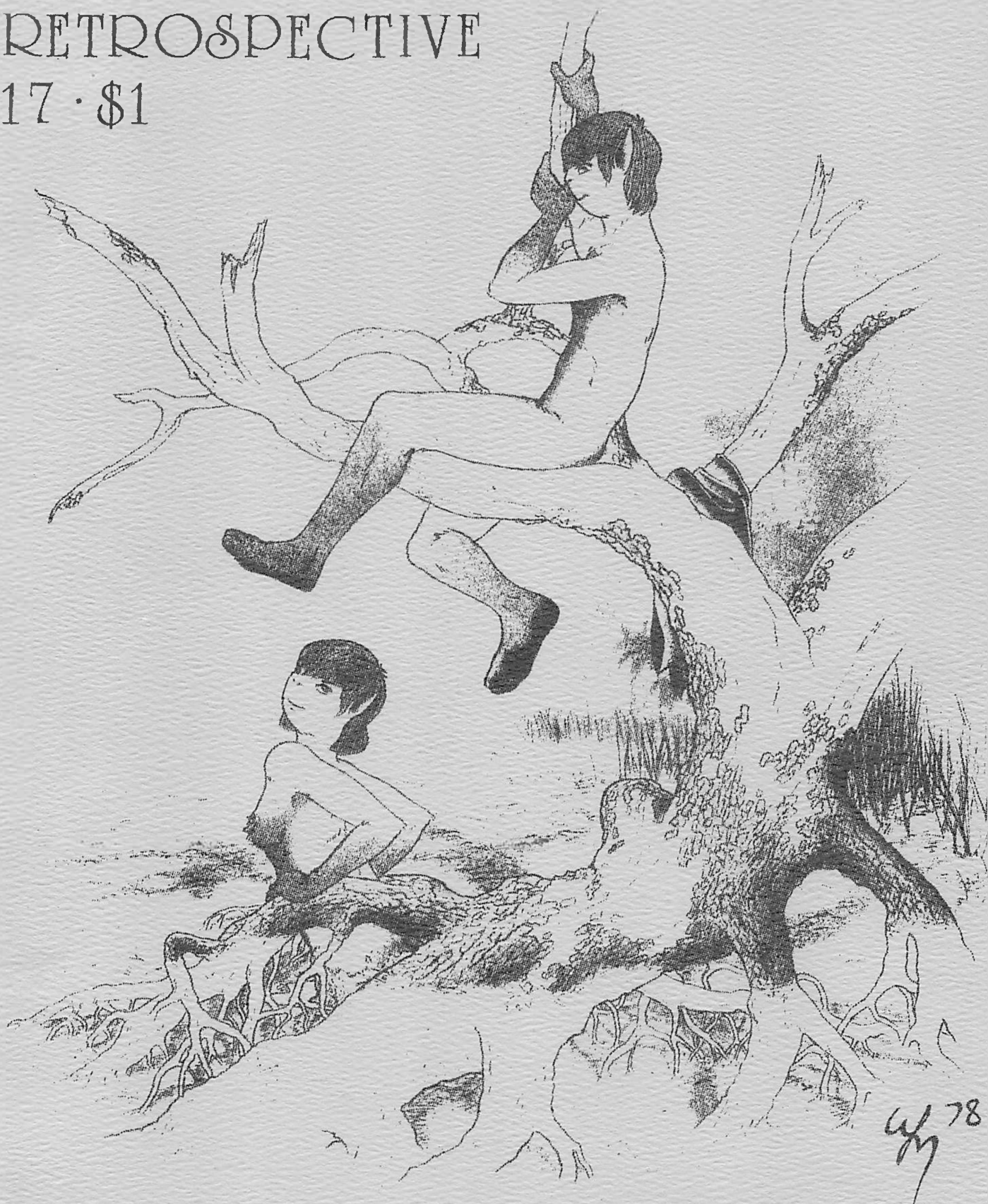


FUTURE
RETROSPECTIVE
17 · \$1



Cliff & Susan Biggers, Editors
6045 Summit Wood Drive
Kennesaw, GA 30144



NO. 17
July '79

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PERSPECTIVE



THE DAYS OF WHINE AND RAISES

I've just finished harping on this a while back, but it's happened again: the Postal Service has increased book rate by 23%, to .59¢ for the first pound. For a three pound package, UPS has, at last, become competitive in pricing to most domestic destinations. And I suspect a lot of fanzines will publish less frequently, or with smaller issues, as a result.

Of course, some people pointed out that fan editors can, if they wish, apply for government grants and subsidies available to small fine-arts publications. Knowing the tendency of fan editors to be independent and spontaneous, however, I'd doubt that very many would take advantage of such an opportunity.

But I've pledged to myself that I won't grumble anew as the Postal Service pushes its rates higher and higher. I'll just keep my fingers crossed that QWIP systems become lower in price, then I'll start phoning in my fanzines. As a final note, though: did you know that mere carriers for the USPS make \$7.53 an hour--and they just got a raise?...

BOOKTALK

According to figures made available recently, paperback sales declined in total number last year--the decline was in the order of 10%, I've heard. This is the first time in years that total paperback sales have dropped--the standard pattern has been a regular climb in sales. But then, this is the first time I can ever remember a mainstream bestseller costing \$3.50 in regular paperback edition.

While this information wasn't available, I'd speculate (perhaps erroneously) that genre sales (mystery, sf, western, romance) have continued a climb. If I'm wrong there, I'd bet that the decline has been much smaller in genres than in bestseller fiction. Again, price is the factor: the average science fiction paperback still costs about \$1.75 or so. Furthermore, the market for used sf is much tighter, as I lamented in last issue's "The Finishing Stroke"; if I wanted a copy of the latest big-seller historical romance or Harold Robbins book, I could count on finding it in the used market within two weeks of release. With science fiction, I have much smaller odds of finding a new book in the used sections for a while. As price escalates, this may become less true, but it holds to that pattern right now.

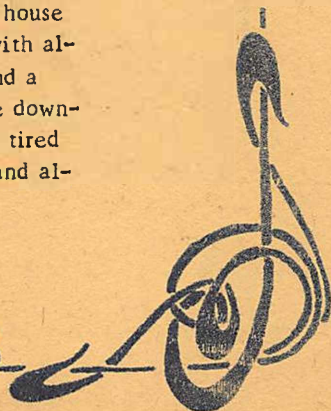
Do science fiction publishers have anything to look forward to in this trend? I'd guess yes; so long as science fiction remains lower in price than the average mainstream bestseller, I'd think there'd be a few readers who might turn to sf (or mysteries, or even--choke--romances) for their reading material.

Incidentally, paperback prices have almost doubled within this field over the past eight years. Since I'm totally in the dark on this, someone tell me: have advances and/or royalties to authors climbed to equal that price increase?

ON THE MOVE

As our astute readers have undoubtedly noticed, there's a new address for FUTURE RETROSPECTIVE with this issue. (Don't bother looking back, I wouldn't lie to you; it's 6045 Summit Wood Drive, Kennesaw, GA 30144) In case you think this is going to be another "we-found-a-better-apartment" tale, think again: we finally bought a house of our own. It's a new place, with almost 1400 square feet upstairs and a full basement and double garage downstairs. If you're getting awfully tired of digging out the liquid paper and al-

cliff biggers



tering our address every year, breathe easy. We have absolutely no plans to change this address for a good while--particularly with housing prices and interest rates escalating at such a rapid pace that our house is sounding like the "good old days" when we discuss home loans with friends who are just now buying.

The basic arrangement is: kitchen, dining room, large great room, master bedroom, two baths, a library, and a study. The study houses the typewriter I'm working with now, the 7' hardcover bookshelf, the electrostenciller, and (eventually) the electric Gestetner. The handcrank unit will probably remain in the basement, since I use it irregularly. The books are alphabetized, most things are neat and in order, and I have space for expansion at last. In a year, that previous line will hang like an albatross....

FAAN AWARDS

As I'm certain most of you know, FAAn Awards are given by fanzine fans, to fanzine fans. Mike Glicksohn was the head honcho on the project this year (see the lettercol for his ad-

dress), and I'm unsure who'll be in charge of vote counting next year. What concerns me will probably hold true regardless of who's in charge of vote-counting, though.

There have been several people who have been touting the need for fan funds, like TAFF and DUFF, to raise money for the FAAns. They've said that money was needed, and no one really thought about the FAAns. I've contemplated the matter many times, and I cannot think of anything that the FAAns do that would necessitate any real expense; I'd be curious to hear from those who've advocated FAAn funds as to why such funds are necessary.

Alright, the FAAns give awards. Plaques, or statuettes, or whatever is actually given, cost money: but everyone who votes in the FAAn Awards must donate a minimum of \$1 for voting/nominating. I'm under the impression that 150 to 200 people actually vote, so that's an income of \$150-\$200 immediately. The only other expense that comes to mind is the cash outlay for the printing of ballots--which can't be a great sum of money.

I can understand the call for funds for TAFF, DUFF, etc.; those funds actually give cash to the winners, so they would have an immediate and obvious need for income. But on a prestige award like FAAns, I question the need for additional income. I'm not closed-minded on this--if someone can explain what the money is actually needed for, perhaps I'll become an ardent fundraiser myself.

Meanwhile, for every subscription over five hundred that I receive to FR, I'll donate 25% of the money to the fan fund of your choice...so send those checks in today!!

PROSE ON CONS

For any who haven't heard as of yet, I'll take advantage of free advertising space to announce that the Atlanta Science Fiction Club is hosting the 1980 DeepSouthCon; I'm co-chairing the convention, along with FR columnist Mike Weber (whose column didn't make it in this issue, but who promises to do better next time) and occasional FR reviewer Rich Howell (whose reviews didn't make it in this issue...is this a diabolical scheme?). Guest of Honor is Ted White, Fan Guest of Honor is FILE 770-and-SCIENFRICTION-ed Mike Glycer, and MC is Michael



Bishop. The convention is scheduled for August 22-24, 1980, and memberships are \$7.50 until the first of the year, \$10 afterwards, to ASFICON (6045 Summit Wood Drive, Kennesaw GA 30144).

For those of you who aren't familiar with the DSC, it's been going on for the past seventeen years (we'll be #18). There's an odd thing that's been happening since 1970, though; every even-numbered year, the DSC ends up in Atlanta. Each time it's here, there's a different chairman or co-chairman for the convention. So far, no repetitions (there have been repetitions on committee, so I know that the chairmen don't find themselves exiled to some desolate island after the con).

I could use this space to try to cajole you into attending the convention, to extoll the virtues of Atlanta, etc.--but I won't. I'm saving all that for next issue... in the meantime, I will quietly encourage you to join the convention, plan on attending, and I promise that I'll have an issue of FR ready for hand-delivery... I never say which issue...

MEANWHILE, BACK AT THE NEWSSTAND...

I've been an avid sf magazine reader/collector for quite a while; I was initially hooked on magazines because of the features, artwork, and lettercols, which were extras that could not be found in a book (yes, that was before the days of Jim Baen's DESTINIES). I began with GALAXY and IF, then AMAZING and FANTASTIC, then ANALOG, and finally F&SF. Since then, I've begun buying/collecting the new magazines as they've begun (and up until the final issues in some cases--COSMOS, for instance).

IF passed away a while back, AMAZING and FANTASTIC might as well be dead today, and now it looks like GALAXY is about to go--it's been three months since I've seen an issue on the stands, and the novel they're serializing will be a Hugo nominee before they finish all their installments of it. I'm disheartened to see it go--but I can't foresee the success of any magazine that can't even approximate a regular newsstand schedule.

I've heard from many people that sf magazines are a dying breed; sales reports on many of the magazines indicate slackening sales, and distribution has become more spotty than it has ever been.

But what about GALILEO and ISAAC ASIMOV'S SF MAGAZINE? Both of them have proven quite successful recently; IASFM has surpassed the previous record-holder, ANALOG, in sales; GALILEO has, according to reports, managed to sell in excess of 50,000 copies per issue without newsstand distribution!

And the odd thing is, neither magazine has noteworthy fiction, on the average. IASFM rarely breaks out of its pattern

of traditional (and, in large doses, monotonous) sf, while GALILEO mixes very entertaining sf with mediocrity, and the reader never knows which of the two will dominate a particular issue. Yet sales continue to climb...

And there's no reason to mention OMNI, since it runs so little sf; but if you are intent on considering it, it would have to be the most successful sf magazine of all, sales-wise. It manages to draw readers who, I would guess, otherwise avoid sf--and it manages to get away with reprinting Heinlein's "Notebooks of Lazarus Long" excerpts, when the same thing has already been reprinted in ANALOG, years before--but it's a new market.

Now, our local comics-and-used-bookstore has begun stocking more in the way of sf; and I see STARSHIP staring at me on the stands--but not for long. The store has sold out of ten copies each of the past three issues within a week of initial display.

It's paradoxical; for the older, established sf magazines, unwilling to alter their patterns and operating on locked budgets, it's a period of stagnation and failure. For the new magazines, with large advertising budgets and/or direct fan approaches, it's a boom year.

I guess I just can't get used to the idea that sf is a commodity; not the fiction itself, but that elusive (and illusive) thing, "esseff". It's something to be marketed, and those who are best at marketing are doing an outstanding job of sales. Those who have a history of good, competent work in the publication of science fiction are falling by the wayside, unable to compete effectively in the mass market. It makes me tend to wonder exactly what the buyers of the new magazines are buying in some cases--fiction or a good advertising campaign.

SELF-PUBLICATION MATTER

This FR is further behind schedule than I'd hoped, and that's largely due to the problems and duties associated with buying a new house: I've been putting a lot of hours into the yard, trying to get something besides a stand of red dirt surrounding our home, and then there's the sorting, alphabetizing of books, etc. Not to mention the problems with a broken drive-band on the electric Gestetner--and a \$32 an hour labor charge to come out and repair the machine. To be fair, I'll have to admit that they did come relatively promptly after my call, and they did give me the part at no charge--but that all conspired to delay this FR even more. The result, however, is a larger issue than I'd intended. The elephant-minded among you will recall my statement that I'd be cutting FR back to 20 pages or so--and here we have another 36-plus page issue. But I will be on schedule with FR #18, and it probably will run a bit smaller; but columnists Mike Weber and Deb Hammer-Johnson should be back then, along with reviews, locs, and other material.

Reviews



HEROIC FANTASY. Gerald W. Page & Hank Reinhardt, editors. DAW U.J. 1455-\$1.95 (1979). Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

The interest shown by publishers in the field of heroic fantasy has given rise to a great many collections, novels, and anthologies, ranging in quality from poor to adequate, but rarely surpassing that measure. The problem seems to be in the limitations of the field, and the difficulty of finding anything really new to offer to the genre.

HEROIC FANTASY only partly manages to avoid the problem of blandness and consistency--but what makes the book promising is that, almost without exception, those who offer quality fiction are those who are new to the genre, and that gives much promise for the future. And it's that occasional touch of quality in a field marred by mediocrity that gave me pleasure as I read this anthology.

Strategically, the placement of stories is a bit unusual: the first two stories are very slow, uneventful pieces, setting a poor pace. Andre Norton's "Sand Sister," the opener, is a very minor addition to the Witch World saga; it's the story of Tursla, a woman striving to find a place for herself in her society. Tursla never comes to life, and the story lacks

the spark that usually accompanies an Andre Norton piece.

Galad Efflandsson's "The Valley of the Sorrows" is another slow mover; it's a well-written piece, but the plotting is very methodical, and the story takes a while to begin. The story deals with fear and shame, and Gram the Sea Wolf tells the reader of his moment of weakness in a convincing, albeit uninspired, manner.

At this point, the book begins to pick up somewhat; Don Walsh's "Ghoul's Head" is a well-written oriental fantasy, and probably is my favorite piece in the volume. Charles Saunders' "Death in Jukun" features one of my favorite heroic fantasy characters, Imaro, in a rather plain story of warrior versus demon--but the storytelling makes the plain tale sparkle. Jerry Page's "The Hero Who Returned" is another top-quality fantasy, concerned with a very human protagonist who manages to accomplish his goals without mighty thews and a sword. Hank Reinhardt's "The Age of the Warrior" is a grim piece, presenting an intriguing view of an aging warrior who knows no other life but battle.

These are the highlights--there are other stories, mostly by "name" authors--and ironically, none of them work well. Adrian Cole's "Astral

"Stray" is the story of Elfloq and his quest to find--and serve--the demon known as the Voidal. Had Cole's story developed more quickly, it might have been a success; as it is, it moves only moderately well, losing interest before it reaches its climax. The remainder of the other stories are simply lackluster--they seem to consist of all the heroic fantasy stereotypes and little else.

It's nice to note that, in a couple of the stories, the authors have diverged from the typical heroic-fantasy style of storytelling. I tend to tire of the eloquent, overwritten prose that has become a standard of the genre, and it's nice to see writers like Don Walsh and Jerry Page and Charles Saunders avoiding the heavy prose.

Ultimately, the question boils down to: how satisfying is HEROIC FANTASY for the reader? For the casual reader, the book will be interesting, above-average, but unspectacular; for the heroic fantasy enthusiast, the volume will be one of the best buys of the year. Assuming the editors are willing to continue this as a series, I hope DAW schedules this as a yearly event.

THE ROAD OF AZRAEL. Robert E. Howard. Donald M. Grant (West Kingston, RI 02892) - \$20 trade edition, \$35 limited edition, signed by Roy G. Krenkel, illustrator. Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

Just when I had assumed that virtually everything REHoward had written was available in one edition or another, Don Grant presents a handful of volumes of REH work I had been unfamiliar with, and in this particular volume, he couples it with the finest Howardian illustrator Grant has ever used, Roy G. Krenkel.

The five stories that make up this volume are Middle Eastern adventure tales--they're more historical adventure pieces than anything else, and while they lack the spark of, say, the Conan stories, they have

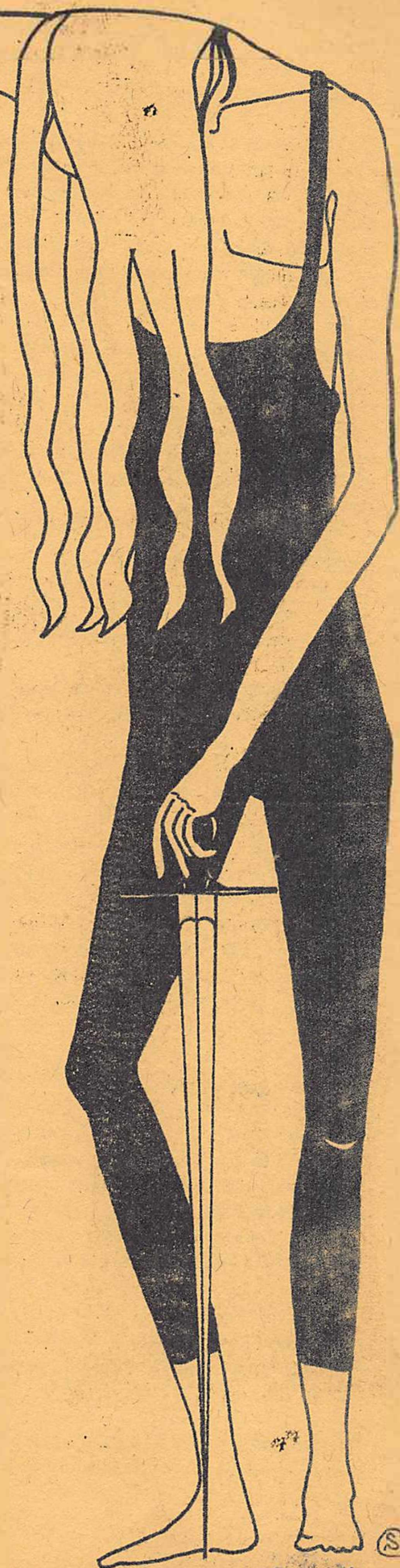
aiswrength and a sense of urgency to them, a style that compels the reader to complete the volume in a single reading. Each story is a grim, brooding piece, reminiscent of the earlier Grant edition of THE SOWERS OF THE THUNDER.

The comparison between the two volumes is certain to be a popular one--both presented the same sort of story, and both were illustrated by Krenkel. Whereas SOWERS was a compendium of scores of Krenkel pen-and-ink drawings and sketches, though, AZRAEL is accompanied by six color plates plus several small two-color sketches. The work is dark and subdued, but the excellent reproduction prevents these illustrations from becoming muddy and vague--instead, the details of the originals are faithfully reproduced here.

The REH completist will no doubt want this book--and the heroic fantasy reader will probably also want to add this to his collection. As is always true with Donald Grant publications, the value of THE ROAD OF AZRAEL is certainly going to go nowhere but up, and the book will most probably sell out in this edition before too long--so don't delay in placing your order, while you can still get it at list price.

THE HOWARD COLLECTOR, by and about Robert E. Howard. Glenn Lord, editor. Ace 34458 - \$1.95. Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

The Robert E. Howard revival continues, it seems, and Ace books is establishing itself as the premiere Howard publisher. In recent months, we've seen a wide variety of REH-related material from that company--but a publication of this sort is something I didn't expect to see in mass-market paperback. In effect, what we have here is a paperback reprint of the best of



THE HOWARD COLLECTOR, Glenn Lord's amateur (or semi-professional) magazine of the 1960s.

The REH material herein is what you would expect from a catch-all volume--it ranges in quality from the excellent to the mediocre. The few letters presented in the paperback only whet my appetite for more--REH may not have been the man of letters that Lovecraft was, but we get interesting glimpses of him through his nonfiction correspondence.

The latter segment of the book, presenting material about REH and his works, is my favorite; we get numerous views of the man and insightful looks into his writing. Fred Blosser's critical looks at Howard's writing present the type of material I enjoy most in this sort of volume--informal, well-written, and carefully crafted criticism.

THE HOWARD COLLECTOR is an excellent volume, one well worth the money--it shouldn't be used as an introduction to Howard, of course, but it is a perfect complement to the Conan and Kull material currently in print.

THE BLADE OF CONAN. L. Sprague de Camp, editor. Ace Books 11670-1 -- \$1.95. Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

THE BLADE OF CONAN is another semipro/fanzine reprint volume, this time reprinting a body of material culled AMRA, plus a few other outside sources; the material is entirely about REH and heroic fantasy, rather than presenting any Howard material, as THE HOWARD COLLECTOR did. This is another solid, readable book, although it does, at times, border on being dry and dull. But then, I've never been as pleased with the material found in AMRA as I have with the material presented in THE HOWARD COLLECTOR; AMRA always tends to take itself too seriously.

The packaging on THE BLADE OF CONAN is atrocious, however; the cover is printed in gold foil on cream pebbled stock, and the end result is a cover that looks blank until you tilt it to just the right angle. The use of Conan's name in the title and logo is also misleading, since this isn't a Conan book, and only portions of it deal with Conan. I don't consider this a must-have, but it's moderately enjoyable reading if you're a real REH aficionado.

THE FOUNTAINS OF PARADISE. Arthur C. Clarke. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich - \$10. Reviewed by Nicki Lynch.

THE FOUNTAINS OF PARADISE is an elegantly written, highly visual book of future history by a master of science fiction, Arthur C. Clarke,

The story follows Vennevar Morgan, a brilliant engineer who has completed the feat of building a bridge linking Africa and Europe, and his dream project of building a "bridge" between the earth and an orbiting space station which would ultimately be linked to the moon. The "bridge" would consist of a hyperfilament which would form the track for "elevators" between the earth and the moon, with the orbiting space station as a way station and tourist center. Thus, man could travel into space in comfort and inexpensively, and earth-launched rockets would become obsolete.

Intertwined with the future history is a story of ancient history that takes place on the same island that is the focal point of the novel--Taprobane. This Pacific island was the home of an ambitious ruler who tried to reach heaven by building a lofty Pleasure Garden. This parallels beautifully with the main story about another man on the island who is reaching for the heavens with modern technology.

THE FOUNTAINS OF PARADISE is a well-written book that explores an idea which we almost have the technology to think about, and with indeed, as documented in the afterword, some scientists have.

Clarke is in top writing form. He even teases the reader with quotes, used to preface some chapters, that give glimpses of the 22nd Century.

THE FOUNTAINS OF PARADISE is highly recommended to those who enjoy science fiction as well as those who enjoy a well-written story of man struggling against the odds. If Clarke's book is not on next year's Hugo ballot, I will be very surprised.

RENAISSANCE. A.E. van Vogt. Pocket 81859 - \$1.95. Reviewed by Susan Biggers.

Some books are all flash and no content; RENAISSANCE is just such a book. The writing is entertaining, solid, and it carries the reader through the book's 190 pages with ease. Once the reader finishes, however, it is obvious that the story is so farcical that it's noteworthy that an author of van Vogt's ability would even attempt it.

The story begins with a simple situation: Dr. Peter Grayson has broken his glasses--or rather, someone else has carefully broken them for him. As it turns out, these rose-colored glasses that all men are required to wear are actually devices to pacify men, to keep them tranquil and under control in a world where women are carrying out all of today's typical male stereotypes. This is a system set up by the alien Utt, and still used on earth; Grayson quickly learns that, without his glasses, he can regain a dominant position (as it is implied he should have), can overcome women by his sheer force of presence, and ultimately he can make

all right with the world--and restore the proper male-female status to his society.

The book is not a feminist one, although it does present a world where women are the more aggressive and more dominant sex. There is nothing feminine about these women, however; they are macho men in drag, reverting to hyperventilated, frilly girls when confronted with a "real man", not subdued by his rose-colored glasses.

The book isn't a wholly bad one--van Vogt's writing can pull off the adventure aspect of it quite well. But when it comes down to the premise of the book, silliness cannot be made into quality material, no matter how well-written the silliness is. RENAISSANCE is a book to pass up--and let's hope that van Vogt's next attempt can avoid the sort of condescension he shows towards his subject in this novel. No matter what that subject might be.

THE INCREDIBLE UMBRELLA. Marvin Kaye. Doubleday - \$7.95. Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

It's rare that I find a book that is as much fun as THE INCREDIBLE UMBRELLA is; it's light-hearted, but totally amusing, and leaves the reader eagerly awaiting further tales of J. Adrian Fillmore and his baffling bumbershoot.

The umbrella of the title is an amazing device that manages to transport its owner into a number of alternate worlds. To begin with, it takes Fillmore to a cosmos where the Gilbert and Sullivan operettas are quite real--and Fillmore finds himself having quite a problem adjusting. Then there's the Sherlock Holmes world, or Burton's Arabian Nights world...and in each, Fillmore is equally uncomfortable. Ultimately, he finds himself facing a diabolical Moriarty and dealing with Frankenstein's monster in a tale that manages to jumble several literary creations together in an unpredictable way.

In its approach and its background, the series seems to resemble de Camp & Pratt's "Harold Shea" adventures; somehow, though, I find J. Adrian Fillmore a more likeable character--and his adventures happen to hit, for the most part, literary worlds that I'm familiar with and very fond of.

THE INCREDIBLE UMBRELLA may not be a major work of science fiction, but it's a solidly entertaining book that can't hurt Kaye's reputation as a competent writer.

DARK WING. Carl West and Katherine MacLean. Argo/Atheneum - \$8.95. Reviewed by Dick Lynch.

The juvenile sf novel is a concept steeped (mired?) in tradition that goes back to the works of Heinlein and Asimov in their prime, and far beyond. Juveniles are fun books to read, in that while character depth is admittedly somewhat shallow, action and adventure is non-stop and

generates a tide of reader momentum that sweeps you through to an upbeat ending. Unfortunately, too few SF juveniles are being written nowadays. Atheneum Press is probably the leading publisher of SF/fantasy juveniles, and has recently introduced a hardback line, Argo Books. DARK WING, one of Argo's first releases, is the first of the "young adult" novels meant to fill the hardback juvenile sf void.

Frankly, I'm not impressed.

As a story, DARK WING is a very pale comparison indeed to the great Heinlein SF novels of the '40s and '50s. In the mid-distant future, Earth is a planet that has overcome many of today's troubles--there are no hints of energy shortages or political turmoil. Scientific achievement has flourished, with coast-to-coast high speed monorail and space colonization that has reached other star systems. But...medical science has vanished. It is illegal to assist in artificially prolonging someone's life by any means, under penalty of mindwipe. So an underground "black market" has developed, and the book's main character, young Travis Gordon, becomes part of it when he finds a paramedic computer in an old wrecked ambulance and begins helping people with his new medical expertise.

The whole plot is rather tenuous, and severely taxes reader believability. After nearly being apprehended, Travis changes identity, and (out of the blue) decides he wants to be a police cadet. Characters are introduced for the convenience of a plot line, and then quickly disappear. Plot lines come and go with equal rapidity. Halfway through the book I quit caring what happened to Travis, because his character and the setting were just too inconsistent and unbelievable.

The strength of the juvenile novel, SF or otherwise, is the ease in readability. This is where DARK WING ultimately fails; I had considerable difficulty in maintaining an interest in it--if I was 13, I don't think I could have finished it.

DARK WING is not a good example of the SF juvenile, or what Argo Books is capable of producing. Don't buy this one.

PRETENDER. Piers Anthony & Frances Hall. Borgo Press - \$4.95. Reviewed by Susan Biggers.

Last year, Borgo Press brought out the first non-magazine publication of Piers Anthony's excellent Arabian fantasy HASAN; now, they have followed it up with an original publication of this collaboration, a science fiction adventure set in ancient Babylon, uniting elements of adventure, sf, and history.

Enkidu is a young man who finds himself acting as an unknowing host to an alien intelligence, NK-2, who has come

to Earth after having ship troubles. While here, he tries to locate station A-10, an outpost on the planet. Eventually, NK-2/Enkidu travel to Babylon in search of A-10/Aten--and Enkidu discovers that to talk of, or worship, the god Aten is a serious crime that results in his being held in a dungeon until he recants. NK-2 cannot afford to let his host die--but he also cannot afford to abandon his search for station A-10.

PRETENDER is an extremely well-written adventure, offering strong plot and good characterization in a package that holds reader interest from beginning to end. While it lacks the complexity found in many of Piers Anthony's solo works, it is certain to satisfy readers.

The trade paperback is illustrated by Larry Ortiz; the illustrations do little to add to the book, and are generally amateurish. The cover itself is the only satisfying piece of Ortiz work--his interior pen-and-inks are very crude. But it's the text that makes this book so enjoyable, not the illustrations.

THE LOVERS. Philip Jose Farmer. Del Rey Books - \$8.95. Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

I imagine that most sf readers are familiar with the story of THE LOVERS, a science fiction classic; this was the book that really hooked me on Philip Jose Farmer when I first read it back in 1969, and it remains a powerful novel today. It's a story of Hal Yarrow and his love for an alien, Jeanette--and it's a story so rich with characterization that I've never forgotten it.

Until this year, there has never been a hardcover edition of this novel; but now, Del Rey books has offered a hardcover first edition of a book first offered in paperback from Ballantine (Del Rey's parent company) eighteen years ago.

If you merely want the book to read, then you'll probably be happy with a paperback copy; Farmer collectors are probably going to want the hardcover, however--particularly when you realize that the book has been slightly rewritten and revised. A basic book in any well-stocked sf library, THE LOVERS is a book you should treat yourself to.

DOOMSDAY. Marv Wolfman. (Marvel Novel series #5, The Fantastic Four). Pocket 82087 - \$1.95. Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

A few comics writers also want to be novelists; some of them, like Gerry Conway and Gardner Fox, do a competent job of it. Others, like Marv Wolfman, should never have left comics--and perhaps need to apply more care to their craft even there.

DOOMSDAY is one of the most poorly-written books I have read in quite a while. The style of the novel is awkward,

cliche-filled, and flat; the characterization has no depth at all; the dialogue does not attempt to surpass or add depth to typical comics dialogue; and the plot itself is weak and repetitive.

I imagine it's difficult to write a really capable novel using a comics character as your hero; Ted White was able to do it with his Captain America novel, THE GREAT GOLD STEAL, in bygone years; and more recently, Bill Rotsler has done a good job with his recent Iron Man novel. But these men were proven writers who added something special to the flat, four-color comics character to make him human; Marv Wolfman lacks the talent necessary to switch from the visual medium of comics to the literary one of novels.

The story involves a visit to Latveria at the behest of Dr. Doom; naturally, it's a trap, and a typical heroes-versus-diabolical-death-devices ensues. As always, Doom is defeated, supposedly forever--until the next time he appears.

DOOMSDAY is a most disappointing novel, and a blot on the series of Marvel Comics novels being published nowadays. Avoid it, by all means.

PROJECTIONS. Stephen Robinett. Baronet - \$5.95. Reviewed by Susan Biggers.

As a novelist, Stephen Robinett has never particularly appealed to me; as a short story writer, however, he seems to be much more satisfying. PROJECTIONS is an enjoyable collection of nine short stories by Robinett, most of which appeared in ANALOG.

Robinett works on the strong-plot format; his stories are centered around what happens, not who's doing it or what is happening to their character. "Helbent 4", for instance, is a story of a soldier returning home, only to find out that a time distortion causes him to arrive before his time, where he is mistaken for an invader; Robinett makes the story work quite well, making Helbent's sacrifice seem believable. In "The Linguist," we have a master linguist whose occupation is learning languages, then having his knowledge transferred to other people who desire to learn that language instantly, and without any effort. Then there's "Cynthia", the tale of an old man who transfers his mind into a young man's body to return to a woman he had left behind long ago. In every case, Robinett begins his stories with a strong idea, then wraps characterization and mood around that idea very carefully, never obscuring it.

PROJECTIONS is an entertaining, well-written short story collection; if this is any sign of the level of quality being set for the Baronet/Analog Books series, then I suspect that's one series I'll be reading regularly. It also proves that Robinett is an author worthy of attention; be sure not to let this book slip by unread.

IN MEMORY YET GREEN. Isaac Asimov. (Doubleday - \$15)
Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

The first volume of Isaac Asimov's autobiography is out at last, and the book is much more interesting than you might think when you first see it. It's a very, very large book, and it only covers Asimov's life up to 1954; the book is, as a result, packed with all sorts of trivia and many anecdotes that only Isaac Asimov could have made interesting. But it is an interesting book, once you get past the early segments of the book--the first fifty pages are incredibly boring--and into the events that Asimov actually remembers.

Unlike Pohl's *THE WAY THE FUTURE WAS*, this isn't really at all valuable as a chronicle of sf fandom, or as a chronicle of what it's like to break into professional sf writing. Certainly, sf writing concerns a large part of this book--but an equally large part is concerned with where Asimov lived, where he worked, how much money he made, who his friends were, when his first extramarital affair occurred (yes, it's in here), and the like. It's, as the word "autobiography" implies, an interesting chronicle of Isaac Asimov the person. Asimov fans are sure to like it; general sf fans will probably like it; casual sf readers will probably wonder why in the world anyone would even want to wade through this book's pages. Decide which category you belong to and act accordingly.

THE RED SPIDER. Kenneth Robeson. Bantam 12787 - \$1.75.
Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

I've always maintained that Lester Dent was a superlative author of detective/adventure fiction. His story "Angelfish" in Herbert Ruess's *THE HARD-BOILED DETECTIVE* showed what Dent could do when he wanted to write realistically; *THE RED SPIDER* shows the same thing. This is a never-before-published Doc Savage novel, rejected because Dent (using the Robeson house name) had written a realistic story that sends Doc Savage to Soviet Russia.

The book isn't totally realistic, of course; but it presents a more believable, real-world Doc Savage, and is less formula oriented than the average Doc Savage novel. If you're a fan of hero pulps, you'll be most thankful for the work Will Murray has done in locating and bringing into print this work.

HELLER'S LEAP. Ian Wallace. DAW UE1475 - \$2.25. Reviewed by Sue Phillips.

Kippe! Another Ian Wallace Book!

To me, this jubilation is justified. I think Wallace is one of the most underrated writers around. He writes very cerebral, complicated plots, and this latest is another of the same.

The action begins when Klaus Heller, while playing chess with his sister Kyri, dies via a conical hole suddenly appearing

in his chest. There is no one else in the room.

Claudine St. Cyr is brought in to investigate. One evening, while speaking with Kyri Heller alone, Kyri dies in the same manner as her brother...while Claudine watches. This is disconcerting, since now it means that Claudine must consider herself a suspect.

Wallace flashes back to Heller's attempt to jump through a black hole in order to get to a star system that happened to be surrounded by them. He, and an unwanted assistant, disappear. They are snatched out of the air by the matriarchal society of Iola. Therein lies one of the two major parts of the story.

The other part deals with St. Cyr's investigation. During this, she meets Croyd who is currently the fifth most powerful man in the galaxy. These two are my favorite characters among Wallace's writing and it is interesting to see how they play off each other.

They get along famously--but almost everyone gets along well with Croyd. The two exhibit some of the same character traits, which adds to the book's interest. They feel attracted to one another and do something about it; and, to my knowledge, this is the first time that Croyd teaches the art of uptiming to anyone else.



Uptiming and downtiming are the two creations of Wallace's that I find most fascinating. Originally, they were explained in such a way as to make them terribly confusing. As time passed, their meaning became clearer. Claudine quickly catches on, and makes use of the ability in solving this, one of the most unusual cases she has ever handled.

The flavor of the book is pure Wallace, who writes a brand of sf that is strangely unique. It is almost totally cerebral, even when the storyline is filled with action. It takes almost total concentration to follow, but it can be utterly rewarding when one takes the time to puzzle out the ins and outs. To top it off, most are also good mystery tales, well written and playful.

I say again, Ian Wallace is an underrated writer. I'll avidly await each of his books until and if he turns out a disappointment--but I don't think that will happen soon.

THE YEAR'S BEST HORROR STORIES, SERIES VII. Gerald W. Page, ed. DAW UJ1476 - \$1.95. Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

Under Richard Davis, who was the initial editor of the YEAR'S BEST HORROR series, these books were oriented heavily toward the twist-ending, macabre story that almost typifies horror. Under Gerald Page, the series has taken a twist toward the psychological horror story, and YEAR'S BEST HORROR STORIES VII continues that trend.

There are only a couple of real disappointments in here; Darrell Schweitzer's "Divers Hands" is one (this story of how a knight managed to lose his hand would be much more appropriate in a heroic fantasy anthology than it is here), and Jack Vance's "The Secret" is the other (Vance's story is entertaining and well-written, but offers nothing to make it special). The remainder of the stories in the book are at least satisfactory, and sometimes excellent.

"Intimately, With Rain" by Janet Fox, a story of a unique return home, is a superb and compelling story, one of the highlights of the book; Stephen King's "The Night of the Tiger" isn't as impressive as King's novels, but this story of a circus tiger and a cruel lion tamer is solid horror fiction nonetheless. My personal favorite, though, is Dennis Etchison's "The Pitch", the story of a salesman who manages to make a vegamatic-type device...diabolical. Another intriguing story, although only marginally in the horror vein, is Michael Bishop's "Collaborating", an odd point(s) of view story told by a two-headed man.

As has (I hope) become a pattern, the book is graced with a stunning Michael Whelan cover; on the whole, THE YEAR'S BEST HORROR is a good, solid anthology of modern horror fiction, and should be satisfying to anyone who enjoys a feeling of unease along with their reading. I wish this once-a-year publishing event would get more attention, though--it deserves it.

NIGHTMARE EXPRESS. Isidore Haiblum. Fawcett 4204-3 - \$1.95. Reviewed by Sue Phillips.

I don't know what to say about this book. It's funny, and it's fast-paced and it has lots of action. In it, you'll find a girl and a golem, a registered MM (middle man), a city controller, and a mad scientist. You'll find amorphous beings who turn into doppelgangers of our heroes. There's a mysterious red mist and equally mysterious switches in time and dimension. The mayhem is about par for the course in a Haiblum book.

Isidore Haiblum, who may or may not be female, is definitely Jewish. All of Haiblum's fiction is replete with particularly Jewish humor. Here, it is the golem who gets many of the good lines.

We switch from the adventures of the MM to those of the controller to those of the girl and golem to the mad scientist and back again. You always know who you're reading about, though, and ultimately all will converge.

It is that "ultimately" that is the only bad point in an otherwise outstanding tale. The action begins fast and furiously and keeps surging forward until the last three pages. There, it just breaks down. All the excitement and suspense that has been built up just stops. The danger to the world is still there, and the world is saved, but it's as if the manner of it was pulled out of thin air. It's not an exciting rescue; it just happens and our heroes live happily ever after.

Overall, I'd rate this book as disappointing; I know I was disappointed when I finished it. At the midway point, I was impressed and would have told you so, but the ending was the spoiler.

NIGHTMARE EXPRESS is well written and the characters are well drawn. Each is a real person who tries to deal with what happens to him in a true and accurate fashion, as real people might try to deal with it. Action, mystery, and suspense, it's got. Action it hasn't got. Make up your own mind about this one.

SCIENCE FICTION: AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY. Grosset & Dunlap - \$7.95. Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

As an entertaining hodge-podge of facts and opinions, and a nice glimpse at the foreign sf market, This book by Sam Lundwall is entertaining reading. As an organized history, the book lacks a great deal. Lundwall, a Swedish sf author of some note, tends to greatly bolster the achievements of foreign sf writers and publications--and while it's true that foreign sf is a market to be considered, it's Lundwall's perspective that makes SCIENCE FICTION: AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY almost valueless as a true, unbiased history.

Lundwall organizes his book thematically rather than chronologically, for the most part; he also includes films, comic

books and strips, and marginal sf in his history. This isn't bad in itself, but the haphazard inclusion of such tends to contradict any sense of organization the author is trying to create.

What can be said about this book? The illustrations are generally adequate, the text is interesting reading, and the viewpoint is interesting to an American reader. But is the book valuable as a history of science fiction? No.

SILVERLOCK. John Myers Myers. Ace 76671-4. - \$2.50. Reviewed by Sue Phillips.

I bought this on the strength of the three introductions by Poul Anderson, Larry Niven, and Jerry Pournelle. I am very glad I did. First published in 1949, SILVERLOCK is an epic fantasy that is more blatantly allegorical than LORD OF THE RINGS but, I think, less so than Lewis' Narnia series. Myers takes the reader on a trip through the Commonwealth, following the adventures of A. Clarence Shandon, known as Silverlock due to a vein of silver running through his hair.

Shandon first meets his guide, Golias, when both are shipwrecked off what turns out to be the eastern coast of the Commonwealth. They are washed up on the shores of Aeeca, part of the Archipelago that lies to the east (everything travels from east to west). A slight altercation with Circe gives our hero the first taste of the oddity of the place.

From there, it takes off on a joyous flight through fancy. Silverlock is on a journey to find himself, though he doesn't know that yet. On the way he has a great time, meeting and learning from personages such as Robin Hood, Don Quixote, Nimue, members of every mythology you can imagine and some you can't. The place is so full of brilliant images and interesting encounters that you can get lost in the story without seeing any of the allegory.

Unfortunately, the last third of the novel seems to get bogged down in that aforementioned allegory. Here, Shandon meets a character named Faustopheles who makes a bargain with him to lead him to his goal, a spring called the Hippocrene. Instead (or on the way depending on your interpretation of the bargain) he takes him (and us) on a trip through Hell. This guide is much more interested in the bitter aspects of the place than anything else and he tries to turn our hero into a despairing, cynical denizen of that place.

That doesn't mean you can't enjoy even this segment of the book. Among other things, for instance, it means we discover yet another name for Golias. That fact alone makes a worthwhile story.

I can't end this without mentioning the songs; like LotR, it is full of poetry meant to be sung. They, like the prose, are lyrical and well written.

I recommend SILVERLOCK highly. Take your time reading it; there's so much in it, and I wouldn't want you to miss it.

THE ILLUSTRATED HARLAN ELLISON. Baronet - \$8.95. Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

This is Baronet's companion volume to last year's Roger Zelazny edition; unlike the Zelazny, which was almost entirely done by a single artist, this volume presents several artists and their versions of noteworthy Ellison stories. The visual interpretations are not of an even quality, and that's the problem (or the benefit) with this book.

Visually, Wayne McLoughlin's "Deeper Than the Darkness" and the Sutton/Alcala/Oliff "Croatoan" are the most impressive (it's odd for me to say that, since I so strongly dislike "Croatoan" and (usually) Tom Sutton's art--but it all works together to make an impressive visual adaptation. Steranko's highly-touted 3-D adaptation of "Repent, Harlequin" (yes, it even comes with the red-and-green glasses) is visually attractive, but seems almost totally unrelated to the story it is supposed to illustrate--I'll take Alex Nino's version from a few years back any day. There's some attractive Leo and Diane Dillon work--unfortunately, it's all reprint work, and I've seen it before.

THE ILLUSTRATED HARLAN ELLISON is enjoyable, but it's hard not to find yourself thinking how much more could have been done, compared to this final product.



TWIN VIEWS: Two Reviewers look at CATACOMB YEARS, by Michael Bishop (Berkley/Putnam's - \$10.95). Reviewed by Nicki Lynch and Cliff Biggers.

In the 21st Century, the United States has been dissolved into city-states under domes. In a series of short stories connected with interludes, CATACOMB YEARS chronicles the rise of the domed city of Atlanta. Taken in historical sequence, the stories form a disquieting view of the future.

The short stories included are: "If a Flower Could Eclipse", "Old Folks at Home", "The Windows in Dante's Hell", "The Samurai and the Willows" (which received Hugo and Nebula nominations), "Allegiances", "At the Dixie Apple With the Shoofly-Pie Kid", and "Death Rehearsals."

CATACOMB YEARS is the background for Bishop's novel of last year, A LITTLE KNOWLEDGE. In reading CATACOMB YEARS, I suddenly found A LITTLE KNOWLEDGE becoming clearer and clearer. It would be very interesting to have the two novels put together in the right time sequence. I feel it would make a very interesting work.

CATACOMB YEARS is a well written character study of a gentle people living in the ungantle time of the development of the Atlanta city-state. The people chronicled are a sharp contrast to the cults and restrictions set up by the city's rulers. Despite all the restrictions, these people rise triumphant from the ashes.

If you have read A LITTLE KNOWLEDGE, by all means read CATACOMB YEARS. If possible, read them together; it is an interesting trip into the future.

--Nicki Lynch

Over the years, Michael Bishop's stories of the Atlanta Urban Nucleus have grown into an intricate, interconnected series whose full impact can only be seen when the works are assembled together, as in this large volume. Each story stands as an individual piece of fiction; together, they not only form a powerful novel but serve as a document of the developing talents of Michael Bishop.

The early works are less refined; in "If a Flower Could Eclipse", we see only a hint of the powerful characterization that so marks Bishop's later works. This story of a child who doesn't quite fit in, and the man assigned to assist his teacher in trying to help him, is the earliest piece in the book, and it's a far cry from the final "Death Rehearsals."

And it is the final story, "Death Rehearsals" that is the most impressive; here, the Cygnostikoi serve a vital purpose in the story, taking an active role for virtually the only time in the book. We are also reintroduced to Leland Tanner, first presented in the novel in "Old Folks at Home" a story of a group companionship-marriage experiment. In "Death Rehearsals," Leland is an aging, frustrated man--frustrated

by the type of life the UrbNu forces him to lead. Bishop tells us of Tanner's falling in love--a love destined to be unrequited--and he also tells us of Julian Cawthorn, the returning character from A LITTLE KNOWLEDGE. Tanner is tired of his type of life; Cawthorn is, it seems, tiring of his unbreakable bonds with the comatose Cygnostikoi. As the story ends, things have changed for Tanner, for Cawthorn--and, with a glimmer of hope, for the city of Atlanta.

CATACOMB YEARS is, according to the author, destined to be his last entry into the Atlanta UrbNu series--at least for a while. It's a shame; some of his best work has been done within this framework, and I'd hate to see him irrevocably end this segment of his career.

CATACOMB YEARS will probably be the one Bishop work most likely to satisfy those readers who have been less than enthralled with Bishop's writing thus far; its characterization and strong plot-threads make it pleasant reading, and its powerful conclusion lingers after the book is finished.

--Cliff Biggers

ISAAC ASIMOV PRESENTS THE GREAT SF STORIES 1 (1939). Edited by Isaac Asimov & Martin H. Greenberg. DAW UE1454 - \$2.25. Reviewed by Susan Biggers.

The premise behind this anthology (the first of a series) is self-evident; Asimov and Greenberg intend to present the best sf of the year given in the title, beginning with 1939 (a great year for sf--some of the best-selling authors of today placed their first stories during that year) and working forward. I imagine that, in a way, this is analogous to what Carr or Wollheim does--it's just that Asimov & Greenberg seem to be about forty years slower getting their "best of" volume into print.

I can't help but wonder how much Asimov actually does on anthologies like this, other than lend his prestigious name to the project; I tend to expect that, otherwise, the extent of his effort is to write brief, casual introductions for each story.

Is the fiction good? Of course--most of it has withstood the test of time. The only problem with this sort of volume is that I've already read half (or more) of it; however, I might also point out that a less considerate editor would have included fewer of the less-reprinted stories, and the result could have been a book I had read 75% or more of already.

All in all, the idea behind THE GREAT SF STORIES is a good one; what with the absence of "year's best" from the era this book covers, this series can offer a good retrospective of sf's middle period. I only hope that Greenberg, Asimov, and DAW continue this series to its fruition, rather than publishing a few volumes and letting it die out. As it is, THE GREAT SF STORIES (1939) is a highly readable, entertaining trip into sf's recent past.

THE ATLAS OF FANTASY. J.B. Post. Del Rey/Ballantine 27399 - \$9.95. Revised edition pub. 1979. Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

The coffeetable book has become very popular of late; it seems that there's a need for books that can be casually flipped through without requiring concentration. Unfortunately, THE ATLAS OF FANTASY is a poor coffeetable book; the maps are drab and lackluster, and there's little in this book to retain the interest of most people.

For the geographically inclined, this might be a superb volume; I find it of little use, however.

The book offers maps of a variety of fantasy and sf worlds, and has been updated to include the maps that accompany Terry Brooks' and Stephen Donaldson's fantasy-worlds; among others; unfortunately, many unnecessary maps are included, while important creations, like Marion Zimmer Bradley's Darkover, are overlooked. I question the need to include Verne's Chairman Island, or Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha County, or several "humorous" disproportionate maps.

An atlas of fantasy is a good idea, perhaps; but even so, this one suffers too much from padding and missing worlds to suit my needs. Pass AN ATLAS OF FANTASY up.

GATEWAY TO LIMBO. Chris Lampton. Doubleday - \$7.95. Reviewed by Jim Brock.

Take a touch of Asimov's THE GODS THEMSELVES, a shot of Piers Anthony's humor, and the liveliness of Dave Bischoff, Lampton's sometimes co-author, and you have a novel that reads well, is enjoyable, and shows promise of more to come.

Allison Carstairs decides he must stop Ian Hawkesworth or die trying. Hawkesworth has promised the Zzyri, the inhabitants of the Second Energy Plan, the lives of the N'Guith in exchange for an unlimited supply of energy. The only problem lies in how Carstairs may carry out his plan; to complicate matters, he soon learns that the N'Guith do not mind dying.

There's nothing really new brought out in this book. It shows how one man survives as he tries to follow his own concepts of morality. But Lampton turns it into an engrossing adventure, very enjoyable; this book is an indication that Lampton should go far in the sf field.

ALTERED STATES. Paddy Chayefsky. Harper & Row - \$8.95. Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

I've never had any doubts that Chayefsky was a solid, capable author; memories of his television and movie scripts, such as "The Mother" and "Hospital" constantly remind me of just what a talent he is. But I was wary when I saw that he had turned his talents to the novel--and more specifically, a



science fiction novel. The track record for successful mainstream novelists/writers who turn to sf is a very poor one. Thus, it was with some trepidation that I began ALTERED STATES.

Edward Jessup is a brilliant man--but seemingly a person who has displaced his emotions. His experiments with drugs and isolation tanks have taken him into a hallucinatory primeval state, where he envisions himself as a part of man's earliest beginnings, as much ape as human. His wife Emily is hardly able to comprehend her husband; he seems to be ignorant of the meaning of love, and he has no visible emotional ties to his wife. As he puts more and more effort into his experiments, increasing the dosage of the hallucinogen more and more, he and his colleagues discover that the dreams are not merely dreams.

Jessup is one of the most vividly portrayed protagonists I have encountered in recent years; his thirst for knowledge counterbalanced with his emotional aloofness combine to create a vivid, memorable character. And his changes at the end of ALTERED STATES are both believable and acceptable--for they tend to support the fact that ALTERED STATES is a novel of redemption. There's no doubt that Chayefsky's novel deserved its Nebula nomination; it may well have deserved even more than that, as it's the most memorable thing I've read this year.

THE FAR ENDS OF EARTH AND TIME and PRISONERS OF THE STARS: The Collected Fiction of Isaac Asimov, V. I & V. II. Doubleday - \$12.95 @. Reviewed by Nicki Lynch.

In two new volumes of reprinted stories, new readers, as well as old fans, can become reacquainted with one of the masters of science fiction, Isaac Asimov.

THE FAR ENDS OF EARTH AND TIME is a collection of two novels and a short story collection that has the connecting theme of time travel to or in a future earth.

In PEBBLE IN THE SKY, Joseph Schwartz is transported accidentally into future earth. Earth has become an outcast among the other populated planets due to the radioactivity of its crust. Schwartz becomes a powerful weapon in the "revolution" to bring earth back into status as the home of mankind and the seat of government after an experimental operation is done on him.

The theme of time travel is explored as a deliberate means of travel for the purpose of "smoothing out" history in THE END OF ETERNITY. Andrew Harlan is a technician with Eternity, a group of people from different times who monitor time and sift out things such as wars and space travel from earth's history. Harlan stumbles upon a plot which could destroy the future he knows, but would set mankind free to explore the stars.

In the short story collection EARTH IS ROOM ENOUGH, the stories are the usual exploration of people's lives as changed by technology, but in the wonderful Asimov style.

The focalpoint of PRISONERS OF THE STARS is space travel. The two books are set in Asimov's Foundation universe, while the short story collection deals with exploring planets closer to home.

In THE STARS LIKE DUST, Biron Farrill becomes a pawn in an intergalactic search for a rebel base. In his hunt, Biron takes part in a plot to overthrow a people who dominate a whole star system. Reminiscent of STAR WARS, this would make a pretty good film.

Space travel also plays a part in THE CURRENTS OF SPACE, but to a lesser degree. The planet Florina is controlled by another race for its wealth. A man, Rik, who has discovered that Florina is doomed has become "psychic probed" into forgetting this information. Left on the planet, he struggles to regain his memory and warn the people of the disaster.

In the collection THE MARTIAN WAY AND OTHER STORIES, planets closer to home are explored in four short stories.

Both books have a fascinating introduction by the good doctor which give background on the stories and Asimov's own view of the themes. These two volumes of fiction by Isaac Asimov

are a fine collection of past Asimov and a must for all Asimov completists.

MASTER OF HAWKS. Linda Bushyager. (Dell 15871 - \$1.95) Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

Linda Bushyager's first novel is available at last, and the book is a good, competently written fantasy novel of a world where telepathy is a crucial weapon. It's the story of Hawk, whose telepathic powers work best in conjunction with his animal namesakes (or, for that matter, any kind of bird). It's the story of an attempt to save the kingdom of York; and it's a story of a growing love between Hawk and Ro, a woman who has telepathic powers of her own.

The book is good; rarely does the action lag in the book's 256 pages. There are problems, though; the most aggravating aspect of the book is the incredibly large number of Tuckermisms it contains. Taral, Avedon, Steffan, Elgin, Tompkins... the list grows longer and longer, and it gets to the point, at times, that it's almost like an extended fannish roundrobin of some sort. Certainly, it's a minor point, but it is something I hope will be avoided as much as possible in future novels of the Eastern Kingdoms--although many of the recurring names will be used in future books by necessity, I'd guess.

There's been a good bit of enjoyable fantasy published recently, and MASTER OF HAWKS is yet another book to add to that growing number. It's easy to be most critical of a book written by a fan, particularly a first novel; but there's nothing awkward or "fannish" about this book--it'd be good reading no matter who wrote it.

BLIND VOICES. Tom Reamy. Berkley 04165 - \$1.95. Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

Tom Reamy's first--and only--novel makes me painfully aware of how tragic to the field of science fiction his loss really was. BLIND VOICES is a superb novel, a book whose likes you rarely find, and its comparisons to Ray Bradbury are most apt.

Angel is the protagonist; a circus performer whose act is based on his mental powers, he is understood by very few people. One person who does seem to understand him is Evelyn Bradley, a midwestern girl who has fallen in love with Angel.

The book captures and conveys perfectly the impressions of a circus in the midwest of the 1930s. It also manages to capture human emotions and human realities in a style that captures the best of Ray Bradbury, but never seems imitative.

Don't dare pass up BLIND VOICES; it's one of the best first novels ever published, and it's a shame it also has to be a last novel by this talented author.



ANDROMEDA. Peter Weston, ed. St. Martin's Press - \$8.95. Reviewed by Nicki Lynch.

ANDROMEDA is a new anthology of original science fiction stories written, for the most part, by British authors, with several American writers added for interest. The book is edited by Peter Weston, who had his own critical magazine, SPECULATION, from 1963 to 1974.

Included in this collection are: "Appearances of Life" by Brian Aldiss; "Starthinker 9" by Michael Coney; "Waltz of the Bodysnatchers" by Bob Shaw; "Travellers" by Robert P. Holdstock; "Valley of the Bushes" by Naomi Mitchison; "The Infinite Summer" by Christopher Priest; "Doll" by Terry Greenhough; "A Beast for Norm" by George R. R. Martin; "The Giant Killers" by Andrew M. Stephenson; and "Seeing" by Harlan Ellison.

ANDROMEDA is intended to be a showcase for fine original work; its success is mixed, however. Among the better works, "Appearance of Life" by Aldiss is a finely woven story about a Seeker who discovers a long dead love affair in a museum. For those who like a blending of detective and SF, there is "Waltz of the Bodysnatchers" by Shaw; this story takes place on a planet with very strict laws against marital infidelity, suicide, and murder with a very interesting way of punishing the latter crime.

In "Doll", Greenhough has a haunting tale of symbiosis between man and an alien creature who helps him survive in a hostile world. Ellison's "Seeing" rounds out the volume

very well with a story about a woman who truly sees and how her life moves from being a curse to being at peace.

ANDROMEDA is a truly mixed bag of stories, with all too short introductions by Peter Weston.

ALFRED BESTER'S THE STARS MY DESTINATION. A Graphic Adaptation by Howard Chaykin and Byron Preiss. Baronet - \$8.95 pb (\$15.95 cloth). Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

Chaykin seems to have established himself as the major "graphics adapter" of the past few years; last year, we had his massive EMPIRE with Samuel Delany, a flawed project (flawed more by Delany's writing than Chaykin's art), and this year we have this first part of a two-volume adaptation of Bester's work.

No one needs to tell you how well-written and enjoyable Bester's novel of Gully Foyle is; it's a job of work that will probably be with us for years to come, because it has all the essentials of a science fiction classic: solid plot, strong characterization, acceptable extrapolation, and--most importantly--something to say. Chaykin had a difficult job in trying to match visuals with the text--for the most part, he has done it well.

Byron Preiss is credited with panel configurations; a rather vague description, since it could mean anything from merely arranging blocks on a page to actually roughing in panel layout itself. I'd tend to suspect it was more or less the former, since the published product still looks very much like Chaykin's previous work. To Chaykin's credit, however, he has taken the time to finish his art--the rough appearance I had objected to in much of his more recent work is rarely present here, and the color execution here is vibrant and appealing (I had found some of Chaykin's previous color work almost garish).

I'm a fan of the graphic adaptation format, so I am most impressed with THE STARS MY DESTINATION; however, I think this volume might be appealing to the sf reader who has little interest in visuals--this slick, all-color publication really accents the text well, and shows how, with imagination, art and text can be mixed attractively.

LEST DARKNESS FALL. L. Sprague de Camp. Del Rey 28285 - \$1.95 (reprint). Reviewed by Susan Biggers.

As most of our friends know, Cliff and I are both time travel enthusiasts; that is, we avidly collect books having to do with time travel--it's almost a sub-genre of sf. Bearing that in mind, you can well imagine my feelings as I began LEST DARKNESS FALL, a "classic time travel story", as the front cover blurbs it.

LEST DARKNESS FALL lives up to any and all expectations I had of it; while it avoids the complexities and intertwining

plot-threads of works like *THE MAN WHO FOLDED HIMSELF*, it manages to present an engrossing view of a modern man suddenly thrown back into an earlier era--and era of which he just so happens to be quite knowledgeable.

Martin Padway is an archeologist who knows a great deal of Roman history; somehow, he finds himself hurled back into Sixth Century Rome. The novel details his climb from a position of a stranger in a backwards era to a position of authority and power; Padway is a man who knows that the Dark Ages are soon to come to Rome--and he is a man with enough intelligence to possibly stop those Dark Ages from ever arriving.

The basic story, albeit shorter, appeared in *UNKNOWN* 40 years ago; it's a credit to de Camp's literary ability that it is just as readable and entertaining now as it must have been then. *LEST DARKNESS FALL* is a must-have for any good science fiction library.

THE TWO FACES OF TOMORROW. James P. Hogan. Del Rey - \$1.95. Reviewed by Vince Lyons.

The everyday functions that hold society together in *THE TWO FACES OF TOMORROW* are controlled by a super-sophisticated computer network called Titan. The problem is that the computer has begun connecting logic circuits in a manner that leads to some difficulties; i.e., when asked by a lunar survey team to schedule the removal of a section of ridge that blocks the path of a proposed magnetic accelerator, Titan responds by immediately diverting several loads of rock from the operating accelerator onto the ridge, very nearly killing the team.

A computer is without common sense. Titan was pleased with itself that it had been able to figure out that impacting several tons of rock onto the offending ridge would solve the problem; but it never occurred to the computer that the people might be injured, or indeed that people could be injured, or that it even mattered. Ray Dyer and his team of computer specialists must figure out how to teach the computer "common sense", while making sure the resulting entity is benevolent towards mankind.

THE TWO FACES OF TOMORROW is largely enjoyable, at times brilliant, yet its 391 pages should have been reduced by about 25%. There is a bit too much detail on the care and feeding of complex computer systems for my taste (understandable when you realize that Jim Hogan is a computer scientist with Digital Equipment Corporation), though I must confess that most of it was reasonably interesting, if not essential to the story. He handles the interrelationships of his characters well, but his women are somewhat stereotyped; the ending was stock "happily ever after", which detracts. All in all, a better-than-average sf novel.

On a scale of 1-10, I'd give it a 6.5.

WHISPERS II. Stuart Schiff, editor. Doubleday - \$8.95. Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

WHISPERS, as a magazine, is the finest regularly-published periodical of horror fiction today; as a horror anthology, the hardcover version ranks alongside Jerry Page's *YEAR'S BEST HORROR* in the paperback field and Charlie Grant's *SHADOWS* in the hardcover market as a superlative example of modern horror.

The only problem I have with the hardcover version of *WHISPERS* is that I'm familiar with the stories reprinted from Stuart Schiff's magazine, thereby cutting tremendously the total amount of reading pleasure I can get from the book. But as in the initial volume, *WHISPERS II* makes up for this by including several original stories alongside its reprints.

Friends whom I've convinced to try this book's predecessor were surprised at the crispness of tone of the fiction; everyone unfamiliar with the market seems to expect horror fiction to be either in the Lovecraftian tradition or in the style of Poe's oppressively heavy prose. The fiction is, instead, quite contemporary in style and approach.

The offerings are widely varied; the Kane story "Undertow" by Karl Edward Wagner opens the book, and it's a wise selection; this is my favorite Kane story thus far published. There are also good selection from Richard Christian Matheson, son of the more famous Richard Matheson (RCM's story is a wry piece about a man who makes a living by selling his body--literally). Jack Chalker turns in a moody and impressive piece about a young girl who can control the weather. Lee Weinstein's "The Box" is a moving and horrifying piece about parental love and loss. And there are many many others, most of which are quite good.

The volume has its disappointments, of course; R. A. Lafferty turns in a very lackluster story, and Charles Grant's "The Fourth Musketeer" fails to make its points with any conviction. Joseph Payne Brennan's "Marianne" is as trite as those half-minute fillers they used to utilize on *NIGHT GALLERY*. But for the most part, the stories are at least entertaining.

As with the first volume, *WHISPERS II* is illustrated, both with black and white plates and with a full-color Tim Kirk dustcover (one of the very, very few Doubleday dustwrappers to be in the least way attractive--I wish they'd take a hint and use these four-color pieces on more of their sf and fantasy releases).

WHISPERS II is a feast of reading pleasure for someone whose appetite for horror fiction is sated only rarely; for the casual reader who's unfamiliar with what modern horror fiction is like, I'd recommend this book as a crash course on the genre.

A PLANET CALLED TREASON. Orson Scott Card. St. Martin's Press - \$10. Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

It's rare to find a refreshing, original sf novel; you can usually count the number of those published each year on the fingers of both hands. Thankfully, A PLANET CALLED TREASON is just such a novel, and it demonstrates the skill that Orson Scott Card brings to his craft.

Lanik Mueller is an heir to a wealthy and powerful family on the planet Treason; he is also a radical regenerative, a person whose natural ability to regenerate damaged body parts has become overactive; he becomes first aware of this when his body surprisingly grows a pair of large female breasts. Arms and legs are soon to follow--and on the planet Treason, these extra body parts can become valuable trade material. By use of a matter-transmitter called The Ambassador, these "spare parts" are traded for a valuable commodity: iron. Eventually, one of the Families (the descendants from original space colonists) hopes to acquire sufficient iron to build a starship and escape Treason.

Mueller's radical regenerative powers cause him immense trouble; because of this, he is unable to remain his father's heir. Instead, he departs on a dangerous quest to save his own freedom and to try to find a place where he can live at peace--and he takes part in numerous adventures along the way.

Card makes A PLANET CALLED TREASON an adventure piece from the start, but it's not meaningless action; there's a good deal of thought and motivation in this novel, and the character development of Lannik Mueller is superlative. I suspect that the carefully-extrapolated cultures of Treason will impress quite a few readers, also; these cultures transform the book into an odyssey, with our protagonist discovering strange cultures, different talents, and alternate viewpoints all along the way.

I was aware from his short stories that Card was a competent writer; A PLANET CALLED TREASON demonstrates that he can extend his talents to full-length writing, and the result is a most enjoyable novel.

REVENGE OF THE MANITOU. Graham Masterton. Pinnacle - \$2.25.

Harry Erskine and Singing Rock return in this novel of Misquamacus' return to earth to seek his revenge; this time, he and 22 Indian medicine men are returning en masse through a classroom of third grade children.

The action moves on an even keel throughout as one father tries to stop it on his own; he is thought to be insane, and encounters great difficulty in carrying out his task. However, through friendly spirits, he is finally able to stop the planned return. While there's no implied sequel, the book leaves room for a third MANITOU novel.

REVENGE OF THE MANITOU is a readable and enjoyable novel, but it lacks a lot of the power that helped THE MANITOU hold the reader in its spell. There is still a strong atmosphere of horror and suspense. All in all, this isn't a superior work from Masterton, but it's a readable one that will help quench your taste for horror for a while.

MACROLIFE. George Zebrowski. Harper & Row - \$12.95. Reviewed by Susan Biggers.

One gets the feeling from Harper & Row's packaging and promotion that MACROLIFE is viewed by the company as their major entry into the sf field for this year. If that's true, then they've made a wise choice; MACROLIFE is one of the most entertaining and carefully developed sf novels of recent years, and even a weak ending can't lessen the strength of the work very much.

The Bulero family is incredibly rich, largely due to a metal, bulerite, that their industries have developed. Bulerite is unbelievably strong and adaptable, and has made stunning architectural and engineering achievements possible. Technically, the metal turns out to be unstable, and its massive use worldwide becomes a catastrophic problem as the metal detonates with a tremendous release of energy, destroying most of the planet with it. As Earth is seemingly destroyed, the macrolife colonies--giant mobile colonies operating almost as an evolutionary extension of life, with the humans on the colonies the equivalent of the individual cells in a multicelled organism--break away from the home planet and become man's first totally free, self-sustaining space explorers.

Zebrowski presents us with views of the Bulero family over a period of centuries; it's a massive attempt that, for the most part, is successful. The book breaks into three segments, "Sunspace:2021", "Macrolife: 3000", and "The Dream of Time", each of which presents a different major plotline within the macrolife framework.

The book is illustrated by Rick Sternbach; the dustwrapper is impressive in its portrayal of one of the macrocolonies, but the interior artwork is less impressive; space scenes lose some of their impact in black and white, and any time Sternbach tries to portray a human figure, the result is unsatisfactory. At least, though, Harper & Row has made the attempt to add artwork to the volume; I hope they continue the project into other sf releases.

When nominating time comes around, don't forget MACROLIFE on your Hugo nominating ballot; it deserves the nomination, and should be in serious competition for the award itself.

COLD HAND IN MINE. Robert Aickman. Berkley 04109-3; \$1.95. Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

I enjoy well-done horror fiction, but there are certain sorts

of horror stories that tend to leave me cold; most of them are of the psychological horror type. It's not that I dislike psychological horror; it can be well-done if the writer has the skill necessary to pull it off. But when the writer fails, the result is most dissatisfying--it's almost an all-or-nothing situation. And in *COLD HAND IN MINE*, Robert Aickman managed to hit "nothing" with amazing frequency.

COLD HAND IN MINE is a collection of eight horror stories, according to the blurbwriter's squib, the purpose is "to scare you to death." Rarely does a writer drift farther from the purpose of his book (if, indeed, this was Aickman's purpose, and not a blurbwriter's delusion). In "The Swords"; for instance, he details the story of a young man's first sexual experience with a circus performer whose exact nature is a bit surprising. Ludicrously so, in fact, and this is why the story fails to work. In fact, the only story that ever overcame my disbelief was "Pages from a Young Girl's Journal", the story of a young girl's macabre experiences in Italy; it works as a horror story relatively well.

COLD HAND IN MINE was a major disappointment; I hope Aickman's next collection proves to be more satisfying.

NEW DIMENSIONS NINE, Robert Silverberg, ed. Harper & Row - \$10.95. Reviewed by Nicki Lynch.

NEW DIMENSIONS NINE is a collection of short stories edited by Robert Silverberg; it's the ninth in the series of original fiction, and in this volume there are some very good short stories and some very average stories.

Most notable in the collection is the first story, "The Pathways of Desire" by Ursula K. LeGuin. The story is told from an anthropologist's point of view, and tells of a planet where she notices the natives don't have the kind of culture they would be expected to have. What she finds and the implications of her findings make for very interesting reading.

"Crossing the Wastelands" by Jeff Hecht, who is also managing editor of a scientific trade journal, is also noteworthy. Set in the far future, it chronicles man's reawakening in a world which has become his museum.

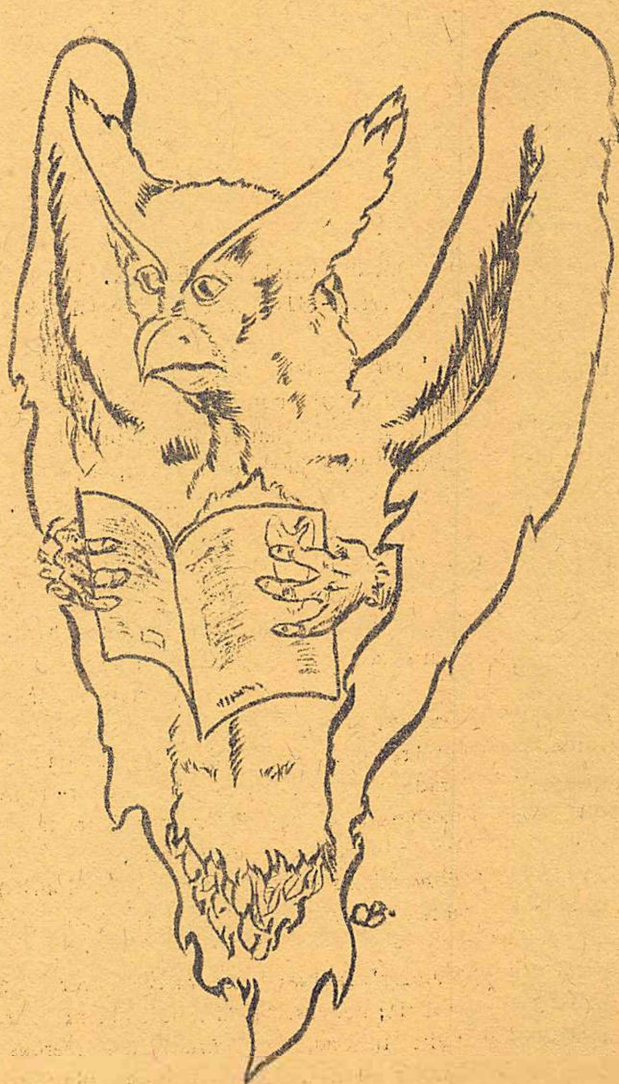
In "A Passionate State of Mind", Tony Sarowitz examines the awakening and workings of a genius's mind through the eyes of those whom he knew as well as his own observations. The last man on earth theme is given a new twist by Michael Conner in "Last".

The volume also contains "The Rauncher Goes to Tinker Town" by Timothy Robert Sullivan; "Calibrations and Exercises" by Gregory Benford; "Binding Energy" by Peter S. A Iterman; "The Attendant" by Bruce Taylor; "Square Pony Express" by Felix Gotschalk; and "The Sands of Libya are Barren" by Donnan Call Jeffers, Jr.

Each story is introduced by Robert Silverberg, who tells the reader a bit about each writer and whether the person has appeared in previous *NEW DIMENSIONS* volumes or not. *NEW DIMENSIONS NINE* is an interesting mix of new and old wave science fiction. It is a series generally worth reading, and this ninth volume is no exception.

WEIRD SCIENCE: A Four Volume Set Reprinting the E.C. Comics of the same title. Russ Cochran (PO Box 437, West Plains, MO 65775) - \$60 for the set. Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

Few companies have established the record and reputation of quality that E.C. Comics managed to achieve in the early 1950s; due to the stories (which, by today's standards, often drift uncomfortably close to cliched predictability) and the art (including, in particular, Wally Wood and Al Williamson), the *WEIRD SCIENCE* run is most highly regarded. So, it was sensible that when Russ Cochran began his project to reprint the entire E.C. Comics library, he would offer as his first selection the 22 issues of *WEIRD SCIENCE*. I'm quite happy that he did; of all the E.C. titles, these are my personal favorites--and with the large amount of Wally



Wood and Al Williamson artwork, these titles serve as a perfect showcase for Russ Cochran's superlative printing as well.

Each volume is a bit over 9 by 12 in size; the paper is a heavy stock, the plates are made either from the original artwork or high-quality photostats (I'm not sure which), and the bindings are sewn. The comic covers are reproduced in full color, while the interiors are reproduced in black and white. The result is one of the most beautifully produced sets of books I've ever seen, with interiors that are filled with engrossing reading for the comics fan.

The latter two volumes in the set include many adaptations of Ray Bradbury stories; the latter volume, in particular, has a good deal of really stunning Al Williamson artwork. And the early volumes, while offering the most embarrassingly trite stories, are filled with attractive artwork and an occasional gem.

The price may seem a bit high -- \$15 a volume -- but the books as a whole are worth the price. For the collector, this makes quality reproductions of E.C. Comics available at a fraction of the price of the original issues. For the speculator, the books are a fine investment because of the limited number of copies released. For the sf-comics fan, the books are filled with a sense of wonder that only E.C. can create.

STRANGE EONS. Robert Bloch. Whispers Press (Box 1492-W A zalea St., Browns Mills, NJ 18105) - \$12 trade edition, \$25 signed edition. Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

I can't help but be surprised by the large number of HPL pastiches and contributions to the Cthulhu mythos released lately; it's no longer an event when one of these volumes comes out. But when the volume is by Robert Bloch, it becomes an event.

STRANGE EONS concerns a number of people who find themselves caught up in a situation wherein the writings of H.P. Lovecraft were not fiction at all, but a fairly accurate representation of real occurrences. It begins with the discovery of a painting by one "R. Upton", obviously the basis for the story of "Pickman's Model"; a theft of the painting quickly lures Keith and Waverly into a mysterious plot to bring the great Cthulhu back into wakefulness.

The Whispers Press edition of STRANGE EONS is clothbound, which is something that can't always be said for hardcovers today; it also features very attractive interior illustrations by John Stewart, whose unique style adds immensely to the book. The only real flaw I see is the use of a Richard Powers cover -- it seems very much out-of-keeping with the mood of the book itself. But it's the text that's most important, and as with any Robert Bloch book thus far, STRANGE EONS is a highly readable and enjoyable pastiche; Stuart Schiff seems to be on his way to establishing a reputation of quality with Whispers Press, and this is no exception.

ELECTRIC FOREST. Tanith Lee. (DAW UE1482 - \$1.75). Reviewed by Susan Biggers.

Tanith Lee's latest from DAW is a bit of a departure: it's a very well-done sf mystery that grabs the reader from the first page and never loosens its hold on your attention.

Magdala Cled is an oddity; she is an ugly person in a world of Beautiful People. Due to her natural conception and birth -- an error -- she was not genetically engineered, and therefore does not have the beauty and form of the other inhabitants of Indigo. But then a man named Claudio offers to transfer her mind into an artificial, but perfect, body; in effect, she will be beautiful for the first time. She accepts, only to find that Claudio has plans for her to replace a woman named Christophene -- a woman she is modeled on exactly. As Claudio's plan -- and Christophene's involvement -- becomes more clear, Magdala realizes that her existence is in serious danger.

ELECTRIC FOREST is smooth, direct, and action-filled; never before has Tanith Lee gotten to the point of a story so quickly and told it with such careful direction. If this novel is any indication, Lee could be writing mysteries if she wasn't in the sf field. By all means, buy ELECTRIC FOREST; it's one of the best things Lee's done thus far.

AGE OF DREAMS. Alicia Austin. Donald Grant, Publisher (West Kingston, RI 02892) - \$25.00. Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

The illustrations are always a real drawing point in any Donald Grant volume; so it's only appropriate that when he releases books that are virtually all-art, it's always an impressive product. Previous volumes by George Barr and Joseph Clement Coll have been quality additions to the art-book line. AGE OF DREAMS is another must-have for the fantasy art fan.

AGE OF DREAMS is 144 pages, almost all of which is Alicia Austin's art, in both pen-and-ink and various color media. What Austin can do with felt pens, as on page 17 and "The Huntress" or "An Elfish Couple" on page 114 is enough to frustrate many capable artists; her colored ink work, best seen in the vibrant pieces like "Cockatrice, Griffins, & Wyverns - Oh My!!" on page 118, are amazingly stunning in their brightness and strength. Her acrylics are, for some reason, slightly more subdued, but the line work is still strong and graceful, with no unnecessary lines or over-delineation. The book seems to have a more-or-less equal mix of color and black-and-white; actually, black-and-blue, since all pen work is printed on a heather-blue paper -- sometimes this adds to the pieces, sometimes it doesn't (but it never actually detracts, either). AGE OF DREAMS is a handsome edition, well worth adding to your fantasy art collection, and the 2000 copy edition means you should buy it now, while the book is still available at a reasonable price.

BINARY STAR #2: "The Twilight River" by Gordon Eklund and "The Tery" by F. Paul Wilson. Dell 1090-4 - \$1.75. Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

The second volume in this decade's answer to the Ace Double is out, and unlike the first volume, which reprinted two well known novellas, BINARY STAR #2 is made up of a totally new piece and a piece most probably unfamiliar to the average science fiction fan.

"The Twilight River" by Gordon Eklund is a future-earth piece set on an after-the-holocaust world; Dreadful Sam, the hero, is a rather paunchy, pragmatic, and sensible man. The girl he befriends, Trina, is a daughter of a warlock--and she has killed a Rangel, part of the cultural elite in this society. As Dreadful Sam and Trina flee for their freedom and their lives, they meet Reardon, a werewolf, and their journey becomes entangled with his search for Nerdy, a vampire, and her great black ship. It's a strong adventure story, very well told and compelling reading.

"The Tery" is a religious parallel piece about a mutated human named Jon--he is the tery of the title. The story is about his significance in his world; it begins with his near-death as a child and carries the Christian parallel up to his execution--and is framed by brief pieces of conversation between a religious leader from the tery's planet and a priest from the Amalgamated Church of Unified Christendom. It, too, is well-written, although it lacks a bit of the polished style that makes the Eklund piece the more impressive of the two. As is standard for this BINARY STAR series, each author does an afterword to the other's novella; the afterwords say a little bit about the authors and a little bit about the stories, but are really nonessential reading.

The book is illustrated by Steve Fabian; unfortunately, Fabian's shadowy work, filled with grays, reproduces very poorly in the paperback format, and the art is consequently very drab. But it is a step towards artwork in this series--and considering the drabness of the cover, that's an improvement. All things considered, though, BINARY STAR #2 is a favorable step beyond the adequate first volume, and a book well worth buying.

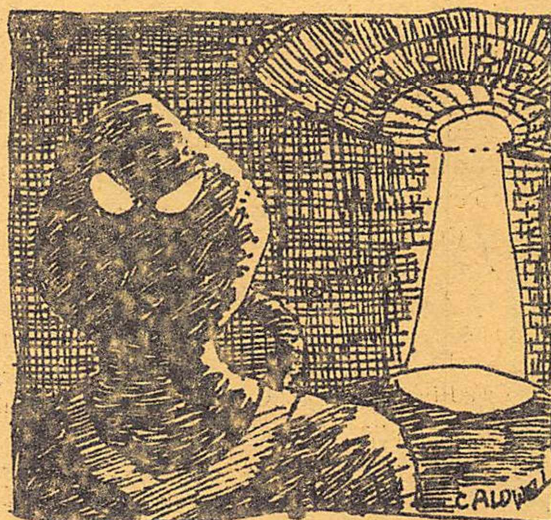
THE IRON LORDS. Andrew J. Offutt. Jove Books - \$1.75. Reviewed by Jim Brock.

This is volume one of the War of the Gods on Earth, as Jarik--who-was-two grows from a child to a place as agent of the Iron Lords. The Iron Lords--Dread, Destruction, & Annihilation--send Jarik to destroy the Lady of the Snowmist.

Offutt is an old pro at witting sword and sorcery, and he is getting better at it. Most writers use a world populated with wizards and warriors and cities filled with life and gaiety. Offutt chooses to avoid this and uses a world of men and gods--who do not appear often--and of poor warks where the

people live. There are no taverns, no wenches, and no wizards.

Offutt has built a world that seems more likely to have existed and shows his talents as a writer to his fullest advantage. Offutt keeps improving and this one shows lots of promise for more to come.



CAR SINISTER. Edited by Robert Silverberg, Martin H. Greenberg, & Joseph D. Olander. Avon 45393 - \$2.25. Reviewed by Susan Biggers.

CAR SINISTER is yet another satisfying anthology from the Greenberg/Olander/___ team (it seems that, for some reason, they always add another co-editor to fill out the series; I'd still like to know how much these co-editors do, since the introductions, etc., all read like Greenberg's writing, more or less); as you might suspect, the collection offers stories from a variety of writers dealing with the automobile. The stories are sometimes classics like "Along the Scenic Route" by Harlan Ellison, a story of honor and dueling on the highways of the future, sometimes lesser known pieces like "Traffic Problem" by William Earls, an intriguing look at one possible method of handling traffic in the future. Occasionally, the pieces are mediocre--but the mediocre stories are few and far between.

Personal favorites would have to be the two aforementioned stories, along with "Auto-da-fe" by Roger Zelazny, a literal man-vs.-auto tale that sparkles with wit and talent; "The Exit to San Breta" by George R.R. Martin, an automotive ghost story that holds up after repeated readings; and Robert Young's "Romance in a Twenty-First Century Used Car Lot," a remarkable look at an auto-oriented society.

There's nothing new and stunning in CAR SINISTER; but if you are, as I am, a fan of theme-oriented anthologies, then you'll probably find this book satisfying reading. Considering today's energy problems, many of the stories may be visions of a world we'd be glad to have--but even the most dismal prophecies in CAR SINISTER make good reading.

CONAN THE SWORDSMAN. L. Sprague de Camp, Lin Carter, and Bjorn Nyberg. CONAN THE LIBERATOR. L. Sprague de Camp & Lin Carter. THE SWORD OF SKELOS. Andrew Offutt. Bantam - \$1.95 @. Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

The Conan boom goes ever on; these three books represent the authorized continuation of the Conan saga, and probably will prove to be excellent sellers. The writing itself is competent in all volumes, and above-average in the Offutt novel.

The first volume is a collection of Conan short stories, all by de Camp & Carter with the exception of a Nyberg-de Camp collaboration. The stories lack the strength and the grim outlook of Howard's Conan--in fact, they read much more like pale imitations--but for the Conan fan who can't find anything else, they'll probably prove better than nothing. There's a long article on Hyborian names--actually, more of a brief article and a long concordance of names and appearances.

CONAN THE LIBERATOR is a formula novel, Conan versus Numedides and Thulandra Thuu (it's amazing how Lin Carterish some of these names can sound). The writing is uninspired, the story drags, and the book itself could be passed up by all but the most dedicated Conan fan.

THE SWORD OF SKELOS is a tale of Conan, a magic amulet, an ensorcelled sword, a tyrant, and an evil mage. It, too, follows rather closely a predictable formula; but unlike the second book, Offutt's novel manages to bring a spark of creativity and strength to the series that de Camp and Nyberg and Carter's refined barbarian can't muster. Offutt's Conan is believable, and that makes it easy to suspend the disbelief and enjoy the story.

The worst feature of this series is the artwork; the book are illustrated (if you can call it that) by Tim Kirk. The illustrations consist of drawings of things like knives, swords, helmets, chairs, and tables--all labeled as knives, swords, helmets, chairs, and tables. What ridiculous thought motivated the art director of this series to fill the book with such illustrations is unknown, but it does nothing but detract from the text. If Tim Kirk is to be allowed to illustrate the books, fine; if not, do away with this space-wasting filler.

LADY OF THE HAVEN and DUNGEONS OF KUBA. Graham Diamond. Playboy Press - \$1.95 @. Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

Graham Diamond's first novel for Playboy Press, THE HAVEN, proved its author to be competent in fantasy fiction. These two novels, part of a series detailing the exploits of Stacy, the Empire Princess, far exceed THE HAVEN as entertaining, well-written heroic fantasy, and Stacy herself equals or surpasses Cija of Atlan as the foremost female heroic fantasy character in recent times.

LADY OF THE HAVEN details Stacy's trip from the Haven to Newfoundland to the land of the white wolves; it also introduced her nemesis, Sigried, and establishes the blood feud between them. There is a lot of character development of Stacy in this novel; the final segment, detailing her confrontation with the white wolves and her acceptance by them as one of the pack, is an enduring moment in fantasy.

DUNGEONS OF KUBA tells of Stacy's journey to Kuba to rescue Princess Mara, imprisoned by Sigried, the ruler of that land. It's an epic adventure, more action-packed than the first book, and its shorter length (254 as opposed to 382 pages) seems to be more advantageous for Diamond, who tended to stretch out scenes a bit in LADY OF THE HAVEN.

These two books by Graham Diamond are some of the best heroic fantasy I've read in many a year, and I eagerly look forward to further exploits of Stacy, the Empire Princess; for that matter, Diamond has proven himself a good enough writer that I'll keep an eye out for any books by him in the future.

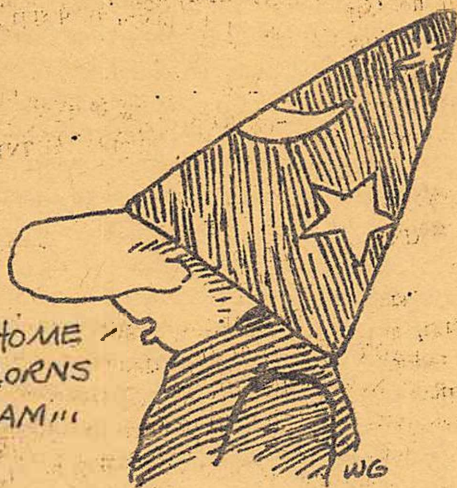
ACT OF PROVIDENCE. Joseph Payne Brennan and Donald M. Grant. (West Kingston, Rhode Island--Donald Grant, Publisher). Trade edition \$10, limited, signed edition \$20. Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

ACT OF PROVIDENCE has plenty going for it to make it a success among the fan market; first, it's a Lucius Leffing story, a tale of that detective with a penchant for the Victorian who finds himself involved in unusual cases. Secondly, it seems marginally tied in with the Cthulhu Mythos/Lovecraftian milieu. Thirdly, it's set at the first World Fantasy Convention. Add that together and mix in generous helpings of real people in the fantasy field, and the result should be a major success.

And that's just what I would suspect ACT OF PROVIDENCE would be. What it isn't, though, is as good as I had hoped. The authors spend too much time trying to drop names from the World Fantasy Convention and getting caught up in their own background--and some of the initial segments with Brennan and Leffing seem awkward and trite. But the book does pick up in action towards the end, and comes to a satisfactory conclusion.

ACT OF PROVIDENCE is definitely a minor addition to the Lucius Leffing saga; that's a shame, since I had hoped it would be a bit more substantial. The book also offers several black and white interiors and a color dustwrapper by Robert Arrington; his black and white work is stark and captures the Victorian feel of any Leffing book quite well. A bonus is the Leffing bibliography compiled by Joseph Payne Brennan and included at the front of the book; it'll be useful to Leffing fans and collectors.

OH FOR A HOME -
WHERE UNICORNS
STILL ROAM!!!



THE MAGIC PEN OF JOSEPH CLEMENT COLL. Walt Reed, ed. Donald M. Grant, Publisher, West Kingston, RI. \$20. Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

I'll have to admit that I was unfamiliar with Joseph Clement Coll's work until publication of this book; I'm glad my ignorance on the subject has been corrected, for Don Grant's publication of a great deal of Coll's black and white work makes me wish I'd been given the opportunity to see it years before.

Coll's art appeared during the first two decades of this century; his pen and ink work decorated COLLIER'S, among other places, and he seems to have illustrated many of the greats, including Dickens, Mundy, Rohmer, and others. His style is reminiscent of some of Jones' and Frazetta's work in ink-line and posture; it is hinted that Coll's work may have been an influence on both artists. Whatever the case may be, there's a wealth of beautiful art presented in this book's 175 pages, and you owe it to yourself to buy it now, while it's still available.

THE FOURTH BOOK OF VIRGIL FINLAY. Gerry de la Ree - (7 Cedarwood Lane, Saddle River NJ 07458) \$15.50. Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

I wondered, when I heard plans for this book, how Gerry de la Ree could put out a fourth Finlay anthology; I assumed all the quality Finlay art must have been used already. While many of the more familiar and more stunning pieces have already appeared in the other three books of this series, the fourth volume contains over a hundred impressive Finlay pieces, all in black and white. This book is in a uniform size and format with the other de la Ree art volumes, and collectors should order now, while still available. Incidentally, I hear that the fifth Finlay volume will offer a good deal of his WEIRD TALES art, so why not order both at once?

BLACK HOLES. Jerry Pournelle, ed. Fawcett 2-3962-4 - \$1.95. Reviewed by Susan Biggers.

This is another theme anthology, dealing (obviously) with sf stories, an article, and three poems that are based on the theory of black holes. Pournelle's opening article, "Black Holes and Cosmic Censors," is based on a piece he did for GALAXY a while back. Most of the stories are fairly new because the concept itself is new; Poul Anderson's story is the oldest, and it only dates back to 1968.

Of the stories presented, "The Hole Man" by Larry Niven and "Singularity" by Mildred Downy Broxon (an unfamiliar story, dealing with a team sent out to observe a singularity) are the best reading; Grant Carrington and George Zebrowski do an interesting collaboration in "Fountain of Force;" and those who attended the 1977 Birmingham DeepSouthCon had an opportunity to hear the Michael Bishop poem presented herein. The remainder of the book is adequate, if somewhat uninspired. I suspect the average reader will find this book adequate reading; it rarely ventures into the outstanding, but it manages to stray from the mediocre as well.

WITCH HOUSE. Evangeline Walton. Del Rey 28020 - \$1.75. Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

Some books capture a mood on their first page and never let go of that mood; WITCH HOUSE is just such a book. There's a compelling eeriness in this story of a young girl who seems to see--and feel threatened by--things that others are unaware of that makes this book almost impossible to put down.

I was unfamiliar with Walton's writing outside of the Mabinogion; this paperback reprint of this classic Arkham House book, long out of print, shows a side of Walton I wish she'd reveal to us more often. A must-have for horror readers.

AND HAVING WRIT... D.R. Benson. Ace 02274 - \$1.95. Reviewed by Susan Biggers.

Benson has created an intriguing plot in AND HAVING WRIT... An impending crash urges the crew of an interstellar ship to throw themselves into an alternate reality. In our world, the ship resulted in the Tuskunga explosion; in the alternate reality, our heroes are rescued and are brought to the United States, where they begin to exert a profound influence on Theodore Roosevelt and Thomas Alva Edison.

The plot is strong; unfortunately, the writing isn't, and the book drags throughout its 250 pages. That's unfortunate, because I was hooked on the storyline from the beginning, and I found it worth my while to bear with the uninspired prose just to see what happened. If the book was well-written, I'd recommend it without reservation; as it is, it's a book that you have to force yourself through, and I can't really recommend it as being worth all the effort.

DIGRESSIONS

susan biggers

It seems that someone (besides fans) is beginning to notice science fiction conventions.

This June, the Atlanta Science Fiction Club decided to sponsor the 1980 Deep South Con (if Atlanta won the bid); as a part of our preliminary research, we went to various hotels to get information about prices, facilities, and the like... I say "we", but I had very little to do with that aspect of it, since Janet Davis Lyons, Angela Howell, and Janice Gelb did most of the research.

The response was surprising: not only did the hotels want our proposed convention, they were willing to bargain to get it at their hotel! Not once, but twice a hotel dropped its prices in order to get out convention, should we win the bidding. They made concessions concerning facilities, offered various extras, and even took Cliff, myself, Janet and Vince Lyons (Cliff and Vince were co-chairmen at this time) out to eat and to discuss the facilities and the arrangements.

And if that wasn't suprising enough for me, our close friend Wade Gilbreath, in Birmingham, had something even more surprising occur. The downtown Hilton in Birmingham approached him and the club with an offer to have a Birmingham sf convention there.

I'd guess that fans and conventions are good business for hotels, though; as Tracy Hill, a hotel representative, pointed out, business conventions and corporate meetings are generally held on weekdays, while sf conventions are invariably weekend events. Unlike Shriners and VFW people, we have a good record of responsibility and very little problem with damage to rooms and facilities. By and large, we even have a very small amount of absolute drunkenness at conventions. But I still can't get used to sf conventions being "courted" by established hotels. A final surprise came when one of the hotels in question offered to send a hotel representative to the New Orleans DSC for the duration of the convention to help present the bid.

Media awareness of science fiction is becoming more pervasive. Cliff told me a while back that he heard over-the-phone interviews with Isaac Asimov and Harlan Ellison on a local talk-radio afternoon program, and almost a year ago the same station, I believe, did an over-the-phone interview with Ben Bova (naturally, I didn't hear any of them; listening to music while I'm working is fine, but listening to talk radio requires that I actually listen, and all work comes to a stop.). And two weeks ago, P.M. Magazine, a half-hour television feature, offered a filmed feature on Balticon. That feature I did get to see, and I wish I hadn't; it offered such brilliant moments as the interviewer trying to find out where the planet "Ralph-Bakshi's-WIZARDS" was, since one of the costumed interviewees said his costume came from there.

The point of all this is simple; I'm suddenly feeling uncomfortable about all this attention sf is getting. Conventions are becoming business (with substantial profits to be made in many cases), the books that I considered my private "find" are becoming well-known, and sf films are becoming the big moneymakers at the box office. I almost miss the days when science fiction was looked upon with such disdain that I would get my brother to buy the books for me, along with the comics I bought at that time. Don't get me wrong: I'm not supporting a "put-sf-back-in-the-gutters" movement. I just have a nostalgic feeling about the days when a large regional convention was a couple hundred people, and I could almost read all the science fiction published in a given calendar year.



WHEN ALL
ELSE FAILS,
I CHANGE
THE RULES...



When all else fails

• • • • • MIKE GLYER

One of the rituals of the Hollywood pre-screening is to applaud each credit. You clap wildly for the person who got your pass into see the film free, and for anyone else you approve. The result in a 500-seat theater is pockets of hysterical enthusiasm more parochial than at the amateur hour.

The LASFS, with a hundred passes for Wednesday night, put on a fair exhibition for ALIEN creator Dan O'Bannon. O'Bannon had spoken at the LASFS Benefit the previous weekend, greatly enthusing the listeners with his explanations of how such artistic talents as Giger and "Moebius" became associated with ALIEN. In Europe to work on the first DUNE film project, O'Bannon and a team of Continental artists (some known from METAL HORIZONT) had developed the design concepts. DUNE fell through and forced O'Bannon to return to America where he scuffled around at odd jobs while cooperating with another out-of-work filmmaker to produce the script which became ALIEN.

O'Bannon had explained, in his laid-back ironic style, how difficult it was to get the script read--until executives at Twentieth Century Fox crowned it the heir apparent to STAR WARS and JAWS. Then the production money poured in--and O'Bannon, who had sold the script at a small price for a small production went back to demand (and get) a bigger slice of the pie.

The obstacles faced by any sf film project, the dearth of directorial imagination, the studio politics, hobbled ALIEN as well. O'Bannon himself survived arbitration over his screenwriting credit--with the result that he was given primary credit while his predators were erased. However, the accomplishment that pleased O'Bannon the most was the reuniting of some of the ex-DUNE artists. To achieve this end he had to ride out the tenure of the original director, whose

idea of something horrible was a creature that looked almost like a man, but with muted features (shades of CLOSE ENCOUNTERS' aliens). Ridley Scott came on to direct the film to completion, and plied with books of their works by O'Bannon, chose several artists from the DUNE team to do backgrounds and spacesuits for ALIEN.

LASFS fell heir to a hundred passes to one of many ALIEN pre-screenings as a result of connections made at the birth of STAR WARS. Members streamed into the mirrored lobby of the Samuel Goldwyn Theater, up a staircase and into a utilitarian theater with one of the finest sound systems. Two man-sized effigies of the Oscar flanked the stage, a chintzy touch. For some reason, OJ Simpson and friends were on hand.

However, OJ Simpson was not in the audience when the lights went on at the end of the film. He must have sprinted out during the credits. Unless he was one of several who sprinted out after the alien claimed its first victim.

"I found out I've outgrown films like this," said a femme-fan. "I can't take them anymore..." A male fan in his 40s nonchalantly stated that he hadn't really wanted to see the film anyway--it was his wife who wanted to see it; understandably, since she emerged from the film calling, "Here kitty, kitty, kitty..." Once you've seen ALIEN you'll understand why one scene could be adapted as a finicky cat advertisement...

I haven't seen too many frightening horror films: mainly because having the shit scared out of me isn't what I call entertainment. However ALIEN topped THE LEGEND OF HELL HOUSE, the only other film that scared me since I saw HOUSE ON HAUNTED HILL in junior high. And if perverse advertising pays off at the box office, news reports of ambulances being summoned to local theaters to carry away patrons of ALIEN should insure the film a good run in LA.

Of course, sf fans are probably the worst audience to see a new sf film with. If it's an old favorite, where everybody practically recites the dialogue along with the sound track, no gaucherie is unacceptable. Even Jack Kelly's banter with Anne Francis in FORBIDDEN PLANET has taken on a certain gloss with the passage of time. But one fan left ALIEN crowing about the ultimate achievement, "Hey, I could see the zipper on the monster's suit!" A stranger passing by would get the impression that a fan is supposed to watch these films with his emotions cast in lucite and his eye oblivious to anything except trivial detail.

My own reaction to the film is this. Not only did I fall for every horrific manipulative trick in the film, but I was impressed with the set design, simulated hardware, and computer graphics. No other film has ever accomplished such a gritty, workaday effect. Certain questions bring out basic flaws in the plot; why take a large ship down when a shuttle-

craft is available? to name just one. But I never thought of that during the film, and isn't that the true test of suspension of disbelief?

((No, Glycer, it's the true test of your lack of film scepticism. After all, don't you sit there mumbling to yourself, "It's only a movie?" You don't? Well, we'll just have to drum you out of the corps...))

I think that most of you who go see it will find you've had quite an experience--and if the fan next to you sees the zipper, pour your popcorn down his shorts.

oOo

oOo

"When All Else Fails" has been a sercon column all along, because I'm one of the few fans I know who still reads science fiction, and where else am I going to talk about it? No surer fan conversation-killer exists than to mention the contents of the latest ANALOG--although considering what it's publishing today, no wonder.

What jewel of precious knowledge have I to show for all these years of devotion to sercon? What can I pass onto you who are tempted by the bright lights and fleshpots of the convention circuit? Don't buy TITAN, save that price to buy your membership at DSC...

No, but seriously, what else besides that? Indeed, I shall impart to you a secret that may save your cash for many a con. The secret is this: publishers are eager to give you their sf books for nothing. Oh, 'tis true. Insane? Yes. True? Yes. Why do they do it? Beats me, but get yours while it's still there for the getting.

Although you will probably be ignored if you xerox a sheaf of your sf book reviews and send them to a publisher in hopes of getting on the review copy lists, hardly anyone who actually publishes a fanzine that includes book reviews seems to get turned down. What, you don't want to waste your money publishing? Hell's jingling bells, Port Admiral, aren't you in an apa? For a year's worth of freebies from Dell, Pocket Books, Berkley/Putnam, and Bantam, you can't put out a few pages of reviews for your apa?

Perhaps they hope to encourage word-of-mouth business. More likely, it's a publisher's way of influencing Hugo voting--one Hugo-winning novel will generate enough extra sales to make the expense of review copies irrelevant, and it is a very small community of fans who determine the winner of that award, is it not? However, if you publish your reviews in zine format, and mail the zine to all the major publishers with the proper cover letter, you may just luck out.

The cover letter should be addressed to the Publicity Director at the home office of each publisher. Your letter should

be neat, and short, essentially saying this: "Dear Publicity Director. I am the publisher of (title), copy enclosed. My publication discusses current science fiction releases, to inform its audience about sf books they may be interested in buying. I would appreciate being placed on your list to receive review copies of new science fiction and fantasy releases from (name of publisher)."

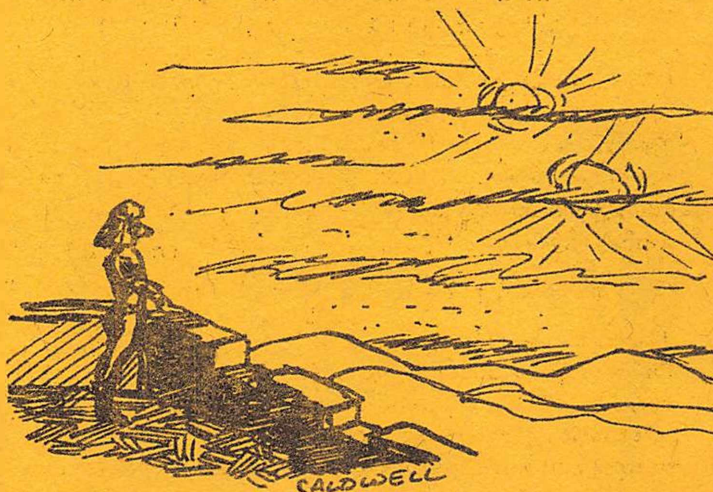
Even though I publish a real genzine with real book reviews, hardly something I whipped out just to get on a list, Avon, Random House, St. Martin's Press, and a few others have steadfastly ignored my requests. But you may have better luck, and in any case, I've been getting review copies from the other publishers mentioned for years.

Good hunting...

((While my experience with FR indicates that there's nothing wrong with the system Mike advocates above, there are a couple of things I'd add to the above information in attempting to get review copies; first, let the publisher know what sort of a print run you have--after all, publishers are in business to make money, and if they're going to give away books, they probably would prefer not doing so to a zine with a total distribution of twenty-two copies. This courtesy gives them the information they might need to make a decision.

Secondly, if you don't like reviewing books, don't do a book review zine, or even a book review column. I see an awful lot of "mini-reviews" that are scarcely more than a "like/don't like" commentary on a book, and I doubt if these are useful to the readers--and I doubt if they're at all impressive to the publishers.

I take pride in receiving review copies of books for FR--I've always read it as a sign that we're doing something right around here. I'd hope that, if you're going to try to receive review copies, you'd show the same sort of pride and ambition in what you're doing, whether it's a genzine, reviewzine, apazine, or whatever. -- cb)/)



Cinematic Eye

Cecil W. Hutto

Certainly, "Watership Down" is an example of an excellent novel being adapted into an equally excellent film. "Adapted" is a good word, "transformed" is another; for a film is not a book, but an entirely different artform. In any transformation from book to film, there are always likely to be changes. In the case of WATERSHIP DOWN there were a few; and yet, the basic essence of the novel is carried over into and preserved within the film.

Richard Adams gives us an engaging look into another form of life and a stimulating chance to see into ourselves. Of course, this is a story about rabbits, but with a bit of suspension of disbelief, your sense of wonder will flow within you, and you will suddenly find yourself enjoying a tale of any courageous beings who must leave the security of their birthplace and home to seek a new life.

This film is animated in a very straightforward manner. The characters of the rabbits are not intended to be cartoons, but illustrations. The effect is that you see rabbits who are plainly rabbits; their bodies are normal and are governed by normal physical laws. The minds of the rabbits are another matter, however; for they certainly possess more consciousness of self than we generally imagine of rabbits. They have a god, for example, and even a folk hero.

The first three or four minutes of the film are concerned with this folk hero, who is the very first rabbit, and the creation of the world by their god Frith, who is manifested into the sun. These few moments are animated in a simple, yet abstract method that differs from the main body of the film. While the book offers a number of different tales and adventures of this folk hero, the film only provides this one. The first rabbit is called El-ahrairah, which literally means Prince with a Thousand Enemies.

The story tells that when Frith made the world and populated it with all the animals, they were all the same and they all ate grass. It wasn't long, however, before the people of El-ahrairah began to multiply, eating more and more of the grass. The other animals were concerned, of course; they appealed to Frith. But when Frith attempted to discuss the matter with El-

ahrairah, he was ignored. Frith then decided that he would provide a solution for the problem himself, and calling a meeting of all the animals, he presented each with a gift, which, of course, turned them all into different kinds of animals. So Frith created the Thousand (the Elil in rabbit speech -- dogs, cats, foxes, etc.) and gave them a great hunger for the death of the people of El-ahrairah. El-ahrairah himself did not attend the meeting, and when he learned of the Thousand, he was afraid and sought to hide. Frith found him, however, and taking pity upon the little, proud soul, blessed him with his own gift.

...El-ahrairah's tail grew shining white and flashed like a star; and his back legs grew long and powerful and he thumped the hillside until the very beetles fell off the grass stems. He... tore across the hill faster than any creature in the world. And Frith called after him, "El-ahrairah, your people cannot rule the world, for I will not have it so. All the world will be your enemy, Prince with a Thousand Enemies, and whenever they catch you, they will kill you. But first they must catch you, digger, listener, runner, prince with the swift warning. Be cunning and full of tricks and your people will never be destroyed."

The rabbits of the film carry on the tradition of El-ahrairah well. Each of the group seems to have a predominant faculty, almost in a Bunyonish way; however, even though this is a tale of resourceful pilgrims forging to a new home, this is no PILGRIM'S PROGRESS. The strong character traits are not the point of the story and they do not get in the way of enjoyment.

Hazel displays those qualities whose sum amount to Leadership, while his brother, Fiver, is the psychichand philosopher for the group. While it is Fiver's vision which guides them all to Watership Down and their new home, it is Hazel who keeps the group together and moving toward their goal. Bigwig is a former member of the privileged warrior class of the abandoned warren. This select group is called Owsia, and the training and experiences Bigwig had as a mem-



ber prove indispensable for the group of pilgrims. Blackberry is their Idea Person, and his inventiveness gets them out of several potentially fatal situations.

General Woundwort is perhaps a character who lost the most in translation from book to film. As depicted in the movie, he is only a cruel, yet courageous, tyrant. The novel provides more detail by which he can be viewed also as being a resourceful, resolute, and genuinely concerned leader.

There is no discernible difference between the literary and graphic representations of Kehaar the black-headed gull. However, the screen version, with the voice of the late Zero Mostel, is much more comic.

Perhaps the only total failure of translating a character is seen in the representation of Cowslip. The book reports him as being "sad, like the trees in November," and displays him as resigned to a fatalistic philosophy. The film fails to reflect all the essential aspects of Cowslip; the viewer is left with only the impression that he is miserable and foppish.

There were some deliberate changes in the storyline in the translation. This is a necessity that comes from the use of two different artforms. The rabbits' stay in Cowslip's warren is greatly shortened in the film. This was done because the film must accent different aspects of the plot and maintain a different type of pacing than the novel. Other changes were for similar reasons. An attack by rats on the rabbits is only mentioned in the book, while it is shown in the film. The rabbits visit Nuthanger Farm before reaching Watership Down in the film; in the book, it is Kehaar who first locates the farm after they have already settled on the Down.

This novel and this film are both grandly executed tales of adventure. The quality and differences of both artforms make them each well worth experiencing. Getting to know these rabbits provides for a stimulating and uplifting perspective by which can be gained a new outlook and a fresh insight that is lasting and inspiring.

NOTE: Some fanzines were inadvertently removed from a display table at a recent convention, and I need replacements; they are MAD SCIENTIST'S DIGEST 1-3, DELTA PSI #1, and FANTASY NEWSLETTER #1. Also, I will be doing fanzine displays at NASFiC and Chattacon this year--if you have any fanzines (yours or someone else's) to donate for display, please send them to me. Thanks.



FR REFLECTIVE

J. Owen Hanner

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2/26/79

As something of a collector myself,

I can empathize with "The Finishing Stroke," but any time I buy used books, I tend to buy hardcovers. They do hold up better

under stress than paperbacks, but we're talking about a lot more money, too. ((Not necessarily--here in Atlanta, the average price for used SFBC hardcovers is 99¢-\$1.50 each, which isn't that expensive--if you happen to need the relatively poor selection available--cb)) There we e a few books I've bought that I gladly paid \$15 for, like a first edition copy of CYBORG; but when the places I do business with are asking \$40 for a first edition book like Aldiss' Hothouse series, I just muffle my sob of disappointment and go look at the latest list of specials from Purple Unicorn. But, while reflecting on the high price of "vintage sci-fi", you must keep in mind that the prices are high because somewhere there's a schlep who'll shell out the exorbitant amounts for them. I guess the dealers are just giving the public what they want.

"Cinematic Eye" was very interesting because I'm quite interested in film, sf moreso than other types, and your publication of Sue Phillips' reviews were the first fan reviews of the two film I'd seen. I have to agree with Sue on both; SUPERMAN was enjoyable, though like SW God knows why, because there are holes in the plot throughout. One that always intrigues me is the fact that they never can seem to agree on the question of time. In the Fortress of Solitude, Jor-el says that he's been dead many thousands of years by n now, but later on, Luthor says that Krypton blew up in 1948. Add to that the fact that Kal-el's intergalactic trip took 3 years, subjective time, and the whole thing is very hard to follow.

BODYSNATCHERS was a somewhat downbeat movie, but it was good. I've heard some people say it was good "for a film with no plot", but I just think it was well-done. Kevin McCarthy's cameo was the most clever thing I've seen in a movie in ages. There he is, still in the same natty suit he was in at the end of the 1956 version, having run for 22 years from the pods. I heard Don Siegel, who directed the 1956 version, had a cameo as well, but I'm not sure who he is, having never seen a clear picture of him. Was he the man in the mud bsth reading Velikovsky's WORLDS IN COLLISION, perhaps? Anyone know?

((I, too, enjoyed SUPERMAN, but my biggest complaint was the differing tone of the film--it takes itself very seriously to begin with, but once it reaches the Lex Luthor sequence,

seriousness was sacrificed for humor. Then again, this is the major complaint that almost everyone who's familiar with the comics brought out; I guess we all have our expectations...))

Charlotte Proctor

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1/15/79

Your declaration that everything in FR will have, from this point on, some relationship to sf criticism, or peripheral sf matters, is understandable. You have to

draw the line somewhere when you have more than you can possibly print.

((That was exactly the problem we faced; now, with the Atlanta SF Club zine ATARANTES growing in size, we can use it for the more fannish material that comes in, thereby creating a balance that I'm happy with.))

Fannish news, gossip, con reports are generally available elsewhere, and perhaps too much emphasis has been put on partycon activity lately, and there is a real need for a sort of SF REVIEW in the South.

I'm sure you don't need me to tell you that all criticism and no comic relief make Jack a dull zine... the columns and the artwork are the icing on the cake. (Am I mixing my metaphors?) ((Yes, but that's alright...))

((I was most satisfied with the material that made up the last issue of FUTURE RETROSPECTIVE: the columns, reviews, and letters had a really good mix, and I had a lot of artwork to add variety to the pages. Unfortunately, I've delved deeply into my art files to come up with the remainder of the artwork needed to fill this issue, and I have little reserve artwork to carry forward--with the exception of a couple of full-page pieces, that is.))

Speaking of postage rates, I think per piece bulk rate for a non-profit organization is 2 or 3 cents (and 9¢ for a business) after the initial annual cost of \$40, so that would be well worth looking into.

((Since the USPS recently raised book rate to an incredible 59¢ for the first pound, 22¢ for each additional pound, anything to save postage money is helpful; unfortunately, the fee cost is \$60, according to the post office, and they have their doubts if FR would qualify for a business--although I imagine I could bluff my way past that barrier. Postage will spell the doom of many a fanzine soon, I'll bet...))

LETTERS OF COMMENT

Frank Belknap Long
New York, NY
3/15/79

FR #15/16 contained such a wealth of material that if I had attempted to read it from cover to cover in just

one reading session I would have been forced to go without sleep for a considerable period. I shudder to think what that would have done to the 101 minor obligations that have descended upon me in recent days--not to mention 3 or 4 major ones. Correspondence alone can be a dreadful problem to a writer who has made the mistake of engaging in too many variegated activities over a comparatively short period--I won't even both to list them. But ever since my return from Fort Worth in October I've found myself envying the resolute hermits who bury themselves in the deep woods for weeks on end, and let their rustic-route mailboxes flow over, ignoring even long-distance phone calls and the coming and going of the postman.

The cover illustration: the imaginatively splendid symbolism here--the linking of a great writer's passing with a space craft taking off for the cosmic immensities has been artistically presented with a rare kind of restraint and impressiveness. It would be my cover of choice, among the five of six best of the previous excellent ones; if you conduct a poll of the readers, send me a ballot to fill out.

Deb Hammer-Johnson lists three categories of SF and feels that they are blending together. I would go a little further than she does, in a most discerning article, in categorizing the different forms that confront us today under the sf label. But I do not believe there is any actual blending in the sense that she implies, or that the terms "mainstream," "true sf," "cult genre," "popular fiction," etc. have lost--or are losing--their meaning. I would not even attempt to narrow it down to just three categories. A half-dozen categories, I think, would come closer to the mark, and there is not a single category that has not, at one time or another, been enriched and transformed by the contributions of writers of stature. For that reason alone the existence of categories is all to the good. It enhances the importance of the entire realm of imaginative fiction, with all of its prophetic implications. But a total blending--no. It would create confusion, and a serious distortion of critical values.

The LOCUS Poll seems to indicate that sf in virtually every category would fall flat on its ears without the ardent support of the young (the 18 to 30 age bracket, or, despite the poll figures, let us say a somewhat wider 16 to 34 age bracket.

From my present perspective, which seems to be almost 110 years, that, too, seems all to the good.

((SF is a young literature, it seems; a lot of that is probably due to the sf film's appeal to the young, who are easily captivated by special effects, etc. I know that I came into sf very young, both from films and from comics, two visual media. In my sf classes where I teach, I note that there is a great deal of enthusiasm, even among virtual non-readers, for science fiction--it's a form of literature that the students enjoy. Demographically studying the figures, I'm surprised more marketing of the type that would appeal to the 18-30 age bracket isn't done--although OMNI seems to have made a good shot at appealing to that group with their television and radio advertisements.))

Brian Earl Brown
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3/29/79

I was amused to read that Brian Lumley's novel SPAWN OF THE WINDS was, according to Barry Hunter, a fine novel, since I had to choke down a lot of it to reach the final page.

Lumley has unfortunately gone the route of Lin Carter--turning out out endless pastiches of early popular writers without finding one tenth the originality and verve of the predecessor. SPAWN is an A. Merritt plot using Lovecraftian creatures, add the story is so conventional that it alone can't suit a novel. The creatures are set out in such prosaic terms that they lose all mystery and terror and Lovecraft's overwhelming paranoia (the driving force behind his successful creating of horror) is so totally absent from Lumley's optimistic nature

NO ONE TAKES
ME SERIOUSLY
AROUND HERE...



that his SPAWN comes out seeming emasculated next to HPL or Merritt.

And the pity is that SPAWN is Lumley's best novel in his Lovecraft series of pastiches. THE BURROWERS BENEATH, from DAW, was almost as good; TRANSFORMATION OF TITUS CROW was a hodgepodge of unmarvelous marvels and diffuse plot and the CLOCK OF DREAMS seems more of the same. From reading some of his non-pastiche short fiction it's clear that Lumley can write good, suspenseful fiction. He is, I fear, wasting his time playing around with Lovecraft's beasties.

Cliff, I see we agree on Spider Robinson as a book reviewer. I was bothered by the way several of the stories in DESTINIES #1 seemed incomplete. Simak's story ended just as it was getting interesting, Benford rushed the ending of his story so that I felt confused about what the point-of-view character did and intended to do. Niven's story stood out because it actually felt like a complete and finished work--and it was, as you say, minor Niven. Lastly about DESTINIES, I'm sick and tired of Pournelle turning his "science columns" into political soapboxes. He almost never writes about science facts, but ends up harranguing us to support the space program, or basic research, or the dolphins, or any of his pet projects.

Rich. Howell's review of CORIOLANUS THE CHARIOT succeeded in telling me not one thing about the book, not the veriest hint of what it's about; likewise, Sally Cook's review of MARGARET AND I.

Susan, Terry Carr's CIRQUE certainly left me with a lasting impression; it renewed my sense of wonder at a time when I found most books too badly written to be readable.

Mike Weber's column requires refutation. Mike cites a number of recent movies that play on the idea of science or scientists as "evil", and argues that this is representative of a new wave of anti-technologists. Apparently Mike has never heard of that vintage 50s movie THE FLY, in which a rash scientist brings doom upon himself by using a matter transmission device. Or GODZILLA. Or FRANKENSTEIN. The idea of science being dangerous is not new at all. Mad scientists have been a part of science fiction since the days of THE INVISIBLE MAN and FRANKENSTEIN, and I will go on to argue that it is an inevitable approach to writing science fiction stories.

Consider for a moment Heinlein's short story "The Roads Must Roll." It's a story about the fantastic transportation system of the future--but how does Heinlein present this roadway system to us? Does he simply have a character narrate the idea? No. Instead, a strike occurs, and via this crippling strike we learn about the roadway. By creating a case where his invention breaks down, Heinlein found a story with which to present his idea. You can look at it as a

story about the dangers of being dependent on one method of transportation and call this an anti-technology story. But Heinlein's plot is simply a strategy to present his idea. The same holds true with many of the so-called anti-technology stories.

As for the "Clamshell Alliance" (of which I am not a member) Mike wonders how many actually wonder about the technology they are opposed to. A lot more than he thinks, I'm sure. I know about thermal pollution and radioactive wastes and I for one am not convinced that fission powerplants make any sense at all. And I'm not anti-technology. I'm fascinated by new technology. I'm just convinced that the problems of nuclear energy haven't been resolved and they're too serious to leave unresolved.

Rather liked Wade Gilbreath's drawings, particularly the sketchy surreal ones on pages 3 and 14.

You've got one heck of a genzine here. Keep up the good work.

((Being an advocate of nuclear energy, my first reaction would be to assail you with the arguments I'm sure you've heard already--the lack of any loss of life in nuclear accidents at power plants, the extreme need for nuclear energy in this era of escalating oil costs, etc. But I guess the most crucial point in our differing opinions is that I don't see any unsolved problems that are so crucial that we should forego the use of nuclear energy until the aforementioned problems are solved.))

((Although I'm not sure if this was intended as DNQ or not--assuming it was, I won't identify the source by name--I've been told by someone who wrote in to ANALOG and complained about Spider Robinson's reviews in a guest column there that he will not be reviewing for ANALOG in the future. I hope not; his style, consisting of name-dropping, coy lines, and clever phrasing, is ingratiating, and I find he rarely, if ever, makes a point in his reviews.))

Mike Glicksohn
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3/11/79

FR continues to be one of the more enjoyable reviewzines, probably because of its excellent blend of contents which makes it an enjoyable reading experience even for those of us who haven't read most of the books under consideration.

One of the few books reviewed that I have managed to read was Bob Shaw's WHO GOES HERE? and while I think you were a little severe on it, I must admit it wasn't up to my expectations. You probably know that Bob is perhaps one of the best humorists in fandom and his annual speeches at the British national Eastercon are among the funniest articles published in fanzines all year long. Somehow that crispness didn't transfer over to his book which was definitely on the

fluffy side. In fact, I was rather surprised Bob found a publisher for it.

The only other review that really struck me was Cliff's review of Chalker's *DANCERS IN THE AFTERGLOW*. I haven't read any of Jack's books, but because I've known him as a fan for a decade or so I usually read what other people have to say about his new career. As it happens, I'd just read Lee Pelton's review of the same book in *RUNE*. The contrast is rather startling. Cliff ends with "Whether you're a Chalker fan or not, be sure to read *DITA*; you won't be disappointed." Lee's review concludes with "I suggest that if you have not read any of Chalker's books, don't start with this one. It might be awhile before you try another." Now how can a poor bewildered neofan like myself know which of you guys is telling it like it is? Surely you don't expect me to buy the book myself and make up my own mind?

If Phyllis Eisenstein doesn't continue the story of Alaric I suggest those of us who enjoyed the book kidnap her, tie her into an uncomfortable chair and force her to watch reruns of "My Mother the Car" until she agrees to. *BORN TO EXILE* just stops right in the middle of the story, like an old Republic serial, and I'm sure I'm not alone in wanting to know how Alaric's quest is resolved. Knowing Phyl, it'll all come out happily in the romantic end but there's bound to be several interesting stories to read on the way to such a denouement.

The question of sexism in fandom (and the reverse sexism practiced by some active feminists) is an on-going discussion in fandom, albeit one that has cooled down somewhat of late. At *IGGY*, *A Room of Our Own* was open to men in the

evenings so long as they were invited guests of women. There was no such masculine haven where men could "escape" from the presence of women during the day to relax and discuss the things that are important to men. Perhaps this indicates that men think the things that are important to men might also be important to women while some women seem to think the mere presence of a man, no matter how sympathetic, inhibits the discussion of certain topics. I don't like the idea of restricted zones at a con but the very anarchistic nature of fandom means I'm not going to do much about it except state my views and go quietly away.

I do believe that Nicki Lynch's letter deals with the first actual class of fanzine production I've ever heard of. There are countless sf courses, of course, and many of them have dealt with fandom to some degree or other and many fanzines have been produced as offshoots of such courses. But a course structured towards teaching fanzine fanac is a new one on me. And I gather it was even funded by the university! Gee, this opens up all sorts of opportunities! For a small fee I'll happily give a basic introduction to the noble art of letterhacking, for example. We could discuss Selecting Topics For Comment, Allowable Personal References to Establish Fannishness, Tempests and Teacups; the "Issues" Route to International Fame in Lettercols and all sorts of neat stuff. And maybe on graduation day we'd all sit down and write two-page locs to the latest *FUTURE RETROSPECTIVE* then listen to an address from Harry Warner Jr. (it'd probably be 432 Summit, but what the hell...) It certainly would be a wonderful thing...

It is quite simply impossible to justify the attitudes of fans towards hotels and non-fannish organizations. I don't try to rationalize the fact that while I'm pretty honest and moral in most respects I think little of taking a single at a con hotel and then sharing it with a friend. I admit it's wrong but I do it anyway. It's all part of the very human tendency to respect the regulations one agrees with and disregard the ones that are personally inconvenient. There was a lengthy discussion in *DON-o-SAUR* about attitudes towards the law some months back, with Don D'Amassa championing the belief that the law should be respected because it is the law and that dissidents ought to work to change the law instead of simply ignoring it. Intellectually I can understand and admire that view but emotionally I'm afraid I'm one of those who continue to pick and choose which rules to follow in accordance with my personal feelings about life.

I'm sure Mike Glyer knows that fans are just as mixed up a bunch of people as any cross-section of humanity would be. (And trying to make any generalizations out of the replies to the *LOCUS* Poll is an exercise in futility. The fans who respond to the *LOCUS* Poll are about as good a representative sample of sf readers as the people in the box seats at a world series would be of baseball fans.) I've certainly never had any evidence to uphold the view that sf readers as a whole are more intelligent than the rest of society, or that they are more literate than the rest of society. On the average, I mean...



OH, BUT OH
TO BE A
WHIZ AT
THIS FAN
PUB BIZ.

Mike Weber is on very thin ice when he suggest Crichton is afraid of technology. An equally valid interpretation would be that Crichton is smart enough to exploit the fear of technology that is rampant in our current society. It is financially rewarding to pander to the mood of the masses, after all.

Deb HJ probably isn't a "fen" in anybody's dialect unless she's a split personality. Although that leads one to ponder the possibility of a fannish version of "Sybil" wherein a prominent fan turns out to be several other prominent fans as well, all acting independently of each other, some in apas, some as publishers, some as letterhacks, some attending cons, etc. It's terrifying to think I might also be Bill Bridget and not know it!

((Or that Harry Andruschak might be Bill and not know it...))

It's also disappointing to read Deb promulgating that US vs THEM artificial dichotomy between "trufaans" and "others." I've been a fan for a dozen years but I don't proselytize fandom and I certainly don't denigrate those who don't know about fandom or who know only about the fringes of fandom. I may think they're missing out on some things that have greatly enriched my life but it's live and let live time, folks. Different strokes and all that tolerant sort of pleasantness.

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I would like to address J.
Owen Hanner. Dear Owen:
I confess to you a thing you
should have figured out your-
self: Feminism does not cure prejudice. It's no reflection
on the ideology.

I am involved in several separatist organizations, and most of the women I deal with are so powerful, so beautiful, so intelligent, so humane in approach--I am overawed with the love we all share. But there are always one or two who are insipid and dumb; a couple more who are charismatic in a sadistic fashion. Feminism didn't make them that way. They were always that way. At most, feminism gave them the strength to reveal repressed cruelty; feminism is not a cure-all. It's an ideology by which women can reclaim some lost, stolen, or denied power. That power may well be misused in a few cases, or many cases.

Fandom is so rooted in its boy-dominated history that it seems incapable of providing healthy separatist spaces for woman-identified women. Susan Wood has tried valiantly, against serious odds, to at least provide the option; I would do anything in my power to help her. Still, I feel presently, healthy women will have to find major support systems aside from fandom, or be crippled by the rampant sexism inherent to anything founded primarily by men, especially men obsessed with literature rooted in the misogynist pulp era. I have met many wonderful people in fandom, and

we've built caste boundaries around ourselves to keep the schmucks and twats at bay, for in fandom they abound. For my healthy separatist company, however, I have relied on the feminist community per se, and especially lesbian friends and lovers.

Here in Seattle, I'm part of a small circle of women--Jill, Chey, Paula, Mary Violet, Sherri, Diane, Jo, etc.--all but one of us lesbian (and she's asexual by choice), all feminist politicians of considerable awareness, and all of us SF readers. (Everyone has weaknesses.) Among these, only Diane and I are involved in fandom, though the others are aware of fandom and have not found it strengthening to women. I'm involved more and more as a professional. I don't think it is really possible for a professional editor and author to not have anything to do with fandom, since so much is settled and caused to happen during conventions which fans create. Since I am bound to fandom, I will do my part, whenever possible, to provide strengthening options for women in transition or discovery. But I feel that if feminist sf readers are ever to have our own "fandom", it will be an outgrowth of the feminist community, not an outgrowth of fandom; it will grow from the community of women at large, not from the community of sub-intelligent boys and their girlfriends, who do continue to comprise the bulk of fandom.

So I've found myself a part of an sf reading group of women almost wholly aside from fandom. We meet in women's groups at the YWCA, the Innerspace Coffee House, the Lesbian Resource Center popcorn parties, feminist literary 1 groups like the local chapter of Feminist Writers Guild, even on the bus. We prefer each others' company. We escape sexism, if only temporarily, by excluding men. We escape other negative things by excluding prejudiced or non-feminist or sf-hating women. We all have men friends we love; but given the nature of patriarchy, which we live in, all men have certain privileges over women, even if some of these men attempt to minimize it. So to escape sexism, we must sometimes be by ourselves. Is that asking so much? Is it taking too much?

It's not different by much than the method by which Most Fans choose not to mingle with "mundanes" who think you are stupid for reading sf. Not much different from poodle breeders joining a poodle club and excluding chihuahua breeders. It is somewhat different, of course, in a very important way. Because women do gain more than each others' company: we gain power.

We learn from each, things that we can't learn from men or we can't learn from each other with men around us. We nurture each other, in ways made difficult when men need or demand that kind of attention. We learn to care for ourselves, which is often hard when society reinforces our caring more for others, especially men and children. We learn new, better ways to relate to the children. And we

gain tools to deal with the rest of the world, which includes men, and includes sexist oppression. We also find a place to simply rest, to make friends. What we don't find is an end to all prejudices, nor a guaranteed panacea against all the pain and suffering that has been hidden, rarely exposed before the monumental works of Chesler, Friedan, Dworkin, et al.

I have heard feminists declaring that all boy children should be killed at birth (except for one breeder who would be kept in prison). I have heard feminists declair bi-sexual women Our Enemy. I've heard that non-feminist women should be killed with the men. That transsexual women are infiltrating and destroying our Cause. That lesbian mothers must be made outcast for fraternizing with The Enemy. That heterosexual women are not true women at all, but disconnected appendages of their male lovers. That every man without exception is our enemy (which is so different from understanding that all men are sexist in the context of any patriarchy, which by definition places all men above all women). That faggots oppress women even more than heterosexual men. On and on.

I also understand the rationales behind each of these statements; a degree of pseudo-logic can be brought to justify any fear or prejudice.

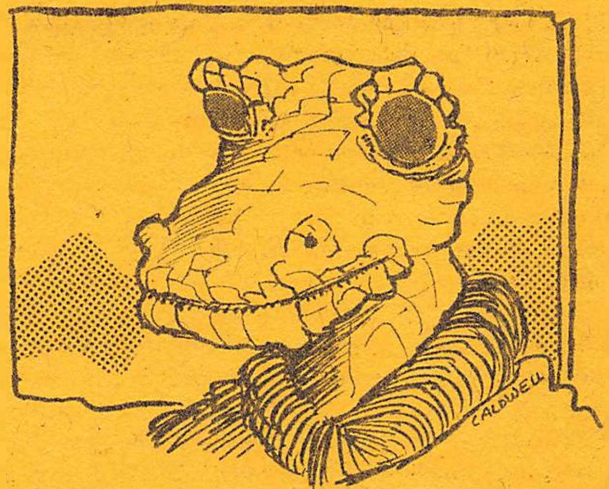
What people who fear women in general fail to see is that these prejudices are not unique to feminists. These women were prejudiced before they found feminism. They remained so afterward. ANY IDEOLOGY CAN BE CORRUPTED TO RATIONALIZE AND JUSTIFY ANYTHING: FEAR, PREJUDICE, HATRED, MURDER. Good christians have done it. Mao did it. It's been done in the name of democracy, socialism, profit, anarchy, totalitarianism, and even love. The key phrase remains: feminism does not cure prejudice. Neither does it create it.

The value of feminism and separatism of various sorts? Feminism gives power to people who have not had their share: female peopld. Whether we use that power to good, or to evil, is a matter of individual choice and personality (insofar as free choice exists in anyone). That some of us are capable of evil does not mean that we should all be stripped of defenses and tools for survival.

Even if J. Owen Hanner is right, if A Women's Apa is cursed with narrow-mindedness (and if I am right in my evaluation that A Women's Apa is far more insulated from feminist society and thought than from male-dominated fandom!), it barely matters. If these women find the strength and power in the society they build, well, it's about time more women began to find their strength. The good ones will come away bolder, more powerful, able to express themselves in their art, tastes, personal lives with greater ideals, understanding, and humane vision. The bad ones, well, they will have the power to cause even more damage than before--to hurt as

many as they can under their misused banner. But in the long run, these bad ones aren't the strong ones. The rest of us prevail.

((Obviously you put a great deal of thought and introspection into the letter, Jessica; I could argue particulars, such as I don't feel we're in a true patriarchy, and your definition of patriarchy is ultimate proof of that; or I'm not overly fond of your using words that you and I know are used only for negative emotional connotations; but I guess there's just one disagreement, in the long run. Since conventions are sf conventions, where we're getting together for our mutual interests in science fiction, then I have always felt it should be an open group, not an opportunity to divide up into sub-cliques at the exclusion of everyone else. As you've pointed out, though, our interpretations differ.))



Mary Elizabeth Counselman
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3/14/79

I'm just joining the stf-scene, really, after years of mostly mythos-and-legend fantasy. Everyone is so science-happy these days, I thought I'd try

at least one stf pb, for luck, in the same vein as my oldie from WEIRD TALES, "Drifting Atoms" (May '41 WT). I didn't know I was fem top-seller to WT in its lifetime, not until Eric Carlson of "Etchings and Odysseys" sent me the Cockroft on it, and Mike Asley put me in his WHO'S WHO. Always thought Greye La Spina (the "family" grandmother) was ahead of me in sales, for hers were longer and guesomer! I didn't write many novelets, mostly shorts under 7000 words for WT's great editors Wright and McIlwraith.

So much has happened to me so fast lately, I'm a little bit punchy, but coming out of it slowly. Shortly after losing my dear husband, the Big Snow was featured here in sunny Alabama (where it's NEVER over an inch of two. The freeze at Guntersville cracked a pontoon of my little hideaway-houseboat... Thanks for the kind words about HALF IN SHADOW. And yes, you've not heard the last word from this old dino-

saur, as they call us of First Fandom... my novel HEREAFTER, an sf piece, is all about the Probes, and "the Shuttle", and inertia "drive"--which Madame Elena Blavatsky (my sad-guru of sf research) spoke of in the 1800s! The bird becomes a phoenix in the book, a "fire alien" that crashlands on moist Earth by mistake, and is causing all our fever-diseases (like Legionnaire's) by polluting air and water as they die and putrify. (My! I really REACHED for that one, for and aft!) Blavatsky was a terrific researcher of myths and legends and ancient religions. But I bet you're already well up on the lady who wrote the "female version" of the NECRONOM-ICON. (Hers exists; I have one, presented by an old astronomy buddy.)

Don D'Amassa THE STAND is a very fine novel,
19 Angell Drive but not, I think, up to King's
East Providence, RI 02914 standard. There are some really
3/4/79 great aspects of the novel, some
 of the characterization, the first
200 pages and bits and pieces from there on. But the novel
gets out of hand at times. The Walking Dude is too incon-
sistent--al powerful and all knowing at one point, short-
sighted and slow to react at another. I wonder where King
will be going with his next novel.

((I think you take the inconsistencies out of context; I'll not deny that they're there, but I don't think they're as crucial to the success of the book. I did feel that THE STAND could easily have ended 50 pages earlier than it did, but that was my only major complaint.))

SOME WILL NOT DIE is not one of Budrys' best, you say? Well, I thought it was second only to ROGUE MOON. I'd be interested to know which of his other novels you thought was better. MICHAELMAS struck me as a bit too slick and contrived. THE IRON THORN was extremely disappointing. MAN OF EARTH is good but almost impossible to find. WHO? is good, as is FALLING TORCH. And there aren't any more.

((My favorite Budrys novel is WHO?, followed closely by MICHAELMAS and AMSIRS IN THE IRON THORN. All three of those novels made a special and lasting impression on me; by comparison, SOME WILL NOT DIE was lackluster.))

I agree with your review of THE LAST TRANSACTION. I'm glad to see I'm not the only fan who thinks some of Malzberg's novels are worthwhile.

In Barry Hunter's review of CHARNEL HOUSE, he fails to mention Masterton's THE DUNN, which was also pretty good. More recently, THE DEVILS OF D-DAY is excellent, and REVENGE OF THE MANITOU is pretty good. Masterton is very good at writing grotesque horror adventure novels, though his reputation among fans is pretty low. He writes to a formula, but it's not a bad formula.

Sue Phillips writes well, and I find myself in agreement with her reviews of SUPERMAN and BODY SNATCHERS. I was

particularly pleased with the latter, because I expected to be horribly disappointed.

Yes, the price of old books is amazing, isn't it? Most of the places around here still charge half of cover price, but some are up to 75% or more, particularly on sf. There's even one shop that has a minimum charge of 60 cents per book.

((Atlanta's book market is becoming increasingly worse; we now have several stores with a 70% price on used sf, and a large number of stores are adding "cash-only" or "collectible" sections with generally high prices. The area's most overpriced bookstore is asking an average of \$3.50 each for any Ballantine Adult Fantasy (unicorn-head edition), a minimum of \$3 for the Beagle editions of HPL books, and about \$2 minimum for Ace F editions. This seems to be irregardless of condition, so long as the minimum condition is fair or better. My only wish is that they'd pay a fair return on the basis of what they'll sell a book for; generally, the flat purchasing price is 25¢ a book, although the aforementioned high-priced dealer is paying 20% of cover price. The problem is, I rarely have anything to sell... *sigh*))

Robert Bloch Thanks for the double issue of FR;
2111 Sunset Crest Drive it was, of course, doubly entertain-
Los Angeles, CA 90046 ing. The reviews are a great help
2/20/79 and guide to reading in this over-
 crowded field. I'm also glad to
see, in the lettercol, some backlash against the militantly
divisive type of lib activity and lib-literature. When it
comes to women, I've always been in favor of togetherness.

((Ahem... I'm certainly glad you said that, and not I...))

Michael Bishop Re: your review of SHADOWS: the
Pine Mountain, GA final sequence of my piece "Mory"
2/22/79 takes place in an amusement park
 modeled less on nearby Callaway
Gardens (although "Colicott Gardens" suggests the equations,
I admit), which is a recreational area with a beach and a
greenhouse, than on your own Six Flags Over Georgia. We
haven't got a roller coaster and a parachute jump down here.

I think FR has improved tremendously in appearance; you have an extremely nice use of illustrations. Don't know what else to say, except that TRANSFIGURATIONS is due from Berkley/Putnam in October, and EYES OF FIRE is underway for Hartwell and Pocket Books.

WAHF: Donald Franson, George R.R. Martin (who suggested that we get some more reviews/criticism out of Mike Bishop; I'm in total agreement--and are you reading this, Mike?), Nicki Lynch, Bob Soderberg, Deb Hammer-Johnson, Elst Weinstein, Joseph Wilcoxon, and Wade Gilbreath. Gee, not too many locs this time; some of which, I'm sure, was due to a seemingly high loss rate by USPS on the last FR--many, many people finally jotted a card to ask what had happened to FR, and I had to send replacement copies... Better luck this time, I hope...



