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FUTURE RETROSPECTIVE is available for trade, LoCs or contributions. At the time being, art (particular spot illustrations) is needed, and any and all artists reading this are more than welcome to submit material to us. We need any material that can be easily hadd stencilled.

A great many people are receiving the final issue of FR on their initial subscription. If you fall into this category, then please renew now--remember, too, that any LoCs or other material used has extended your subscription one issue for each issue containing material of yours.

Belatedly, let me make a few corrections. First, the price on THE GREY GOD PASSES is not given in the beginning segment of the review; the chapbook is \$4, and may be ordered through the address given in the review.

We are making every effort to expand our review-base for FR, but this means that we must receive the books; we are receiving review books from a great many companies now, but we would like to expand this even further; also, we would like to expand our fanzine reviews. Hopefully, we can do both within the next issue or two.

As you read through this issue, some of you may note that page fourteen in your copy is printed upside down--this is an old bugaboo in our fanzine production, but we assumed it was long since solved; you can imagine the chagrin when we discovered the upside-down page after the stencils for the issue had been th destroyed. This will be the last time this problem occurs, though (famous last words?).

UNABASHED PLUG TIME () Binker Hughes, who has a review of IMAGINARY WORLDS in this issue, is the co-editor of PAN, an excellent mystery/sf fanzine. Subscriptions to PAN are available for \$2--send money to S & B Hughes, 5831 Hillside Drive, Doraville, GA 30040.

## ART CLOSURES:

Cover p. 7, 10, 16 -- Cliff Biggers  
Pages 9, 13, 21 -- Wade Gilbreath

The next issue of FR will be a catch-up issue (this is the third time one of us has said this in this issue, as you'll not while you're reading through), and as a result it should be out in mid-May. Most all the material for FR #7 is already on hand, but we could use a lot of artwork and a few reviews. If you have talent to share in either area, please let us know.



PERSPECTIVES IN RETROSPECT  
A dual editorial of sorts by Cliff and Susan Biggers

This issue of FUTURE RETROSPECTIVE, like so many of the other issues to be published so far, is much later than it should be; in fact, we are now almost a full issue behind the schedule we set up with FR #3, and this sort of a situation is one that we can't let stand for too long. However, we've had the everpresent problem of costs to worry with; the limit for size seemed to be about twenty two pages, and we couldn't afford the extra cost that would be added to this zine if we went over the 2 ounce limit--namely, 11¢ extra postage with each copy, which would be an enormous increase in total costs for an issue of FR.

Then came this typewriter, an IBM Executive, with a 1/45" Text typeface--perhaps not a true microelite, but close enough to satisfy me. As you can see, this is almost doubling the amount of material we can get to the page, which will mean that we can put out 20 page FRs that contain the text equivalent of 35-40 page FRs; in short, a fan-nish manna from heaven situation.

The stencils for FR #6 are already done--there's no way that we can do anything about the size of the type in this issue. But with the next issue of FR, we can make the transition to microelite.

So that we don't mislead anyone--there is a chance that all FRs will not run 20 pages in length, now that we can squeeze more material per page. In fact, the next issue, a special catch-up issue that will (hopefully) cover all the fanzine/magazine/book material that we haven't used up that sits idle in our files. This next issue, FR #7, should follow this issue by three weeks or a month--as I say, it's a little ahead of schedule, but that's only so that we can get up to schedule. Confusing but true....

Shortly after preparing the final stencils for this issue we received a notice from Ballantine--and for those of you who don't know yet, Joe Haldeman has won a Nebula for FOREVER WAR. In addition, Roger Zelazny brought home a Nebula for best novella with his work "Home is the Hangman." I'll have to admit my surprise--when I began considering award-winning books, I never gave a second thought to Haldeman's novel. I'm not sure it was the best choice, but it was a good one so congratulations go to Haldeman and Zelazny.

Best Dramatic Presentation Nebula went to YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN, which proves that there are some awards that are even less than worthless. I've never felt that a BEST DRAMATIC PRESENTATION award was necessary in SF, either in Nebulas or Hugos, and a choice like this gives me fuel for my gripes.

In the area of news, Arkham has scheduled SELECTED LETTERS IV by HP Lovecraft for May release--this is to be followed by SELECTED LETTERS V in July. The first three SELECTED LETTERS volumes (scheduled for review in FR #7) are invaluable to HPL fans, and I feel sure that the last two volumes will prove the most informative yet as they cover HPL's correspondence from 1932 until the year of his death, 1937. Also scheduled in the near future from Arkham is a final Derleth collection, DWELLERS IN DARKNESS (April). A new Ramsey Campbell volume, THE HEIGHT OF THE SCREAM (July) and L. Sprague de Camp's critical history of heroid fantasy, LITERARY SWORDSMEN AND SORCERERS (September).

#### Susan's Section

The past few weekends have proven most enjoyable in a fan-nish sense for us; we began with a trip to Meade Frierson's Birmingham abode to meet E. Hoffman Price; we met Price, plus a score of others, which makes the Frierson get-together the most enjoyable mini-con we've had the pleasure to attend.

As most people who know me are well aware, I am not a fantasy fan; in fact, my readings in the field have been very few and most unpleasurable, colored by memories of a horribly dull day spent on Pratt's BLUE STAR and a few attempts to read a collection of works by Robert E. Howard; therefore, I had read absolutely no E. Hoffman Price. Reading his material was no prerequisite to enjoying his company, however; in fact, the discussions Price became involved in were most enjoyable, ranging from bawdy tales of his memories of various whorehouses to tragic sketches of his recollections of Howard and Lovecraft interspersed with discussions of his plans for future books.

One week later, we made a trip to Atlanta, again to hear E. Hoffman Price, this time at Bob Maurus' house. Jerry Page and Price were interesting speakers, the discussions with the various Atlanta fans in attendance were enjoyable, and Bob Maurus proved to be a fan after my own heart--he talked little more than I did the entire evening.

The only problem with such evenings, however, is that they tend to make the weeks that follow very dull and uninspiring.

Next FR goes out the early part of May (early meaning before the 20th--so we aren't sticklers on words), and that should have us up-to-date. Hopefully, next issue will have material by Page, Gilbreath, Hughes, Hunter, Corbin, Mason, Bishop and Moudry--be around and see.



## 1975: SF IN RETROSPECT

(subtitle: "Hugoes There?")

Cliff Biggers

The past year has been an exciting and a disappointing one for science fiction readers; while there have been many items of significance published, very few of them have delivered what they promised, and the failure has left science fiction readers with a difficult choice in the area of Hugo Awards for 1975.

The field of novels is the most disappointing of all, for there has been virtually no important output by the major talents in the field, with the exception of Robert Silverberg's magnificent STOCHASTIC MAN (Harper & Row, \$7.95). Silverberg has produced impressive, memorable fiction for the past eight years, regressing only with SON OF MAN, and STOCHASTIC MAN is his biggest step forward since THORN. If any author has a multiplicity of things working in his favor, it's Silverberg; when you combine his powerful novel with the Silverberg reputation, you come up with a combination that most writers will find difficult to surpass.

The only other novel definitely deserving of Hugo attention is A FUNERAL FOR THE EYES OF FIRE, the outstanding first novel by Michael Bishop (Ballantine, \$1.50). Operating as an allegory and an alien-creature adventure simultaneously, FUNERAL is a novel that possesses that same religious mysticism as Le Guin's LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS or Silverberg's DOWNWARD TO THE EARTH. Despite a resolution that seems a bit hasty in retrospect, A FUNERAL FOR THE EYES OF FIRE is a first novel of a caliber far higher than most first novels; Bishop will have a difficult time competing with the Silverberg reputation, but Mike is no stranger to awards nominations himself, having picked up quite a few in his short time as a professional SF writer. And Silverberg's novel does have a sense of incompleteness to it that will irritate many readers who are growing tired of such things; this intentional abruptness might prove an asset for Silverberg's competitors.

DEALGREN by Samuel Delaney is a book that I expect to see on a Hugo nominee listing; it is a potentially brilliant work

that suffers from flaws in motivation, both on the part of the characters and the author. Delaney overwhelms the reader with magnificent prose, but a second reading indicates a superficiality that is almost missed the first time through. While this one may make a few Hugo list, I can't justify a vote for it.

An underrated novel that deserves a nomination for a Hugo is BLAKE'S PROGRESS by R.F. Nelson (Laser, 95¢). Ray Nelson has mixed time travel and the enigmatic character of William Blake and he has produced a thought-provoking novel that begins to make its finest points after it has been read, not during the reading process itself. While the book isn't in the class of Silverberg's or Bishop's, it definitely heads up a class all its own; and as a successful, invigorating novel, it deserves the attention a Hugo nomination might bring it. I'm not really convinced that the book can offer serious competition in the awards, but it is one of the better novels of 1975, and to deny it that recognition would demean the purpose and meaning of the Hugo awards.

In the category of novelettes, I can think of two that have earned the recognition that a Hugo nomination would bring. "And Seven Times Never Kill Man" by George R.R. Martin (July 1975 ANALOG) is the most memorable, and Martin has a reputation for writing quality fiction. The other is "Down to a Sunless Sea" by Cordwainer Smith (October 1975 F&SF), a strong tale that is expertly completed by Smith's widow.

The novella category has only one strong contender, "ARM" by Larry Niven (EPOCH, Putnam, \$9.95). Niven writes magnificent SF-mysteries, and this is one of the best. "Allegiances" by Michael Bishop could be a possible contender (February 1975 GALAXY), but the story requires the reader to give more if it is to be successful, and all too few readers are willing. The original anthologies contributed few really strong works to this category, although James Tiptree, Jr. came up with a strong work in "A Momentary Taste of Being" in THE NEW ATLANTIS (Nelson, \$7.95). I'd guess the Niven story to be the most likely to win, but it could be one of the others.



In the short story category, there are no real winners, nothing that stands out far above all the competition; perhaps this is a result of short-story overkill in original anthologies, but the genre has become so glutted with average-quality short stories that the few genuinely good works are usually lost to the less-than-totally-dedicated reader. I seem to have the best memories of Jerry Pournelle in this category because of his "Consort" in ANALOG (August, 1975). I suspect the winner, though, will be Harlan Ellison

for his short story, "Croatoan," undoubtedly one of the weakest pieces Ellison has ever attempted. The man is a well-known figure in the field, though, and since many short-fiction Hugos are given to stories that went unread by the voters I expect the name "Ellison" to win an award, no matter what story it's tacked onto.

All in all, 1975 has been quite an uneventful year for memorable fiction; I'm afraid a few second-rate works may win awards due to lack of competition.

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THE JARGOON PARD. Andre Norton (Fawcett 2657 -- \$1.25)

In the past decade, when authors like Robert Heinlein have radically altered their style of writing and shifted the emphasis of their fiction to a new and not totally accepted direction, Andre Norton has continued to produce fiction in much the same form as she has for the past twenty-five years. Her concise writing and lean prose still balance her plots quite well; in an Andre Norton novel, the reader can look for adventure with a heavy emphasis on solid plot and distinctive characterization and be sure of finding it. THE JARGOON PARD can be categorized in this same pattern that has established Norton as a favorite in the field; it uses powerful plotlines and a flair for dramatic scene-shifts to produce a perfect fantasy novel in the Witch World series.

Unlike the past two contributions to the Witch World saga, both of which were competent but seemingly uninspired, THE JARGOON PARD is some of Norton's finest fantasy; the book brings Norton's interest in human-animal relationships to the forefront with a plotline of shape-changing; Kethan, heir to Car Do Prawn is given a belt that enables him to change his human form into that of the pard, a cat untamed and thus feared by man. But shape-changing brings forth the fears in men, and Kethan soon begins to realize that the belt was given to him just so that he might use its shape-changing power and thus become the object of a hunt that might result in his death.

Into this adventure, Norton injects a collection of political subplots, intrigue and mishaps; the result is an occasionally confusing but always gripping story that ranks with Norton's finest fantasy work.

Some readers object that Norton has done nothing in recent years to progress her series; this is the only real complaint that might be levelled against THE JARGOON PARD, for it is only marginally a Witch World novel, and could have been set in a totally different Norton-created world without any real alteration or lessening of the story impact. This tendency to use previously-created worlds is a double-edged sword; while readers clamor for more fiction set in certain series, they protest if the new fiction isn't in the same vein of the earlier works. However, THE JARGOON PARD is a strong novel, not a piece of padding or fluff, and the insight it offers into Witch World cultures make it an asset to the series.

Due to the lesser strength of some of Norton's more recent fiction, many readers have felt that Norton was reverting to tried-and-true ideas; THE JARGOON PARD should prove that accusation to be most untrue, for it is one of the most refreshing fantasies of the year.

IMAGINARY WORLDS. Lin Carter (Ballantine 03309 -- \$1.25). REVIEWED BY BINKER HUGHES.

This book is useful for one thing: it contains thumbnail biographical sketches of a number of important writers in the general field of fantasy. That is its only value. I have rarely been as disappointed



with any book I read as I was with this one. A work of scholarly precision (the not, thereby, dryness) on the broad range of fiction that we call fantasy--or even some small corner of it--has long been needed, and I picked up IMAGINARY WORLDS in the hope that here was at least a beginning. Not so, although the author clearly thinks it is. Mr. Carter may be forgiven some of his sins on the grounds that the sheer excitement of such a project could cause lapses. Likewise, he may be forgiven the fact that he is clearly no scholar; some people simply are not cut out for it and others never take the time to develop scholarship. But he cannot be forgiven letting the book see print without remedying these flaws. The excitement of the first draft should have been followed by the cool reexamination of the second, eliminating errors and striking sections which fell outside his self-imposed limits. If he himself was incompetent or unwilling to do this and if there was no scholar sufficiently well-versed in fantasy to whom he could assign the project in creating this book, he should, at the least, have found a competent, rigorous scholar and worked with him jointly on the book, with Carter providing a lot of the information and the scholar doing the backwork of verification and creating an ordered, scholarly volume. Regrettably, Carter did neither.



THE BASKING SUN

One gets the impression of him sitting down at his typewriter with a bright idea, pounding out a first draft without pausing even to check his references, and then stuffing it into Ballantine's hands in the sure and certain knowledge that he, as one of their editors, will assuredly get it published. Perhaps this isn't a hasty first draft, but it certainly reads like one; this is irritating in itself since it assumes a low enough mentality and a high enough incompetence on the part of the average fantasy reader that a volume of this calibre will pass with a grateful "Oh, thank you, Mr. Carter.\* He doesn't think much of us, if IMAGINARY WORLDS is any indication.

The avowed purpose of this book is to fill the gap left by those who have written about specific writers and works of fantasy the gap that stands waiting for a book on the genre as a whole. This is an exciting project and one to tempt any true-blue fantasy buff. However, as Carter recognized, the term "fantasy" has been used to designate everything from horror to science fiction to children's books to ghost stories--to broad a range to be covered in a single volume and one which includes many works the "pure" fantasy fanatic would disclaim. Hence some criteria are needed to determine what is to count as fantasy for the purposes of this book and what is not, thus narrowing the field to a workable size. Carter spends a great deal of his introduction setting a definition for fantasy and then he promptly abandons it at his every whim throughout the book, bringing in works which contradict his definitions in more ways than they agree with it.

The most offensive part of this book is Carter's totally careless attitude towards accuracy; he bluffs his way through entire sections when simple checking would have proven his points wrong; but he did not care enough about accuracy to devote the time to verification!

There isn't space in a review of this length to work systematically through the book detailing its myriad flaws. The task requires a separate volume; and the time would be better spent doing the job that Carter botched in IMAGINARY WORLDS. I have outlined his two basic flaws; inaccuracy of data and unwillingness to abide



by the criteria for fantasy which he has himself selected. There are others which run throughout the book: inconsistency (he will attack one writer for the same thing he praised in another--often with less than a page separating the two passages), attempts to replace reason with conviviality, and claims of and references to things he has done poorly if at all as if they were rigorous, definitive studies. A case in point of this latter sort of flaw is when he speaks of the Old English sources of Tolkien's work which, he implies, are detailedly presented in his book LOOK BEHIND THE LORD OF THE RINGS; when, in fact, the pages devoted to Old English are shoddily done and contain only a few paltry references.

My displeasure with the book relies almost wholly, though, on the author's false pretensions to scholarship. For that reason alone, I would recommend that you avoid it unless the historical and biographical data are valuable to you, as they were to me. If there were another book on the genre available, however, the flaws in IMAGINARY WORLDS would almost convince me to recommend its rival, sight unseen, as inevitably better. It could hardly be worse.

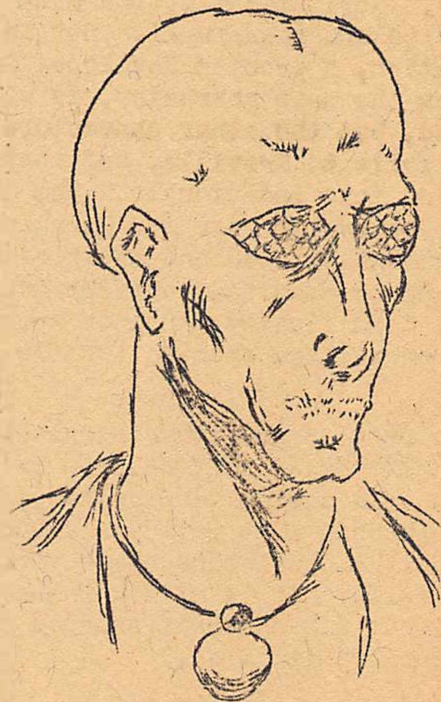
#### LETTER FROM FRANK BELKNAP LONG (1-14-76):

"No review of THE EARLY LONG--and the three the book has received so far have been highly gratifying--has given me anything like as much pleasure as the many generous things you've said about the volume and my writing in general. Just the fact that it has appeared in FUTURE RETROSPECTIVE adds to that pleasure, for I share Robert Bloch's admiration for the reviews as a whole. They possess an unusual kind of balance and perceptiveness, and lack the egotistical combativeness that makes so many fanzine reviews unfair and distorted. But when hard-hitting becomes necessary, as occasionally happens, there is an admirable refusal to be less than forthright."

"Ever since my return from the Providence gathering--and during the Convention, of course--things have been exploding around me in all directions. The almost simultaneous publication of the

Doubleday volume, THE DREAMER ON THE NIGHT TIDE and the 2-volume Panther Books reprint of THE HOUNDS OF TINDALOS has made me feel like one of the characters in a recent musical--"Don't ask me--I Can't Cope." My recent correspondence alone--but I'll probably catch up with that eventually... THE EARLY LONG chalked up a sale of close to 5000 copies within a few days after publication and the Arkham House book 1000 so far. All of this has left me stunned and shaken, and a little doubtful as to the extent of my ability to talk in a calm, assured manner when I discuss both books on the Joe Franklin show (January 21st, 1:30 PM and January 22nd, 8:30 AM). HPL's growing fame appears really to have peaked.

"Thank you again, for both that review and the magazine itself. I'm more grateful than I can say."



THE DREAMING EARTH. John Brunner. (Pyramid, 1975). Reviewed by Wayne Hooks

After an author has established himself, it seems there is a tendency to turn out book after book in an attempt to trade upon his popularity before it wanes. Quality gives way to quantity. This is a danger to which more than one author has succumbed; John Brunner is certainly an established author, but



THE DREAMING EARTH is not consistent with what is generally expected of a professional.

Earth is overcrowded, the population explosion has continued uninterrupted until there is climax population density. There is maximum demand upon all social services; there is simply not enough to go around. Society has transformed humanity into a culture of 21st century locust eaters; in the place of marijuana, THC, hashish and heroin, there is now "happy dreams," a powerful euphoric. Drug use is widespread; only, the drug users are disappearing from the face of the earth in ever-increasing numbers and leaving not a trace. Is Man becoming an extinct species or merely taking the next evolutionary step?

Mechanically, THE DREAMING EARTH is well-written. Progression is smooth and there is a logical transition between the chapters. Stylistically, the book is quite solid and reads well. But in characterization, a problem develops; Greville, as the main character, is well-portrayed, but the other characters act only as foils to Greville, and they fail to develop into individuals. The dialogue is unusually poor for Brunner; it comes through stilted and artificial, a rare thing in even the earliest Brunner writing. And finally, Brunner substitutes internalized frustration for conflict.

But more than any other single thing, THE DREAMING EARTH suffers from excessive padding; this causes the thread of the story to become lost in superfluous material and the characters are never brought to life fully. It is mildly interesting reading, but not one half as good as the blurbs purport it to be.

WHEN THE WAKER SLEEPS. Ron Goulart. (DAW 0YL210 -- \$1.25) Rev. by Cliff Biggers

If science fiction can be said to have a humorist, it would have to be Ron Goulart; unfortunately, even well-done humor becomes dull when it becomes a regular diet, and Ron Goulart has failed to break out of his pattern of absurd black comedy in so very long that the books are beginning to read like the one before; and when a pattern gets that old, it needs updating or abandonment.

This is the reason why a book as promising as WHEN THE WAKER SLEEPS manages to do little to keep the reader awake; Goulart has said all this before, time and time again, and he's not even saying it in a different way. Frankly, that makes the book a waste of the reader's time--something a Goulart novel should never be.

The premise is quite interesting; Nat Kobean becomes the victim of a mad scientist, Dr. Dumpus, and is given a serum that results in his taking fifty year naps. As Nat awakens in different time periods to find that major alterations of history and political systems have occurred while he soundly slept, he also learns that he is not the only Sleeper--in fact, there is an organization of Sleepers dedicated to finding an antidote before they nap again. Sounds fine in summary--but the novel is merely a vehicle for typical Goulart humor concerning mechanical malcontents, second-rate sexual escapades, slapstick jokes that fail to succeed as written and characters who speak in nothing but quips and innuendoes.

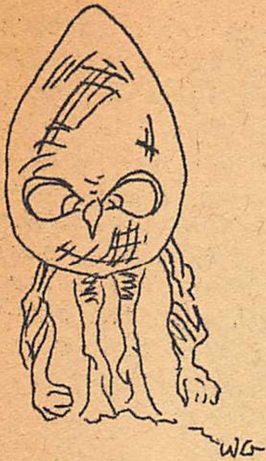
Goulart has finally used up all of his humor on malcontent machines and science fiction slapstick settings; it would be a real treat if he would consider giving us some serious science-fiction--or something that differentiates itself from the last half-dozen books Goulart has done.

DOORWAYS IN THE SAND. Roger Zelazny (Harper & Row, \$8.95). Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

When working with a strong plot, Roger Zelazny can almost always turn out award-winning science fiction. Almost. DOORWAYS IN THE SAND is one example of the exception; the story that has a superb plot but fails to identify itself as anything more than another good SF novel.

Fred Cassidy, the protagonist of the novel, is a "professional student" who manages to entangle himself in the theft of a star-stone, an alien artifact that had been on loan to a university professor for duplication purposes. Naturally, Fred has no idea where the stone is--and he is promptly set upon by murderous thugs, talking wombats and disembodied voices in his mind, all of which seem to be related





in some way to the missing star-stone. His curiosity aroused, Cassidy sets out to locate the stone and find out just why so many people are putting so much effort into recovering it.

For Zelazny, the writing is uncommonly light and "witty." Cassidy seems to express himself via one absurdity after another, leading the reader to believe that Zelazny isn't taking his story seriously. This is the primary weakness of the novel; how can we get involved in the plot, which is supposedly quite serious, when the main characters seem to be making fun of the entire thing?

Yet the book still succeeds in entertaining, for all its flaws of narrative tone. Zelazny moves characterization into the forefront, bringing Cassidy to life, along with all the other people (and aliens, both flora and fauna) who float in and out of the plotline. And even the most clichéd events succeed in holding the reader--a tribute to his talent as an author, to be sure.

If you missed this one in ANALOG last year, it's worth the hardcover price in the entertainment it will give. Certainly it's not a Hugo-type book--but even serious authors are entitled to a few light moods. This is Zelazny's, so read it and enjoy the book for what it is,

THE GARMENTS OF CAEAN. Barrington J. Bayley. (Doubleday -- \$5.95).  
Reviewed by Susan Biggers.

In THE GARMENTS OF CAEAN Barrington Bayley has taken the much-used idea of an alien intelligence's attempt to take over humanity, combined it with the equally well-worn adage "the clothes make the man" and produced a very original and entertaining novel. To do Bayley justice, however, the alien-takeover theme isn't apparent until almost the end of the book, which proves to be good planning on his part because as an explanation for the compelling properties of the Frachonard suit, it is something of a disappointment.

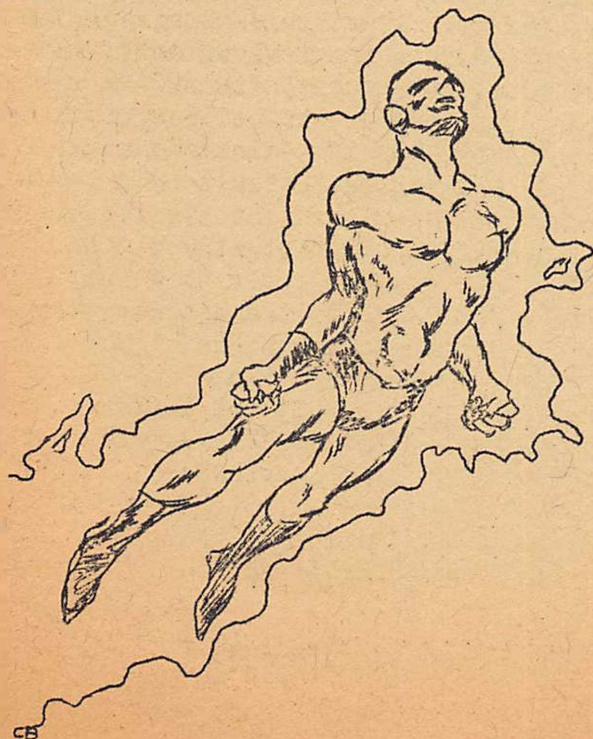
To credit the author with only one alien culture would be an injustice, because he has actually created five different entities, with all five being extrapolated from the same basic premise--the role that clothes play in a society's "body image." The Ziodean civilization--presumably the one that is closest to Earth as it is now--views clothes in a practical, straightforward manner, to be used as body coverings and adornments and not altogether necessary, as suits one's mood and whim. At the opposite extreme is the Caeanic civilization, nicknamed "clothes robots" by the Ziodeans, in which the sartorial arts are held in the highest esteem. Caeanic garments are prized throughout the galaxy, despite the fact that it is illegal to sell them. The friction between Ziodeans and Caeanics leads to the inadvertent discovery of two other civilizations by a team of Ziodean sociologists who are gathering data on Caean. The Sovyans, remnants of an old Russian colony, encase their bodies at birth in 12-foot-high spacesuits which enable them to spend virtually all their lives in deep space. Their body image is that of a metallic giant and they are totally repulsed by the cyborgs of Shoji, a race with Japanese background who modified their bodies by removing the lungs and replacing other vulnerable organs with metallic substitutes to allow them to exist in space. The last and only truly alien culture is a passively intelligent, plant-like entity which covers an entire planet and is the source of the miracle fiber, Prossim, from which a majority of Caeanic



garments are made. When made into clothing, the Prossim can control the emotions and thoughts and thereby the actions of its wearer.

Along with his various civilizations, Bayley has created some interesting characters. Feder Forbarth, one of the victims of a Frachonard suit made of Prossim, is entertaining to observe as he is transformed from an ineffective, overly-cautious tailor to a bold, successful businessman--all thanks to the seemingly magical properties of the Frachonard suit which brings out the best in a person. Also a delight to observe was the character of Amara Corl, a femal sociologist who discovered the Sovyans and cyborgs. The portrayal of a scientific character as a cold, ruthless gatherer of data, insensitive to the destruction and pain her actions cause, is most interesting.

At first glance, it may seem that THE GARMENTS OF CAEAN is a farcical, even whimsical novel and not to be taken seriously. That may even be the way Bayley started out to write it; but if you take the time to read the book, you'll find that a lot of thought and good, solid writing went into THE GARMENTS OF CAEAN. It's a book I highly recommend for anyone who's looking for high quality entertainment and thought-provoking ideas.



THE CRACK IN THE SKY. Richard A. Lupoff.  
(Doll 5419 -- \$1.25) Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

Dick Lupoff is a hard author to take seriously. What with books like SACRED LOCOMOTIVE FLIES and INTO THE AETHER being pleasant pieces of fluff, I've had a tendency to dismiss Lupoff as an unimpressive figure in the field. THE CRACK IN THE SKY sounded a little different, however, a little more sober, so I gave it a try. What I found was a strong, gloomy, oppressive novel with the strength of early Philip Dick in some segments, and the weaknesses of poorly-done fanfiction in others.

The Earth, as viewed in CRACK IN THE SKY, has become a planet of filth, such filth that the inhabitants are forced to live inside domed cities, interacting with their fellow dome citizens but rarely making the trip from Dome to Dome. The Outside is thought to be so poisonous that one could not survive its harshness without protective gear. Inside, life is little more than survival for many; joblessness is such a way of life that food cards and "allowances" are provided for the unemployed who make up such a large segment of the populace. Various sociological, religious and philosophical groups each have their followers, each a seeming extension of certain beliefs of present-day culture. Most interesting is the radical Order of St. Jerome, whose members advocate old morality and two-person marriages; in the Norcal culture, these people are the minority, harassed and ridiculed by some, accepted and ignored by others.

And it's a first-contact story, with an important subplot concerning a message picked up by Pioneer 10 near Jupiter. As the story moves along, the subplot becomes more and more of a prime motivation for the novel, pulling the entire book to a tragic and not totally unexpected ending.

The book has its bad points; self-entertaining passages about the cultural artifacts from the 60s and 70s (underground comics); an artist named Hans Bock; references to comics conventions and 2001--in short, many of the fannish



in-jokes that are usually reserved for fanfiction. I was disappointed to notice their use in CRACK IN THE SKY, because they were totally unnecessary; Lupoff had a fine novel, a strong novel, and he has bogged it down with references that do little more than distract the reader. Perhaps an editor should have suggested their removal; it would have pulled the book together a good deal more.

Nonetheless, CRACK IN THE SKY is a serious book, overpoweringly bleak in its viewpoint of the future--and Lupoff presents this bleakness in such an understated manner that it sneaks up on the reader, creating a mood you're unaware of until you finish. It succeeds admirably as a mood novel; and the mood it creates is very similar to the mood of Phil Dick's THE WORLD JONES MADE.

Like Dick, Lupoff has used multitudes of subplots, casual references, brief character appearances and the like to give the novel a collage-like appearance; and it succeeds because of this. The book is Lupoff's best, and while entertaining in itself, it shows signs of better things to follow.

THE LONG ARM OF GIL HAMILTON. Larry Niven. (Ballantine 24868 -- \$1.50)

Reviewed by Susan Biggers.

Larry Niven has gained a reputation as the top producer of hard-science science fiction in the field; with GIL HAMILTON, it seems as if Niven is attempting to win the same sort of reputation in the area of science fiction mysteries, a difficult field. Niven himself points out the difficulties of this strange type of crossbreed in his afterword, "The Last Word About SF/Detectives;" as he astutely notes, the fields have totally different sets of rules, and in many cases one set of rules almost seems to contradict the rules of the other genre.

GIL HAMILTON is actually three novelllettes, ranging in age from 7 years to a story that may well prove to be a 1975 Hugo winner. The oldest, "Death by Ecstasy," involves both the Niven organ-leggers and the droud addiction (an overload of sensation to the pleasure centers of the brain) that Niven handles so com-

pellingly. This is a packed story, containing many references to various segments of Niven's Known Space milieu, and has been made available in an earlier Niven edition, THE SHAPE OF SPACE. "The Defenseless Dead" is another mystery, as are all three stories in the book, but it is the weakest of the trio; the use of the frozen-man-waiting-to-be-reborn theme isn't handled that well, and the end result is a story that stood out very well among its fellows in TEN TOMORROWS, the anthology where it first appeared, but suffers in comparison with its companions in this volume.

"ARM" is the story that makes the entire book worthwhile, though; this tight mystery first appeared in the Elwood-Silverberg anthology EPOCH recently, and impressed me on first reading. It's just as strong the second time around, even when you know the solution to the mystery due to the strong characterization and the wealth of imagination that Niven put into his works. One almost feels that Niven overpacks his work, filling it with so many ideas that all but the most careful of readers are certain to miss bits of speculation scattered throughout the pages of his books.

The only weakness of GIL HAMILTON is the fact that anyone keeping up with the complete Niven library already has 65 of the book's 180 pages; this reprinting of stories available in previous editions is an easy (and, it seems, popular) way to put more books by a best-selling author on the stands, but it definitely costs those who put out \$1.50 for a book they only need two-thirds of for their collection. With many authors, it would be a difficult decision; but with Niven, I recommend GIL HAMILTON tremendously, this drawback notwithstanding.

THE GREY GOD PASSES. Robert E. Howard. (Pub. by Charles Miller, 239 N. 4th St., Columbia, PA 17512) Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

In the past few years (mainly due to the popularity of the Lancer Conan pbs) there has been a revival of interest in Robert E. Howard material that shows no signs of fading. The problem with such a rise to fame is that there quickly be-



comes an overabundance of material of the popular author in question. In the past few years, we've seen virtually all of REH's material go back into print--good, bad or incomplete, all of it is ready for profit for the "limited edition" producer. Some publishers turn out high-quality products of outstanding worth--an example that comes to mind instantly is Don Grant, who carefully sees that each book is produced in excellent volumes, most of which are complete with the best in fantasy illustration.

Then there are little projects like THE GREY GOD PASSES; this isn't a bad effort, but the price is positively outrageous in comparison with the material included. THE GREY GOD PASSES is 40 pp. + heavy paper covers, reprinting one minor REH story and adding to it six illustrations by Walt Simonson, a talented artist just entering the fantasy illustration field (Walt may be most familiar to readers for his "Star Slammers" series used by Discon's building committee a few years ago, and his "Hyborean Age" feature done for Marvel Comics' illustrated SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN).

"The Grey God Passes" is typically unimpassioned Howard sword-and-sorcery; it's heavy on action, too light on characterization and, all things told, one of his more impressive works. Certainly it deserves to be in print, since the Conn of the story can easily be altered into Conan with a few minor changes, but this overpriced \$4 edition of the story is published only to make a tidy profit for the publisher.

Pass it up, by all means; \$4 can most definitely be better spent elsewhere. Almost anywhere, for that matter...

THE INCREDIBLE ADVENTURES OF DENNIS DORGAN. Robert E. Howard. (FAX, \$11.95) Reviewed by Cliff Biggers

Fax Publishers is trying awfully hard to produce books of the caliber of Don Grant's limited editions; they seem to be sparing no expense on the actual book production, and the Howard fiction they use, while not superb, is definitely not the bottom-of-the-barrel material that has appeared elsewhere. But Fax has a

problem in packaging; and DENNIS DORGAN illustrates the problem perfectly--or perhaps the problem is that it doesn't illustrate the book perfectly...

For a book that shows as much care as DENNIS DORGAN does--fine cloth binding, illustrated endpapers, color dustwrapper--Fax has chosen a horrible illustrator, Tom Foster, whose talent is, as of yet, extremely uncontrolled and undeveloped. The cover is a garish mixture of colors that, rather than focusing the eye, repels it. And Foster's art shows no skill as of yet with the pen or brush; therefore, the illustrated pages, which should enhance the book's aesthetic value, detract from it.

DENNIS DORGAN is a collection of wry sailor tales by Robert Howard; I find the stories more amusing than Howard's western humor--definitely low-key and unrealistic, but fun nonetheless. Howard seems to have been at home with the sailor character, adding a feeling of depth to the storylines. "Playing Santa Claus" is fine fun, but still fairly unmemorable. This is the problem with many of REH's stories; they only succeed for the moment and fail to make a lasting impression on the reader.

Nonetheless, DENNIS DORGAN is a moderately enjoyable book; however, the \$11.95 price-tag is higher than the quality of the book should make it, so I'd recommend going with the paperback edition instead.

TRITON. Samuel R. Delany. (Bantam Y2567 - \$1.95) Reviewed by Wade Gilbreath.

TRITON, Samuel R. Delany's new novel, follows DHALGREN as yet another Fred Pohl selection from Bantam Books. Like DHALGREN, it will probably become a focus of controversy. Unlike DHALGREN, TRITON should be counted as Delany's masterwork.

I find in TRITON that which Theodore Sturgeon said he found and I obviously missed in DHALGREN. I thought DHALGREN was an extremely overlong, self-indulgent novel flashing brilliant. In TRITON, Delany has refrained from the introspective games and deadweight to produce a work of great inner tension and strength. This is definitely his best.



TRITON chronicles the disintegration of Bron Helstrom in a time when the moons of the outer planets have been successfully colonized. Threatened war between the outer satellites and an Earth-Mars coalition provides a background conflict for the novel.

The major strength of TRITON is not Delany's extraordinary ability to create perceptual density and texture, but rather, it is his overwhelming vision of the future society in which Bron Helstrom moves. The components of this society two centuries hence are, in part, communes, sexual preference co-ops, and exotic religious groups. Government is Business/ Business is Government. Marriage is illegal in the outer satellites...nothing earth-shakingly original, and yet, the vision Delany presents is so thoroughly considered and so finely detailed that I am left amazed.

In this book Delany has made a stronger statement on-for sexual equality and understanding than I can ever see any of the crusaders such as Joanna Russ making. I don't know--perhaps in two or three months when I can draw away from this initial, blinding reaction, I will be able to take stock of the book's failings, but for now I don't see any.

WEIRD HEROES, V. II. Byron Preiss, ed.  
(Pyramid A4044 -- \$1.50) Reviewed by  
Cliff Biggers.

WEIRD HEROES bills itself as "A New American Pulp;" while some of the connotations the name might carry don't seem to fit the product, the overall feel is strong enough to make the "pulp" description seem totally apt.

In WEIRD HEROES, the primary emphasis is on heroes; it fits that basic formula of heroic-characters-always-coming-out-on-top-in-the-end. Preiss seems to have done little actual editing on the book, for most of his efforts seem to be compiling; the authors range from Ted White to Harlan Ellison to Steve Englehart, a wide variety indeed.

I dug into the book primarily for the material by Ellison; the story's protagonist is Cordwainer Bird, and he represents Ellison--no, any writer--who finds



himself ignored and ostracized by the literary clique that oftentimes determines the success of a book. Ellison personifies this faceless Literary Establishment, put names to them, and then sets Cordwainer Bird out to wreak havoc on them all. Bird calls in a little aid from his uncle, the Shadow--and yes, it's definitely an "all in fun" story, a release of frustrations that a writer accumulates over the years. Trust Ellison to find a way to get paid for it, though.

The only other fairly unique story is Ted White's Doc Phoenix story, which features White's pulp hero with a difference; he travels into the minds of the people he helps and solves their problems from inside. It's the Dent-style, only more sophisticated and a little more realistic in characterization. White has quite a knack with characters, and he shows it. Doc Phoenix should be appearing in his own book soon--the nostalgia factor makes it worth buying when you see it.

The other four authors all take a back seat to Ellison and White; Farmer manages to write a dull, mummy story about Greatheart Silver, a zeppelin captain, which is a follow-up to his equally dull and mummy story in WEIRD HEROES, V. I. Farmer seems to spend far too much time playing character-games in his writing, to the detriment of the story. The Charlie



Swift story is an uneventful attempt at humor that fails to grab hold--I could find nothing in the story to hold my interest, and had to force myself through to the end. Englehart's "Viva," a tale of a prostitute forced to find herself and fend for herself simultaneously on a mad scientist's jungle island is such a cliché-filled story that I just couldn't get into the plot--it reads almost as badly as a great many of Englehart's comic scripts, which is to say full of "social significance" but bereft of plot. No amount of suspension of disbelief could save this one.

Of all the stories in the book, though, the Elliot Maggin story, "SFV 166--The Underground Express" has to be the greatest surprise. I expected Maggin's story to be trite and contrived, but it flowed fairly well and managed to capture the pulp flavor very well. Maggin seems to have a desire to introduce unnecessary plot-threads into his fiction, but the story manages to work well as hero-fiction nonetheless. His grandiose explanation for the writing style is totally unnecessary; the entire thing can be described as a play or a script. Whatever it is, it manages to work fairly well, and the story is surprisingly enjoyable.

Even with as many failures as successes, WEIRD HEROES V. II is enjoyable and manages to capture just a bit of the pulp feel the editor seems to be striving for. If Preiss can only do more real editing in the future--including a few more rejections--this series could shape up very well.

THE BOOK OF JOHN BRUNNER. John Brunner. (DAW UY1213 -- \$1.25) Reviewed by Susan Biggers.

Out of the group of authors who made up a large part of the old Ace stable of the 1960's, John Brunner and Robert Silverberg have made the most spectacular climb into the SF elite. Brunner's climb began with THE SQUARES OF THE CITY, when he proved to the readership at large that he could write more than SF-adventure with little underlying meaning. Since that time, Brunner has proven himself in the field; and it's only fitting that he should get a book of his own to look back and trace that development.

Unlike previous editions in this "series," THE BOOK OF JOHN BRUNNER contains much more than just a collection of short stories and a small scattering of nonfiction; quite the contrary, THE BOOK OF JOHN BRUNNER is a grand compilation of numerous smaller works that, when put together in one volume, give us an excellent profile of John Brunner, author, and of John Brunner, man. From "A Different Kick," a speech delivered at the 65 Worldcon, to the tragic, provocative "The Atom Bomb Is Twenty-Five This Year" (one of the most powerful nuclear disarmament pieces I've ever read) to the short story "The New Thing," a somber look at the future of man and Earth, this book is John Brunner, alternating between a nudge, a whisper, a complaint, to a harsh cry, a roar of anger; this is John Brunner, showing us his hopes, his views, his feelings about the field and, most importantly, his talent.

There are a few poor pieces in here; "Who Steals My Purse" was an awkward tale of Southeast Asian intervention when it first appeared in ANALOG, and historical changes have made it even more uneventful today. The "Feghoot" pieces are nothing more than filler, paling into insignificance in comparison with the serious Brunner. The articles, the speeches, the songs, the poems--all this is Brunner at his best, showing his wit, his intellect and his powerful ability to write well.

The BOOK OF series from DAW has been a consistently high-quality offering; but THE BOOK OF JOHN BRUNNER is the best-done of the entire series, offering a rare glimpse into an author of importance. It should set a pattern for future BOOK OF offerings to follow.

HOWARD PHILLIPS LOVECRAFT: DREAMER ON THE NIGHT SIDE. (Arkham House -- \$8.50) Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

In the aftermath of the furor brought about by L. Sprague de Camp's biography of Lovecraft, the consensus of opinion among those who disliked the biography was, "wait til Long's memoirs on HPL are published--that will give a true picture of Lovecraft." I had feared that "true" would mean "slanted and biased;" as it stands, the Long book is neither. It is, however, a superb picture of HPL by the



man who knew him better than any author still alive. DREAMER ON THE NIGHT SIDE is not a book to replace LOVECRAFT: A BIOGRAPHY; instead, it is a volume that should stand beside it, offering a complete and balanced picture of the man who was Lovecraft.

To compare this volume with de Camp's would be unfair to Long, for it would imply that DREAMER ON THE NIGHT SIDE is a biography--it is not. While it does contain a wealth of biographical information, it is primarily a memoir of Long's associations with Lovecraft. The de Camp volume contains much more biographical material, as is understandable, since it was intended as a biography. The de Camp biography makes a few critical judgments of HPL that deserve a dissenting voice, though; DREAMER ON THE NIGHT SIDE, thanks to Long's wealth of memories and insights, is just such a dissenting voice. Long's book is a patchwork quilt of memories; it contains all the emotions that Long must have felt in his contacts with Lovecraft--and it is a tribute to Long's abilities that he is able to convey to the reader these emotions without any sense of the contrived.

Long's book is not, however, a reply to de Camp's biography; it would be so limited in scope as to be worthless if it was. It can stand alone as a portrait of the attitudes, actions and aspects that made up Howard Phillips Lovecraft. This book belongs in the library of every student of fantasy, for it is a non-fiction work of major impact.

Long's talents as an author are evident in the book; while the rambling narrative style took a moment's getting accustomed to, it suited the book's ambitions well. As always, Long chooses his words carefully, and as a result the prose flows smoothly, making Long's transitions and links almost unnoticeable.

DREAMER ON THE NIGHT SIDE is not a substitute for HPL: A BIOGRAPHY; it should accompany the book in every library, however, to provide a true picture of Howard Phillips Lovecraft. The five thousand copy edition should keep DREAMER ON THE NIGHT SIDE available for quite a while, but anyone interested in HPL should obtain a copy immediately.

THE WANDERER. Fritz Leiber. (Ballantine 24907 -- \$1.50) Reviewed by Susan Biggers

Fritz Leiber's more recent success has been in the field of sword and sorcery and fantasy, and as a result, many people are beginning to forget that Leiber is also a superb author of science fiction. But now Ballantine has brought back into print this Hugo-winning novel by Leiber, which should serve as a reminder of his talents in the SF field.

THE WANDERER is a slow-moving, low-key book that puts almost all its emphasis on characters and their reactions to the disaster that has occurred--that disaster being the sudden appearance of a planetoid in Earth's skies, resulting in massive shiftings of the Earth as the new gravitational force from the planetoid takes its toll on our planet.

Unlike Leiber's sword and sorcery, the emphasis in THE WANDERER is not on action but characters, as previously said. The result is a book that gives you the personal reaction of normal people to this unprecedented event--and Leiber does it all with such an interest and involvement that it becomes almost journalistic in style.

THE WANDERER is not the adventurous Leiber, but is instead a product of the intellectual Leiber; the book is an author dealing with a hypothetical event that would affect all mankind, and mankind's reactions. It's a solid, competent work that well deserves to be available again.

LETTER FROM DON D'AMASSA (2-12-76)

"Enjoyed FR very much, even though I disagreed with many of the book reviews. I'm harder to please than you, I suspect, a thought that gives me somewhat mixed emotions.

"The reviews of the EARLY series were quite good, although I frankly feel that for the most part Williamson is overrated as a writer, rather than underrated, and I still consider Del Rey as far from a major writer of SF, despite a few successes (most notably NERVES and THE ELEVENTH COMMANDMENT). The Long book, incidentally has mostly appeared in paperback under ?



titles, THE HOUNDS OF TINDALOS and THE DARK BEASTS, both from Belmont.

"Piers Anthony's comments on title changes reminded me of a recent project of my own. The only good title change index for SF came out over a decade ago, & sponsored by the NFFF, compiled by Mike Viggiano and Don Franson. It is now hopelessly out of date, of course. A while back, I decided to try compiling a new one. To get an idea of the scale, I took just the authors whose names began with an "A" and compiled that. The complete section ran 70 pages. An entire index would have been monumental and, alas, has been relegated to some future date when I have grown two more arms and have found the secret of the forty hour fan day.

"Ah, but the uniformity of appearance (and lack of quality) of the Laser line is deliberate. Elwood claims that the reader doesn't want any surprises, wants to know exactly what to expect. Pfu!..."  
(((I'm not so sure the general fannish contention that Laser means "no quality" is at all justified; it has become proper to make at least three snide remarks to Elwood in almost every fanzine, and as a result, most people have determined that all Elwood-edited books are bad without reading them first. I must admit that the majority of the Elwood-edited volumes I have read have all been quite competent.)))

(Don D'Amassa, 19 Angell Dr., Providence, R.I. 02914)

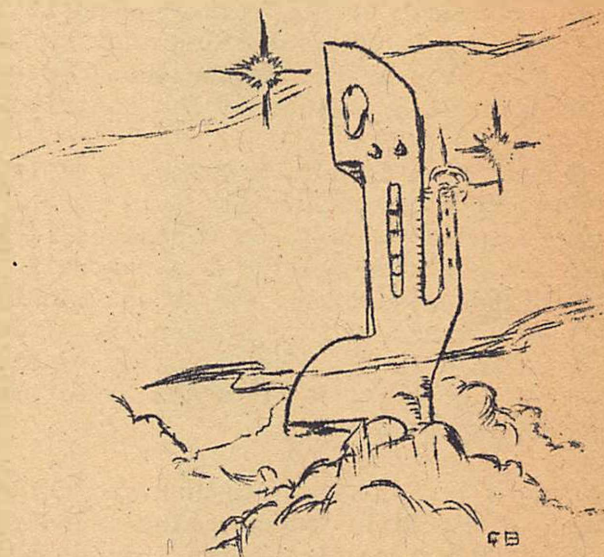
IRONCASTLE. J.H. Rosny & Philip Jose Farmer. (DAW UY1225 -- \$1.25) Reviewed by Barry Hunter.

IRONCASTLE is a top-notch adventure novel, an excellent jungle adventure that succeeds without using a Tarzan-type. The book is translated by Farmer from Rosny's French version, but I suspect a great deal of Farmer's own work must have gone in the novel. I can't tell where the Rosny ends and the Farmer begins, in fact--Farmer has utilized the novel as a springboard for his own unique talents, justifying his co-credit on the cover.

Ironcastle, the only member of the Baltimore Gun Club to have gotten in by vote, yet not be a professional artillerists, is

known, we are told, for designing a cannon that weighs under 500 pounds. Aside from his expertise in this field, he is also a prestigious adventurer and explorer, having accompanied Professor Challenger and Dr. Savage to Maple White Land. Ironcastle received a letter from Samuel Darnley about an African discovery of warm-blooded reptiles and plants that control men. Ironcastle and party head off to Africa, and become involved in strange cultures, societies and discoveries pack the book.

IRONCASTLE is an epic adventure that seems true in tone to the period it was written in; for the Burroughs and Farmer fan, this book is an unexpected and quite impressive surprise. The DAW edition comes complete with a series of Roy G. Kronkel that add a great deal of visual appeal, also; this is definitely one of the best lost-race novels to come out in many a year.



NOW YOU SEE IT/HIM/THEM... Gene DeWeese and Robert Coulson. Doubleday, \$5.95. Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

Some books seem to be written for nothing but fun--fun to write, certainly, but also quite fun to read. NOW YOU SEE IT/HIM/THEM... is just such a book; it's a fannish mystery, a science fiction story, and a series of in-jokes, blended into 157 pages. From beginning to end, the book is filled with fannish references, jokes and gimmicks; and for the most part, it



seems almost believable, in a perverted way.

NOW YOU SEE IT/HIM/THEM... takes place at a convention--not the first book to have that sort of setting, but one of the better ones--and involves the murder of a rather well-known SF professional. The murderer, however, is more difficult to locate than one might think--particularly when he shows a definite inclination to turning invisible and/or teleporting away whenever threatened with capture. Throw a skeptical reporter in the middle of the entire series of complexities, and the result is a book that almost demands a non-stop reading, flaws notwithstanding.

To be sure, there are a few flaws in the novel; for one, the authors never give the reader enough facts to figure everything out himself; another complaint is the inclusion of quite a few scenes that don't mesh with the rest of the book, almost as if they were an added afterthought just to enable the authors to drop names in here and there. But the flaws aren't major, and are easy to overlook.

For the fan who enjoys conventions, fanzines and the ingroupishness of fandom in general, NOW YOU SEE IT/HIM/THEM... is a must-read; this one is hard not to enjoy.

BLAKE'S PROGRESS. Ray F. Nelson. LASER (2013.--95¢). Reviewed by Susan Biggers.

BLAKE'S PROGRESS begins ordinarily enough with the wedding of William Blake, 18th century poet, to Kate Boucher; however, things soon become anything but ordinary when Blake reveals to Kate that he can travel through time. From this point until the end of the book, the story moves so quickly and is so intriguing that there is no question of putting down the book until it's finished.

R.F. Nelson's postulation that William Blake could travel through time makes for one of the most interesting books I have read. Certainly a lot of puzzling things about Blake could be explained by this ability, his poetry and other writings being the primary examples. I would have loved to have been able to show my 12th grade English teacher Ray Nelson's explanation of "Tiger, Tiger."

Every bit as entertaining as the time travel premise of the book is Nelson's characterization of Blake and Kate. Kate, especially, is fascinating as the illiterate but supremely devoted wife who learns to travel through time, also, so that she can share Blake's adventures. Having the more stable personality, Kate possesses the common sense to get the two of them out of many dangerous situations in which they find themselves. But her love for Blake, which endures through such trying events as Blake's meeting a woman from the future who can give him the only sexual satisfaction he is capable of enjoying, right up until the time of his death which is known to both of them due to their trips through time, is one of the most memorable parts of the novel.

BLAKE'S PROGRESS is one of the few books about which it can be said that everyone should read it. It is not a book that is forgotten a week or two after it's read, but rather one whose memory stays in the mind long after it's finished. Ray Nelson has created a superb novel in BLAKE'S PROGRESS, and it surely deserves recognition.

THE FALL OF THE TOWERS. Samuel R. Delany. Ace 22642 -- \$1.95. Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

The popularity of Delany's more recent works, particularly DHALGREN and NOVA, soon to be followed by the new TRITON, have become a center of attention among many SF fans. Delany's first major work came much earlier, however, although it remained a segmented and somewhat inferior work until Delany revised it in 1970. The book, of course, is THE FALL OF THE TOWERS, released by Ace as three separate books during the 1963-1965 period. Ace has seen fit to rerelease the trilogy in one book, using the original cover for the 1970 edition--a beautiful Kelly Freas painting that accentuates the novels well. Inside, FALL OF THE TOWERS is a grand tale of a future in which society is becoming decadent, rotting from the inside; Delany's society has all the weaponry and tools of a highly advanced science to use as it may. Into such a society comes Jon Koshar, who hopes to avert an impending war. The book is Koshar's tale, and Delany handles it well, creating a charac-



ter the reader can become interested in, unlike the nameless character in DHALGREN, or the hopeless individuals of THE TIDES OF LUST.

THE FALL OF THE TOWERS is older Delany, more controlled and conservative; perhaps for this very reason, it is Delany at his best. This book seems to come back into print periodically, and deservedly so; it shows where Delany's reputation came from, and offers insight into the development of the rich Delany style. Newer works notwithstanding, every Delany fan should read THE FALL OF THE TOWERS.

BIRTHRIGHT. Kathleen Sky. Laser 72014 -- 95¢. Reviewed by Susan Biggers.

The android-equality theme has been used quite frequently in science fiction; after Silverberg's TOWER OF GLASS, however, few authors have tried to handle the theme on more than a superficial level. In BIRTHRIGHT, Kathleen Sky has attempted to present an adventure novel that manages to take on that same theme--and in a slightly-more-than-superficial manner, she almost succeeds.

BIRTHRIGHT deals with Andros Roarchik, the son of the android-expert Erik Roarchik. Upon the death of his father, Andros learns that, rather than being a human being, he very well may be an android (as if a name like "Andros" wasn't a strong clue to that effect). From this point on, BIRTHRIGHT deals with Andros as he attempts to prove that he is not one of the inferior androids he shuns and works.

Sky tells a story well, although her characterization tends to be far too flat to make the book a major work; Andros remains predictable and the other characters are little more than names, with no real identities. But the plot is strong, and the execution is competent, making BIRTHRIGHT an enjoyable, if not wholly successful, first novel.

As Kathleen Sky progresses, her writing should mature a great deal; her biggest problem with BIRTHRIGHT was attempting to handle a complex problem before she was ready; but as an effort, BIRTHRIGHT stands as a competent attempt.

#### LETTER FROM MICHAEL BISHOP:

"Have you received EPOCH yet? I hear that a review of the volume in the NEW YORK TIMES was largely negative. Don't have the review at hand, however, and can't second-guess it. I'm sure that an anthology of EPOCH's size has to present a rather mixed assortment of material. 600+ pages is a lot to fill.

"Read Michael Moorcock's LEGENDS FROM THE END OF TIME and enjoyed the book when, to begin, I didn't believe I would. There's a dedication to George Meredith, for instance, and the only fantasy novel that Meredith wrote is one I've never been able to read, THE SHAVING OF SHAGPAT. At any rate, Moorcock's book was pleasant, intelligently written entertainment and one of the few SF and/or fantasy novels I've read in the last two to three months. It snuck up on me...

"Haven't seen Elwood's ODYSSEY yet; I still remember Jerry Page saying he didn't believe the effort would last very long. Guess we'll have to wait and see on that one. I will say, however, that the SF market has virtually dried up in the last two years and the overall picture is a discouraging one. It would be nice, I suppose, if ODYSSEY could hang on a while and make it as a steady entry in the magazine market."

LEGENDS FROM THE END OF TIME. Michael Moorcock (Harper & Row -- \$7.95) Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

One fact about Michael Moorcock that any reader can be sure of--his trilogies almost always run over three books. LEGENDS FROM THE END OF TIME is, in effect, the fourth volume of the "Dancers at the End of Time" trilogy--the trilogy that began with AN ALIEN HEAT and followed it up with THE HOLLOW LANDS, both of which deal with Jherek Carnelian and his quest for the hand of his love, Mrs. Amelia Underwood. LEGENDS is a spinoff volume, a collection of three novellas dealing with the other inhabitants of the End of Time.

Moorcock's "End of Time" stories are sardonic, almost decadent tales of a future that seems to be ruled by an overwhelming desire to escape the ennui that



accompanies the life at the End of Time. Physical worries having long since been solved, the inhabitants spend their time following their every whim and fancy, unconcerned by questions of ethics, morality or the like. The entire premise is one that a lesser author could turn into a bleak, desolate scenario--but Moorcock manages to produce a series of incredibly delicate, wry and gentle tales in this setting, using a group of character filled with perversions and quirks, but so nonchalant about it that the reader feels no desire to chastize.

LEGENDS FROM THE END OF TIME centers on the minor characters of the trilogy--Werther de Goethe, The Duke of Queens, Iron Orchid and the blue-nosed Dafnish Armatuze with her sixty-year-old son, Snuffles. The satire is strong, but the presentation is delicate, gentle and refined to such a degree that the stories bring as much delight as anything else.

By far the best of the three novellas is "Pale Roses," one of Moorcock's best short works. "Pale Roses" touches lightly on the puzzling relationship between chaste and sexual love, with de Goethe the bewildered victim of both emotions. "Pale Roses" should be a must-read for anyone who enjoys well-done fantasy; in fact, the same may be said for the entire volume of novellas.

LETTER FROM PETER ANTHONY: (1-8-76)

"Right now I am busy with maybe three projects. They are CHAINING THE LADY, which is my second novel in the Cluster series, and yes it may run 102,000 words but no, it won't frighten off the publisher because all three novels in the Cluster trilogy are already under contract. That's why I have to move on it; have a deadline on it. And Jason Striker novel Number 6 is half done--but the editors changed at Berkley and so we can't be sure how it stands, and I have held up work until I see the actual contract.

"Third, I may have to revise my novel GHOST for sale to Dell; editor says he wants it, but again, until I see a contract it isn't certain. Nothing is ever certain with publishers until nailed down, and even then not very certain. So

I may have three novels to complete by June...

"As for CLUSTER--I turned it in a couple months ago. My agent said it read well, but there has been no word from the publisher. I presume that means they like it, since they have to object within a reasonable time if they are going to. I don't know when it will see print, though, because Avon has to print the 89,000 word OX first. I understand OX is now being distributed by the SF Book Club; I hope they printed it accurately, because it may be my second best novel to date. Usually sequels are worse than the original novels, but it seems to me ORN was stronger than OMNIVORE, and OX is stronger than ORN. But it takes time to gain perspective, and of course the readers are the ultimate judges..."

FUTURE POWER. Jack Dann and Gardner R. Dozois, editors. (Random House, \$7.95) Reviewed by Michael Bishop.

Jack Dann and Gardner R. Dozois have loosed an interesting animal upon us with their editorial collaboration FUTURE POWER. In their perceptive introduction the editors write, "Power is a two-edged sword. We are owned by our possessions as surely as we own them, and it would seem that the ability to do something is almost synonymous with the necessity to do it." The double-edgedness of power is a thesis that most of the stories in the anthology touch upon.

The lead story is Ursula K. Le Guin's "The Diary of the Rose," an account in the form of a diary by Rosa Sobel, an apprenticing psychoscopist. Psychoscopy is a discipline employing a machine to display on a screen for study and analysis the "Con and UnCon dimensions" of those who come under the psychoscope for scanning. Rosa Sobel's reaction to a patient who fights the machine as an intrusion on his freedom and privacy is the real point of the story. Le Guin's incidental political statements seem to me old-hat and (forgive me for saying so) a bit naive in their earnestness, but the writing here is irreproachable and the character study both acute and moving.

Damon Knight's "The Country of the



Kind," a classic deserving of the designation, is as fresh and as meaningful as the stories written expressly for FUTURE POWER, even though it was first published in 1954: testimony (if anyone needs it) that science fiction can be enduring fiction. It may be the best story in the book.

"Smoe and the Implicit Clay" by R.A. Lafferty, on the other hand, strikes me as far from vintage Lafferty. Although it contains a computer called Epikt and belatedly reaches the conclusion that everyone is an Indian, its whimsy seems forced and its relationship to the theme of "future power" is at best a tenuous one. Part of the problem may be that it is impossible to care about Lafferty's characters any more than the author himself does, and of late his people have become--even more pronouncedly than in his early work--voices, only voices, in the orchestration of his whimsy. I wish this weren't so, and I hope I soon have to eat these words.

Dann and Dozois try to justify the inclusion of James Tiptree's "She Waits for All Men Born" (a story about death and a mutant immortal) by arguing that all systems of control are built upon awareness of death and "the false intuition that we can escape it." Justification is unnecessary. Colorful and chilling Tiptree, this story makes its own way. My only cavil is that Tiptree's omniscient narrator explains rather than dramatizes on several occasions--but I have a feeling no one else will notice. Results are what count.

Felix C. Gotschalk's "The Day of the Big Test" concerns Bradley IX of Newark who passes a test in a technologically idiosyncratic future society and earns the right to move his family to Binghamton. Being utterly without suspense, the story's main interest lies in Gotschalk's prose and the weirdness of Bradley's world. I wearied.

George Alec Effinger contributes "Contentment, Satisfaction, Cheer, Well-Being, Gladness, Joy, Comfort, and Not Having to Get Up Early Any More," in which the men who rule our futures have prosaic names like Tom, Denny, Stan, Chuck, Ed, and Nelson. This is a story so bland and unemotional--the catalogue comprising its title is a perfect clue to its tone--that one

gets caught in its low-key inevitability. Sense-of-wonder addicts may not like this one, but what Effinger tries to do here, he succeeds in doing. His story is another of those giving the reader a substantial return on the collection's price of admission.

"Coming-of-Age Day" by A.K. Jorgenson is the second of FUTURE POWER's two reprints: it deals with living "appliances" that free one from the untidiness and terror of shared sex. First published in 1965 (I would be interested in knowing where), the story reminds me of the sort of thing Ellison was looking for while compiling his first DANGEROUS VISIONS anthology; for different reasons I think of both Carol Emshwiller's "Sex and/or Mr. Morrison" and Delany's "Aye, and Gomorrah," although "Coming-of-Age Day" has the impact of neither. Still, it is an effectively understated "initiation" story which has fit application to the editor's theme.

The book's shortest piece is Vonda N. McIntyre's eight page horror story "Thanatos." Hard and unsubtle, it deals with a future society's technological cannibalization of its rebels. It makes precisely the statement its author wishes it to make.

Finally, there is Gene Wolfe's enigmatic novella "The Eyeflash Miracles," which concerns two favorite Wolfean themes: the struggle of an innocent toward full awareness and the role of fantasy in lubricating the skills. Here, though, the blind Little Tib escapes a repressive society which uses retinal patterns for identification and control purposes by joining another engaging misfit and an "angel" named Dorothy on the railroad tracks to Oz. Wolfe is often a complex writer; his complexity here may demand more patience and attention than many will be willing to give. Perhaps the only thing Wolfe can be faulted for in "The Eyeflash Miracles," in fact, is a certain lack of narrative impetus; in a story of better than seventy pages, however, this flaw can prove fatal, and I am going to waffle a bit on whether the reader's patience and attention are ultimately rewarded here: they are if one is already a Wolfe aficionado.



All right, then. Nine stories and an introduction, all ostensibly on a common theme. I believe Dann and Dozois have put together a creditable package, handsomely produced by Random House. It contains a wholly successful, if somewhat minor, story by McIntyre and better-than-average pieces by Le Guin, Tiptree and Effinger. The book's closing novella is either brilliant or off-putting, depending on one's tastes, and Knight's "The Country of the Kind" is without doubt a superb lesson in both the craft and the art of short-story writing. These things considered, Dann and Dozois's *FUTURE POWER* is a solid investment.

Post script: If Dozois had not been one of the editors of this anthology, it might have contained his story "The Visible Man" published in the December, 1975 issue of *ANALOG*. "The Visible Man" seems to me to be modeled on Knight's contribution to *FUTURE POWER*; it deals with a man who has been inflicted with a specific blindness making it impossible for him to see other living creatures. Dozois's handling of this concept is in every way praiseworthy, if one can overlook the gimmicky cop-out of the story's conclusion. (It's my hope that when Dozois assembles a collection of his own short fiction he re-thinks this ending.) At any rate, readers of *FUTURE POWER* might wish to look up "The Visible Man" as a significant addition to the nine stories reviewed here.



*PTHOR*. Piers Anthony. (Berkley Z3011--\$1.25). Reviewed by Susan Biggers.

Of all Piers Anthony's novels, *CHTHON* has remained a favorite of mine; perhaps it was the brutality of the setting, upon which the protagonist's quest took on a special significance, or perhaps it was the concept of the minionette, the beautiful creature who must always be shunned, it could not be narrowed down to one item but instead a melding of many things. When I began *PTHOR*, I had the apprehensive feeling that a memory might be eradicated by an inferior sequel, as has happened with many other sequels.

Instead, *PTHOR* proved itself to be every bit as enjoyable and provocative a book as *CHTHON*, although it operates on a much less symbolic level. While *PTHOR* will not have the impact of the earlier work upon its readers, it is a mature, well-crafted novel that succeeds as well by itself as it does as a sequel.

*PTHOR* is the story of Arlo, son of Aton (the protagonist of *CHTHON*). Arlo has been the victim of his father's imprisonment, in that he was born and raised in the caverns of Chthon. Arlo follows his desires and becomes interrelated with the minionettes whom he finds in the caverns--even though it pits him against the will of Chthon, the god figure of the cavern world.

*PTHOR* deals with maturity, awareness and sexuality's importance to both--in fact, it is this sexuality that might be a major complaint against *PTHOR*. Piers Anthony's book is a powerful one and an honest one, but many may complain that he was overly concerned with sexuality and thus let his work suffer--this same complaint was levelled at RAHeinlein with the publication of *I WILL FEAR NO EVIL*. Perhaps *PTHOR* does contain sexual scenes that could have been removed without harming the book. Likewise, their inclusion does no harm to the book, in that they do not distill the essence of *PTHOR*. It is a sexual book, basically, dealing with Arlo's awareness of the siren-like minionettes, and it works in sexual way on a literal and a symbolic level. But not for shock value, or sales purposes--no, the sexuality of *PTHOR* is a reason for



for its existence, and without the strong sexual themes of PHTHOR, the book would suffer.

The primary drawback of PHTHOR is Arlo himself; Arlo does not emerge as much more than a carbon copy of Aton in CHTHON, having very few traits of his own individuality. There can be reasons for this, but it manages to detract somewhat from the ultimate success of the book, making it slightly less powerful than the earlier CHTHON. The book is far from potboiler fiction that so often floods the newsstands and bookstores, though, and is in itself a solid work, as well as a rich sequel to CHTHON.

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In many ways, this issue of FUTURE RETROSPECTIVE can be viewed as a catch-up issue; coming out much later than was intended due to many mundane pressures and the loss of the cover, forcing the substitution of the cover that appears at the other end of this zine, this FR is actually appearing midway between FR#6's original publication date and the scheduled date for FR#7.

Therefore, FR#7 will be the second of our "catch-up" issues, filling in the gaps on recent releases and offering more space to reviews of fanzines and SF magazines, both of which were neglected entirely in this issue. The size of FR seems to have levelled off at about 22 pages per issue, so next issue should offer 22 pages of recent book reviews, fanzine reviews and magazine reviews.

Hopefully, our next issue will include a few reviews by Mike Glyer, a talented writer who said he wouldn't review for us if I didn't say that. There are already eight reviews for the next issue of FR that could not fit into this issue, due to a few last-minute arrivals that required the shuffling of a few stencils to make room for last-minute reviews.

And there are chances that FR will be produced offset rather than mimeo in the near future. Our circulation is beginning to reach the point that our mimeography is suffering because of overwork, so offset may be required. Be here next issue and see. Meanwhile, write Locs!

Alexander Graham Bell-13c



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