

WHO KILLED SCIENCE FICTION?

For the past two years at least, I have heard countless people decry the death of magazine science fiction and mourn for the lack of critical soul-searching from within the field. Consequently, in a serious effort to conduct an inquiry into the deplorable status of contemporary magazine science fiction I am asking your assistance.

Please pardon this impersonal letter, but in order to make this study of benefit to you, I must reach a larger number than can be economically reached with personal letters. This letter is going to everyone within the sf field who has ever expressed an intelligent critical look at the field. Since most of us have derived some measure of enjoyment, recognition and income from the field over the past many years I feel it is up to us to make a definite step toward understanding (at least) and overcoming (if possible) the threats before us.

Will you please answer these questions:

1. Do you feel that magazine science fiction is dead?
2. Do you feel that any single person, action, incident, etc. is responsible for the present situation? If not, what is responsible?
3. What can we do to correct it?
4. Should we look to the original paperback as a point of salvation?
5. What additional remarks, pertinent to the study would you like to contribute?

It is my intention to collate, abstract and in general edit the material and publish it on April 15th, 1960. For this reason a positive break-off date for contributions to the study will be December 26th, to allow time for evaluation. Everyone who contributes to the study will automatically receive a copy of the findings.

In order to make the study of the greatest possible benefit to everyone, your answers to the questions should be as detailed as possible. Your opinion on any one of the points may be of great help to others, and in turn you may find benefit in a thought of someone else that has not occurred to you. I feel that this study, if the contributions come from the people who stand to benefit from it, will be of great help to all of us. The findings will not be for sale. I plan to publish them only for the contributors, and possibly for the Spectator Amateur Press Society (40 copies), other than that it will not be available.

Please, lets work together long enough to ~~make this~~ ^{your,} valuable study.

Earl Kemp

INTERIM REPORT
ON
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The response to the initial mailing of the 5-point questionnaire has been overwhelming, both in volume and quality of wordage contributed. Several six and seven page manuscripts have been contributed. The mailing was to 103 names, of which 35 have sent in complete answers. Two have replied that they will have their answers in before the deadline. Someone returned their questionnaire anonymously with quack answers. One disqualified himself. One was returned because I did not have a correct address. This leaves 63 yet to be heard from.

I sincerely feel that the 35 contributions received to date contain many useful ideas that should be of help to all of us. I can personally guarantee that they are of interest to all of us.

In view of the amazing quality of these 35, I am sending this report to the 63 who have not yet answered, reminding them that the cut-off date of December 26th is rapidly approaching. Originally I had no intention of this follow-up, but if it results in bolstering the quality of the original 35, the additional effort on my part will have been worth while.

I wish to repeat what I said in the original inquiry, that I intend to publish these findings on April 15th, 1960. Copies of this publication will not be for sale. By contributing, you will automatically receive a copy. 40 copies will go to the Spectator Amateur Press Society, other than this copies of this study will not be available. This will not be arbitrarily mailed to the SaFari mailing list, do not assume that because you get SaFari you will also get this report.

As the holidays are also rapidly approaching, and some of you will not hear from us otherwise, Nancy and I would like to take this opportunity to wish you the greetings of the season.

Yours,
