underlay the basic storyline, if they like some thematic strawberries to go with the frothy action-permeated whipped cream. There are many mythic and psychological motifs.

But most fascinating, every character is, to one extent or another, an exile -- some from society, some from love, some from enemies, but most from themselves. The use of exile as a metaphor even extends to the aliens, who ironically are exiles from others of their kind because of the antiquated battle-religion they persist in following. The humans exiled themselves from the social complexities of technological society, so in a very real sense, both humans and aliens alike are exiles from themselves and their increasingly technological societies. A pervasive use of Jungian symbolism and the conceptual treatment of exile as metaphor and motif, illuminate THE MANY-COLORED LAND.

Its richly complex future-history will be explored further: THE GOLD-EN TORC, the direct sequel to be published in Fall, 1981, will resume the adventures of the eight human protagonists in the Pliocene Era. Two other volumes, THE NONBORN KING and THE ADVERSARY, which concludes the Pliocene Tetralogy, are currently under contract; the Galactic Era, which I find fascinating and unique, will be the theme of several novels.

Although I read THE MANY-COLORED LAND some time ago, several images and characters still remain in my mind: the flickering lights of the Tanu cities, the strange Firvulag, the hideous Howlers, the comic Aiken, fierce Felice, gentle Amerie, Elizabeth the metapsychic ... people, places and events that are imaginary yet strangely real through the power of the writing.

If you are bored with the bland books so currently prevalent in SF, this novel will surprise and delight with its fresh outlook, exciting story, literate sensibilities and evocative prose. Buy this book, read it, then re-read it, give it as a gift -- this has "award-winner" written all over it. I plan to nominate it for a Hugo.

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## YOU CANNOT DIE

By Ian Currie  
Playboy Paperbacks, Non-Fiction/  
Parapsychology, March, 1981  
288 pp., \$2.50  
ISBN: 0-872-16791-7

REVIEWED BY PAULETTE MINARE'

YOU CANNOT DIE by Ian Currie has eight chapters, each treating a major area of phenomena: apparitions, hauntings, out-of-body-experiences (O.B.E.s), deathbed visions, resuscitation experiences (of the "clinically dead"), possession experiences, reincarnation claims and mediumistic communications. On each page are numbered references to the 15-page bibliography in the back of the book, listed chapter-by-chapter.

To one who has little or no belief in these phenomena, the title YOU CANNOT DIE, could well be a turn-off, but open-minded people of whatever belief will find it very interesting reading -- and will read further to find it not only thought-provoking, but even amazing: For whenever the reader thinks, "Yes, but ..." he reads on to find that experiences are skillfully presented from various angles which give answers to his mental reservations. I doubt if there is any person who can read this without having his deepest convictions shaken.

Of the eight phenomena, I found the least convincing to be reincarnation.

## THE UFO ENCYCLOPEDIA

By Margaret Sachs  
Perigee Books, 1980, 7½ X 9½" Pbk.  
Non-fiction, 408 pp., \$9.95  
ISBN: 0-399-12365-2  
SBN : 399-50454-0 Pbk.

REVIEWED BY PAULETTE MINARE'

This is the best source book I have seen for the UFO phenomenon. Subjects are dealt with alphabetically. In the front is a listing of chronological UFO sightings, giving location, number of witnesses and description. Supplements in the back of the book include 3 pictorial pages of UFO shapes and maneuvers, 8 pages listing UFO organizations and contactee groups, 8 pages of publications dealing with UFOs and related subjects and 8 pages of maps showing location and times of UFO waves.

Of special interest to us in the Northwest, a U.S. map on page 379 shows McMinnville, Oregon, as the site of a major UFO event in 1950, followed by an article on page 194. Mount Rainier is also shown and discussed.

Tying in with the book, YOU CANNOT DIE: "Mind Control" which relates to the chapter on possession; astral travel (O.B.E.) is mentioned on page 239; an enlightening article on "Parallel Space-Time Continuum Hypothesis" shows there may be many spatial dimensions existing beyond the three we know, length, width and depth -- a fourth dimension is time, so that, due to differences in vibrational frequencies, the invisible realm of God and spirits could exist in our same space; in both books telepathy is used as communication among spirits and among extradimensional UFO occupants.

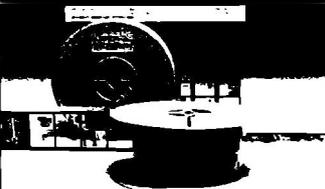
In the next issue of SFR, there will be Wesley Graham's article, "Beyond the Fringe." Several topics discussed there are treated in the UFO ENCYCLOPEDIA: "Foo Fighters" and where they got their name; "Project Blue Book", a U.S. Air Force report on UFOs and what became of it; "The Condon Report" and what Condon did not mention.

Of interest is the article on "Bigfoot" and how many link this hairy creature to the 25th chapter of Genesis account where Rebecca gave birth to twins, "the first came out red, all over like an hairy garment".

Space limits me to only a few of the many articles in this comprehensive book on UFOs.

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is available  
in microform.



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## TEN YEARS AGO IN SF: SPRING, 1971

BY ROBERT SABELLA

Ballantine Books raised the cover price of most of their science fiction titles to \$1.25! ... The Nebula winners for 1970 were announced: RINGWORLD by Larry Niven was Best Novel; "Ill Met in Lankmar" by Fritz Leiber was Best Novella; "Slow Sculpture" by Theodore Sturgeon was Best Novelet. In perhaps science fiction's most embarrassing gaffe, Isaac Asimov mistakenly announced "The Island of Doctor Death and Other Stories" by Gene Wolfe, as the winner of Best Short Story. He had to renege on that award in Wolfe's presence, when it was revealed that No Award took the prize with "The Island of Doctor Death..." finishing second ... AMAZING STORIES serialized THE LATHE OF HEAVEN, by Ursula LeGuin ... GALAXY MAGAZINE serialized A TIME OF CHANGES by Robert Silverberg ... Ballantine Books published DRAGONQUEST, the second of Anne McCaffrey's popular Dragon books. (Thanks to LOCUS for several of the above items.)

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## CANNED MEAT

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# SHORT FICTION REVIEWS

## ANALOG

*Reviewed By Patricia Mathews*

FEBRUARY 2, 1981 ISSUE

Charles Sheffield is back with another story about space pilot Jeanie Roker and her charming, but impractical physicist friend, McAndrew in "All the Colors of the Vacuum". Jeanie grows more likable with every story and now that one no longer has to understand the McAndrews drive, the story moves right along. Let's have some more where that came from.

I hate to put Sheffield, or anybody else, ahead of Poul Anderson, but the last thing I need right now is a pair of tired, middle-aged protagonists given to the sort of fantasizing one does over the dishpan -- I have mirrors all over my house. These two are exploring Iapetus and nearly get themselves killed through their daydreaming; do we really need Poul Anderson to tell us this? Not even he can convince me any halfway bright exploring party would get that hooked with a job at hand. The action was competently done and the characters were likable, if all too familiar. "The Saturn Game" by Poul Anderson.

Eric Vinicoff's "Politics of Plenty" does the same sort of thing Mack Reynolds does, but better, and the lead character's moral dilemma is both nicely done and central to the story. A mechanical genius, born in an African village, discovered by an American Peace Corps volunteer, is asked to "solve" an alien matter transmitter that could mean the end of the Third World or its salvation -- but the big powers want to use it as an economic weapon against them.

Lee Correy's "Shuttle Down" lumbers on. Chilean governor Ernesto Obregon reiterates that the Pascuan natives are thieves; nothing has come of this yet. Shuttle Commander Frank King pulls a "no furriner is gonna push me around" act with Obregon, who is as coy about his reasons

as a Gothic hero/villain, then is totally reasonable as he gets it through his thick head that Obregon really is Somebody. Reporter Alice Arnold comes through as wolf-on-the-prowl and gringo chauvinist at the same time, scaring Frank into a clumsy realization that poor Jackie isn't so bad after all; she's just trying to be people. High time. He refuses Alice on the grounds he can think of no other woman but his wife, but when Joyce Fisher of the State Department feeds him a totally un-Latina line about multiple loves, he takes her to bed, presumably because she's the only one (except Jackie) who didn't get pushy. Soviets are said to be prowling, and at the last minute a planeload of Chilean diplomats blows up in the air. Because the Pascuans stole the gas tank cap? Reading this is like taking a walk on a high-gravity planet; the scenery may be all right, but it's easier to stay home and read a good book. Besides, if the characters are typical of either NASA or State, no wonder the country's in the mess it's in. A half-witted dog could cheat this bunch at cards.

MARCH 2, 1981 ISSUE

With the Shroud of Turin much in the news, it is not surprising that one of the most interesting stories in the March 5 ANALOG is Michael McCollum's "The Shroud". He has a good idea and it reads well. Unfortunately, he grossly underestimates the basic mental toughness of the clergy -- they've heard it all before, usually in seminary. I could also question his "hellfire and brimstone Episcopalian" -- it's really not like them -- but it's possible, so let it be. A good read.

"Paradise Misplaced", the lead novelette by Ian Stewart, has an interesting technical gimmick and political-commercial feud, all sorts of intrigue. It also has a running thread of literary reference (The Faerie Queene) and some of the most appalling name games and puns since the ninth grade. The only irritating one was the name Lindilu -- again, what a ninth-grader would make out of Lindy Lou in order to be exotic. But fun, and again, a good read.

"We're Working on It" by Robin Kincaid is the story of two time



machine repair techs finding a super-advanced version of the common kitchen machine -- one that can do the impossible -- and coping with the repercussions. Unfortunately, how it got in that kitchen is totally silly.

"Mustard Seed", by Jaygee Carr, has a pirate attacking a frontier farm with an unusual pet with a very strange life cycle. Old theme, nice story, nicely exotic details and setting.

And now for the hatchet. SHUTTLE DOWN by Lee Correy, concludes, with some loose ends tied up that were never there to begin with and others left dangling. To summarize:

The Chilean governor's oft-repeated statement that the island natives are thieves has never come to anything, so I guess we're supposed to take it as an expression of his contempt for them. A native comes to Frank King and in very obscure language tells him the Rapa Nui people would be overjoyed to come into the twentieth century; one in the eye for the governor.

The plane that was shot down was a Soviet sabotage job. The governor shoots the island's only doctor and announces after the fact that he was a KGB agent. Really, in any other story with this plot, the man would be the villain!

Jackie finds herself pregnant by one of the crew following a shore leave luau in the first or second installment; she does not love the father, but merely likes him; she doesn't believe in abortion; a convenient shootout gets Jackie and embryo; she marries the guy anyway. Frank King acknowledges, now that it's all over, that Jackie would be a hell of a pilot; that's big of him, but I hope she gets her head together before doing anything else, in spacecraft or before the Justice of the Peace.

Oh, yes, SHUTTLE DOWN gets off the ground at last.

Three excellent science-fact articles conclude this issue, one of them the guest editorial. As a lifelong space buff, I'm deeply interested in getting our program off the ground, and why it's not. Physicist Silbar can always be counted on for a readable, fact-filled overview of the latest in physics. The last is a regular feature, Alternate View, Jerry Pournelle on waldoes.

MARCH 30, 1981 ISSUE

This is a very good ANALOG! Enjoyable, fun to read and hard to put down.

Charles L. Harness has a novella,

"The Venetian Court", about a patent infringement case, a computer, a mad judge, in an age when guilt carries the death penalty. Despite the historical reference in the title, it should also be called "The Byzantine Court" for its complexity and flavor.

"Hollow Victory" by Timothy Zahn is a classic puzzle. A shipload of touchy, proud aliens are down with an unknown illness; interstellar diplomacy hangs on Earth's representatives finding a cure. One nit: Would worlds like the aliens' be as scarce as the story claims?

"Incredibility Gap", by Ian Stewart, leaves the town klutz stranded in a swamp with monsters coming on and his girl's father to impress. Clever and fun.

"Seek Not Prometheus", by Edward A. Byers is a three-way conflict in one short story. One side wants to destroy the alien Gates; the hero must battle the ultimate in monsters and his old teacher as well, to keep them open. Byers goes for the human tragedy and gets better every time.

"Schrodinger's Cat" by Rudy Rucker, is an updated, highly intellectual version of THE FLY. The cat in question is in a mixed state; so are the two inventors of a time machine. If it's possible to get a laugh out of physics textbooks, this would be it.

I got a little lost with Paul J. Nahin's "Security Blanket", though the point was clear. The U.S. is fooling the Russians, elaborately. A father concocts a tale about a force-field to reassure a child terrified by the prospect of atomic war. Everybody gets all tangled up, a little hilariously for such a serious start. I do find myself wondering why we seem to be rerunning the events and zeitgeist of thirty years ago. It may have been the Golden Age of ANALOG (ASTOUNDING) but it was certainly the leaden age of politics.

The issue is rounded off with a good reference article on Xenobiology by Dr. Robert A. Freitas and a very good article by Harry Stine on the ecosphere as seen from the air.

I used to fly from San Francisco to El Paso regularly. It was obvious where the people were: wherever the landscape looked green. It was the trademark of humankind. I could never listen to moanings about humans despoiling the landscape with the same complacency again; I had seen differently. So I was very glad to read this confirmation of my own observations.

And Stanley Schmidt's editorial, suggesting that we end the throwaway economy and the unemployment problem

by redistributing work: fewer hours for everyone and more careful craftsmanship. This, by the way, is merely an illustration of his thesis that one problem can often be used to solve another. Sounds good and rather Greening-of-America; I'd have to see how it works out at the brake shop, the donut place, and the other businesses I'm familiar with.

Nice magazine this month!

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## ASIMOV'S Reviewed By Robert Sabella

JANUARY 19, 1981 ISSUE

FEBRUARY 16, 1981 ISSUE

MARCH 16 1981 ISSUE

After reading science fiction magazines for eighteen years I feel that most magazine fiction is readable, even interesting to various degrees. However, it is my opinion that only a small minority of it is fully successful. I estimate the typical science fiction magazine averages one fully successful story per issue.

Consider ASIMOV'S. In the four previous issues I have read for review, five stories were successful. This quarter the quality dipped slightly to two successful stories. That is exactly seven successful stories in seven issues. Considering Sturgeon's Law (90% of everything is crap -- including reviews), that is a decent average.

Obviously, I do not suggest that only the few successful stories should be read. These three ASIMOV'S also had three stories that were partially successful for various reasons, as well as one recommended non-fiction article.

# # # #

I seldom read the nonfiction in science fiction magazines since it tends to concentrate on the harder sciences (physics, engineering, etc.) while I much prefer the softer sciences (sociology, psychology, mathematics). Fortunately, ASIMOV'S has been offering a different bag of nonfiction than either ANALOG or F&SF. While not all of it has been my cup of tea -- such as John M. Ford's gameplaying series -- they occasionally offer something of interest. My favorites are James Gunn's critical analyses of science fiction,

excerpts from several of his recent books. The 19 January issue had "On the Robot Novels", a 23-page study of Isaac Asimov's *THE CAVES OF STEEL* and *THE NAKED SUN*. While I always considered *THE NAKED SUN* a minor SF-detective novel, *THE CAVES OF STEEL* is one of the important classics of the field. Gunn's views on it are interesting and he does not seem to search for meanings that Asimov never intended (a flaw of many literary analysts). Very worthwhile reading.

Speaking of detective stories, both successful stories this quarter feature strong elements from that genre. "Death in Vesunna", by Eric G. Iverson and Elaine O'Byrne, combines a murder mystery with time travel. Two time travelers go back to 150 A.D. to obtain a rare copy of Sophocles' lost play, "Alceadai". In doing so, they foolishly kill the play's owner with a pistol. Imagine the puzzlement of the local law enforcement officials as they try to solve such a murder! It's all cleverly done and plays fair.

"These Stones will Remember" is a thoroughly competent thriller by Reginald Bretnor which succeeds on two levels. Its climax -- the murder of a high-level Soviet academician -- is admitted by the narrator in the opening paragraph and it keeps you hooked trying to figure out how and why the deed was done. On a more SFnal level, it concerns a fascinating theory about resurrecting ghosts of the past through modern science. My only regret is that more of the latter was not explored.

The partially successful stories were:

"Island Man" by R.A. Wilson, a first story which shows promise. Wilson paces well, holds the reader's interest and creates a strong mood. Unfortunately, he writes about little more than a pack of cliches: there's the old storyteller regaling

youngsters about life in the old days; the great plague which wiped out the technological civilization and forced the survivors to adapt to a pastoral lifestyle; the young boy doomed to succumb to the plague except the readers know he was the storyteller as a child so therefore he must have survived! Hopefully, Wilson will write future stories less from the memory of SF stories he's enjoyed. If so, he has a promising future.

"I Have A Winter Reason" by Melissa Michaels, is quite a frustrating story. Her first sale was selected by Terry Carr for last year's *THE BEST SCIENCE FICTION OF THE YEAR*, so you know she can write well. She vividly creates the framework of an asteroid dweller returning to Earth for the first time in twenty years, a tortured woman who is both convincing and sympathetic. Unfortunately, the story is basically hollow. Nothing happens except the woman endures her suffering while trying vainly to alienate the only person sympathetic to her. If there had been a plot to fill this shell it could have been quite good.

I mentioned in a previous review that I liked Sydney Van Scyoc's gentle stories and "Bluewater Dream" is as readable as the previous one was. It concerns the love of a young space colonist for her native alien pet and her reaction when she learns it is dying of a disease caught from humans. The story fails because of an unconvincing ending. It seemed as if Ms. Van Scyoc felt compelled to tack on a happy ending as well as a comeuppance for all the colonists unwilling to accept the alien as intelligent. Neither fit into the context of the story. Still it is worth reading for its better parts.

## F&SF

### Reviewed By

Russell

Engbretson

#### FEBRUARY ISSUE

The February issue of F&SF is distinguished mainly by the presence of a Stephen King story, which I will come to later.

"The Softest Hammer" by Charles Sheffield is a club story in the mold of Lord Dunsany's "Jorkens" tales. In this instance, the club is a literary agency rather than a bar, and most of the story's charm derives from the breezy dialogue. The surprise ending is transparently obvious early in the story and ruins much of the fun.

Jim Aikin's "The Lilith" is an interesting exploration of a future in which only a handful of mutated females are responsible for the continuation of the human race. There's plenty of sex and a violent yet sadly thoughtful ending. My only gripe is with the present tense narrative, the use of which always leaves me feeling somewhat breathless.

"Absolutely the Last, This is It, No More, The Final Pact with the Devil Story" by Michael Armstrong (which deserves an award for longest title) is a fictional correspondence story full of in-joke references to SF authors and editors. To fulfill his pact with the Screwtape Literary Agency, the protagonist frantically submits a terrible story to one editor after another -- Red White, Ned Nova, Harmless Edison -- only to be met by rejections. A fast-moving, witty story.

"The Oracle and the Mountains" by Stephen King is the third in a series of stories about Roland, the last gunslinger, and his search for the Dark Tower. Although King has written a string of best-sellers, his love and knowledge of SF and fantasy shows in much of his work. A frighteningly good writer, Stephen King has taken all the ingredients of formula fiction and shown what power they have in the hands of a master. This new story is a departure for him. It is set in some unspecified time and place. There are demons that speak through skulls and haunt ancient ruins, a mysterious Man in Black, and a Dark Tower that stands at the root of time. Heady



stuff for a fantasy fan. And the characterization is superb. Need I add, this is a highly recommended story?

#### MARCH ISSUE

"A Peculiar Man" by Ken Wisman contains some nice writing built around the theme of loneliness. It's about an intelligent and sensitive hunchback and his search for friendship. The ending is a disappointment, giving the reader an easy and unreal resolution to the problem.

"Right of Passage" by Terry Brykczynski is a wry tale of talking monkeys and human nature.

Bob Shaw's "Go On, Pick a Universe!" is a second-rate story by a first-rate writer. He is capable of much better than this.

"A Day at the Fair" by Neal Barret, Jr. is a very good and cryptic story set in the distant future on a planet called Far. It's told from the viewpoint of a young girl, Tooney, in a matter-of-fact narration that highlights the strange setting and events.

"Last Song of the Voiceless Man" is Warren Brown's first published story. A psychologist, guilt-ridden by the death of a friend in a car accident, travels to a space station designed for the treatment of space-induced psychosis. What follows is her encounter with a patient and attempts to understand and treat his psychosis. She comes to terms with her guilt and discovers that an attempted alien contact with her patient is the cause of his insanity. This is a strong, solid story that deals realistically with human problems.

IN THE WESTERN TRADITION, a novella by Phyllis Eisenstein, is also concerned with human problems. The Bubble is a visual time machine, a window into the past, run by trained operators and used mainly by historians. Basically, the story is concerned with the main character's loss of his lover, Alison. He discovers Alison, an operator like himself, has fixated on Jimmy Logan, a minor character in the life of Wyatt Earp, and tries to convince her of the futility of loving a man long dead. I found myself reacting against Alison's coldness to her former lover, hoping she would come round to his point of view and realized I was completely caught up in the characters' emotional dilemmas. IN THE WESTERN TRADITION is mature and rich in metaphor and by itself worth the cost of the magazine.

#### APRIL ISSUE

There are several good stories in the April issue.

"A Hedge Against Alchemy" by John Morressy is a humorous fantasy about a wizard and barbarian in search of a mountain of gold. The story occasionally slips into juvenile silliness, but was in the main enjoyable. There's a nice twist at the end too.

"Taste Taste" by Larry Tritten is a spooky story of alien possession.

"Nightmares" by Ian Watson is about the efforts of four astronauts to disperse an alien entity that has covered the skies of Earth, blotting out the sun and stars. The supposedly malignant presence is found to be benevolent; it was protecting life on Earth from a gigantic solar flare. The climax is bitterly ironic.

"Stuff of Dreams" by Lewis Shiner is a surrealistic excursion into the world of an intern hooked on an exotic new drug. When analyzed, the drug is found to be a noncontagious virus that fastens onto a receptor in the brainstem and injects RNA into the cells. The ending leaves one wondering who is the dreamer and who the dreamed.

Susan C. Petrey's "Spareen Among the Cossacks" is a remarkable story of the Varkela, a dying race of vampires. The year is not given, but I would guess the story's events take place around the late fifteenth century. Spareen, a Varkela leechman, rides to the Cossack fort at Groznoi at the request of his brother, Vaylance. There he attempts to heal one of his brother's patients. This is a nearly perfect story; everything clicks together and balances just right. I was enthralled from start to finish. And the very sad news is that the author, Susan C. Petrey, died on December 5, 1980. As the editor of F&SF wrote, her "... loss will be felt by anyone familiar with her work".

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## THE TWILIGHT ZONE

*Reviewed By*  
*James J.J. Wilson*

APRIL 1981 ISSUE

Harlan Ellison never wrote for Rod Serling's classic TWILIGHT ZONE

television series. This situation has been rectified by the editors of the new TWILIGHT ZONE magazine, however: The first issue features a story by Ellison as the cover feature. "Grail", probably not so surprisingly, fits into both the biting Harlan Ellison tradition as well as the Twilight Zone mold of having a basically contemporary setting with one fantastic element thrown in to prove a point. "Grail" is a story about a man who, like many throughout the ages, devotes his life to the search for "true love". As suggested in the title, Ellison parallels this quest with that for The Holy Grail but the story itself reminds one more of Gutman's life-long quest in Dashiell Hammett's THE MALTESE FALCON. Ellison's masterful use of cliches makes this story a true delight. The basic premise for the story lies in a joke that Ellison told a few times last year, but in the story Ellison delivers the punchline and then drops the real conclusion on you like a ton of bricks. "Grail" is a really wonderful story and serves well to set the tone for the entire magazine.

"Remembering Melody" is a gruesome, painfully graphic story that never would have been adaptable to the television series, but George R.R. Martin has successfully captured the feeling of a Rod Serling snap ending. The "Three Cautionary Tales" by Robert Sheckley, "The Rose Wall" by Joyce Carol Oates, "Author's Query" by Fred G. Shapiro and "The Death Runner" by Thomas Sullivan all fit, more or less, into the Twilight Zone style and make for very entertaining reading, though none is particularly distinguished. Yet the quality of the worst of these is above that of the average fiction magazine these days.

Felice Picano in "Absolute Ebony" has contributed a nicely-crafted 19th-Century-style story that, by the sheer power of its author's abilities, still fits well into the Twilight Zone mode. It is the story of an obsessive young artist who, after much critical acclaim, becomes reclusive in his search for the ultimate black pigment. Unfortunately, he is successful.

Many of the stories in the magazine might look a little grim. To show a sense of humor, they've thrown in Ron Goulart's hilarious "Groucho", about an inept TV script writer whose collaborator dies and is reincarnated as a cat. It is impossible to read this story without laughing out loud.

The final fiction entry in the issue is Rod Serling's original script from the TWILIGHT ZONE episode, "Walking Distance". This piece

about a frustrated, Madison Avenue executive who recaptures his past by visiting his old home town, is the personification of what Rod Serling's vision of The Twilight Zone must have been. Rod Serling was one of the great script writers in Hollywood's history and even those who are not familiar with the format should enjoy it.

Other features of the magazine include a biography of Rod Serling, a lengthy interview of Stephen King by Charles L. Grant, an episode guide to the television show's first season, a full-color movie preview of John Carpenter's ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK, film reviews by Gahan Wilson and book reviews by Theodore Sturgeon. Still the bulk of the magazine is devoted to the excellent fiction.

The surprisingly high level of quality fiction in THE TWILIGHT ZONE gives it probably the strongest lineup of any other mostly-fiction magazine currently available. THE TWILIGHT ZONE is certainly the best and most entertaining fantasy magazine since John Campbell's UNKNOWN and Horace Gold's BEYOND. It is a welcome addition to the dwindling short fiction market, and if the high level achieved with this first issue is maintained, just might become the premier publication in the field.

## AMAZING

*Reviewed By*

*Patricia Mathews*

AMAZING, MAY, 1981

This issue of AMAZING was readable and interesting with a Somtow Sucharitkul Mallworld story, a Tuttle & Martin Windhaven story, a technological gimmick story in the manner of ANALOG, one of Marvin Kaye's literary jests, an Amazon story by Jessica Amanda Salmonson, another greedy-Human-Empire versus self-proclaimed allpowerful-planetary-entity story, and a chaotic self-proclaimed can of Tomato Surprise. I noticed that three or four of them could have been published in, or at least aimed at, other magazines; I think AMAZING makes it a habit to run the Kaye stories and the Amazon stories.

The introduction said "Vampire of Mallworld" was funny. I'm glad they told me; it explained some of the things I found a bit much, like the diaper costume of the full-grown

woman attendants of the baby farm. The trouble was, I empathized with the Vampire and felt sorry for him and took his problem seriously. What's more, the solution was plausible.

The next story is listed in the index as a feature, not fiction, probably because it is a reprint. Gregory Benford's grim vignette of future ghetto life, "Nobody Lives on Burton Street". Dateline, 1969, but not dated.

"The Fall", by Lisa Tuttle and George R.R. Martin, is tragedy, about a lifelong Flyer losing her wings. Good characterization, excellent detail of a strange world, but surely it can't end there? There has to be more.

"So I was Born" is a short-short, metamorphosis is the point.

"Project Purple" by Lewis Jacobson is the ANALOG-styled story, with an outside expert called in to solve a technical problem, much to the resentment of company scientists. Just a bit rabbit-out-of-hat.

Marvin Kaye's "A Smell of Sulphur" gives the Wicked Witch of the West a moral choice before the events outlined by Frank Baum proceed on their inevitable way. Kaye has been playing games in well-established universes for some time, and it's fun.

"The Greater Gift" by Wayne Wightman pits the well-meaning agent of the greedy empire against the planetary being; good triumphs in a rather gory fashion. Read it for the puzzle and don't expect too many loose ends to be tied off.

"The Lock-Box and the Magic Monger" is sword-and-sorcery, with a rascally hero and his Amazon owner-for-a-while. Salmonson's description of how the Amazon thinks and behaves tells a lot about how she thinks men think and behave, as in most simple-reversal stories; however, enjoy the fun.

Richard Anker's "The Action Hook", shouts "surprise" in the reader's ear, followed by a can of tomatoes and a cascading series of puns at the end.

AMAZING has come a long way from its crudzine days. It may still run second to the current Big Three: ANALOG, ASIMOV'S and F&SF. However, it's a very respectable second. If it were available locally outside of a few specialized places far from my home, I'd buy it.

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## S-F NEWS BY ELTON T. ELLIOTT

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### # COMMENTARY

#### AN INDIAN SUMMER?

The 1980 preliminary reports are in. PUBLISHER'S WEEKLY announced in the April 3, 1981 issue that publishers' net sales in 1980 amounted to nearly \$6.79 billion, an increase of 11.9% over 1979; books sold, around 1.8 billion, up only 2.8%. Christmas, when most bookstores make half their yearly revenues, was slightly ahead of 1979. The general picture is clear, not one the publishing industry relishes.

PUBLISHER'S WEEKLY, in its "The Year (1980) in Review", elaborates: "It was a year . . . of considerable economic hardship for many publishers, one in which inflation continued at a steady and unacceptably high level and the cost of borrowing money rose at some points to over 20%. Cash flow became a serious problem all along the line from author to bookseller". Contrast this with 15 years ago when the megacorporate conglomerates started buying publishing companies, the average yearly growth was 15-20%+, and had been since World War II. To corporate America, the publishing industry appeared a good investment, up there with dog food and real estate. The growth rate slowed in the late '70s when spiraling book prices (a 300% increase in mass-market paperbacks) and worsened economics left customers with less money for non-essentials, diminishing the profit/sales rate of increase, making publishing a less attractive investment.

Corporations unhappy with lower profits could (1) sell off less-profitable divisions, (2) instruct their top executives to cut expenses and maximize profits or (3) sell the company. Options 1 and 3 have been extensively used (i.e. Harcourt Brace Javonovich sold Jove, its mass market division to Berkley, RCA sold Random House to Newhouse and the Dutch firm Elsevier has E.P. Dutton up for sale).

The mix of books is 70-30% paperback over hardcover, causing various maneuvers among the publishers: Bantam plans to publish Clive Cussler's (author of RAISE THE TITANIC) hardcover, NIGHT PROBE, in August; Crown is publishing Gil Ziff's new novel, TIBET, in trade paper only; several publishers are experimenting with simultaneous cloth/trade paper releases; some are combining to bid on a book, the Perigord imprint jointly used by Morrow for hardcover releases and Bantam for massmarket, is among the first, company spokesmen denying rumors of its impending demise. more juggling of lines and experimenting is to be expected.

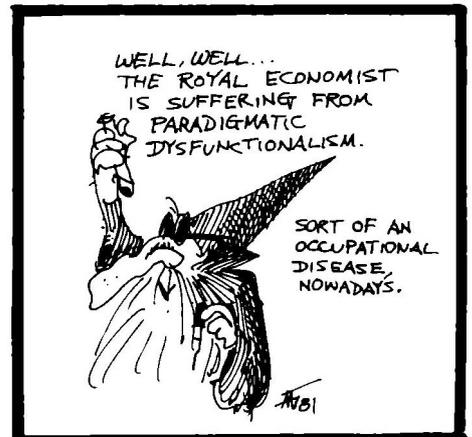
One method publishers use is to entice readers into buying series of books in a specialized area: an example, Harlequin with Romances. The idea is the "canned goods" approach, packaging each book of the series like every other; the theory is the reader will buy each title as if it were soup or crackers. Harlequin's success has encouraged others to try the Romance market; recently Scholastic Books started a line, Wildfire Romances, for teenagers and Bantam is following with Wishing Star Books, aimed exclusively at women. Warner plans a line of action/adventure books aimed at men, called Men of Action. The advantage of both Romance and Action books is a fairly sure sale of around 125,000

to 200,000 per title to defined readers. Such efforts in SF have usually failed (i.e. Laser Books) because the SF reader is tougher to pigeon-hole.

Science Fiction has been faring better than the industry as a whole; the estimated rate of growth is around 10-12%, varying from company to company. The near-term future of SF varies widely: Some publishers like Doubleday and Dell have or are cutting back, other companies such as Holt are starting lines, others like Ace which had cut back, are re-expanding and Pinnacle under the Tor imprint is newly entering the field in a big way. Among the magazines, one promising newcomer, TWILIGHT ZONE, has started monthly production, Davis is bringing a new entry (see Magazine News), rumors abound that OMNI will start an all-SF magazine; several more are in the planning.

Does all this signal that, for SF at least, the Recession has ended? Probably not; with a shaky economy nothing is ever out from the Recession cloud -- it might signal a leveling-off in the SF field. It will be difficult but possible to bring out a new magazine or book line provided the party knows the market, has adequate capital and doesn't overextend.

The Industry short-term outlook is that publishers are prepared to live with high interest rates in fear that in retreating too far, they will lose their place in the market. Evidence of this: A recent first novel, WOMAN'S WORK by Anne Tolstoi Wallach, sold for \$850,000 to NAL; other novels have received high bids, even in advance of the manuscript. In the long-term, today's summertime outlook will cloud all too soon, and for the unprepared, it is disaster.



## # NORMESCON IV:

Held at Hyatt House by the Seattle-Tacoma Airport, with attendance of over 1400. During this harried weekend I managed to talk to some authors and the Artist Guest of Honor, Rowena Morrill. The Guest of Honor was Samuel R. Delany; Toastmaster was Philip Klass (William Tenn). Again, it was enjoyable to talk to the readers of this column; my thanks for your kind comments.

# Rowena Morrill is under contract to Timescape/Pocket Books; covers she has done for them are: *RETRIEF OF THE CDT* and the upcoming Philip K. Dick hardcover, *THE DIVINE INVASION*.

# Dean Ing has sold two novels to Ace; the first, *SYSTEMIC SHOCK*, will appear in June.

# Christopher Stasheff has completed a new novel, *THE WARLOCK UNLOCKED*, third in the Rod Gallowglass series, with a novel-in-progress tentatively titled *ESCAPE VELOCITY*.

# Alexis Gilliland, whose illustrations grace this magazine, has written a sequel to his first novel, *THE REVOLUTION FROM ROSINANTE*, called *LONG SHOT FOR ROSINANTE*, to be published by Del Rey Books in October.

# Nicholas Yermakov has a novel out in June, *LAST COMMUNION*, from NAL/Signet, plus two books from Berkley scheduled for early 1982: *AN AFFAIR OF HONOR* and *CLIQUE*.

# Gene Wolfe has two more novels to go in his *THE SHADOW OF THE TORTURE/CLAW OF THE CONCILIATOR* series: *THE SWORD OF THE LICTOR*, third, and *THE CITADEL OF THE OTTER*, the final book of the series.

# Octavia Butler has a new novel coming out, *BLINDSIGHT*; *WILD SEED* will be out in September (Timescape/Pocket).

# Susan Coon will have a novel, *THE VIRGIN*, out in June from Avon.

# Vonda N. McIntyre will have a novel, *THE ENTROPY EFFECT*, paper, from Timescape in June, the first in their *STAR TREK* novel program.

# Ursula K. LeGuin is working on a screenplay with Michael Powell, titled *EARTHSEA*.

# Bill Gibson has sold several more stories to *OMNI*.

# Richard Purtill has written a non-fiction work on C.S. Lewis, to be out from Harper & Row in October, and a mystery from Doubleday, *MURDER CON*, in March, 1982, set at an SF convention.

# Poul Anderson's new novel for Timescape is tentatively titled *ORION SHALL RISE*. (*LOCUS* reported that Mr. Anderson has sold over a

million words of short fiction to Tor Books to be collected into short-story anthologies.)

## # MAGAZINE NEWS

Davis Publications plans a third magazine, *SCIENCE FICTION DIGEST*, to be digest-sized like their other SF magazines, *ASIMOV'S* and *ANALOG*. It will feature three 25,000-word condensations of full-length novels per issue, edited by Shawna McCarthy, Managing Editor of *ASIMOV'S* and *ANALOG*. It will debut in August with an August cover date, press run of 100,000 copies, published quarterly. The distributor of the 192-page issue will be Curtis, which also handles *ASIMOV'S* and *ANALOG*, art to be handled by the Davis Art Department under direction of Ralph Rubino, also in charge of art for the other Davis SF publications, replacing *ANALOG'S* and *ASIMOV'S* editors in that function.

*SF CHRONICLE* reports that *SCIENCE FICTION DIGEST* is not an open market; most deals will be made with subsidiary rights managers at major book publishers. Where possible, author approval of the condensations will be sought, and the ideal publication date of condensed books will be within two months of their book-on-sale dates, either before or after the fact. In the first issue: "Swarm Summer" by Gregory Benford, "Sun Waifs" by Sydney J. Van Scyoc and a portion of articles by Isaac Asimov from his new Doubleday collection of short essays, *ASIMOV ON SCIENCE FICTION*.

The first two issues of *TWILIGHT ZONE* are on the stands, now. The first issue has stories by George R.R. Martin, Robert Sheckley, Harlan Ellison, Ron Goulart, Ramsey Campbell and Joyce Carol Oates, among others; non-fiction on the old TV *TWILIGHT ZONE* series, created and guided by Rod Serling, plus a show-by-show guide to the first season, a profile on Mr. Serling, all by Marc Scott Zifree (who has sold a book to Bantam, *THE MAKING OF THE TWILIGHT ZONE*). Also included: a book column by Theodore Sturgeon (he does one for *HUSTLER*), a screen column by Gahan Wilson, an interview with Stephen King conducted by Charles Grant and the complete script of a *Twilight Zone* Teleplay, "Walking Distance", by Rod Serling. The second issue of *TWILIGHT ZONE* has in addition to the regular features: an interview with Peter Straub, author of *GHOST STORY*, stories by Robert Silverberg, Joe Haldeman, Roger Zelazny, Spider Robinson, George Clayton Johnson and a novelette by Tenth Lee.



*DESTINIES* is apparently dead, informed sources say, the result of contract squabbles between former editor, James Baen, and Ace Books. There are 3 or 4 issues in inventory. *THE BERKLEY SF SHOWCASE* has changed its schedule to a one-a-year anthology; *ASIMOV'S* and *ANALOG* are on a four-week schedule; *FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION*, *OMNI* and *THE TWILIGHT ZONE* are monthlies; *AMAZING* appears bi-monthly. *ARES* has discontinued most SF stories not directly related to the simulation games featured in each issue.

*QUESTAR*, a magazine previously devoted mainly to the cinematic side of SF, is now printing fiction. The new fiction editor is Horace Gold, the founding editor of *GALAXY*. Both new and reprint fiction is sought; *QUESTAR* appears bi-monthly, with an advertising guaranteed circulation of 125,000.

## # ROYALTIES:

Several authors wrote regarding their payment/non-payment of royalties and the depressed publishing industry -- one mentioned "Tight money has little to do with the slump in publishing. Rather it's a change in the nature of ownership. Most publishing companies are now owned by conglomerates with no interest in publishing programs or backlists. They are interested only in best sellers and books that can be turned into TV and movies". Another concurred: "...this is what happens when corporations more concerned with the profit ledger than with a quality product take over ... the end result is why pay royalties?" One source went further: "Their thinking is, 'we don't give percentages in Hollywood, except to major stars; why do it differently in New York?'... I predict Work-For-Hire contracts will be appearing all over in the next year."

One change in the royalty formula is suggested by an "Insider" in the publishing industry, Oscar Dystal, former chairman and chief executive of Bantam Books, now consultant to Bantam, at the 8th Annual Richard Rog-

ers Bowker Memorial Lecture (11/25/80): "... Another approach to making royalty structures more equitable could very well be to move our rates from a percentage of the cover price to a percentage of net selling price. Royalties based on net selling price would be a much fairer way to look at the relationship between author, agent and publisher". No move has yet been made to restructure royalties to wholesale rather than retail rates. That such steps are even being considered is indicative that the industry is examining the author's financial role, which many authors would not welcome. If Mr. Dystal's views are acted upon, one author said it "will mean all-out war".

As for publishers withholding royalty statements for an extra 6 months or more, one author wrote: "Yes, two publishers have run as much as six months late in reporting and paying my royalties; I thought this was bureaucratic fouling-up; now I wonder".

#### # PUBLISHING NEWSNOTES:

The Thor Power Tool ruling doesn't look as if it will have much effect on SF. One source reports "... no publisher of SF uses that tax system". Several others agree, although one mentioned "it will still affect publishing as a whole, and anything which affects publishing generally is bound to ..." have ramifications "... on SF specifically". Several Congressmen, along with Senator Moynihan, have reintroduced legislation to ease the effect on the publishing industry of Thor Power, after legislation was stymied in the last Congressional session. (One opposed to the earlier Moynihan Bill was Sen. William Proxmire; he now supports it, PUBLISHER'S WEEKLY reports.)

I got in touch with Senate Appropriations Chairman, Senator Mark O. Hatfield's office, and asked for the senior Senator from Oregon to write me on his position. Excerpts from his letter, March 11, 1981: "... As an avid rare book collector myself, I am deeply concerned about the effects of this proposal. ... Perhaps an accommodation can be made to allow publishers to utilize lower inventory values for tax purposes if the taxpayer establishes by reasonable evidence, including production and sales histories, that they in fact had excess inventories which they could not sell or dispose of. ... The retroactive effect of this proposal should be eliminated by the Congress when it enacts a tax cut for 1981".

The original IRS proposal was retroactive to 1979. Rep. Barber Co-

nable of New York introduced legislation to eliminate retroactive application to book publishers; Rep. Bill Green of New York introduced legislation to eliminate Thor applications to the publishing industry; Moynihan's legislation would change the depreciation procedures currently allowed by IRS and would apply to all businesses.

# Harper & Row had record revenues in 1980, squelching reports of financial problems. Earnings per share rose from 58¢ to 74¢ and income increased 27.8%.



#### # AUTHOR NEWS:

# Piers Anthony is currently working on CENTAUR AISLE, fourth in the Zanth fantasy series and JUXTAPOSITION, third in the Split Infinity Trilogy, with two other novels appearing at Avon, MUTE and VISCOUS CIRCLE. After finishing these books, Mr. Anthony says, "I am setting aside SF for a few years in order to explore other genres, but will surely return to SF in due course". He is currently trying horror, World War II and general mainstream.

# Jack L. Chalker's mainstream novel, DEVIL'S VOYAGE, is out from Doubleday and doing fine; the first in the new FOUR LORDS OF THE DIAMOND series for Del Rey will be out in the fall; he is currently working on the second. THE IDENTITY MATRIX may finally appear in late spring, '82 from Timescape. Most of his books have been translated into Ger-

man. The Well series in the U.S. is over the half-million mark in sales.

# Sandra Miesel has a novel out in August from Ace, DREAMRIDER; she has essays and commentary on various pieces of Anderson's works coming out from Tor Books, the three-volume Psychotechnic League series and THE GUARDIANS OF TIME for openers.

# Mike Resnick has sold a pair of SF novels, BIRTHRIGHT: THE BOOK OF MAN and THE SOUL EATER to New American Library; he has just completed a third SF novel, THE BRANCH, and is working on a semi-SF/semi-mainstream novel, ADVENTURES.

# Charles Sheffield's new hardcover, non-fiction book, with a guaranteed first-printing of at least 75,000 copies, EARTHWATCH, will be published in July with simultaneous editions in England, The Netherlands, Italy, Canada and the U.S.A. The main publisher is Sigwick & Jackson of London, with U.S. co-production by Macmillan and Canadian production by Thomas Nelson; it will be Sigwick's lead title for the year.

Dave Bischoff and he have just finished a 180,000-word novel, THE SELKIE, as SF, but will probably be marketed as horror, which Sheffield describes as having "lots of gore, sex and violence, a genre that Richard Evans labeled a 'Nasty' after he read it. Maybe that ought to be a genre in its own right -- Gothics, Western, Nasty, Science Fiction, Mystery, etc." His next work, a collection of stories, HIDDEN VARIABLES, should be out from Ace in May and another novel, MY BROTHER'S KEEPER, around the end of the year.

# Pamela Sargent will have a novel, THE GOLDEN SPACE, in hardcover from Timescape in early '82; another novel, THE ALIEN UPSTAIRS, is set for Doubleday.

# George Zebrowski is completing STRANGER SUNS for Doubleday, the first novel in the Star Web Trilogy and is working on MIRROR OF MINDS, the third part of the Omega Point Trilogy for Grosset & Dunlap.

#### # MOVIE/TV NEWS:

The big news is that George Lucas has turned in his Director's Guild of America and Writer's Guild of America cards and moved his entire operations to Marin County, north of San Francisco; he has made little secret over the years of his distaste for Hollywood. The last straw occurred over a dispute of the credit notices on THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK. Director, Irvin Kershner's name, was listed at the end of the film; D.G.A contracts specify that

the director's name must appear in the credits at the beginning of a film. Lucas took some guff, even though Kershner supported Lucas and said he was treated excellently while they worked together. Shortly afterwards, Lucas began moving all of his operations out of Hollywood.

Lucas can afford to thumb his nose at the Hollywood establishment; some estimate his personal-financial gain from STAR WARS at \$150 million, not counting subsidiary rights sales, the revenue from THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK, etc. Lucasfilm Ltd. is rumored to be worth more than half-a-billion; STAR WARS is set for nationwide re-release in April.

The latest reports have Roddenberry out as the controlling producer of the new STAR TREK TV movie, studio executives reportedly unhappy over the massive cost of STAR TREK: THE MOVIE, guesstimated at over \$50 million. If Roddenberry isn't directly involved, the chance of a movie is greatly decreased; Leonard Nimoy has often said he will never reprise his role of Spock unless Roddenberry is in charge of production on the line.

This summer will see release of the new Harryhausen epic, CLASH OF THE TITANS, a fantasy movie starring Sir Lawrence Olivier.

#### # DEATHS:

Sue Petrey (obit in last issue), died by mixing two prescription drugs.

H. Warner Munn, 77, died of cancer January 10, 1981. Among his works are THE WEREWOLF OF PONKERT, THE KING OF THE WORLD'S EDGE and THE SHIP FROM ATLANTIS, which were collected as MERLIN'S GODSON (Ballantine, 1976), MERLIN'S RING and THE LOST LEGION, an ancient Roman historical.

Stephen Tall, 72, real name Crompton Crook, died January 15, 1981. Among his works were THE STAR DUST VOYAGES and THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE WALL.

#### # CORRECTION:

Last issue's note on Somtow Sucharitkul should have said he submitted, not sold, a novel, THE STARSHIP AND THE HAIKU, to a Japanese publisher.

#### # MORE AUTHOR NEWS:

# William John Barnwell has another novel coming out, CURVE OF THE SIGMOID, plus several more planned.

# Patricia Jo Clayton has a sixth novel coming out in the Diadem series, NOWHERE HUNT.

# Michael G. Coney: a new novel from Tower, NEPTUNE'S CAULDRON, currently working on THE RELUCTANT MARINERS, a history of the B.C. forest service launches.

# Michael Conner, author of I AM NOT THE OTHER HOUDINI, has recently finished a juvenile fantasy and an SF novel.

# Richard Cowper's sequel to THE ROAD TO CORLAY, titled A DREAM OF KINSHIP, is being published in the United Kingdom.

# Carl Sagen has sold an outline of an SF novel, CONTACT (about humanity's first meeting with extraterrestrials) for \$2 million to Simon & Schuster, the manuscript to be delivered in January for late '82 publication, even though Sagen still has two books to go on a 4-book contract with Random House. Sagen claimed that the Random House contract pertained only to non-fiction; Random House disagreed but chose not to dispute the point. The first two books on the Random House contract were the Pulitzer-Prize-winning, THE DRAGONS OF EDEN and BROCA'S BRAIN. COSMOS, the latest Sagen bestseller, adapted from the PBS science miniseries of the same name, was published under a separate contract. Industry sources say Sagen was upset with Random House for underestimating the sales potential of COSMOS, which was in very short supply during the Christmas season. COSMOS has sold over 400,000 copies at \$19.95.

#### # SMALL PRESS:

##### STARBLAZE:

For September/October: ELF-QUEST I by Wendy and Richard Pini, the first in a new line of graphic illustrated novels.

##### STARMONT HOUSE:

A new title out in the Starmont Reader's Guide series: #5 in the series, on Frank Herbert.

Elton T. Elliott has sold a book to them, no title as yet.

##### UNDERWOOD/MILLER:

For June, three new limited edition collectors' hardcovers: DESERT OF STOLEN DREAMS by Robert Silverberg, novella-length prequel to his novel, LORD VALENTINE'S CASTLE; two volumes of Jack Vance's Demon Prince Series, THE STAR KING, Book I, and the concluding fifth volume, THE BOOK OF DREAMS. (The fourth book, THE FACE, was published by the same company.)

Tentative for July: a bibliography of Philip K. Dick. (This info on Underwood/Miller from FANTASY NEWSLETTER.)

#### BOOK NEWS:

##### # ACE:

June: Returning to 10 titles per month; Ace had cut their schedule from 10 to 6 in November, 1979, because of cash flow problems, in the belief that the same sales spread over fewer titles would raise the sales of each individual title, but this did not occur. According to Ace, the sales per title was irrespective of the number of books printed each month.

Terry Carr will edit a new line of Ace Specials, of six new titles. Some or all may appear in trade paper format before their mass market release.

125,000 copies of EXPANDED UNIVERSE by Robert A. Heinlein are in print.

DREAM PARK co-author, Steven Barnes, was the creator of the animated sequence in the movie, ZANADU, starring Gene Kelly and Olivia Newton-John. DREAM PARK by Larry Niven and Steven Barnes will be published as a trade paperback in April.

##### # BERKLEY:

Purchased Stephen King's non-fiction work on horror, DANSE MACABRE, for over half-a-million dollars.

Berkley Showcase is settling into a schedule of one volume per year beginning with Volume IV in July; they have bought up through Volume V and will begin reading for Volume VI in July.

##### # CONTINUUM:

###### May:

Stanislaw Lem ...THE COSMIC CARNIVAL  
.... OF STANISLAW LEM

##### # DAW:

Publication of HORN CROWN, the new Witch World novel by Andre Norton, celebrates DAW's ninth anniversary with the first use of foil on a DAW cover.

##### # DELL:

###### May:

Joan D. Vinge ..... THE SNOW QUEEN

###### June:

Ben Bova ..... KINSMAN  
Christopher Priest ..... AN INFINITE  
..... SUMMER  
George Pal & Joe Morhaim ..... TIME  
..... MACHINE II

###### July:

None to be released in July.

August:

Orson Scott Card.....SONGMASTER  
Carl Sherrell.....THE SPACE PRODIGAL

# DEL REY:

April:

Roger Zelazny .....THE CHANGING LAND  
Lee Correy .....SHUTTLE DOWN  
James White .....THE ALIENS AMONG US  
Paul O. Williams.....THE ENDS OF THE  
.....CIRCLE  
Roger Zelazny.....MY NAME IS LEGION  
William Tenn ....OF MEN AND MONSTERS

May:

Stephen R. Donaldson....THE WOUNDED  
.....LAND  
Bob Stickgold .....THE CALIFORNIA  
.....COVEN PROJECT  
James White .....MAJOR OPERATION  
L. Sprague de Camp....THE FALLIBLE  
.....FIEND  
Hal Clement .....CYCLE OF FIRE  
John Brunner.....THE SHEEP LOOK UP

June:

Wayland Drew .....DRAGONSLAYER  
Lawrence Watt-Evans .....THE SEVEN  
.....ALTARS OF DRUSARRA  
Lee Correy .....SPACE DOCTOR  
Theodore Sturgeon...MORE THAN HUMAN  
Philip K. Dick....MARTIAN TIME-SLIP  
Robert Silverberg.....UP THE LINE

Del Rey is starting a trade paperback program, re-releasing classic SF novels in trade paper format, after and sometimes concurrent with the massmarket edition.

# DOUBLEDAY:

April:

ASIMOV ON SCIENCE FICTION, a collection of 55 essays on many aspects of SF, including "The Answer to STAR WARS", "The Vocabulary of Science Fiction", "The Scientist as Villain", "The Myth of the Machine" and "Ray Bradbury", among others. They are cutting from two to one SF title per month.

# HOLT:

They are starting an SF hardcover line. They have had success with several Larry Niven titles, including RINGWORLD ENGINEERS, with over 25,000 copies in print.

They will publish NEBULA AWARDS SIXTEEN, edited by Jerry Pournelle, to coincide with the 1982 Nebula Awards Banquet; other 1982 titles: MINDKILL by Spider Robinson and DAMOCLES by Robert Sheckley.

# PLAYBOY:

The six-book War of Powers series by Robert Vardeman & Vic Milan, will conclude with: THE FALLEN ONES, THE SHADOW OF OMIZANTRIM and THE DEMON OF THE DARK ONES.

Playboy has gone back to press for 15,000 more copies of THE SUNDERED REALM, first book of the series

and have upped the print-run on THE DESTINY STONE, third in the series, after receipt of the advance orders.

April:

Jacqueline Lichtenberg.HOUSE OF ZEOR

May:

Graham Diamond...THE BEASTS OF HADES

June:

Karl Hansen .....WAR GAMES

July:

Philip Jose Farmer.....DOC SAVAGE

# PUTNAM:

April:

Jeff Rovin.....THE TRANSGALACTIC  
....GUIDE TO SOLAR SYSTEM M-17

May:

Frank Herbert....GOD EMPEROR OF DUNE

June:

Richard Rhodes .....SONS OF EARTH  
(Contemporary novel about  
an ex-astronaut)  
Frederik Pohl .....FREDERIK POHL'S  
.....FAVORITE STORIES

# TIMESCAPE:

March: (Corrected list)

Alfred Bester .....GOLEM 100  
Vonda N. McIntyre.....FIREFLOOD AND  
....OTHER STORIES  
Robert Stallman.....THE CAPTIVE  
(The Second Book of the Beast)  
Syd Logsdon .....A FOND FAREWELL TO  
.....DYING  
A.E. van Vogt.....THE MIND CAGE

April:

Paul Hazel .....YEARWOOD  
Robert Anton Wilson....MASKS OF THE  
.....ILLUMINATI  
(Schrodinger's Cat: Book II)  
Robert Lupoff...ONE MILLION CENTURIES  
M. John Harrison....THE PASTEL CITY  
Kate Wilhelm .....MARGARET AND I

May:

Philip K. Dick...THE DIVINE INVASION  
(Hardcover distributed by  
Simon & Schuster)

Gene Wolfe .....THE SHADOW OF THE  
.....TORTURER  
(Volume I of the Book of the  
New Sun Tetralogy)

William Barnwell.....IMRAM  
(Volume II of The Blessing Trilogy)

Terry Carr, Editor .....FANTASY  
.....ANNUAL III

David Dvorkin.....THE CHILDREN OF  
.....SHINY MOUNTAIN

June:

Vonda N. McIntyre.THE ENTROPY EFFECT  
Marta Randall & Robert Silverberg,  
(Eds.).....NEW DIMENSIONS 12

James Gunn .....THE JOYMAKERS

Robert Anton Wilson .....THE HOMING  
.....PIGEON

(Schrodinger's Cat: Book III)

Harry Harrison & Gordon R. Dickson..  
.....THE LIFESHIP

July:

Gregory Benford .....TIMESCAPE  
(Apparently to be published by  
Pocket Books as a general novel.)

Timescape Books, the first SF line with a designer logo, created by Rudolph de Harak, weathered a potential crisis by reaching an agreement with Gregory Benford on the use of the title of his novel, TIMESCAPE, as the imprint of the new SF line, negotiated by Henry W. Holmes, Jr. (the lawyer who handled Ellison & Bova's lawsuit with Paramount). Benford was concerned with the lack of advance publicity regarding his novel along with that of the new SF line.

TIMESCAPE's problems began as it was being published; many felt the book (and the rest of the Simon & Schuster SF line) wasn't being supported properly (it was all but impossible to find copies of TIMESCAPE in the Portland area). Disagreements lead to the formation of Timescape Books, with publicity for both hardcover and softcover handled by Pocket Books, the hardcovers distributed by Simon & Schuster. One author very close to the situation said there was a "concerted campaign at Simon & Schuster to destroy the science fiction line", and that in the ensuing power struggle David Hartwell (Timescape/Pocket Editor) and Pocket Books management won out.

The March 6, 1981 issue of PUBLISHER'S WEEKLY reported Eric Kampmann's resignation as vice-president and director of sales at Simon & Schuster; Alvin B. Reuben has been appointed senior vice president and director of marketing for Simon & Schuster's trade division.

# TOWER:

April under the Leisure imprint:

William Tedford.....TIMEQUEST #2:  
.....HYDRABYSS RED

(Book III in the series, out later this year is titled, NEMYDIA DEEP)

April under the Tower imprint:

John Jakes...BRAK #1: THE BARBARIAN



# TOR BOOKS:

May:

Poul Anderson ....THE PSYCHO-TECHNIC LEAGUE
Keith Laumer.....THE BREAKING EARTH
Andre Norton.....FORERUNNER
Fred Saberhagen.THE WATER OF THOUGHT

# CONCLUDING WORDS:

My plans to include an article on SF displays in bookstores had to be postponed; you see, I tore ligaments in my ankle playing basketball and had barely gotten off crutches by Norwescon IV. Next issue, Murphy's Law allowing, that article plus one on distribution in publishing and censorship of SF amid the rise of the Meddling Minority will be here.

Gamecon I will take place June 26-28 in Salem, Oregon. For info: GAME ALLIANCE 481 Ferry Street Salem, OR 97303 Phone: (503) 370-8982

I am going to be running Risk-and-Conquest tournaments there; hope to see some of you -- till then, don't play basketball on a tilted cement driveway as I did.

ALIEN CONCLUSIONS

# I happened to notice in 'More Author News' on page 64, that Elton included the information that William John Barnwell has a novel coming out titled CURVE OF THE SIGMOID.

I suspect this novel will be full of shit. I suspect somebody has pulled Elton's leg, in passing. Seems a waste of time.

The sigmoid curve marks the last few inches of the large intestine before it ends at the anus.

# Here I must do my usual apology schtick. It's a drag. I "need" about eight to 16 more pages each issue to ideally publish all the material that should go into the issue.

But I suspect the material available expands in direct relationship to the added pages, so that even if I were totally insane and did go to an 84-page format, the articles, interviews, reviews and letters would expand to require a 100-page issue.

I started with 48 pages, and look where I am now!

Anyway, the Michael Whelan interview is now promised for next issue.

Darrell Schweitzer's Small Press Reviews (fiction) will appear for sure next issue.

A short feature, "Beyond The Fringe" by Wesley Graham, will also be in #40.

# And, listed below are the reviews in-hand ready, waiting, faunching at the bit, to be published in #40, as of 4-6-81. Note that it is longer than the list last issue. Note the anguish on my face as I type.

- WEIRD TALES #1-2
THE BREAKING OF NORTHWALL
THE ANDROIDS ARE COMING
THE ART OF THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK
THE SCIENCE FICTIONARY STARLOG PHOTOGUIDE TO SF TOYS AND MODELS, VOL.1
TOWERS AT THE EDGE OF A WORLD
EXPANDED UNIVERSE
FANTASTIC LIVES
THE PHAROH'S GHOST & THE TIME OF TERROR
KINDRED
TIME'S FOOL
LOVE NOT HUMAN
UPBUILDING
THE ILLUMINATI PAPERS
THE MAGICIANS OF CAPRONA
SHADOWS ON THE WALL
THE SPINNER
ROBERT A. HEINLEIN: AMERICA AS SCIENCE FICTION

- OTHERBORN
DOWNBELOW STATION
AFTER DARK
SF STUDIES IN FILM
THE TROUBLE WITH YOU EARTH PEOPLE
STARMONT GUIDES TO PHILIP FARMER; JOE HALDEMAN; FRITZ LEIBER
THE HUMANOID TOUCH
HELLSTONE
MAYFLIES
BEASTS OF ANTARES - REBELS OF ANTARES
YESTERDAY'S LILLY
OPTIMAN
SONGS FROM THE STARS
PROJECT POPE
BEYOND REJECTION
THE DEVIL'S GAME
THE PEOPLE BEYOND THE WALL
FIREBIRD
WHAT IF? VOL.2
PLAYERS AT THE GAME OF PEOPLE
SKYROCKET STEELE
THE WALL OF YEARS
STARFINDER
FAR FROM HOME
GENE WOLFE'S BOOK OF DAYS
THE CLAW OF THE CONCILIATOR
THE CAPTIVE
THE DEADLY SILENTS
A TREASURY OF MODERN FANTASY
A SPADEFUL OF SPACETIME
STAR DRIFTER
THE UNICORN AFFAIR
OUTLANDS
MYTH CONCEPTIONS
FIREFLOOD

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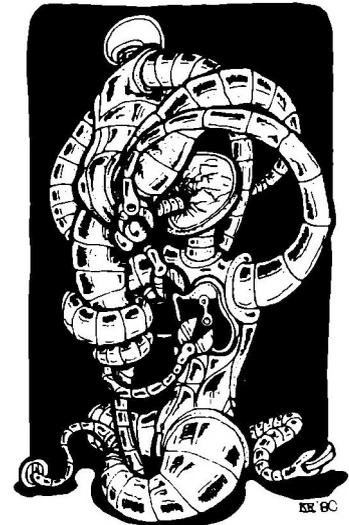
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THE ALIEN CRITIC #5 Interview  
with Fritz Leiber; "The Literary  
Dreamers" by James Blish; "Irvin  
Binkin Meets H.P. Lovecraft" by  
Jack Chalker.

THE ALIEN CRITIC #6 Interview  
with R.A. Lafferty; "The Trench-  
ant Bludgeon" by Ted White; "Trans-  
lations from the Editorial" by  
Marion Z. Bradley.

THE ALIEN CRITIC #9 "Reading  
Heinlein Subjectively" by Alexei  
and Cory Panshin; "Written to a  
Pulp!" by Sam Merwin, Jr.; "Noise  
Level" by John Brunner; "The  
Shaver Papers" by Richard S. Shav-  
er.

THE ALIEN CRITIC #10 An Inter-  
view with Stanislaw Lem; "A Nest  
of Strange and Wonderful Birds"  
by Sam Merwin, Jr.; Robert Bloch's  
Guest Of Honor speech; The Hein-  
lein Reaction.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #14 In-  
terview with Philip Jose Farmer;  
"Thoughts On Logan's Run" by Will-  
iam F. Nolan; "The Gimlet Eye" by  
John Gustafson.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #15 In-  
terview with L. Sprague de Camp;  
"Spec-Fic and the Perry Rhodan  
Ghetto" by Donald C. Thompson;  
"Uffish Thots" by Ted White.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #16 In-  
terview with Jerry Pournelle; "The  
True and Terrible History of Sci-  
ence Fiction" by Barry Malzberg;  
"Noise Level" by John Brunner;  
"The Literary Masochist" by Rich-  
ard Lupoff.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #17 In-  
terview with George R. R. Martin;  
Interview with Robert Anton Wilson;  
"Philip K. Dick: A Parallax View"  
by Terrence M. Green; "Microcos-  
mos" by R. Faraday Nelson.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #18 In-  
terview with Lester del Rey; Inter-  
view with Alan Burt Akers; "Noise  
Level" by John Brunner; "A Short  
One for the Boys in the Back Room"  
by Barry Malzberg.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #19 In-  
terview with Philip K. Dick; Inter-  
view with Frank Kelly Freas; "The  
Notebooks of Mack Sikes" by Larry  
Niven; "Angel Fear" by Freff; "The  
Vivisector" by Darrell Schweitzer.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #20 In-  
terviews with Theodore Sturgeon  
and Joe Haldeman; "Noise Level" by  
John Brunner; "The Vivisector" by  
Darrell Schweitzer; "The Gimlet  
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SF film reviews.

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ties in Digression" by Orson Scott  
Card.

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Engines of the Night" by Barry N.  
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