



future retrospective

FUTURE RETROSPECTIVE #3 is written and edited by Cliff & Susan Biggers (621 Olive St., Cedartown, GA 30125). Published bi-monthly.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: \$2 for 6 issues or 35¢ per single copy. Back issues are available; the first issue is in good supply, but the second issue is in limited availability--and there won't be too many extras of this issue. You can order back issues along with your subscription if you wish.

TRADES are very much welcome--we try to review everything sent us in trade. We also attempt to send complimentary copies of FR to anyone with something reviewed in its pages--provided we have an address to send it to.

LETTERS OF COMMENT are requested--if you received this, we'd love to hear from you about anything found in this zine or anything related to this zine.

## CONTENTS

Cover -- Wade Gilbreath-----1  
Perspectives in Retrospect---3  
REVIEWS:

THE JAWS THAT BITE, THE  
CLAWS THAT CATCH-----4  
THE MOTE IN GOD'S EYE-----6  
TIDE-----7  
TRANSITION OF TITUS CROW--7  
RED TIDE-----8  
ENDLESS VOYAGE-----9  
EIGHTY-MINUTE HOUR-----9  
TIME WAR-----11  
2018 A.D. OR THE KING  
KONG BLUES-----11  
THE OTHER GLASS TEAT-----12  
A KNIGHT OF GHOSTS AND  
SHADOWS-----14  
A FUNERAL FOR THE EYES  
OF FIRE---14  
FINAL STAGE-----15  
THE NEW ATLANTIS-----17  
THE SYNDIC-----17  
THE ART OF WALT DISNEY---18  
Comics reviews-----19  
Fanzine reviews-----21

## LETTERS

Piers Anthony (4)  
Michael Bishop (8)  
Mike Glicksohn (8)  
Gene Wolfe (10)  
Wade Gilbreath (10)  
Thomas Burnett Swann (13)  
Jodie Offutt (13)  
Harry Warner, Jr. (15)  
Roy Fabian (18)  
Lester Boutillier (21)

## ART

Wade Gilbreath -- pp. 3,4,12,15  
Cliff Biggers -- pp. 7,9,19

## GUEST WRITERS

Steven Carlberg -- pp. 9-10  
Alan Hutchinson --pp. 19,20  
Lester Boutillier--p. 20

OUTSIDE MATERIAL (if you don't live here, anything you write is outside material) is welcome; it's preferable that you contact us beforehand and let us know what you plan on doing, though, so we can let you know if we can use it or not.

NOTE: All the books reviewed herein, if in print, are available from T-K Graphics (PO Box 1951, Baltimore, MD 21203) at cost. They charge no postage or handling charges. Write them for their catalog, listing books available.

We need art; spot illos are becoming particular problems--after all, we can't work Wade too hard, since he has a number of other obligations. If you have any spot illos, please send them. If we use them, we'll get them stencilled, so you don't have to worry about that.

Remember--we want you to respond!

FUTURE RETROSPECTIVE #3 -- Cliff & Susan Biggers, 621 Olive St., Cedartown, GA 30125

## PERSPECTIVES IN RETROSPECT

Oddly enough, this is the first time either Susan or I have done the editorial page of FR last; nothing incredible, but worth mentioning, it seemed.

The main thing you've already deduced about this issue of FR is that it's late--just about one issue late, in fact. There's a simple reason for this--and if you'll give me a second, I'll make one up...

Seriously, the one thing that retarded the publication of FR #3 was totally non-faanish; it was the fact that I was student-teaching during the spring quarter and as a result our income was at an all-time low level. And with one thing calling for money, then another (most of them were such mundane items as rent, payment on the '73 Blue Beetle and utility bills), FR kept getting pushed back a little, and a little more, until I had finished my student teaching, a little dribble of money was coming in, and we could invest in paper, stencils, ink and incidentals.

To those of you who assumed we had cancelled FR after only two issues, we apologize; we aren't going to try to stick to such a tight six-week schedule from here on out, though, so that hopefully mix-ups like this won't happen. We're going to call it a tentative bi-monthly and leave it at that.



SUSAN'S HALF-A-PAGE: Subtitled, "why do I get stuck with the financial parts of the editorial?"

We've been considering expanding FR, making it about 26-30 pages per issue; but we aren't sure that you'd want each issue much larger than this or that you'd be willing to pay the extra costs that we'd have to pass on if we did so.

FR was originally intended to be around the 18-page-per-issue range; we didn't anticipate such a fine reader-response that would make it impossible for us to do the number of reviews we had intended in that small a number of pages. As is obvious, our 35¢-per-copy price-tag isn't making us rich--it's just lessening our fall into poverty as we lay out cash for each issue of FR. So if we increase the size of FR to 26-30 pages per issue, we'd have to raise the price to 50¢ per copy.

Personally, I'd just as soon keep it at the size it is--but four or five correspondents have asked that we make it larger and raise the price.

Here's the other tentative solution--we've gotten very little response to the comic reviews, so we're considering cutting them back to half-a-page (plus the half-a-page for Alan Hutchinson's Barks reviews), thus freeing one more page for book reviews, letters, etc. Comics are in a poor state now, and the really noteworthy issues in any given two-month span can usually be reviewed in half-a-page, since there are rarely more than two or three titles worth particular attention. Some have even suggested that we put the comics reviews in a separate publication--a four-or-six page zine to be issued approximately once a month. That's another consideration--if we did that, the cost-per-issue of our comics reviewzine would be 6/\$1 and we'd have even more free space here. So let us know next time what you prefer--fewer comics reviews, no comics reviews, a separate zine, preserve the status quo, or what.

But whatever you do, write. Your letters are the highlight of each issue for us, so don't let us down.

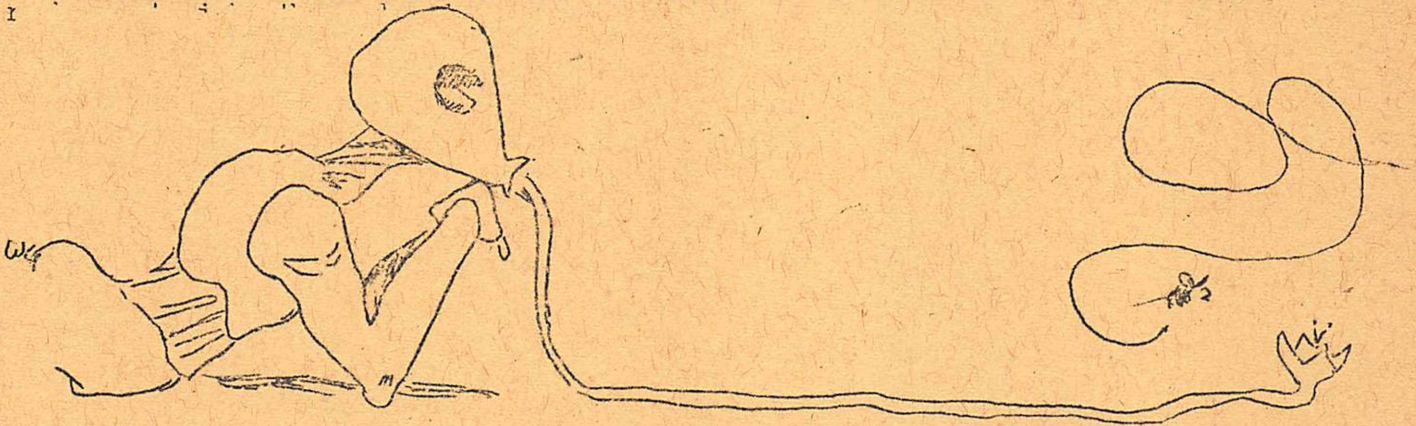
# BOOKS

THE JAWS THAT BITE, THE CLAWS THAT CATCH  
Michael Coney (DAW UW1163 -- \$1.25)

Michael Coney's latest novel is yet another of those books with a title borrowed from the "Jabberwocky;" however, that won't be why you remember this book once you read it. Post-reading ruminations reveal that there's a lot more to JAWS (Not to be confused with the best-seller) than meets the eye. The main theme of the book is Coney's idea of how crime will be punished and jail sentences will be served in the very immediate future. He presents a very feasible--in theory--solution to the overcrowding of prisons in which criminals are treated as slaves and can be bonded to any free man willing to pay the fee for bondage and take the risk of having a criminal as his servant.

The second theme of JAWS is that of a society which makes frequent use of a nationwide organ bank for any major emergency and quite a few (it is later revealed) clandestine uses by the rich. One of the stipulations put upon a prisoner who is bonded is that he must act as a "spare parts man" for his owner should any accident befall him. In case of the death of a free man, the bonded man is automatically freed.

First Michael Coney sets forth his proposals about the penal system and then he shows us how these seemingly better methods can be just as bad, if not worse than the old ones. There is a great deal of resentment and hostility between most bonded men and their free masters. There is always the threat of an accident occurring and the bonded man being called upon to make a donation of one of his body parts. This factor



rather outweighs the reduced prison sentence bondage carries with it, making the system somewhat less than the success it is supposed to be. There is also an organization called the Foes of Bondage which makes things tough for the bondage system. It is at this point in the novel that some of Coney's so-called male chauvinism begins to show through; the Foes are comprised mainly of women who do rather an inept job of demonstrating against bondage and generally manage to turn the organization's presidency into a popularity contest. Then things get much better when the hero, Joe Sagar, becomes the Foes' only male member and shows the ladies how things should be done. I say so-called chauvinism because I haven't yet decided whether Coney really believes in the things his characters say and do, or he is having them do so because his novels call for such characters. Right now I'm willing to give him the benefit of the doubt.

Towards the end of the book the secondary theme of misused organ banks becomes the major theme and we are treated to all the grisly examples of how the system can go wrong. People are imprisoned for minor crimes and forced to give donation after donation until they are little more than lumps of scar tissue with all useful parts long gone. Through Sagar we get a look at how the system operated from the inside where people are classified not in the usual ways, but as to how many organs they have left to donate. In fact, the whole concept begins to go sour as people who are rich enough or who have enough influence begin to use the organ bank for cosmetic purposes.

Aside from the two outstanding issues of JAWS are a number of other interesting ideas Michael Coney introduces; the development of sea creatures into landgoing, oxygen-breathing pets to replace the standard cat and dog pets which presumably have been destroyed in some world-wide catastrophe. This, by the way, is my only gripe with the book: Coney is not very clear about the disaster that is hinted at as having occurred in the near past. There are also the slithe skins obtained from alien animals imported and raised on Earth, which change color according to the emotions of the humans wearing them. And for the sportsminded there is an evolved and more dangerous form of today's hang gliding. There are a lot of ideas packed into 191 pages of JAWS and all are developed satisfactorily. I suggest that THE JAWS THAT BITE, THE CLAWS THAT CATCH be placed immediately on your reading list for 1975. --shb

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PIERS ANTHONY WRITES:

(3-30-75)

"Ah, yes. I am returning that book to you by book-rate mail ((TWILIGHT OF BRIAREUS)) and thanks for letting me see it. As you know, my curiosity was to ascertain what the common elements might be, between that and RINGS OF ICE, since you matched the two books so closely. Now I can offer a skeptic-eye rationale of your tastes. (You may not wholly like this) RINGS, of course, is an end of the world novel set near your home, involving unusual people. TWILIGHT is an end-of-world novel set in England (which, coincidentally, is where I was born). The common element is this: the focus on pregnancy in trying circumstances. You, as a young couple, would naturally be interested in this, and you have either struggled with it consciously or suppressed your concern. It is a worthy concern; my wife and I agree that the most significant change in our lives occurred with the birth of our first child. More significant than marriage itself... Every moment, literally, of the day and night, we had to know where the baby was and how she was doing. Anyway, this is an aspect not much seen in science fiction, perhaps because the authors are mostly men who leave children to women (You will be interested in OX, third in OMNIVORE/ORN trilogy: same reason). Too bad. At any rate, children are well worth while, and worthy of attention in any novel.

"But as to why Susan preferred RINGS, while Cliff preferred TWILIGHT: this is only natural. Take a youngish teacher whose students are teenage; girls have been known to exert their wiles to obtain better grades from their male teachers, and teachers have been known to run off with students. Speaking from a certain limited experience, I can say that teenage girls can manage to show off surprising amounts in the classroom by the way they cross their legs (ankle over knee) and lean forward. Their minds may be immature, but not their bodies. The notion of being exposed to all that does not bother the average male--but I dare say it might bother the wife of that male. Thus Susan, however open minded and trusting she may be (and I speak as one whose wife has never evinced any such jealousy or distrust, ever), still would be likely to be subtly turned off by a novel in which the protagonist deserts his wife to take up with a student. It simply is not an attractive scenario for the wife.

"All right, all right--I told you you would not necessarily like my comments. TWILIGHT is an intriguing novel, suffering some disjointedness in the latter portion, a bit slow in the center, a bit over-concerned with the traditional male sexual fantasy of young, pretty, universally available girls (girls are simply not that way in real life)--the male is generally much more conscious of sex than the female) but certainly worth reading. I think its appeal for you must be largely owing to these particular elements that are on your consciousness, rather than any great amount of merit, however. And so I suspect is the case with my own novel. Which is what I really wanted to know. The novel can appeal to the particular concerns of the greatest number of people is the prizewinner...but neither of these will go far, I think.

"Oh--and a brief remark on PROSTHO PLUS: no, I've never been a dental student. That series started when I had \$2,300 worth of dental work done, and I determined to make it up by adapting it to fiction. So the agony of my mouth became the novel, yes even through the squishy tooth and the eventual need to have half the job redone. I was

"Horsefeathers," and it happened just that way. I have done several more stories in that series, but no one will buy them. Same story as it was the first time: the editors are convinced there is no market for this sort of thing, despite the wide success (once I did squeeze it into print) of PROSTHO PLUS. Editors are that way, and they don't seem to learn from experience. In a related connection: the "no taboos" editors, except for Harlan Ellison, are often the worst of all, refusing even to recognize their taboos but rejecting on the basis of them anyway. Grump, grumble...."

Cliff and Susan comment: I would imagine that children/pregnancy concern all young couples, and we wouldn't claim to be an exception. We are less-than-eager to have children in the near future (next ten years), and possibly will have none at all. Perhaps that is why we both enjoyed RINGS OF ICE so much; the female character attempted to stand up for her right to remain childless because she wanted it that way.

Both of us still maintain that TWILIGHT and RINGS are both very good books, doing fine things with believable characters in catastrophic situations. I think that's the most important factor in RINGS; those people are real, painfully so, with all their fears, quirks and oddities. Very few authors have created people that believable in science fiction.

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THE MOTE IN GOD'S EYE. Larry Niven & Jerry Pournelle (Simon & Schuster)(SFBC)

Any book with a blurb like this catches my attention immediately: "Possibly the finest science fiction novel I have ever read"--Robert Heinlein. Let's face it; when possibly the finest SF writer says this is possibly the finest SF novel, you know it has to be great, right?

Well, it is; sort of. THE MOTE IN GOD'S EYE is the finest tribute to space opera and to Heinlein's juvenile adventure novels, because that is precisely what the novel is. Except for its length, this could have been a 1950s Heinlein juvenile, and it would have been a good one. It's no wonder that Heinlein liked it so much; it must be intensely flattering to see two talented authors mimicking your twenty-year old fiction.

Rod Harold, Lord Blaine, is made captain of his warship, MacArthur as the novel opens; quite abruptly, he is sent to investigate a strange ship entering his range from a distant system. The ship is accidentally destroyed, but its origin is traced to a region of space known as The Mote. Blaine and his ship are sent to find the home planet of the ship, and they do just that. The contact with the Moties is strange and uncomfortable--obviously, something is being withheld, but what? That what leads us into an adventure classic, a book that should remain popular for years and years.

Is it good? Very much so; but the problem is, "Is it award-winning SF?" I don't think so, primarily because it comes too late. This is epic SF, star-spanning fiction of the most grandiose sort, and is incredibly enjoyable. But it succeeds so well because it doesn't set out to do all that much; it's a situation-book, plain and simple, and that's all it concerns itself with. We get few glimpses into the make-up of the society of 3017, we get no deep looks into the consciousness of the characters; what we do get is great, but it's not enough. More than anything else, this is a throw-back, a nostalgic tribute to the SF we remember so fondly but never see any more. I only hope it doesn't start a trend back to this sort of fiction--while MOTE IN GOD'S EYE is very good, it would only take two or three more books of this sort from Big Name Writers to flood the "market," reader-wise. It's like divinity; it's fine every now and then, a rare treat, but two or three pieces, one after another, make me nauseous.

Don't pass this up, though; while it may or may not be award-winning SF, it's definitely fun reading.

--cb

TIDE. Zach Hughes (Berkley Medallion N2813 -- 95¢)

The first Zach Hughes book I read, SEED OF THE GODS, impressed me enough to convince me to buy this book when I ran across it. Hughes is a competent writer, consistently readable and with a style clear and concise enough to remain in the background as you read along, yet not bland enough that you fail to notice it. So I bought TIDE, even with its atrocious packaging (the cover is definitely unattractive--from a foot or so away, it has a tendency to blur into one monotonous aqua blob), and settled down with expectations of a pleasant hour's reading. Once again, Hughes didn't disappoint me.

As I've made perfectly clear in previous issues of FUTURE RETROSPECTIVE, I'm a sucker for a well-done catastrophe novel. This, quite simply, is just that. Mutated dinoflagellates turn fish in and around a government installation (called \*surprise\* Tide) into berserk killers, attacking one another as well as unwary swimmers and/or fishermen. It turns out that the same hyper-aggressiveness is carried over into people who eat the fish--and you begin to get the picture.

Hughes does a superb job of describing the vicious brutality which results from the dinoflagellates; the book is a real tension-causer. My main complaint with the novel is the very, very weak ending (that seems to be a problem with a number of more recent novels); the characters pass through a tense, climactic situation, but the real problem is never resolved for the reader (nor for the fictional world of TIDE). Another flaw is the lack of clarity concerning a character's physical handicap; at the climax of the novel, Tusk flips an artificial foot that had only been mentioned in one other part of the novel, very matter-of-factly, and no doubt many readers were quite confused as to exactly what was happening.

Weak points notwithstanding, Zach Hughes writes competent SF with a flair, and TIDE is solid, readable SF, worth your time and money. --cb

THE TRANSITION OF TITUS CROW. Brian Lumley (DAW UW1173 -- \$1.50)

I like the writings of H.P. Lovecraft; while not a superbly talented wordsmith, Lovecraft produced some of the most memorable horror-SF fiction ever written. In his Cthulhu Mythos stories particularly does his flair for the macabre stand out. This novel is Lumley's second from DAW in the HPL line, dealing with the creations in his Mythos, so it already has a lot going for it.



And Brian Lumley managed to blow it all. I could not believe it--I wanted to like the book, I wanted to write this review and rant and rave and scream "buy it, buy it!" And I can't; because in all honesty, this is a weak, uneventful, (shall I say it? Yes.) boring novel.

THE BURROWERS BENEATH, Lumley's first novel, was strong and competent. This novel is a sequel to that book, concerning itself with the return of Henri-Larent de Marigny and Titus Crow, ten years after their mysterious disappearance. Lumley fails, though, by trying to present the novel as a series of fragmented notebooks, recordings, etc. The entries are gappy, irregular, and just as dull as a genuine journal would probably be. And 252 pages is far too much for this sort of idea; had Lumley cut his novel considerably and tightened it up a bit, he might have had a success. As it is, this novel is a dismal bore. I recommend his first novel, and for the real Lovecraft fans I recommend Colin Wilson's MIND PARASITES; but I recommend that anyone and everyone pass it up. --cb

MICHAEL BISHOP WRITES:

(4-12-75)

"Thanks for the two letters, the issue of FUTURE RETROSPECTIVE and the copy of Tiptree's book...

"Forty copies of FUNERAL sold at one store? Good lord, I'm flabbergasted. Do you know that I haven't even seen a copy on a newsstand, anywhere? As a matter of fact, I don't even have a copy of the book at the present; someone we scarcely know prevailed upon us to borrow the only copy I had upstairs here and so far hasn't returned it. That copy also contains all the corrections I want to make in the second edition of the book, if there ever is a second edition.

"CROATOAN by Ellison? Godawffulll. I don't think even that "Ellison-drive" would have saved this one; it's one of the most ridiculous concepts for a story he's ever pushed over on his readers, phony as a rubber nose. However, the novel running in F&SF now makes the magazine worth the price, I think; especially when you consider that a buck's now the going price for just about all the magazines. THE STOCHASTIC MAN is fine low-key work, and I'm waiting for the third installment.

"I've just finished a novel, and I've spent seven hours today typing on the final draft, as I've done for the past three days. A scoop of sorts for you; it's entitled STOLEN FACES, and I'm hoping it's going to get me out of debt soon. Not a great book, but better than competent, I think. Keep your fingers crossed..."

Susan comments: Cliff was utterly disgusted with CROATOWN, but it didn't offend my aesthetics all that much; while the plot was very flimsy, the force and style made the story adequate for casual reading. I was quite surprised to see it reprinted in a Big-Name Men's Magazine.

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RED TIDE. D.D. Chapman & Deloris Lehman Tarzan (Ace 71160 -- \$1.25)

For anyone who (a) is blind, or (b) never pays attention when passing the SF racks, Ace has brought back their once-popular Science Fiction Special series in a new numbered run. The numbering is a clever gimmick--it appeals to those of us who have just enough collector's instinct to try to keep up with numbered series.

RED TIDE is a competent, engrossing novel that well-deserves to be in the Special line. The novel deals with life in Cobb Seamount after the powers-that-be launch the attack-that-shouldn't-be. The plot is strong, but the writing is the real attention-grabber; it's gripping fiction, carrying the reader along all the way through. Chapman and Tarzan don't bog themselves down in purple prose; they write crisply and keep prosaic style out of the forefront.

I notice that more and more SF novels are painting bleak pictures of the future; it's not a new trend, but it's taking on ominous proportions nowadays. The state of humanity is shaky in this novel; it shows a grim vision of humanity unable to work together for a common cause--survival of the Seamount--and unable to see a logical course of action. Frankly, I find this kind of novel, with its recognizable characters and believable interaction, more frightening than the most spectacular tales of nuclear or ecological catastrophe. Don't let this one slip by you; it's a must-have for any avid SF fan.

--shb

MIKE GLICKSOHN WRITES:

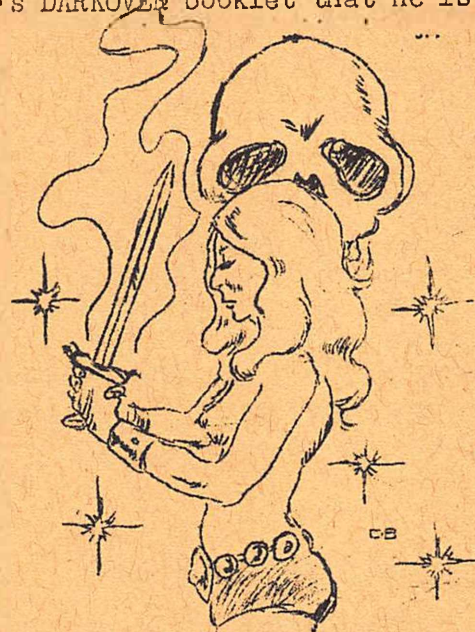
(4-21-75)

"Thanks for sending me the second issue of FR. While this is not the sort of fanzine I'm likely to respond to at length, I did enjoy reading through it and I commend you on handling an ambitious undertaking rather well... I hope your own fanzine is both personally rewarding and a source of good free stuff from the publishers.

"You don't mention in your review of Walter Breen's DARKOVER booklet that he is MZB's husband, and while that may not be germane, it should at least indicate that the authoress herself was probably happy with the volume which makes your own negative reaction a little surprising..."

"You seem to have gotten a goodly amount of response from the authors you discussed in #1, and that strikes me as about the only reason one would want to undertake the task of a reviewzine. Good luck."

Cliff comments: You know, there was a very good reason why I didn't mention Breen's being MZB's husband; namely, I didn't know it. It explains a lot about the lack of objective material--Harry Warner's letter elsewhere explains even more, and my only question is, "Why does everyone tell me these things after I put my foot in my mouth?" Oh, well; those tire-rubber sandals taste just about like the cheap steaks you get at Bonanza. \*chomp, chomp\*



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ENDLESS VOYAGE. Marion Zimmer Bradley (Ace 20660 -- \$1.25)

This book was a certain "must-read" as soon as I came across it; first, it's by Marion Zimmer Bradley, a personal favorite, and second, it's the third book in the new Ace SF Special series.

ENDLESS VOYAGE is very, very reminiscent of good Heinlein, particularly STARSHIP TROOPERS. Not in plot, really, but in drive; Bradley reels out a superb tale, and through the eyes of her protagonist, Gildoran, we see the life of an Explorer, the next last of a dwindling breed of space travellers who spend their lives searching for inhabitable planets to set up teleportation stations. The Explorers are losing their dedication, beginning to lose their sense of purpose, and we see it all through Gildoran's eyes. The crew of Gildoran's ship, Gypsy Moth, is unaccustomed to the idea of failure--their entire life is geared to success in an extreme--and by the end of the novel, their dedication is totally, irrevocably real to the reader. Bradley has created strong characters and clothed them in a firm plot, but the most memorable segment of this novel is the purposefulness of these heroes of the future, their devotion and their love of space. It's the strongest theme in the book, the outstanding theme, and makes ENDLESS VOYAGE the finest release in Ace's reincarnated SF Special series.

--cb

THE EIGHTY-MINUTE HOUR. Brian Aldiss (Leisure Books 2372K -- \$1.25)

At first nibble, THE EIGHTY-MINUTE HOUR does not seem to be a serious novel. It is peopled with characters like Devlin Carnate, Monty Zoomer, and Choggles Chaplain, any of whom, as the story progresses, can be expected to break out into full-fledged song-and-dance routines on the slightest of pretexts. No kidding. Once every couple of chapters, Aldiss foregoes prose for a few stanzas of catchy lyrics about the philosophy of determinism (or some equally tuneworthy topic) that you can imagine being set to music by Jerome Ragni.

After all, the subtitle is "A Space Opera."

I, a serious sort of reader, was put off to a large extent by all this flippancy, until I began to realize what the whole idea was. THE EIGHTY-MINUTE HOUR is told in first person, but unlike other books in which that perspective is employed (such as

THE MOON IS A HARSH MISTRESS), this is not a simple narrative; Aldiss's speaker does not confine himself to a mere recording of events. The notion is that the narrator instead of being just a regular guy involved in some exciting things, is an aspiring novelist who is rewriting his personal experiences for a commercial audience in 1999. Bearing this in mind, it makes a good deal of sense that the book should be replete with anything, even song-and-dance, eccentric metaphors, bewildering humor, and over-tones of the most outrageous writers of the 1970's.

Once I got the premise figured out, I was able to enjoy the story. Then my only worry was that the complexity of the style was going to overpower anything Aldiss actually had to say. Much to my surprise, the excesses of style were vindicated by a substantial core of meaning, so that I finished up feeling completely in tune with the author's objectives, and as if I really owed it to the book to read it again.

THE EIGHTY-MINUTE HOUR is an elaborately well-written novel that any science-fiction fan should enjoy.

--Stven Carlberg

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WEIRD NOTE FROM GENE WOLFE:

(4-13-75)

"Thanks for sending the sample issue of FR. (A sample issue is one the Postal Service has poured on pancakes.) You were right, it looks like something I will be interested in; and so since you did not include a threatening note I will include one of my own--a \$2 check. (If the check carries a red "ecs" you must send me five and a half issues or more or I'll sue. If it carries a green "ecs" I will come to GA and set fire to 621 Olive. If it carries a black dot, I'll send a blind pirate after you.)"

EDITOR'S NOTE: The blind pirate came around here and we sold him (cheap) to a nearby Long John Silver's franchise. We aren't scared of you...

LETTER FROM WADE GILBREATH:

(4-11-75)

"I always feel that when I write any type of letter of comment, I have to try and write it as though it were going to be published. To hell with it. Here are my observations on FUTURE RETROSPECTIVE #2.

"As I told you before, I thought the first issue was an excellent beginning. This second is much better. The "Geis Format" is the format for a review zine. (I hope the comparison between FR and TAC will go no further. Your zine is your own, and any comparison of content between the two would be ludicrous.) I read the whole thing at one sitting and was particularly impressed by the pacing you got from reviews, letters, and editorial comments. It flowed.

"I thought the quality of reviews in FR #2 was better than in one. They were more cohesively written and had more critical content. It seemed a number of the reviews in FR#1 were content summaries with a short pro or con recommendation. With this second issue you are getting more into what you feel are each book's strengths and weaknesses."

"I would have thought you would have had a review of Michael Bishop's new book in this second issue. I have a copy but haven't been in the mood to read it yet. Sue Phillips panned the book in her fanzine, WONDER POINT, so I'm looking forward to your opinion...."

"You mention Nino's visualization of Ellison's "Repent, Harlequin..." Now is this for grandiose acclaim? I believe this piece is the single best graphic storytelling I've ever seen. I want to rave, jump up and down, exclaim to the world. IT IS A PERFECT THING. Let's see, how else. Nino is a GENIUS! Well, better quit this before they take me away.

"FR does read like your apazines and that is definitely a compliment. I'm recommending it to all my Birmingham area friends with an interest in SF. Also, you'll be getting a continuous stream of art if you can use it. I want to give you all the support I can on this."

Susan comments: There was a superb reason for our not reviewing the Michael Bishop book from Ballantine; distribution on Ballantine books around here has been non-existent since February, and thus far we aren't getting review copies from them; we finally located a copy, though, as the review in this issue attests. That's also the reason we haven't reviewed the new Tiptree book, nor any of their other releases. \*Are you listening, Ballantine?\*

We printed your final paragraph so that years from now, when we're pubbing FR #386 and you gripe about having to do all this art for free now that you're a Big Name Artist, we can just show you those lines, gloat, and demand another page or two of spots. You've sold your soul, Gilbreath...

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TIME WAR. Lin Carter (Dell 8625 -- 95¢)

According to Lin Carter, this book is a semi-pastiche of A.E. van Vogt--whom I like. According to Cliff, it's graced with a Frank Frazetta cover, which I'm supposed to like.

Par for the course; I don't like the cover and if this book is a tribute to van Vogt, it's a left-handed compliment.

According to Carter, this plot-line resembles a van Vogt plot-line in its intricacies. As far as I could ascertain, it's far closer to another of his countless Burroughs pastiches, minus the sense-of-wonder. Van Vogt uses as a prime theme of his fiction the idea of the human forced into a situation of change, with everything resting on his ability to accept the change, act with it and utilize it. Witness Jommy Cross, witness Gilbert Gosseyn--then witness John Lux, the protagonist of TIME WAR. Van Vogt works very well with the characters at a mental level; but in Carter's book, the hero never worries more than superficially about his ability to teleport himself, he never seems to realize the immensity of it, and he gets himself immediately involved with a simplistic battle with some simplistic forces of the future (and if this is where Carter sees our technology leading us, I pity anyone who may exist 200,000 years from now). All the plot complexities are superficial; it's as if he wrote the book in his usual manner, then decided to complicate it by adding plot frills and lacing it with ornate ribbons of complexity. It looks complex superficially, but the complexities fall away upon careful examination and you end up with a slightly-less-than-fantastic version of Carter's UNDER THE GREEN STAR.

And before all you Frazetta fans bombard me with letters telling me what to do with my opinions, let me explain that there are numerous reasons for my disliking the cover. First, the foreground is very monotonous in color, and the background is excessively bright. Secondly, the cover looks far too much like one of his countless ERB covers and less like SF (of course, perhaps the astute Frazetta saw through the pretense and recognized this book for what it really was). And finally, the cover could have been reduced more and the entire effect would have been improved. Unless you're a Frazetta completist, pass this up. If you're a Carter completist--well, pass it up, anyway if you can. --shb

2018 A.D. OR THE KING KONG BLUES. Sam J. Lundwall (DAW UY1161 -- \$1.25)

Don Wollheim has put this book in pretty good company when he compares it to 1984 and A CLOCKWORK ORANGE. I was a little apprehensive, in fact; after reading Lundwall's BERNHARD THE CONQUEROR, I really expected these high-class comparisons to be so much publisher's hype.

Maybe it is a little hype, but not so much as I expected. 2018 A.D. is an honest appraisal of future society in Sweden as Lundwall extrapolates it--and even more importantly, it says a lot about humanity itself 43 years from now. Lundwall is wry,

satirical and entirely to-the-point in his visions of society--and for those of you who have any doubts as to the validity of his projections (not to be confused with the truth of them--while no one can know whether or not they're going to be true, we can judge their validity right now by seeing how logical they appear to be when viewed in relation to present life), Lundwall ends the book with chapter-by-chapter footnotes, referring you to articles that led him to write the book.

The vehicle for giving us this peek into the future is a fine one; an advertising agency is looking for the first girl born in the first minute of the 21st Century. Finding her proves to be a bit of a problem, though, because no one knows exactly where to find her--or, for that matter, exactly who she was. Her computer files are virtually bare, and all they have to help their search is her name.

Don't fail to read this one; you'll get your money's worth in entertainment and serious thought out of it. Pay particular attention to Arno Schmidt, the author of Zettels Traum, the longest, most obscure novel ever written--a claim to fame is merely finishing the book, and no one understands it. And this is only one example of Lundwall's sharp talent for thought-provoking writing; and the book is full of dozens more. It might be a little out of its class with 1984 and A CLOCKWORK ORANGE, but not that much.

--cb

THE OTHER GLASS TEAT. Harlan Ellison (Pyramid A3791 --- \$1.50)

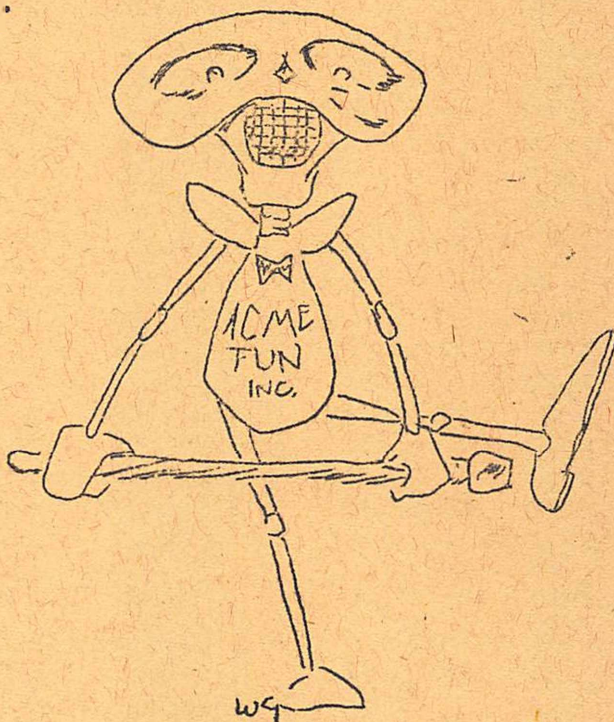
Everyone with an interest in manipulation of society should read this book. Not just SF fans; everyone. Ellison is a brilliant critic of television, its effects upon us, the manipulation of the public by the medium and the ultimate mind-rot that television is leading us to.

For those of you who lived a sheltered life and thus are unaware of the origins of the book: from 1969 to 1972, Harlan Ellison did a series of columns for the LA Free Press and ROLLING STONE entitled THE GLASS TEAT. The first year's worth of columns were collected and printed by Ace in 1971; but for some reason (and Ellison admits he can't be sure why, but he attributes it to administration pressure) the book had a staggering number of returns (even while people avidly searched for the book) and this, the second volume, was never published from Ace.

Now it's three years after the final column was originally published; the first volume went back into print from Pyramid early this year, and THE OTHER GLASS TEAT is out at last. As I said, everyone should read it; but the Ellison fan is going to have a grand time with this; it's pure Ellison, ranging from abrasive to contemplative to angry to apologetic to kind--but it's 100% Harlan, and you'll find it almost impossible to put this one down.

And as a side-note, let me add that Pyramid is publishing a numbered series of Ellison books, new and old, of which this is the fifth. This is the most important repackaging of an author's work to occur in SF in quite a while, and I urge everyone to buy the books, read 'em, and let Pyramid know you enjoy it. Keep your eyes open every month for the newest release--a lot of new or long-out-of-print titles are scheduled starting next month, and you have only yourself to blame if you miss them (unless you have a rotten distributor--but if that's the case, mail-order the books or something, but get them).

--cb



LETTER FROM THOMAS BURNETT SWANN:

(4-22-75)

"I was very glad you wrote, because I had lost your address; I managed to misplace FR #2. I thoroughly enjoyed your review of THE NOT WORLD (Thank you for not liking it as well as HOW ARE THE MIGHTY FALLEN. It doesn't even come close). Like you, I don't feel at home in the 18th century, and I only set this novel in that period because Thomas Chatterton, a sort of pre-Romantic admired by Keats and Wordsworth, lived then. But I hurried my people into the forest as soon as possible. Those 18th century drawing rooms strike me as stifling. It's hard to generalize about a whole period, but I do think that you can say that in general the 18th century was smug. Poets and philosophers and even architects thought that they knew exactly where everything fitted, even God, and of course they gave themselves a very high rank, just a little below the angels. For me at least, the Romantic Poets had to come along to save English literature. Who would take Dryden when he can get Keats or Coleridge?

"You have no idea how much I appreciate your taking the time to seek me out in my oceanic eyrie, and you are gracious to compliment my apartment, what with all those movie books scattered over the floor. Yes, I did decorate it myself. I like to decorate a place and then mess it up with books and papers and such--disorder in a larger order, a sort of microcosm of life, I suppose. Shirley Temple Black said a few years ago that an apartment ought to reflect the owner, and that's why it's hard to understand people who call in a decorator and tell him to plan everything for them. They get something perfect and cold--the sort of place where you're afraid to sit on certain chairs for fear they might break."

Susan comments: The 18th Century may have been a bad time for poetry, but you must admit that the prose of the era was quite distinguished. After all, virtual contemporaries of Dryden were Defoe and Swift. But yes, it was a wasteland in there until the Romantic Poets came along.

The second paragraph really doesn't have a direct tie to FR, but it says an awful lot about Tom Swann, so we ran it. For those of you who wonder what he refers to; we made a recent trip to St. Petersburg/Clearwater/Southern Florida, where we managed to look up Tom, as well as Piers Anthony and Alan Hutchinson. Tom's apartment is as personable as Tom himself, and very impressive.

Finally, Tom failed to mention that he has some novels due out in the next few months. DAW has THE MINIKINS OF YAM due out late this year or early 1976; Ace is due to put out TOURNAMENT OF THORNS about the same time. Tom was finishing up a book about Republic Studio's major actresses, entitled THE HEROINE AND THE HORSE: REPUBLIC'S LEADING LADIES, when we visited him, which explains the reference to movie books. And finally, Tom is working on CRY SILVERBELLS, a prequel to THE FOREST OF FOREVER. For the avid Swann fan (like ourselves), the next year or so should prove rewarding. ((And we had to get our news from POSTax, PO Box 8251, Louisville, KY 40208--12/\$1; Tom's modesty prevents him from sounding off about his upcoming books))

LETTER FROM JODIE OFFUTT:

(5-?-75)

"Hey! Thanks for sending FR #2! I like it, I like it.

"Yes, you should sign everything. I was so busy (while reading it) trying to figure out which of you wrote the editorial that I missed parts of it. Surely you don't want that.

"I'm anxious to see Joe Green's STAR PROBE, too. If it is the same story, there is a female in it whose name is Jodie. My name became the title character in a Cleye novel, JODINARAH, and it was Josie in THE CASTLE KEEPS. Very flattering of Joe; neat. With a Jodie in it, how can STAR PROBE miss?

"I guess I'm just a sucker for disaster movies. I enjoyed TOWERING INFERNO. So it's all been done before. So the acting isn't much. So what?! The kids and I saw it and during the first ballroom scene one of the boys leaned over and said the whole dance floor would turn upside down in a minute. The other said no, it was going to run into an iceberg.

"I told them both to shut up!"

A KNIGHT OF GHOSTS AND SHADOWS. Poul Anderson (Doubleday) (SFBC)

When Poul Anderson is writing serious novels, I enjoy his work immensely. But when it comes to such series as Nicholas Van Rijn and/or Sir Dominic Flandry, I'm left cold. Some authors are unable to interest me with anything but their regular-series stories; some, like Poul Anderson, bore me with their regular series writing yet at the same time produce outstanding unconnected novels (Anderson's TAU ZERO and THERE WILL BE TIME are examples of fine single works).

This is a Flandry of Terra novel (do I detect cringing among the readership?); and yes, it bored me. The synopsis sounded good; Flandry was to locate and thwart a fanatical underground movement before things went too far and the entire planet fell. To aid him in this he had purchased a slave, Kossara, who had been captured in a prior attempt to overthrow the government.

The primary problem in the Flandry novels I've read, and particularly in this one, is that too much time is spent on useless character development and minor details of Flandry's life. I find the development of Flandry less-than-satisfying; more than anything else, he resembles a character taken whole-cloth from a satire and thrown into a serious situation. It doesn't mesh, really, and that's the crux of the problem. Had Anderson developed this same situation as an unconnected novel, he might have saved it. But as it stands now, it's a flop for me.

If you like the other Flandry of Terra tales, you'll probably go for this one. It's not Anderson's best (nowhere near), though, so if you've never read anything else by him pass this one up--it might ruin your appetite for his genuinely fine fiction. cb

A FUNERAL FOR THE EYES OF FIRE. Michael Bishop (Ballantine 24350 -- \$1.50)

Every now and then, a novel comes along that creates an alien culture so well that you can't forget it. DUNE was one such novel; LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS was another. And this first novel by Michael Bishop is the most recent example of such a novel; it's a literary tour de force, a heavily introspective novel that offers a disquieting look at mankind's tendency to oppress other men by denying their equality, their humanity.

The two men from Atlanta, Gunnar and Peter Balduin, are offered a chance to remain separate from the city they had left if they help the Glaparcans relocate a tribe of Tropean natives on Glaparca. The Ouemartsee are persecuted, oppressed people of Trope, regarded as inferior by the Tropeans and thus isolated in their own settlement. Gradually, Gunnar begins to realize that this is far more than a mere relocation; this is a virtual destruction of a minority culture, and his partaking in it is a betrayal of his humanity.

The title refers to the unusual anatomical features of the Tropeans; they have no mouths, merely a ridge of flesh, their heads are large and lobed, and their eyes are large and crystalline. Upon death, the eyes are removed, ground into a powder and worn in a pouch called a dasera; they feel this gives them the experiences of all that the dead ancestor had seen. These are kept in the family and regarded as very personal. The Magistrate of the Tropemen gives Gunnar his dasera as a symbol of their friendship; this is one of the many, many things that makes Gunnar realize he is more than a man making a simple business deal.

The aliens are superb fictional creations; by the end of the novel, they are as real as Gunnar himself. Bishop has done an excellent job of creating a race that differs from man in their very motivations; he has created their culture, their religion, their moral values, their living habits--in short, he has developed a world in FUNERAL FOR THE EYES OF FIRE. This alone makes the book memorable; but there's more than that.

This is an engrossing novel, one you can't quit on until you finish it; it's a disquieting novel, because it says a great deal about the inhumanity of man in his oppression of others; and a soul-searching novel, one that stirs the reader to contemplate his own outlooks. Very few novels have had the effect on me that FUNERAL had;

DOWNWARD TO THE EARTH by Robert Silverberg immediately comes to mind, but I can think of no other examples of a work this strong.

If you only read a handful of SF novels this year, let a FUNERAL FOR THE EYES OF FIRE be one of them; this deserves to be on the Hugo ballot next year. --cb

FINAL STAGE. Edward L. Ferman & Barry Malzberg, Eds. (Penguin 4039 -- \$2.50)

"The Ultimate Science Fiction Anthology" is an awfully pretentious title. Like a book I found once called "The Greatest SF Book ever," it sounds like its claims are impossible to deliver. (The novel, by the way, was thoroughly forgettable) This collection, however, comes awfully close to delivering exactly what it promises.

If the title on this anthology seems familiar, there's a very good reason; the original hardback edition contained major rewrites of, among others, the Harlan Ellison story, "Catman;" therefore, this paperback edition is the correct edition of the book. So, while the \$2.50 price tag sounds a little high, compare it with the flawed hardcover edition and you'll see that this Penguin release is the one to invest your two and a half bucks in.

There are 13 stories on 12 major SF themes in FINAL STAGE; each story is supposed to represent the ultimate story on a assigned theme. The stories are all more-than-competent, and some of them approach brilliance. Fred Pohl's "We Purchased People" is a provocative look at the idea of alien "contact;" this tale is far more frightening than any of the popular "possession" stories. "An Old Fashioned Girl" by Joanna Russ is a segment from her novel THE FEMALE MAN, and is a disquieting look at the male as a (quite literally) mindless sex object. "Catman" is Harlan Ellison's finest story of 1974, a totally non-erotic look at the ultimate SF-sex story (and Ellison's afterward is the finest of all of them). And Philip K. Dick's "A Little Something for us Tempunauts" is one of his finest short stories, ever, dealing with time-travellers trying to get out of an endless time-loop. These are the best stories, but every effort in this collection is satisfying, well-deserving to be in an anthology with such an auspicious title and blurb. I got my \$2.50's worth out of this, and I think anyone who enjoys good sf will make the same claim once they finish it. --cb

LETTER FROM HARRY WARNER, JR. (5-4-75)

"Apologies for the slowness with which I'm acknowledging the second issue of FR...I never get caught up on LoC obligations and I'm usually weeks or months late in writing them.

"I enjoyed this issue very much, even though much of it concerns fiction that I haven't yet read. I'm even further behind on reading pro-zines and books than I am in writing about fan-zines received. Your fanzine is just about the right length for one which intends to emphasize discussion of fiction. If it were much smaller, it would be hard for readers to find enough items to fill a loc, and if it were much larger, there would be the temptation to put it away for a while until the recipient felt the urge to digest so much material on SF within one set of staples.

"One thing bothers me about the escalating prices of paperbacks, over and above what the increases do to my purse when I buy one. It's the way publishers never seem to have considered, all during the years when they held the line on prices, to try charging a dime or even a quarter more per copy so they could pay much



higher rates to authors and artists. There's no telling how much the whole field of science fiction might have improved, if the bottom rates for paperback novels had been \$5,000 or thereabouts instead of the thousand dollars or so that has prevailed. As things turned out, people continued to buy paperbacks after they began to rise in price, and I'm sure the same thing would have happened if the price increase had begun due to higher word rates, rather than higher paper and printing expenses. Now it's probably too late to hope that the artists and writers will ever get substantially better pay from most paperback lines, because prices have increased for the finished product to a level that must be very near the point at which people will just stop buying.

"I read just last week my first Malzberg novel. It was HEROVIT'S WORLD and I was quite surprised at the amount of enjoyment I received from it, after I'd read so many general condemnations of Barry's fiction in various fanzines. Now I find you folks praising another novel. Maybe there's a change coming in the general attitude to Malzberg fiction. It wouldn't be the first time such a thing happened in fandom; Murray Leinster, for instance, was once condemned as a hack of the first water, but in more recent years has been praised for his best work, honored at cons, and in general rates as one of the few surviving important writers from the earliest years of the pro-zines.

"As long as different people have different opinions about what constitutes the best sf and fantasy, there's no way the Hugos or Nebulas or any other awards will really establish eternal verities. The situation is complicated by the vast amount of material eligible for nomination in any given year, too much for most busy people to read in its totality... The way things are in the science fiction field, people are going to nominate and mark final ballots in the Hugo races after failing to read some or most of the eligible material, and they're going to choose their favorites on different criteria; friendship with the writer, preference for one particular style of writing or theme, memory of the good work a writer has done in the past, or the number of reviews particular stories have received in fanzines, for instance..."

"If the Walter Breen essay is the same one that I've read in another published version, there's a simple reason why it omits so many things. It was written as a present for Marion Bradley, who is his wife, for a birthday or wedding anniversary or some such event. Naturally, she knew all the basic facts about her novels.

"Full agreement on the value of the Kuttner anthology. Someone really should do a long, long article on Kuttner as one of the most influential authors of all time, with respect to the effect his stories had on other writers...

"Maybe Joe Green should have said that writing full-length novels is hard for a part-time writer. I suspect that it's easier for most people to write mediocre novels than the equivalent wordage in shorter forms...

"You really should initial your contributions, if only for the sake of posterity. Think of the confusion that future graduate students will suffer, if one of you becomes another Shakespeare and nobody can be sure which paragraphs of your fanzines should be included in the collected works. There's also some fanzine indexing going on right now which can be hampered by failure to identify authorship."

Cliff comments: Your suggestion about raising the cost-per-book and paying the writer a little more sound great to me; but so long as publishers can sell the product they have now, while paying only \$1000 or so, they'd rather keep all the extra loot for themselves and not raise prices any more. I think that if they did raise prices, less than half of it would ever get to the author.

Had T-K Graphics printed a page telling where the Breen piece first appeared, why it was written, etc., that would have explained the lack of objective material. Oh, well; as I commented to Mike Glicksohn, I put my foot in my mouth so often that when I have a cavity filled, I have to get my shoes resoled. \*sigh\*

And as you notice, we now initial reviews, etc., so people will know who wrote what. I was surprised to find that so many people actually cared about authorship, but far be it from us to frustrate the readers.

THE NEW ATLANTIS. Robert Silverberg, Ed. (Hawthorn) (SFBC)

This is the latest in Robert Silverberg's series of three novellas by major new SF authors--and the only thing tying them together is their editor and the fact that each book has a tremendous variance in quality.

THE NEW ATLANTIS presents three novellas by Gene Wolfe, Ursula K. LeGuin and James Tiptree, Jr.; they are "Silhouette," "The New Atlantis," and "A Momentary Taste of Being," respectively. Oddly enough, the weakest of the three is the one written by the usual-best author, Le Guin. Her short novella suffers mainly from lack of development; the 1984-ish society she propounds is deserving of more attention than she gives, as well as a greater length being necessary to give more background on the geological changes that had altered the face of the Earth.

Tiptree's novella (almost a short novel in itself, being 93 pages in length) is the usual type of fiction Tiptree does; a story heavy on humanity, but backed with a strong plot and full development. "A Momentary Taste of Being" is oddly reminiscent of Marion Zimmer Bradley's ENDLESS VOYAGE in its plot--no accusations of influence or any of that rot, since both are new works, just pointing out a point you might like to investigate yourself--but unlike the MZB novel, his work is less on the adventurous side and acts on the more subtle personal level. Of the two, I preferred Bradley's; although both are well-written, Tiptree's story of the Centaur and its quest for an inhabitable planet is a bit too pessimistic in its projections to suit me. I won't deny that it's a very strong story, though; read it for yourself and make your own comparisons.

Gene Wolfe spins an engrossing tale in "Silhouette," a fine mixture of suspense and science that leaves you feeling just a little uncomfortable. Johann finds that his monotonous voyage through space is becoming a little less monotonous--at least for him--due to the fact that his shadow was becoming an independent entity. And then there's the impending mutiny undertaken by members of a strange cult. Wolfe writes a full story that keeps the reader's mind busy shifting from one perspective to another, and yet he manages to tie everything up in a neat climax. This novella should pop up in a few of the anthologies next year; buy it here and read it beforehand.

For anyone interested in reading longish short fiction (or shortish long fiction), this is a fine book. Silverberg's produced a few clunkers using this three-novellas idea, but occasional books like this one make up for it. --shb

THE SYNDIC. C.M. Kornbluth. (Avon/Equinox -- \$1.95)

This is one of those rare examples where the blurb-writers' handiwork sounds far better than what the author produced. SYNDIC is one of those books that has a great premise but is ruined by the author's inability to hold reader interest and deliver what the plot-line leads the reader to expect.

Basically, it works like this: The Eastern US is controlled by the Syndic, a futuristic Mafia, while the Western US is controlled by the Mob, an outgrowth of the mid-western mobsters that lurk in the old UNTOUCHABLES reruns. The two criminal growths are legitimate and totally open in their operations and each controls its own sector; they're also in a near-war state with one another, operating clandestine assassinations and strikes in one another's territories. Unlike you'd expect, though, Kornbluth doesn't develop this plot-line fully; instead, he strands his protagonist in a primitive area where he's captured by telepathic natives; then loses him on a submarine for a while--you begin to get the picture. Never did he develop the plot adequately; I came away feeling cheated, because what I had gotten wasn't what I had wanted.

This is an exception in the Avon Equinox series of oversized paperbacks, though; thus far, they've made overall excellent selections for their reprintings, and the series as a whole goes recommended. This is one you can pass up, though; it isn't worth the time or the money.

--sl

--cb

LETTER FROM ROY FABIAN:

(4-25-75)

"By some quirk of fate which I am sure that the post office had nothing to do with knowingly, I received both FR #s 1 and 2 on consecutive days. Since I am somewhat (or even moreso) familiar with your works from GALAXY & MYRIAD from the past few years that probably foreshadowed what I expected from your reviewzine. May I say it was all and more of what I had hoped for. I am sure that you will have no problems in taking FR as far as you want to take it. After nearing the completion of FR#1 I was saying to myself, "What! No fanzine reviews?!" Then I read you planned on having them next issue and lo and behold, you did! The first issue was definitely interesting, but your second effort seemed somehow as more complete reviewzine...I believe you should continue with the trend of #2, seeing as you are having no problem with reader response. I was particularly interesting in your zine since I am just getting back into extensive reading after having slacked off for a while and need to know where to pick up again...

"Okay--speaking of DAW placing their sf stamp on the cover. I have a real lemon for you. I have just finished reading 2018 A.D. OR THE KING KONG BLUES by Sam J. Lundwall, and I should have used the \$1.25 to buy a couple of beers, instead. (No, my wife just wouldn't understand ) The reason that I bought this pb was that I enjoyed 1984 and A CLOCKWORK ORANGE, the books it is compared with. But I'd hate to see anyone waste their money on this. It has to be the most boring novel I can remember reading in a long time. I don't see anything in it worth bearing the sf mark..."

Cliff comments: I winced upon reading your letter, since I knew beforehand that I had scheduled my review of 2018 A.D. for this selfsame issue of FR. There's little I can say that I haven't already said in the review; obviously, your taste in wry SF is a bit different from mine. But the most boring novel you can remember reading in a long time?... Now that's a difference of opinion...

THE ART OF WALT DISNEY. Christopher Finch (Abram's -- \$29.95)

As a not-too-great fan of Walt Disney, I was a little hesitant about buying this book; in fact, had I not found it at a damaged-book sale for \$7, I would have passed it up entirely. But I got it, flipped through it once or twice; then, in a moment of ennui, picked it up and began reading the prose that went along with all the pretty pictures.

Finch's book is a competent history of Walt Disney, from his earliest cartoon days through the recent releases of Walt Disney Productions. It offers interesting trivia concerning his productions, copiously illustrating each chapter with examples of his work during that era. The writing is the to-be-expected praise of Disney--in a book of this sort, you wouldn't expect to find real criticism--but it does offer some very interesting historical data on the production of the early Disney animated works. The chapter on FANTASIA is well worth reading, and the illustrations are mind-boggling. But on the whole, I'd recommend that you stay away from this book at its full price; the abridged paperback or hardback version might be more worth the cost. It's a nice coffee-table volume, if you have a spare coffeetable, and it's pleasant reading, but definitely overpriced. ab

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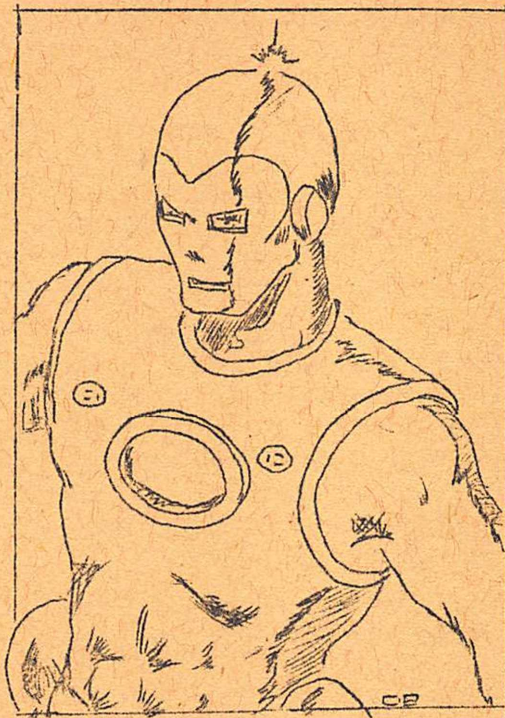
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Next issue of FR, we'll get around to reviewing the books that we'd slated for this issue but didn't have space for--UNIVERSE 5, MERLIN'S MIRROR, MEMOS FROM PURGATORY, BORN WITH THE DEAD, THE BIRTHGRAVE, THE MANY WORLDS OF ANDRE NORTON and NINJA'S REVENGE are definitely on the agenda, as well as whatever else we might read between now and then--and at long last we'll get to use our review of THE STORK FACTOR by Zach Hughes, which we've scheduled and re-scheduled for two issues now. Plus, we have a few outside reviews promised for that issue--and we're as anxious as you are to read them.

Of interest to the Disney or Carl Barks fan are the recently (well, within the last six months) released Golden Specials titled "The Best of Walt Disney Comics." These handsomely packaged volumes, priced at \$1.50 each, reprint some of the best of Barks' work as well as that of Floyd Gottfredson's Mickey Mouse newspaper strip. Stiff cardboard covers, good quality paper, beautiful printing and excellent coloring all add to the overall effect of a labor of love. But according to various sources, Western Publishing cares not much for the idea of producing any more such volumes and so is not distributing them except to certain selected areas of the country and to bookdealers who order them specially. This plan seems designed to get the Disney people off their backs by proving the unprofitability of such a venture, though why a company should not like to make money, I couldn't say. If the books sell well, I see no reason for not continuing them.

# COMICS



But enough about that. The contents of the books make them well worth getting, even if only for (shudder) speculative purposes. The first volume contains a nearly complete reprint of DONALD DUCK FOUR COLOR #63 (1944) by Carl Barks. The original of this book would cost one around \$200-300, so the reprint is a bargain. Unfortunately, Western chose to cut a page from each of the two stories in order to fit the 46 page format, but they did display some talent in the editing room as the pages clipped added little to the plot and their absence detracts likewise. I might not have known the difference myself if I hadn't had the original book and noticed that "Frozen Gold" ended on the wrong side of the page. Anyway, the stories in this book are classic Barks, and "Mystery of the Swamp" is an especially good tale (ahead of its time for Barks, who didn't start writing "humorous menace" type stories until 1949 or so, with "Lost in the Andes.")

The second Barks volume contains a reprint of the first issue of UNCLE SCROOGE comics (Color #386, 1952) titled "Only a Boor Man," which is considered by many (including me) to be the most perfect Scrooge story ever done. It contains all the elements of Scrooge's personality, all the schticks like the money bin, McDuck's daily swim in his cash, the Beagle Boys' latest plan to rob him, the rescue, the trickery Scrooge uses to save his money. That, and some of the best art Barks ever did. The book is rounded out by two untitled strips from US #7 (1954) and #495 (third issue, 1953).

The third Barks book is somewhat of a disappointment. Not because the stories are poor, but because they've both been reprinted within the last 10 years. "The Ghost of the Grotto" (from DD Color #159, 1947) is one of the better "rescue" stories and is still nice to see again. "Christmas on Bear Mountain" (from DD Color #178, 1947) is notable for marking the first appearance of Uncle Scrooge, and is a fairly good story to boot, although not one of Barks' best. With so many unreprinted stories of better calibre ("Terror on the River," "Sheriff of Bullet Valley," "The Magic Hourglass" and "In Old California" are four that come to mind immediately), one wonders why they chose these two, particularly "Ghost," which hasn't even the saving grace of Scrooge's introduction. Nonetheless, the book is excellent for those who don't have the originals.

The fourth volume (actually, the second in the series) is Floyd Gottfredson's Mickey Mouse and the Bat Bandit of Inferno Gulch which originally ran in newspapers from April 30 to June 28, 1934 with only the first and last three strips omitted from the book, as well as two other complete strips, 16 separate panels and 17 captions, none of which contributed greatly to the story (data supplied by Kim Weston). The strips have been especially colored for this book and it is consistent with the excellent col-

oring in the other three volumes. In all, the four books come highly recommended to any fan of the humorous, and anyone who likes good artwork and fine adventure stories.

--Alan Hutchinson

THE JOKER #2 was even better than the first issue; Denny O'Neill now knows exactly what combination of humor and straight action-adventure he wants for this mag, and his decision is flawless. THE JOKER isn't camp, ham-handed satire, or corny Youngman type trash. It's crime and mystery treated with a light, sophisticated touch of humor; and The Joker's characterization as the criminal with method in his madness is carried on without a hitch.

--Lester Boutillier

Of late, Marvel has been dispatching its heroes hither and yon--and the change in settings adds a little variety in their titles, at least. MAN-THING #21 is yet another issue with the swamp creature mucking his way through Atlanta; the story-line is getting overlong, but Steve Gerber's managing to prevent it from becoming too boring with clever use of sub-plots. In MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE, the Golem manages to destroy half of St. Petersburg before the Thing stops him; the story line is utter insipidity from Roy Thomas, who knows better, but the change in setting makes it fun.

DETECTIVE #450 is noteworthy due to the Walt Simonson art on the Batman story. SF fans may remember Simonson as a Washington-area artist whose STAR-SLAMMERS was distributed as part of a Discon bid; and his art is better than ever.

--cb

WALT DISNEY'S COMICS AND STORIES #416 features a nice Carl Barks reprint from WDCS #222, 1959. Recent issues of this comic have mostly been reprinting early and mid-1960s Donald Duck stories and it's a pleasure to see one just a wee bit older than that. Barks' ten-page Duck stories became somewhat pedestrian around 1960-61, as did most of his work, but they were still leagues ahead of any other "funny animal" stuff being published at the time. The story this issue concern's Donald's new moving business and his troubles trying to move a small zoo onto a mesa in the middle of a bottomless canyon. His worries are compounded by a talking mynah bird who blackmails the ducks into giving him prunes by commanding the other animals to be troublesome. But a side effect of the prunes is that they make the bird think he's strong as a horse and he challenges some passing eagles who make a shambles of the bird and Donald. The ending is one Barks used variations of many times, but I won't spoil it by revealing it. It's no big mystery, but it has a nice effect. The rest of the book is new material and not as good as the Duck story. A so-so Scamp two-pager and a four page Chip 'n' Dale of similar quality precede a passable Micky Mouse story drawn by Paul Murry. The MM serials seem to have been discontinued and all stories are complete within the issue. But the book is worth the quarter just for the Barks tale.

UNCLE SCROOGE #119 features a story from US #23, "The Strange Shipwrecks." As with WDCS, this book has been mostly reprinting early and mid-1960s Barks and the 1958 story is welcomed--and a good one. Scrooge's gold-laden ships have been mysteriously running aground in Doomguggle Straits along the coast of Alaska and he hires Donald (a mail-order-trained detective) to investigate. The story isn't a real mystery since the who and why of it are revealed fairly early in the plot, but the tale's engrossing anyway. Lots of good sight gags, humorous banter and verbal exchanges, and even a short-lived pie fight all add to the making of a fine story. The book is finished up by a nice Barks Gyro Gearloose story from US #37. As with most Gyro stories, it's man against machine, with man usually coming out second best.

--Alan Hutchinson

This issue's comics reviews are shortened, primarily due to the desire we had to run Alan's page-long review of the special Disney \$1.50 editions. Next issue we should be back to our shorter reviews with 2 pages of comics-material; we are planning to make Alan's Disney reviews (WDCS and US) a regular part of the segment, though. Alan is an avid fan and collector of Carl Barks material and, as such, much more qualified to review this material than we are. Also, Lester Boutillier sent more comics reviews than the one used, but a shortage of space and the fact that most the books were dated made it necessary for us to cut all but one. Thanks for the interest, and we enjoy these outside reviews a great deal.

--shb

"I disagree with you about Steranko. I think of him as primarily an illustrator, a painter of visions, rather than a good storyteller. Steranko belongs on paperback covers and things like that. Comics need storytellers more than vision-makers. That's one of my gripes concerning Jim Starlin's art.

"THE FEMALE MAN left me with mixed reactions. I was wild about its bulls-eye picturing of male attitudes towards women; the scene at the party with the married man calling the woman from Whiskeyway a "real b\*lls\* chick" and the host accosting her only to get what he deserved but apparently rarely got before then--well, that came across to me. But I can't ignore that apparent "final solution to the chauvinism problem" the book expounds. Is it impossible for a man to have a non-sexist attitude toward women? Are we forever to be involved in a black-or-white war of the sexes? Is war-on-all-men lesbianism the best women can do in their struggle? I don't think so. But apparently Russ does. At least that's the way I interpret the book...I think it will probably do more harm to the feminist cause than good."

"...Actually, I found more good in BEFORE THE GOLDEN AGE than I thought I would. Sure, the quality of the prose was inferior to what's been written in the past 2 or 3 decades and sure, racism and sexism ran rampant, and sure, science in the stories was outlabeled and in many cases was ill-based even then. But I still found that good old-fashioned sense of wonder in most of the stories. And after 10 years of new wave nihilism and anti-science stories filled with promiscuous sex and other disgusting elements of the "counter-culture," I found the stories in BTGA quite refreshing..."

Susan comments: I think you've missed the point of THE FEMALE MAN; I don't think Russ is openly advocating "war-on-all-men lesbianism," as you say, but instead she's saying, "this is an alternative, a what-might-have-come-about; and it still could." I know that Joanna Russ is strongly concerned with the issue of female equality, but I think you're attributing character's ideas to the author, which isn't always applicable.

"New wave nihilism and anti-science stories filled with promiscuous sex..." Come on, now, Lester; aren't you exaggerating to the eleventh power? To classify the fiction of the past ten years as such is thoroughly unfair to those authors who have produced fine SF with none of the qualities you name. And contrary to your disapproving tone, I think there's a great deal of excellent fiction that falls into the categories you describe (although you try to make them sound as repulsive as possible with your word-choice)--are you so hung up on the sexual aspect of them that you can't recognize good writing? If so, I certainly hope you never reach a position of authority with any publisher and/or editorial staff...heaven help us readers who'd have to return to the days of CAPTAIN FUTURE and BEFORE THE GOLDEN AGE...

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A number of good fanzines have come in since the last FUTURE RETROSPECTIVE; one of the best of them, it seems, is a thoroughly fanish production from Edward C. Connor (1805 N. Gale Ave., Perika, IL 61604) entitled SF ECHO (#22), \$1. ECHO is a mimeo, 80-page (give or take a few pp.) zine of letters, articles, reviews, opinions and art in a fine mixture. This issue features, among other things, an interview with Wilson Tucker and an article on possible origins of Farmer's RIVERWORLD. The letters come from a variety of fans and are interesting and enjoyable; they also contribute to the over-all feel of SF ECHO, which is very informal and very friendly. In this day of slick fanzines and the sort, I heartily recommend Ed Connor's fanzine, because it's an honest, simple product, without unnecessary frills but with an awful lot of meat.

Linda Bushyager's KARASS #14 arrived just a few days ago; KARASS is one of those fanzines you get addicted to before you know it. (1614 Evans St., Prospect Park, PA 19076--4/\$1). It's a newszine, covering both the fanish and professional fronts, and features a very strong editorial presence--and a pleasant one--that gives the zine an attractive feel. Issues aren't very large, but you get your money's worth--I recom-

mend that you try this one--once you start receiving it, as I said before, it becomes a habit you hate to break.

One of my favorite fanzines, one I always look forward to receiving, is Dick Geis's SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW. The thirteenth issue came in as I was working on the stencils to this zine and, try as I might, I just couldn't go on until I took a break and read SFR from cover to cover. Geis's zine is sharp, sometimes antagonistic and always entertaining, and this issue was no exception. The best point of the entire issue was an article/letters series on Roger Elwood by Bruce D. Arthurs, Elwood himself and Geis--Arthurs comes across just a little unfairly towards Elwood (and Dick Geis must have a sore spot in his heart concerning editors with taboos, because he comes down particularly hard on Elwood's practices of rejecting "offensive" stories) but the article contains a lot of important information on one of SF's most prolific editors. The low spot this issue is an article by Milt Stevens, "Visit to a Pulp Planet;" it deals with PLANET STORIES, a magazine I am singularly disinterested in. Plus there's a variety of material--letters, comment by Ellison, reviews and the like. This is worth twice the price (but don't tell Geis). (\$1.25 or 4/\$4; POBox 11408, Portland OR 97211)

FOSFAX was mentioned before, but it's worth mentioning again. It's supposedly a clubzine for FOSFA, but the news and reviews are interesting to everyone. It's published monthly and costs are extremely low. I've enjoyed the issues I've received and I think that, once you start getting it, you'll make the same claim. Recently, FOSFAX has included important news on such things as Andy Offutt's upcoming series of Robert-Howard-character novels and Thomas Burnett Swann books slated for recent release. (Bob Roehm, 820 Cambridge Blvd. #165, Clarksville, IN 47130) (12/\$2)

One of the most informative, thought-provoking fanzines we receive is OUTWORLDS; Bill Bowers never fails to put together a fine fanzine, full of information and entertainment. OUTWORLDS #23 features a segment of a major critical work on John Brunner that's due out very soon now, as well as some hilarious reprints from an earlier fanzine and the usual entertaining letters. There's a lot in this issue (including some great fan-art; take a look at both covers to see what I mean), and Bill's talent for layout shines through as you read this. Get it (PO BOX 2521, North Canton, Ohio 44720; 4/\$4)

And then there's the fannish newszine, SFincter by Miller, Weinstein and Mitchell. Everyone interested in the 1977 Worldcon should try to get the 5th issue from the editors; it's a short issue, but it contains a chart in which 13 questions were asked of each bidding committee--their answers are given for easy comparison. New York declined to respond (which is fine, since I eliminated them as my choice as soon as I saw they were bidding--NYC is not the place I want a Worldcon, for a variety of reasons) and Montreal withdrew, but this chart helps the undecided voter compare Orlando, Washington and Philadelphia and make his own decision. Every issue of SFincter is light, refreshing and informative, though, so while you're ordering the Worldcon issue, why not send \$1 for 8? (Craig Miller, 9115 Beverlywood St., Los Angeles, CA 90034)

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And so much for the third issue of FUTURE RETROSPECTIVE; due to lack of space, our prozine reviews got squeezed out, but maybe next time...

Next issue will also feature a bit more space in fanzine reviews (provided we get a few more fanzines) and, hopefully, an over-all larger pagecount (we'd like to get up to 24 or 26 pages and hold that level). It's becoming almost a necessity that we expand it a bit more when you stop and consider how many pages of this zine have to be devoted to non-review material (primarily letters).

We aren't going to tell you exactly when the next issue goes out, because we aren't sure ourselves. (haHAH--now we don't have any squirming to do when FR #4 comes out)

Thassall, folks.