

Science-Fiction Times

"The World Of Tomorrow Today!"

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1958 IN SCIENCE FICTION

by Edward Wood

IN TWO PARTS - PART ONE

IT WAS a bad year. No compromise with the truth can disguise this elementary fact. Three new titles were added to the magazine field and 12 removed one way or another during the year. Another year like 1958 and American magazine science-fiction will for all practical economic purposes be dead. Those evils of circulation, obscure writing, moronic monstrosities, and non-science-fiction deviationism inherent in the field for years have come to a head. The results are interesting even if sadly predictable.

There were good stories, yes, even memorable stories during the year. Not as many as in some years, not as few as in others. Yet how long will a dwindling market attract talent which can reap greater rewards in more lucrative fields?

The paperbacks which depended for so long on the reprinting of magazine stories are starting to print original stories. The paperbacks are also reprinting themselves sometimes under different titles. Just from the economics of the situation, one would rationalize that the paperbacks are driving the magazines out and are at the same time replacing them.

I am listing the 1958 magazines in alphabetical order giving besides the number of issues published during the year, the total number of issues published by that title to the end of 1958. Out of the total of 23 titles and one marginal item I have also indicated the rating of the first ten. It seemed fruitless to rank those magazines which published one issue unless the issue seemed to be an outstanding item.

AMAZING SCIENCE FICTION STORIES (12 issues) (337) The oldest science-fiction magazine is not even among the first ten. Yet the changes in name, pages, and editors seem to show that there is awareness that a problem exists. "This Crowded Earth" (October) by Robert Bloch was outstanding. The Mack Vance story "Parapsyche" (Aug) was to put it kindly - "peculiar". With the proper sort of editing this magazine could be a leader. It certainly has the circulation.

ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION (12 issues) (337) 2nd in a field of 23. Campbell is good but he has been better. You can always depend on Astounding to be either 1st or 2nd. "The Man Who Counts" and "We Have Fed Our Sea" both by Poul Anderson and "Unwillingly To School" by Pauline Ashwell were excellent but "Close to Critical" by Hal Clement was dull, dull, dull. I said it and I'm glad.

FANTASTIC (12 issues) (50) Another Ziff-Davis magazine and still out of the first ten. The use of the "Troon" series by John Wyndham from the British magazine New Worlds Science Fiction has brought some badly needed tone to this magazine. Why the July issue on Shaver? The use of non-science-fiction/fantasy stories is insulting.

FANTASTIC UNIVERSE SCIENCE FICTION (11 issues) (58) Number 10 in a field of 23. The non-flying saucer articles are excellent. Robert Silverberg's "Road To Nightfall" (July) was impressive. If editor Santesson would only cut down on the ex-

 Edward Wood, like Thomas S. Gardner who ran this annual report for years, is one
 of a very (few) rare breed of science-fiction fans who read each and every sci-
 ence-fiction story published in s-f mags. He is a natural to take over this well
 liked review, and we are quite sure you'll find it most interesting. We'll be
 very curious in seeing how your viewpoints compare with his. Our thanks to Ed
 *Wood for a job well done. -the editors *

cessive flying saucer material in his magazine, he might pay more attention to the stories. He has a broad base of story material unlike say Gold or Campbell and could progress. Why the waste of Finlay on those banal covers?

FLYING SAUCERS (4 issues) (32) This marginal item is included merely for interest. Ray Palmer has induced a curious affection for himself in science-fiction fandom. The contents of his current effort are trivial.

FUTURE SCIENCE FICTION (6 issues) (40) Number 9 in a field of 23. Here is an example of good editing overcoming many difficulties. Lowndes gets good stories and articles. Must reading was Damon Knight's "A Yardstick For Science Fiction" (June).

GALAXY MAGAZINE (12 issues) (98) Number 3 in a field of 23. I have disliked the way Gold handles his magazines, yet he published my favorite story of 1958, "Last-born" by Isaac Asimov (September). This is the finest Asimov I've read in years and I still have the magazine version of "Trends". Notable among 1958 serials was Fritz Leiber's "The Big Time". Is Gold really serious about the title change? Gold once had a fighting chance to beat out John W. Campbell. But that was long, long ago.

GALAXY SCIENCE FICTION NOVEL (1 issue as a magazine) (31) Finally, years late, this magazine has been transformed into a paperback. Selection #31 "Shambleau" by C. L. Moore was excellent but surely not more than 3/7's of the original book could have been packed into the reprint's pages?

IF SCIENCE FICTION (6 issues) (49) Number 4 in a field of 23. Hard luck Damon Knight could have done a lot with this magazine. Here is a definite loss to the science-fiction field. A well printed and competently edited magazine which should have survived. Not to be missed are "The Songs of Distant Earth" (June) by Arthur C. Clarke, "A Question of Identity" (April) by Frank Riley and numerous others. (Since this was written, If has been bought by Bob Guinn who has revived it with Gold as editorial director plus the entire staff of Galaxy Magazine -editor.)

IMAGINATION SCIENCE FICTION (5 issues) (63) Now that William Lawrence Hamling has withdrawn from the science-fiction publishing game, (can anyone seriously call it a business?) I feel someone should thank him for the help his fan departments have given to science-fiction fandom. Think also of all the artwork from Hamling's magazines that have been sent to convention auction after convention auction. The stories in Imagination were average hackwork, without luster or sparkle.

IMAGINATIVE TALES (3 issues) (23) Average hackwork, nothing to brag about, nothing to be ashamed of.

(to be concluded in the next issue) -----

 WITH MIMBOGRAPHING there will be very few, if any, copies left for the back-issue department; so please resubscribe as soon as you can and thus not miss any issues. The number after your name is the last issue you have coming to you. -----editor

DAVE KYLE ATTEMPTS TO FILE NOTE OF ISSUE - RAYBIN AND DIETZ FILE COUNTERCLAIM

BRONX, 21 January, (CP) - It was reported here today that Dave Kyle had attempted to file a Note of Issue with the Calendar Clerk of the Supreme Court, Bronx County. This paper, if filed, and the proper fees paid, would place his lawsuit against Frank Dietz and George Nims Raybin upon the Court Calendar to await its turn for a trial. A perusal of the paper revealed the fact that Dave Kyle was demanding a trial by Jury. His Note of Issue, however, was rejected by the Calendar Clerk because of some defect in the papers.

Raybin and Dietz, defending themselves in this legal case, have filed a counterclaim as part of their answer, charging libel, based upon the three "Bell" fan magsalleged written and published by Kyle during 1958.

SCIENCE FICTION BOOKS ----- by Stephen J. Takacs

NEW SCIENCE/FANTASY BOOKS RECEIVED:

THE DEEP RANGE by Arthur C. Clarke, Signet Books, NY, 35¢, November 10, 1958.
STAR SCIENCE FICTION STORIES #4, edited by F. Pohl, Ballantine Books, NY, 35¢ November 13, 1958.

IMMORTALITY DELIVERED by Robert Sheckley, Avalon Books, NY, \$2.75, November 24, 1958.

BEYOND THE VANISHING POINT by Ray Cummings; Plus THE SECRET OF XI by Kenneth Bulmer, Ace Books, NY, 35¢, November 26, 1958.

FIRST ON THE MOON by Jeff Sutton, Ace Books, NY, 35¢, November 26, 1958.

YEAR'S GREATEST SCIENCE FICTION & FANTASY: 1958, edited by Judith Merrill, Gnome Press, Hicksville, NY, \$3.50, December 1, 1958.

CRY, HORROR! by H. P. Lovecraft (reissue of "The Lurking Fear & Others") Avon Books, NY, 35¢, December 3, 1958.

THE MOON MAKER by Arthur Train & Robert W. Wood, The Dawn Press, Hamburg, NY, \$3.00, December 4, 1958.

THE RETURN OF SOLAR PONS by August W. Derleth, Mycroft & Moran, Sauk City, Wisc., \$4.00, December 8, 1958.

WINDS OF TIME by Chad Oliver, Pocket Books, Inc., NY, 25¢, December 9, 1958.

TOMORROW'S GIFT by Edmund Cooper, Ballantine Books, NY, 35¢, December 9, 1958.

THE BEST FROM "FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION" - 8th Series, edited by A. Boucher, Doubleday, NY, \$3.75, December 19, 1958.

LOST IN SPACE by George O. Smith, Avalon Books, NY, \$2.75, December 26, 1958.

WAR OF TWO WORLDS by Poul Anderson; Plus THRESHOLD OF ETERNITY by John Brunner, Ace Novels, NY, 35¢, December 29, 1958.

TIME TO COME, edited by August W. Derleth, Berkley Books, NY, 35¢, December 31, 1958.

B-R-R-R !, edited by Groff Conklin, Avon Books, NY, 35¢, January 2, 1959.

STARMAN'S QUEST by Robert Silverberg, Gnome Press, Hicksville, NY, \$3.00, January 3, 1959.

AFTER THE RAIN by John Bowen, Ballantine Books, NY, 35¢, January 16, 1959.

NOT IN SOLITUDE by Kenneth F. Gantz, Doubleday & Co, NY, \$3.50, Jan. 23, 1959.

A MEDICINE FOR MELANCHOLY by Ray Bradbury, Doubleday & Co, NY, \$3.75, January 23, 1959.

SCIENCE FICTION FORECASTS ----- Coming Up Next In The Pros

GALAXY MAGAZINE June 1959 issue will contain: Novella: WHATEVER COUNTS by Fred-erik Pohl. Novelets: TAKE WOODEN INDIANS by Avram Davidson, and NO PLACE FOR CRIME by J. T. McIntosh. Short Stories: TRAVELING COMPANION WANTED by Richard-Wilson, and SOFT TOUCH by Daniel F. Galouyc. Non-Fact Article: EXTRACTS FROM THE

GALACTICK ALMANACK ("Music Around The Universe") by Larry M. Harris, Science Department: FOR YOUR INFORMATION ("Any Questions?") by Willy Ley. Features: EDITOR'S PAGE by H. L. Gold, and GALAXY'S FIVE STAR SHELF by Floyd C. Gale. Cover by EMISH illustrating WHATEVER COUNTS.

"FUTURE SCIENCE FICTION" DROPS COLORED COVERS

NEW YORK, 5 February, (CNS) - The April issue of Future Science Fiction came out today, and like the current issue of its sister magazine Science Fiction Stories, the colored covers have been dropped. In its place is a brown and white, plus yellow, line drawings. Unlike Science Fiction Stories, there is no cover-up editorial. Calls to editor Robert Lowndes have resulted in what amounts to "no comment" answers.

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