





## FUTURE RETROSPECTIVE NUMBER SEVEN

FR #7 is a publication of Cliff & Susan Biggers, 621 Olive St., Cedartown, Georgia 30125 (404-748-6363). June, 1976 issue.

This is the largest--and most experimental--issue of FR yet, so let's give a brief run-down of contents.

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\* Due to a misnumbered stencil in the preparation of this issue of FR, Jerry Page's excellent, detailed review of THE BODE INDEX is broken up--please note that the rest of the review is in here, it just skips a page. If the stencils had not been destroyed, these pages would have been run again in order.

\*\* Credit for this review was accidentally omitted; it is written by Barry Hunter.

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### LETTERS OF COMMENT CONTAINED IN THIS ISSUE:

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### ART THIS ISSUE:

Wade Gilbreath: Cover, p. 3, 9, 13, 14, 16,  
Cliff Biggers: p. 21, 25.

This issue of FR does contain two technical errors (well, i'm sure it contains more than that, but these are glaring errors that deserve apology), and both of them are mentioned at the bottom of the first column of this page: the broken review by Jerry Page and the uncredited Review of ERB: A BIOGRAPHY (isn't it amazing how we can retitlize books at will?), reviewed by Barry Hunter. Please note these corrections as you read along--it should help things make a little more sense.

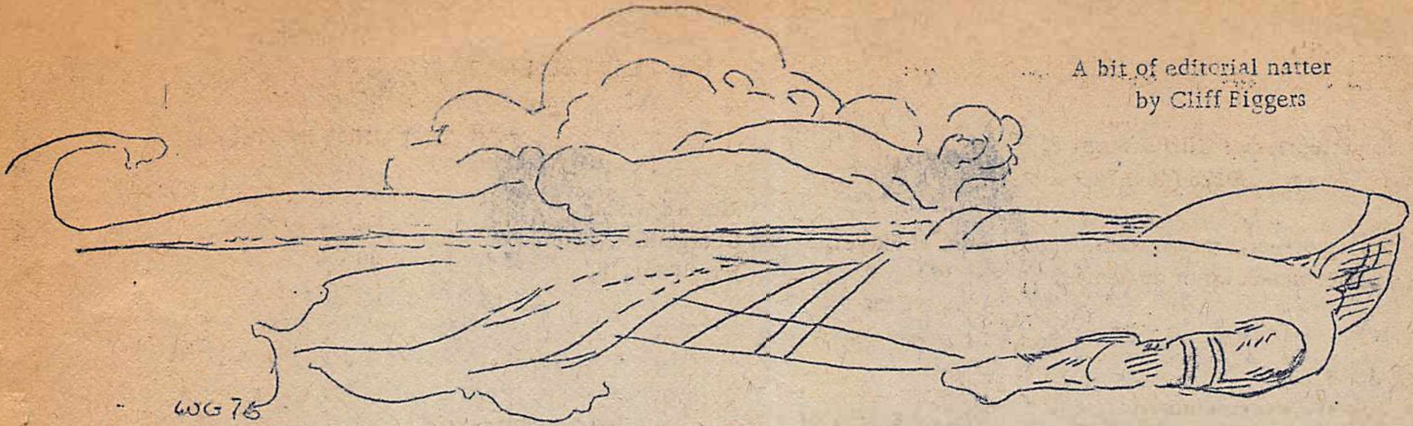
Subscriptions are still 6/\$2, and many people have let their subs lapse with this issue; please renew, because one more issue this size may make us raise the sub rates to 6/\$2.50 or 50¢ per copy, and you may as well save money. We have back issues available: #s 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 are infairly good supply, but we have fewer than ten copies of #4, and it may be sold out by the time you read this. Back issues are 35¢ each.

Art and LoCs are the two rare items around here; please send either or both, as we do give freebies to contributors. Reviews are also welcome, but we still reserve the right to refuse service to all customers, as the sign goes (but we rarely turn down a well-done review).

This fanzine is always available for trades, locs, etc., but please, don't send a four-or-six page apazine and expect us to trade for it--if you do so, we'll only send you a copy of one of our lapazines, which seems like a fair trade.

Most books in here are available in order from F&SF BOOK CO., PO Box 415, Staten Island, NY 10302. In addition, some of the limited-edition items are available from the publishers and/or writers--such is the case with the BODE INDEX and TWO AGAINST TYRE. While you can order these items through dealers, often the publishers could use the order themselves--they paid money to make the thing available, y'know...





EVERY now and then, something happens that makes a faned feelslike he's accomplished something--like someone's been reading the zines he's been sending out. The first time I ever got that feeling was when we received a letter from Piers Anthony and a note from Michael Bishop shortly after FR#1 went out--I fully expected the first issue to be ignored. Everything that was going on in my life at that time was supposedly important--at least, everyone kept assuring me that it was, and that my upcoming student teaching should be receiving all my attention, etc.--but now, a year and a half later, I can't even remember what mundane was going on at that time. I still remember the letter and the card, though.

Of course (he said by way of a digression), the events of my life have pretty much been dated by fannish happenings rather than mundane things. I have virtually no memories of high school graduation, for instance, nor of college graduation; yet I can recall the events surrounding virtually every deadline of MYRIAD, the amateur press alliance Susan and I have been OEs of for almost five years now. I remember specific summers by which conventions we attended at that time. Our travel has almost always been fan-oriented. Our writing definitely has been--had it not been for the impetus of fanzines to push me into doing a few crude columns in 1987 and 1988, I'd have no such thing as a writing output, much less a string of apazines and fanzines and contributions that number in the hundreds.

Enough digression, though--I was working on a subject at one point...oh, yes. The second important event in the history of FR for me was that weekend in July when we returned home from a weekend spent with Wade Gilbreath and found a box of review books sitting on the front porch. At that point, I could bring myself to take FR totally seriously, rather than regarding it as something secondary to my apa-work. And I felt like a real accomplishment had been made--someone else had taken us seriously.

A And now, a third thing has happened--something that my mind has taken totally out of proportion to its prominence and has turned into a major event around 821 Olive Street--and that something is found inside the pages of DAW Books THE STORM LORD. Opening to the front page, I find:

"The most promising sf-fantasy author to have entered the field in the past three years." -- FUTURE RETROSPECTIVE

Yes, indeed, Don and Elsie Wollheim actually quoted something from FR! "Trivial," a fannish friend told me, "it happens all the time." True, it does happen all the time--but not to me. This is the first time, and it's a nice little bit of egoboo to bask in. Pardon me while I put on sunglasses...

Ah, how we grasp onto anything to give us that little feeling of importance... "sigh"

The Hugo nominations are in, and I see that all my predictions for Hugo winners are nominated, which means I haven't made a damn fool out of myself yet. Before I make myself sound too awfully knowledgeable about this, though, let me point out that while I did predict THE STOCHASTIC MAN as the winner (and it is on the ballot), I also predicted two other novels as being on the ballot, and neither of them are. One was FUNERAL FOR THE EYES OF FIRE, the other was DAHLGREN--two left-field guesses, although I still feel that the Bishop book had sufficient quality to make the nomination. At any rate, let's give ourselves another chance to be called crackpots, shall we? For the Hugoes this year, I predict the following:

NOVEL: THE STOCHASTIC MAN

Novella: "Storms of Windhaven" (note that I change my mind here--I said "AFM" last time, but had failed to read the Martin/Tuttle collaboration)

Novellette: "And Seven Times Never Kill Man" (my actual prediction is probably LeGuin's "New Atlantis," but this story is much better)

Short Story: "Goatman" by Ellison (in this case, I think the award should go to Leiber's "Catch that Zep-pelin," but I predict Ellison's name will win it.)

Fanzine: OUTWORLDS

Pro Artist: Vincent DiFate

Pro Editor: Ben Bova (although my personal tastes go with Silverberg)

Dramatic Presentation: A BOY AND HIS DOG

Fan Writer: Dick Geis (although I'm inclined to vote for Don D'Amassa instead)

Fan Artist: Grant Canfield

And that's it, in print. Let's see how well I do, okay?



HAVEN'T WE HEARD THIS BEFORE? I ran across a news item Monday, June 7, that gave me the strangest feeling of *deja vu*; to paraphrase it a bit, it went something like this:

"The Fontainebleu Hotel in Miami, Florida was announced to be up for sale today. The present owners are selling the hotel to pay off amassed tax debts totalling in excess of one million dollars."

The story, an AP item, brought home the disquieting feeling that the Orlando-cum-Miami Suncon will actually be held in Schenectady, NY. Yes, I know this doesn't mean that the convention won't be held there, but it does give the new owners a chance to refuse to honor the contract the present owners have with Suncon--at least, that's the way I understand it. This convention gets more confusing all the time--perhaps it's a ruse to spread convention attendees out all across the US and prevent a large Worldcon. If you can't find it, you can't attend it, right?

As I type this, the crucial primaries in Ohio, New Jersey and California are being held--and, in fact, the Ohio primary has just closed, and the California primary will be over in two more hours (I think--time zones still occasionally baffle me). I'm surprised--perhaps astonished is a better word--that Jimmy Carter, former Georgia governor and peanut peddler, has made it to a point where he could be in contention for the Presidency of the United States. Even worse, the media has ignored the man's lack of ability as governor, so that vast country-at-large views Jimmy Carter as a competent candidate for the office he is striving to win.

I've been here for a while, folks, and 'tain't so. As a governor, Jimmy Carter was an incompetent who did virtually nothing, relying on the state legislature to handle all the important matters while he flashed his smile here and there. He spent a large part of his time feuding with the equally ludicrous Lester Maddox, racist turned lieutenant governor at that time, and Georgia remained in a virtual stasis during Carter's time, failing to fall into the realm of a wasteland of unemployed and uneducated only by the grace of God.

Somehow, I fear I'm going to find myself without a candidate to support in November--that is, if the newscaster's predictions of a Reagan win come true and he becomes the only other choice. Gerald Ford I can support; besides being a sort of national nebbish, Ford has actually done nothing I vehemently object to. Yet.

The Atlanta JOURNAL ran one of its rare reviews of an SF book recently--the review was of Mike Bishop's *AND STRANGE AT*

*ECBATAN THE TREES*; rather than deal with the book, however, the reviewer tells us how bad the choice of names and titles are (odd, since she said earlier the title was "the most interesting and imaginative aspect" of the book). She follows this up with a brief description of the background cultures that make up the book--never discussing the plot, mind you--and then, after presenting this mish-mosh as a review, says "if you are still interested...get the book". Still interested?! Forgoshsakes, she never told enough to make anyone interested! This kind of non-review that pans the book because of its silly names and funny people is just the kind of thing that keeps the public thinking science fiction is plotless drivel. Even when Laurel Vandenberg tries to identify the plot, she fails to do so--needless to say, I was somewhat disgusted by the inept review. If it was a fanzine review, I'd feel sure that the reviewer had read the blurb and not the book--and I still suspect that to be true.

The bad thing, though, is that this is the only tangential contact about 90% of the Atlanta JOURNAL's readers will have with science fiction--and particularly with this book. I wonder how many potential readers have been turned off SF and on to the latest Harold Robbins/Allen Drury trash instead?

I might note that, quite probably, the only reason the JOURNAL reviewed the book at all was because Mike Bishop is a Georgia author, and the JOURNAL did run an article on Mike in their Sunday magazine supplement a couple of months back. And yes, the article was a little more literate, overall (although the caption that broke me up was underneath a photo of the Bishop's kitchen, with Mike's lovely, intelligent and gracious wife, Jeri, preparing lunch: "No science fiction in the kitchen--just bologna sandwiches." Did he expect bug-eyed monsters to crawl out of the cabinets?)

This is very near the finish of the entire FR shtick this time around, since this paragraph is all that stands between me and total completion of this issue. We're experimenting with a new mimeograph this time around, so please bear that in mind if you run into any unusual printing effects--chances are they were intended to look totally normal, but something fouled up. The mimeo is rather nice--a former Steve 'n Binker Hughes silkscreen that they recently sold to us--but getting ink for a machine used to Gestetner products is a problem around here--looks like we'll have to make a drive to Atlanta for supplies when we need them.

Even more reviews, locs and natter next issue--between now and then, though, we have a few conventions to attend, as well as a huge number of apazines to finish up. Speaking of apas, this is as good a place as any to plug a fine apa which we happen to be OEs of: MYRIAD is the name, and if you're looking for an apa to join, keep it in mind. And this is it...



## THOMAS BURNETT SWANN: MEMORIES

My first contact with Tom Swann took place in Atlanta in 1974; we had just arrived for the opening of the DeepSouthCon that year, and Susan was rather eager to get something to eat. Being somewhat hungry myself, I agreed, and we went upstairs to the convention hospitality suite to find a friend to make the trip with us. We found the friend and all of us were heading to the elevator when someone stopped me.

"You wanted to meet Thomas Burnett Swann, right?"

The answer on my part was unswayingly affirmative, and a door was pointed out to me. I walked in and there was a man, surrounded by six or eight people. He was tall, and overall appearances made him seem large--not hefty, but large, as if he filled up much more space than he actually did. A tanned face, topped with dark hair, slightly receding, completed the picture as I saw it--except for the bowtie that I remember so well. From that moment on, I could never think of Tom without that picture coming into mind...

As the crowd began to disperse, I pulled Susan against the flow of bodies and edged in somewhat; I expected a somewhat brusque, abrupt man, but I was determined to speak with him for at least a moment.

My expectations could have been no farther from the truth; rather than abrupt, Tom Swann was a talkative man, generous with his time, his opinions--generous, in fact, with anything he had. We talked of many things--new books, old books, movies, art, conventions and the like--and I scarcely noticed the other people who had joined us. The subject of food was brought up again, reminding me of the feelings of hunger I had had earlier, so we went out to eat.

Tom Swann tried to pay for that meal; he owed it to us all, he said, because we had read his books. Instead, we paid for his meal, countering that we owed him so much more for writing the books. He seemed at a loss for a reply, as if he wanted to refute that, but didn't know how to do so tactfully.

That was Tom Swann; more than courteous, he was a man whose generosity could never be repaid--and now, there is no more time to show our thanks.

Tom Swann had us as guests in his home once; his home was a marvelous place, impeccably decorated without seeming lavish, filled with statuary and books and elegant furniture, and completed with a bay window overlooking the water. He was working on a book, fighting a deadline; he took four hours to talk with us, to entertain us, to share all he could with us. It was a wonderful evening--he was able to choose a subject I knew nothing about and discuss it coherently, making it both interesting and educational. More than anything else, I learned about Tom Swann. He insisted that it was "Tom," not "Mr. Swann." "Mr. Swann lives in Winterhaven,"

he responded. "I'm Tom." Not Thomas Burnett Swann, he said--that was a writer's name--simply Tom. And to make the point, he asked what books of his we needed to complete our set, recalling my mention of an elusive book we were still seeking. When I told him, he pulled out a copy of the book and handed it to me; then, on an impulse, he took the book back and wrote inside its cover, "To Cliff and Susan with Best Wishes...Tom." And then he proceeded to sign every book in much the same way. I never called him Mr. Swann again--and now, it's hard to call him anything but Tom.

Tom Swann was a gentle man, a delicate man almost; not physically, but in personality. Tom never seemed to have any feelings of ill will towards anyone, and he made it a point to find good points in people. He concerned himself with his friends, eagerly listening to what must have been dull subjects and conversations. On second thought, they couldn't have been dull subjects to Tom--he was intensely concerned with people, and I doubt he was ever bored, for whenever a silence came about, he filled it in with observations, or questions, or polite analyses of what had just been said.

Tom spoke softly, always; perhaps this is why he avoided writers' panels often, and seemed uncomfortable in crowds. I recall one panel, in which Keith Laumer was expounding quite loudly and rudely upon certain editorial policies; Tom sat in the audience, behind us. When I asked him why he wasn't up there, he replied, half-whimsically, "Oh, I wouldn't have anything to say; I've had a few problems with editors, but I enjoy seeing my work printed too much to get so upset over my editors." Again, that was a vital part of Tom's personality; he wanted to share his words with everyone, and he was grateful that writing had given him the opportunity--he never had complaints...almost never...

Tom's biggest gripe--his only gripe--was packaging of his material. According to Tom, only Jeff Jones ever felt what he had felt when he wrote a book; he loved Jeff's cover for MOONDUST, and remarked that he desperately wanted a Jones cover for another book. Richard Garrison is fulfilling Tom's request with a limited-edition hardcover of an original novel by Tom; unfortunately, Tom didn't live long enough to see the drawings he had so often hoped for on his books.

Tom Swann died a quiet death; he died without publicity, just as he had lived.

I feel the loss. Tom Swann was a special man, a gifted writer and an outstanding friend; his career was ended by cancer abruptly, and with much discomfort. Yet Tom remained courageous and hopeful throughout his life; had it been possible, I'm sure he would have written up until the time of his death... I cried for Tom. I mourn his death, and I hope that, through his works, many others can become aware of how great the loss was.



# Books

SELECTED LETTERS OF H.P. LOVECRAFT I (\$8.50)  
 SELECTED LETTERS OF H.P. LOVECRAFT II (\$8.50)  
 SELECTED LETTERS OF H.P. LOVECRAFT III (\$10.00)

Edited by August Derleth and Donald Wandrei  
 SELECTED LETTERS OF H.P. LOVECRAFT IV (\$12.50)

Edited by August Derleth and James Turner  
 All published by Arkham House. Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

In the prefatory notes, Clark Ashton Smith is quoted as saying "The SELECTED LETTERS will exhibit manifold angles of Lovecraft's astounding genius..." For the Lovecraftian scholar, these four volumes have done that very thing; they serve as a means of spanning the decades that have passed since these letters were written and thus bringing Lovecraft to life for the readers who wish to know more of him than just the fiction he wrote.

The four volumes are arranged in chronological order, and will be completed with the publication of SELECTED LETTERS V, sometime this summer. Each book is a massive compilation of correspondence, including letters written to some of the most spectacular names of the weird fiction genre. The first volume covers 1911-1924; the second volume, 1925-1929; the third, 1929-1931; and the fourth volume covers the years 1932-1934. When read together, the four volumes present a detailed, full picture of HPL, a picture far more accurate than any literary sketch could be, because these are the words of HPL himself, presenting his own opinions, views, preferences, practices and prejudices.

The scholarly interest in HPL that seems to be reaching a peak now may find in these volumes a wealth of information; and with the opportunities to obtain the actual handwritten correspondence being virtually non-existent (and trips to Brown University, where many of these letters may be found, are quite expensive), these four volumes are the only chance many readers will have to actually study this enormous outpouring of correspondence.

Lovecraft was an incessant epistolarian, filling page after page of letters with intimate insights into his life. HPL drew many of his story ideas from his own dreams; others (including August Derleth and Frank Belknap Long) converted some of these dreams into later stories; the SELECTED LETTERS presents these dreams as Lovecraft himself first recounted them. Lovecraft's 18th century ties are discussed much more fully in his own words than in L. Sprague de Camp's biography; the issue of HPL's racial prejudice takes on a new dimension when discussed by Lovecraft himself. In short, this volume offers the Lovecraftian scholar a chance to form his own opinions by going directly to the source--the letters of HPL--and drawing his own conclusions. The fact that there is such a demand for this information is perfect reason for it to be placed in the hands of the scholar in these uniform volumes.

The arguments still go on as to the literary merit of HPL's work, as to the importance of the man in weird fiction, etc.; the fact is, in the almost-forty years since his death, HPL has been a constant figure of study, and his small body of fiction has proven to be an immeasurable force in the shaping of weird fiction today. Lovecraft is now a major literary figure, and as such these volumes become almost mandatory for a careful study of the man. As an epistolarian and an observer of the world around him, Lovecraft makes his mark via his letters.

For the casual science fiction and fantasy reader, the four volumes of letters would probably be a total waste; these are not books for casual readers. The body of Lovecraftian scholars has grown enough that they provide an eager audience for these volumes; HPL is such a fascinating figure, however, that many readers exposed to his works via the Ballantine paperbacks find it necessary to further their reading with these volumes. The LETTERS are not dry reading; they are every bit as vibrant as HPL's best fiction, and almost carry the reader through the hefty volumes. But many science fiction/fantasy readers are not in the field for scholarly reasons; and for this reason, the LETTERS has a limited audience. But the limitations seem to be lessening; the first two volumes are in second printings of 3000 copies, the first printings having sold out; and the fourth volume has been forced to raise its print run to 5000 copies to satisfy the demand by ever-increasing readers of HPL. This is a wise move, for the fourth volume is probably the most important published thus far, for it presents a detailed insight into HPL's literary relationships with the more famous authors of the WEIRD TALES circle, and shows HPL at his most mature.

For the interested reader, all four volumes are must-haves; but for the reader wishing to try the flavor of HPL's letters before laying out the expense of the entire set, the fourth volume is no doubt the most meaty of all. Your own interests will dictate your need for the books; the title serves to identify them aptly, and little more can be said about the contents. I recommend them highly if you have an interest in HPL; these four volumes are more valuable than any biographies or critical studies.

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UNIVERSE 6. Terry Carr, editor. Doubleday -- \$5.95.  
 Reviewed by Wade Gilbreath.

No other anthologist in the field today has been able to fulfill the reader's desires and needs with anything like the record of consistency Terry Carr holds. With his editorial magic Carr has brought together seven original tales to challenge the imagination and entertain. It's all here in UNIVERSE 6; the humor and horror, style and content, the real and the surreal.

Brian W. Aldiss in "Journey to the Heartland" explores the inner world of dreaming in a slowly developing tale. The



story's only weakness is one which Marta Randall pointed out in her review for Locus; the two women Aldiss has created here, Alice and Rose-Jean, are paper thick. One is a bitch and the other is a helpless thing; two of science fiction's stereotypes linger on. This aside, "Journey to the Heartland" is solid material.

In "What Did You Do Last Year" Gordon Eklund and Gregory Benford present a tense and fascinating look at a future where technological advances occur so rapidly that the utterly fantastic becomes commonplace. Ennui reigns. Eklund and Benford can add a silver star to their collaborative record for "What Did You Do Last Year."

"Custer's Last Jump" by Steven Utley and Howard Waldrop is the first of two Hugo class stories in UNIVERSE 6. From an alternate timestream, Utley and Waldrop pull extracts from articles, diaries and the notes of Mark Twain to present a multi-faceted view of the events surrounding the death of Gen. George Armstrong Custer and the defeat of the 7th Cavalry at the Battle of the Little Big Horn. Well researched and beautifully assembled, Utley and Waldrop's version of the Battle of the Little Big Horn is, of course, a bit different from today's history texts. Somehow theirs is more believable.

Next, Harlan Ellison beguiles the reader with a story about a gathering of immortals at the end of time. Written with Ellison's powerful vision and stylistic weight, "The Wine Has Been Left Open Too Long and the Memory Has Gone Flat" stands much higher as a finished piece of imagination than the story's premise should allow. In the hands of another this story would have seemed paltry, but using some formula of enchantment, Ellison wins again.

"Under the Generator" by John Shirley is the second Hugo class piece in UNIVERSE 6. Dealing in death and dying is the story's theme, and Shirley exhibits a masterful touch with difficult material. In his introduction to "Under the Generator," Carr suggests that Shirley writes with an "original voice." Mature and powerful are two more adjectives which apply here.

Perhaps because of its place after the John Shirley story, "Stars and Darkness" by Glenn Chang seems to be a somewhat pallid work in the UNIVERSE line-up. A story of terror in starflight, "Stars and Darkness" contains a "gasp" ending which leaves a slightly sour aftertaste. Although in this story he misses the mark, Chang's ability to write strong material is obvious.

The last story is by Charlie Haas and in "Shifting Parameters in Disappearance and Memory" he has set his goals high. In any story that is constructed for a complexity of levels of meaning and interest, the chance for failure grows disproportionately high. In compensation a success in this area can be immense. "Shifting Parameters," as sometimes happens, falls in a shaky middle ground. The fact that Haas attempted the complex should not be discounted, but the final offering in UNIVERSE 6 remains a mixed bag.

The fiction in UNIVERSE 6 runs from good to excellent, with no truly bad stories being included in the anthology--a remarkable feat, it seems, since so much of his competition is unable to duplicate that quality. Terry Carr's reputation as a quality editor remains intact.

#### LETTER FROM RICHARD A. LUPOFF (5-12-76)

"Thanks for the copy of FUTURE RETROSPECTIVE and the review of THE CRACK IN THE SKY. You're the first person who's ever compared my work to that of Phil Dick (although lately I've seen or heard myself compared to Alfie Bester, A.E. van Vogt, and even Iving Wallace(1), and my reply in each case is, the only writer I'm trying to be is Richard Lupoff).

"Actually, I'm flattered at the comparison to Phil--he's one of the writers I most admire in the SF field, one of the few people whose byline on a new book means an automatic pick-it-up-and-read-it response from me. Others of whom I think highly include Silverberg, Malzberg, LeGuin, Tom Disch, Delany (I for one like his recent works better than his early ones). Then there are two writers of whose works I've only read one novel apiece (ain't that the scrdwedest-up construction of the week?), but who delighted me with that one book. The authors are Gene Wolfe (PEACE) and Michael Bishop (AND STRANGE AT ECBATAN THE TREES, although I don't like the title per se).

"Regarding the "fannish references" in CRACK, you may be entirely right, although I will point out that of all the people who've either reviewed the book in print or commented on it personally, you're the first one to make this complaint. Basically, I apply to this kind of thing a principle taught me by the late James Blish. What Blish said was approximately this:

"The use of the roman a clef is legitimate as long as the reader who does not possess the key can still read the novel with unimpeded understanding and enjoyment, while the key provides its holder with extra delight. If the reader lacking the key is left puzzled and dissatisfied as a result, then the device is not legitimately employed."

"In this sense, I suppose that GULLIVER'S TRAVELS is a legitimate roman a clef, although I unfortunately never discussed the book in question with Blish.

"At any rate, you should know that CRACK was written in 1971 and 1972 under the title FOOL'S HILL. It then got hung up, literally for years, in the inventory at Dell, and when it finally reached the top of the stack and went into production the title was changed to THE CRACK IN THE SKY over my rather heated objections.



"A much better example of my current (or at least recent) work is THE TRIUNE MAN published by Berkley/Putnam this year. Other books you might like to look at are SANDWORLD (a very unpretentious little adventure story from Berkley) and LISA KANE (due next month from Bobbs-Merrill).

"On the other hand, my book BARSOOM, due this July from Mirage, is even older than FOOL'S HILL/CRACKIN THE SKY. BARSOOM goes back to 1970-71, and has been the victim, first, of a series of internal squabbles at Publisher X (since defunct) at whose request the book was first written... and then an incredible run of scheduling problems, financial crises, production disasters, and general Murphy's Law type delays at Mirage. Fingers crossed that it will be out in July for that matter!

"I have two books scheduled for early 1977. NEW ALABAMA BLUES from Dell (want to bet that they change that name too?) dates all the way back to 1967 although various chunks and segments of it were written over the years up to about 1974. It's going to be very strange to see reviews of my "new" ten-year-old book next spring!

"The other is called SWORD OF THE DEMON and is scheduled for February from Harper & Row. This is actually my most recent book. Although its roots and preliminary material go back several years, I did my serious research for it over the summer of 1975, did most of the actual writing in the fall and winter, and did my revisions and polishing work early in '76. For them who cares about such minutiae, I delivered my manuscript (or, more accurately, put it in the mail) on February 20 of this year, and received a letter of acceptance from Harpers dated March 16. So that book will be not quite a year old on its own publication day.

"I wonder how many readers are aware, when they read their favorite author's latest works, that almost all of these "new" books are anywhere from one year to three or four years old, and occasionally even more?"

((Many writers seem to think that, when I compare the style of a book to another author's work, I am implying some sort of conscious imitation--quite the contrary, there is very rarely a conscious imitation of that sort (unless the review is of a Lin Carter book, which is almost always conscious imitation). But the fact that you rank Phil Dick so highly, and remain such an avid fan of his work, makes it quite possible for you to draw an influence from him and still be trying to be no other author than Dick Lupoff.))

((I must confess to not having read THE TRIUNE MAN yet, but it should be read and reviewed soon. I'm always interested in finding out which book/story each author considers his best and is the one he'd hand to people who were reading his works for the first time.))

((While Mike Bishop's AND STRANGE... is a fine book, I'd probably have to rate it second to his superb FUNERAL FOR THE EYES OF FIRE--that novel impressed me tremendously.))

JAPAN SINKS. Sakyo Komatsu (translated by Michael Gallagher). Harper & Row -- \$7.95.  
Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

In the midst of the run of disaster novels, disaster films, etc. we have seen in the last two years, JAPAN SINKS fits perfectly. Harper & Row brought this Japanese story into print in the US at the peak of the disaster craze, showing good planning; yet the book remains stubbornly outside its sub-genre, refusing to fit the pattern it seems to be riding.

JAPAN SINKS is an oddity; a disaster novel that attempts to present a message on a symbolic level. Komatsu has produced a true disaster novel; one that does not dwell merely on the physical disaster, but on the social, personal, political and economic changes brought about by such a disaster.

The title aptly describes the book; Komatsu's novel deals with continental shift, and presents a future in which a sudden series of shifts have resulted in the sinking of the Japanese archipelago. The book has a tendency to revert to the cliched attitudes of the 1950s and 1960s in regards to how a country might react to such a disaster, making the book read much like a grade-B horror film at times, but for the most part Komatsu strives for semi-objective realism--and obtains it.

JAPAN SINKS has been a best-seller in Japan, and a strong publicity program could make it an impressive seller in the US as well; Michael Gallagher's translation is competent and does not distract the reader with unnecessary eloquence, being satisfied to tell the story and little else. All in all, JAPAN SINKS is an enjoyable disaster-SF novel that presents some provocative ideas in very low-key ways. The only flaw is that the book may be perhaps too low-key--JAPAN SINKS may suffer most of all from its own inability to take itself seriously. Nonetheless, it's a moderately enjoyable, but rather expensive, way to spend a lazy afternoon. The novel still demonstrates, though, how far ahead of the other SF-producing countries America is--for all its assets, this Japanese SF bestseller fails to even approach the strength of better American SF.

THE VAUGHN BODE INDEX. Edited by George Beahm, annotated by Vaughn Bode. \$5.00. From HERITAGE, PO Box 721, Forest Park, GA 30050.  
Reviewed by Gerald W. Page.

On the record player Joan Baez is singing "All in green went my love riding" and I'm writing a review of an index. They aren't that far apart. The song is from a poem by e. e. cummings and the index is of Vaughn Bode's work. There are obvious differences between cummings and Bode, of course, even other than the one the cummings was a poet and Bode



a cartoonist. The imagery of "All in green went my love riding" is Duncanesque; it suggests the delicate intuitions of a Jeff Jones drawing, not the brash boldness of a Bode' cartoon. But I think the song's appropriate. For one thing the care and craftsmanship that went into any Bode' cartoon, regardless the rules he was breaking at the time, are analogous to the lyricism found in even cummings's most innovative poetry. The only real problem in trying to compare these two may be nothing more than that we lack the perspective of years with Bode's work that we have with cummings. No matter. The important thing, that vital link, I think, between cummings' poem and Bode' (or any other artist, poet, cartoonist, writer--any other human, perhaps) is metaphor. Four lean hounds crouch smiling not merely as they run before, but also at the corners of any artist's world. The question in the end is, are they friendly or do they wait to attack?

This is an index. Bibliography is easy, right? You just gather up a bunch of tables of contents and read down them and feed the data into the old computer and program what you want. Instant index. You want by title, punch button A, it gives you by title. You want it by author, you want it by issue, punch button B or C. Who needs the sort of effort a T.G.L. Cockcroft or Don Tuck or Darrell Richardson put into their work? Machines. Do it by machines, they even set type.

Bull.

This index is a work of love. Machines, I admire machines. But--tragically for them, fatally--they lack capacity for love. Until we give them that they won't be whole and people'll still do the best indexes.



Physically, the book is a dream for the Bode' fanatic. True, there's a lot of type, but most of it's to the point and anyway this is an index. Only two pages are without any illustration at all: page 6, which is the second page of Beahm's introduction, and page 36, which is part of the index proper. All the other pages have something, a drawing, a photo, something. The front and back covers on stiff paper are in full color, original work apparently. Bode' seemingly was very enthused with the idea of an index to his work and determined that it be something special. It is. The index doesn't really start until page 32. Before that we have an introduction by Beahm; a Chronology of Important Events; "Bode' Consciousness," an article by Bode' that was written about two months before his death; and a reprint of a lecture bureau leaflet on Bode's Cartoon Concert. The next section, Bode' Milestone Cartoons, reprints ten pages worth of works that for one reason or another Bode' considered of major importance; these are accompanied by notes written by Bode' giving his thoughts on them.

The Vaughn Bode' Index seems complete and I assume it is. Not being a Bode' collector I'm in no position to catch errors or omissions. But it was checked and revised by Bode' and he should have known. The thirty or so pages are impressive and well set up. The listings are broken down into sections: Books, Periodicals, Newspapers, Bode' Oriented Projects, Convention Material, Comic Books, Posters, Stationary (sic--and I can't make up my mind whether this has Freudian significance or not, or what it could be), Flyers and Miscellaneous. There are reproductions on most pages and scads of photos.

There is an effort to personalize this book, infuse it with a feeling for the man Bode' was, but it doesn't really go deep. Most of the effort, I think, may have been Bode's own doing garnished by the editor in completing the project. This is hardly a criticism since the book is an index and not a biography; in fact, it is amazing that the book has as much about the man in it as it has. But ultimately we get the work and not the man. Oh, I know, the man is in his art, but what we get here is the fragmentary index-regimented approach that can only give us glimpses. The incursions of the man into this book are tantalizing but only that. The Chronology lists his birth and death (add there are only one or two references to the fact that Bode' is dead in the entire book) but the rest is almost impersonal listings of what are really only business transactions: in 1967-72 he illustrated 45 magazine and book covers. In 1972 he co-founded a company to produce posters, slides, books and T-shirt designs. Statistics. REIs and Dow-Jones closings.

Where do we find glimpses of the man who created all that this index is about--glimpses that can compete with those carefully executed and planned and therefore edited ones that flicker into his cartoons--is in the "Bode' Consciousness" article. Even here the insight is buried among a glittering array of brash pretensions and self-serving and entertaining antitudinizing. "You see a shadow, a figure

contd. on p. 11



SHAKESPEARE'S PLANET. Clifford D. Simak (Berkley/Putnam), \$6.95. Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

At present, science fiction has all too few authors who can be relied upon to turn out quality science fiction, book after book; many of the masters in the field have rested on their laurels in recent times, with the end result that they are no longer reliable authors, men and women of quality in their profession. Thankfully, Clifford D. Simak is not one of them. Simak's fiction has just as much energy, punch and style today as it did twenty years ago, if not more; and SHAKESPEARE'S PLANET is the latest in Simak's string of quality fiction.

SHAKESPEARE'S PLANET is a novel that centers around a dilemma that unites the efforts of an Earth astronaut-pioneer, a primitive named (aptly) Carnivore and a female archeologist to escape from a planet known only as "Shakespeare's Planet" (the previous Earthman there had told Carnivore he was Shakespeare, a name chosen from the volume of Shakespeare the man had with him). Shakespeare's Planet, it seems, is a prison; while it has a sort of dimensional gate on its surface, the controls have been tampered with to allow only one-way travel--in short, getting on the planet is no problem, but getting off seems to be impossible.

As with most Simak fiction, SHAKESPEARE'S PLANET is an adventure novel, a work heavy on plot and strong in characterization. Simak packs his novel with ideas, so many that he hasn't the time to fully develop all of them; the ship that Horton, the astronaut, travels on remains an enigma of sorts, for instance; but this does not detract from the book at all.

For the price, SHAKESPEARE'S PLANET is an excellent investment; while not Simak's best, it is strong, plot-heavy fiction in the traditional SF vein.

MOTHER WAS A LOVELY BEAST. Philip Jose Farmer, ed. Pyramid V4071, \$1.25. Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

Philip Jose Farmer has always had a keen interest in the Burroughsian tradition of fiction, as is evidenced by his numerous delvings into the character of Tarzan, the ERBian city of Opar, etc. In MOTHER WAS A LOVELY BEAST, Farmer gets down to the core of Burroughs' most famous creation, Tarzan, and also takes a look at other authors' works in the "feral man" tradition.

While the *raison d'être* for the book seems rather weak, the anthology itself proves surprisingly enjoyable, and shows a great deal of research effort on Farmer's part. The fiction ranges from the to-be-expected ERB to the most unexpected "Tarzan of the Grapes" by Gene Wolfe, a story

I somehow missed in its initial appearance in F&SF. Some of the work seems rather antiquated by modern standards (particularly Olaf Baker's "Shasta of the Wolves," an unbelievably poor excerpt from a book dealing with, in Farmer's words, "a Canadian Mowgli." Mowgli was never this bad...), but there can be no denial of its place in this anthology.

Farmer ends the anthology with his essay, "The Feral Human in Mythology and Fiction," a well-done informal essay that treats its subject well, covering many aspects of the feral human and making many references to works that relate. For the staunch ERB buff, the essay alone should be worth the value of the book; but for those of you who find essays dull, dry reading, the fiction offers an enjoyable escape from the civilized world and into the natural wilds.

FICTION ILLUSTRATED VOL. 2: STARFAWN. Byron Preiss and Stephen Fabian. Pyramid 02764; \$1. Reviewed by Susan Biggers.

Byron Preiss began making himself known in SF-fantasy circles with a "new American pulp" called WEIRD HEROES; however, due to a misunderstanding, many people had expected WEIRD HEROES to be much heavier on the art and lighter on the fiction. To satisfy them, Preiss has put together FICTION ILLUSTRATED, a series that presents digest-sized comic art adventures, printed in full color. "Starfawn," a combined Preiss/Fabian effort, is special in that it presents, for the first time, an example of an entire story illustrated by the excellent SF artist, kStephen Fabian.

Briefly, "Starfawn" is a space exploration story, with a group of twelve people travelling on board a tremendously large starship, searching for alien life. The plot is full of senseless inconsistencies and errors; of thinking; for instance, why are these twelve even drifting through space? We are informed that there is no hope of their return to Earth, and the adventure points out that they quite obviously have communications problems--in short, there is no real justification for the entire premise of the book. Then too, why only twelve? Why not hundreds? And why send a man with a kidney condition--surely there were healthy volunteers. In short, the story is inextricably lost among the "what-if"s, and would have been rejected by any sane SF editor immediately.

The Fabian visuals are more impressive, although they prove to be somewhat disappointing; Fabian seems to be unable of sustaining his high level of quality over approximately 100 pages, with the end result being rather cartoony and sketchy. In short, the illustrations, while pretty, are not top-quality Steve Fabian. But on a story like this, what can you expect... Unless you like to look and not read, pass this one up and buy something more meaty--even a Pery Rhodan book surpasses this.



on the far side of a fog shrouded field: not even an outline, just fragments of shadow, and you want to see more. But you have to realize--you are forced to--that this is an index. Other books must follow: a definitive collection of Bode's major work including, if possible, writings by him. Someday, perhaps, a biography.

The one thing revealed here, the one thing we come on again and again, as the most vivid insight we have of the nature of the man, is his love of creating worlds. He claims something like 1500 cartoon characters and the attendant assortment of worlds and solar systems. The parallel that comes most readily to mind is the one with Edgar Rice Burroughs. For that matter, if Burroughs spoke the things people wanted to hear in the 20s and 30s, and Bode spoke for the 60s and 70s, where is the real difference? They both created vivid fantasy worlds to serve as their soap-boxes. What they said, and the fact that one said his in novels and the other said his in cartoons strikes me as not especially basic differences.

Bode himself draws a parallel with Kirk Allen, the character in Robert Lindner's "The Jet-Propelled Couch" in THE FIFTY MINUTE HOUR, who spent so much energy and thought in creating fantasy worlds that he could no longer tell the difference between them and reality.

There's a rumor--unverified and probably unverifiable--that Lindner based this character (the book was a collection of psychiatric case-histories) on the man we know as Cordwainer Smith. That in itself prompts some interesting thoughts. Smith like Bode created a vast and detailed body of work through the use of a complex background of characters and worlds. It was Smith who set the groundwork in the 50s for what science fiction was to become in the 60s. Smith died too young and left much of his major work incomplete, as Bode did; but as tragic as it was, Smith's death at an older age and by natural causes wasn't the senseless sort of tragedy that Bode's was.

In the lecture bureau piece on the Cartoon Concert it is said that Bode claims a basically positive view of man despite the primitive violence and disorder of the worlds he wrote and drew. I don't pretend to know enough about Bode the man to make a judgment about him with anything resembling self-confidence. But I have a gut-feeling this is true. It was himself that Bode was unable to come to grips with, not the rest of us, himself he distrusted and feared. Smith--always assuming the rumors are true and it's really Smith we're talking about--had, at the end, learned to live with his fantasies better than some of us learn to live with our realities.

Which really brings me back to Cummings' smiling crouching hounds. And to our not knowing what they're smiling about and the hell of some of the methods we use to find out. But Cummings even said that best and I can only join him in calling on Mister Death and asking, How do you like your blue-eyed boy?

And are you posing for him--yet?

#### LETTER FROM GEORGE R.R. MARTIN (5-27-76)

"We received #6 of FUTURE RETROSPECTIVE, for which many thanks. A number of interesting perceptive reviews. You seem to have struck a fairly good balance, covering a good wide selection of current releases and still giving your critics enough room to do a good job. I was particularly glad to see Michael Bishop's criticism, and hope you can get more out of him. He seems to be as talented a reviewer as he is a writer.

"Needless to say, I'm glad you found "And Seven Times Never Kill Man" memorable and worthy of possible awards consideration. Judging from the results of the LOCUS Poll, it seems to have a fairly good chance to slip onto the Hugo ballot, although I strongly suspect that LeGuin has the novelet-category Hugo all sewn up with "The New Atlantis." Novella, however, is a different story--"The Storms of Windhaven," by Lisa Tuttle and myself, lost to Zelazny in a close Nebula race, and beat him by one point in the LOCUS Poll, so it is possible we've got a good shot at the Hugo. I don't know, though; my record at predicting these things is pretty abysmal. I'd be willing to be on FOREVER WAR winning the Hugo to go with Joe's Nebula, but except for that..."

((As it turns out, you and I both pegged it pretty close on your Hugo nominations, George; in Novella, "Storms of Windhaven" is there, and "And Seven Times Never Kill Man" made the Novelette nomination. Personally, I don't feel that LeGuin's "New Atlantis" is strong enough to win an award--but then again, I never foresaw "Before the Revolution" winning any award at all.))

((Michael Bishop seems to be equally capable of criticism and writing--and his part in a recent convention panel discussion showed Mike to be aware of trends that many writers have ignored. This sort of awareness is the prime thing that makes him so successful, and we eagerly look forward to future reviews from Mike.))

((On the topics of Hugoes for a moment: the Fanzine nominations this time bring forth mixed emotions from me, and I've already heard other complaints of a nature similar to mine. Of the five nominated fanzines, only two are the informal, personal type of fanzine that epitomizes excellence in the field--OUTWORLDS and DON-O-SAUR. The other three nominees--SFR, ALGOL and LOCUS--are far closer to professional magazines than fanzines, and contain purchased material (on the part of the first two). LOCUS is a middle-ground sort of fanzine/prozine, but I can't see giving awards to Geis' zine or Porter's zine, even though they are top-quality magazines--they are profit-making ventures, and therefore shouldn't be eligible to run as fanzines. But the FAAN awards remain ineffective as an alternative, so the Fan Hugoes are all we have right now.))



Gerald Page  
193 Battery Pl. NE  
Atlanta, GA 30307

I want to thank you for the kind review  
you gave NAMELESS PLACES. I'm  
particularly happy you enjoyed "World-  
song." Since you also cite Gary Myers'

story as outstanding, I trust you've read his Arkham House  
collection THE HOUSE OF THE WORM. If not, do so. It's  
ten stories, vaguely related to one another, all in the same  
vein as "The Gods of Earth." I suspect Gary will not be doing  
too much more of this particular type of writing any more  
since he seems anxious to move on to more challenging areas.  
I also suspect he'll be outstanding, whatever he writes.  
Pumilia also has some damned good stuff written that has not  
seen print yet.

((While the Myers volume from Arkham is on the shelf, I've  
not read it yet--perhaps the shortness of the work has put me  
off a little, but your mention of it has urged me to move it  
into my "must-read" stack soon. I can imagine, though, that  
a writer might become quite dissatisfied when cast into a  
particular type of mold as to his writing ability--but when an  
author turns out something I like, I generally want him to do  
more of the same. Selfish but true...))

All in all I rather enjoyed FUTURE RETROSPECTIVE. Found  
Michael Bishop's letter very interesting. The primary emo-  
tional product of writing (and editing for that matter) is frus-  
tration and I'm not sure anyone's ever actually done the sub-  
ject justice. Bishop comes close with his letter.

I read Vonda McIntyre's THE EXILE WAITING with con-  
siderable eagerness since her short stuff has impressed me. I  
seem to have found it more satisfying than you. Jim Wilson  
called it an Andre Norton plot written as if by Delany. It  
lacked most of the qualities that have been evident in her  
short fiction, the degree of insight and feeling in particular,  
but there was a lot there to be dug for. So many writers,  
these days in particular, have avoided putting anything be-  
low the surface of their work (and it isn't their fault; editors  
are telling them to write like this) that even a slight novel  
from McIntyre is more rewarding than almost anything else  
the field has to offer.

((While the McIntyre book was a deep book, I've not seen  
an absence of deep SF in recent months--certainly, there is  
a renaissance of adventure-SF, but the more literary work  
is still there--usually in hardcover, though, for paperback  
publishers seem to be particularly guilty of limiting authors  
into adventure-SF molds))

THE ENORMOUS HOURGLASS. Ron Goulart. Award AQ1510:  
\$1.25. Reviewed by Susan Biggers.

I have yet to be disappointed by a Ron Goulart satirical novel,  
and THE ENORMOUS HOURGLASS is certainly no exception.

This latest novel has all the elements of a successful satire,  
plus a feeling reminiscent of one of his earlier books, WILD-  
SMITH. The somewhat deadpan, almost unwilling hero is  
Sam Brimmer, a private investigator of the future. He has  
a robot partner, Tempo, who is actually a time machine  
in human form and whom Sam is constantly having to rescue  
from the baddies as they come.

The book has a rather familiar plot, but with Goulart's wit  
and excellent talent of bringing out the ridiculous in a situa-  
tion, it becomes an enjoyable afternoon's reading, great to  
relax from the day's stresses with. In the 21st century time  
travel is possible and Sam Brimmer makes his living as a  
time-detective by locating lost documents and papers for  
his clients. Through a routine missing persons case he be-  
comes involved in a huge smuggling operation in which  
artifacts from the past are smuggled into the future and big-  
time criminals from the future are smuggled into the past.  
Brimmer finds the girl missing and breaks up the smugglers'  
game, but not without many pitfalls and pratfalls along the  
way.

Ron Goulart is one of the masters of science fiction satire;  
his characters and the situations they manage to get them-  
selves into are the perfect parodies of the supposedly realistic  
stories with which we are presented on television. As a  
means of escape from the everyday world, THE ENORMOUS  
HOURGLASS is an excellent choice.

TWO AGAINST TYRE. Robert E. Howard. Published by  
Dennis McHaney (3400 S. Perkins, Memphis, TN 38118).  
\$2. Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

As I mentioned in the last FR, there is a spiraling upsurge in  
the publication of REH chapbooks, pamphlets and hardcovers  
in limited editions at high prices--many publishers have seen  
REH as a way to make a few dollars, and have published  
products that lack any care or quality.

Thankfully, TWO AGAINST TYRE is not such a product. It  
has a most reasonable \$2 pricetag, even though it is pub-  
lished in a 1500-copy regular edition, and presents one of  
Howard's many swordsman-adventurer stories in an attractive  
format, complete with Stephen Fabian illustrations (al-  
though the work is, to be sure, not Fabian's best). The  
story seems to prove quite well my contention that there is  
very little good REH material left to publish in these chap-  
book editions--this story, while adequate, is little more  
than an uneventful adventure story with a very weak raison  
d'etre; one never manages to become involved with the  
characters, the setting never takes on any dimension, and  
the plot is trivial and unimportant. Yet TWO AGAINST  
TYRE will certainly sell out soon, for it's a REH story; and  
if it is to be printed at all, I must congratulate Dennis Mc-  
Haney for publishing it at a reasonable price. If you're a  
Howard fan, then you'll probably want it.



AND STRANGE AT ECBATAN THE TREES. Michael Bishop. Harper & Row, \$7.95. Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

With his shorter fiction, Michael Bishop proved himself to be one of the group of new authors intent on making SF a serious form of literature. Unlike so many of that group, though, Michael Bishop has not satisfied himself with just short fiction; his first novel, FUNERAL FOR THE EYES OF FIRE, won him a Nebula nomination, and this second novel might very well bring him the very same honor.

AND STRANGE AT ECBATAN THE TREES is a moody novel of Ingram Marley's coming of awareness; the tale is introspective and foreboding, actually becoming melancholy in some sections. Unlike his first novel, this book does not center around an alien culture; while some time is spent in giving the reader insight into the Spartan culture of the maskers, they remain close enough to a truly human culture that the reader does not feel that they are the primary emphasis of the novel.

Ingram Marley is a government agent assigned to work with, and observe, Gabriel Elk, a highly influential talent in Stonelore, a place of seclusion for thinkers. Marley becomes a witness to the talents of Elk in the field of neurodrama, a sort of puppet-show drama that uses reanimated corpses in lieu of puppets; and later, he witnesses the same brilliant mind used for destruction in warfare.

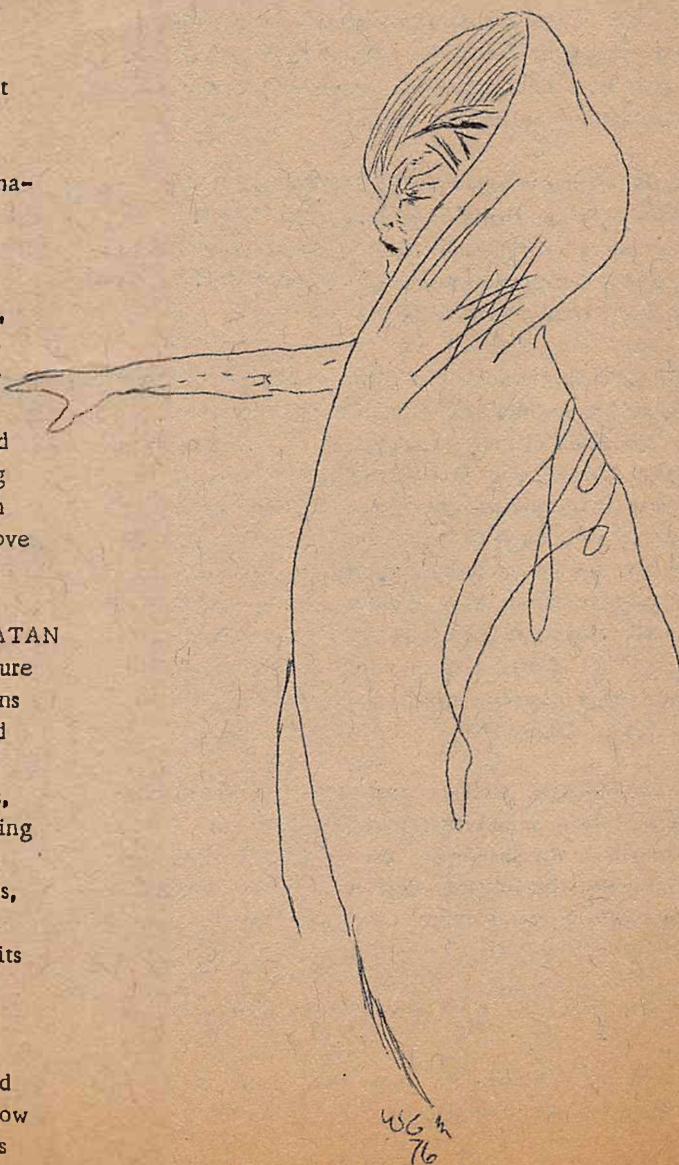
Marley is the center of the novel; as he gains awareness, we are led to the same awareness. Marley is young, confused about himself, and primarily concerned with merely doing his duties; as he becomes closer to Elk, he becomes aware of an innate pride in himself, a desire to excel, and he recognizes Elk's ability to fulfill this desire by teaching him the art of neurodrama. Marley becomes torn between his allegiance to his government and his admiration and love for the old man he has been sent to observe.

Even in a story as concerned with its protagonist as ECBATAN is, Bishop has taken the time to offer insights into the culture of the island of Ongladred; a subplot, for instance, concerns the legend that purports that a tremendous sea creature had twice destroyed civilization on Ongladred and was soon to destroy the culture for yet a third time. In other segments, Bishop gives the reader insight into the maskers, a foreboding and Spartan group of people who control their emotions, rather than be controlled by them. Yet, as he does all this, Bishop never makes it seem that he is halting the narrative flow to give the reader insight; instead, he weaves these bits into the narrative so well that they become integral to the story.

Unlike FUNERAL FOR THE EYES OF FIRE, Bishop's second novel is not a massive work; in fact, one almost wonders how he can pack so much in slightly more than 150 pages. This is the primary problem with the book; while it handles the

development of Ingram Marley well, it has insufficient space to devote to further insight into the Ongladredan culture, or the basis for the war between them and the Angromainans; instead, we have only enough space for quick glimpses into all of this, and a quick glimpse proves, in the long run, insufficient to sate the reader's desire to find out more about the Ongladredans, the purpose of Stonelore, or any of the other unique plot devices Bishop has introduced.

With AND STRANGE AT ECBATAN THE TREES, Michael Bishop has proven that the power of his first novel was not a fluke, and that he is a major force in serious SF of the 1970s; but ECBATAN is a short work, and this is its primary drawback. Length notwithstanding, however, ECBATAN is a book that shows the power of well-done SF, and should be read by all those who look for a little more than escapist entertainment in science fiction.





SPACE ODYSSEY S. Brian Aldiss, Editor. Doubleday: \$7.95.  
Reviewed by Susan Diggers.

Recently, the trend toward non-original SF anthologies has ended; perhaps it's because of the guarantee of new material ("new" also meaning "unread by the purchaser who's paying for enjoyment"), or perhaps it's just a cessation of interest (or a lessening of interest) in those old "classics." At any rate, with the exception of Robert Silverberg's ALPHA series, there are no outstanding anthologies of reprinted SF; however, this volume by Brian Aldiss, a companion volume to his inspired SPACE OPERA, shows that an editor with good taste and a correlative mind can produce a quality reprint anthology.

SPACE ODYSSEYS covers SF's history well, spanning forty years of science fiction history and offering a wide range of literary values, from E.E. Smith to James Tiptree, Jr. The arrangement of the anthology demonstrates that Aldiss has an awareness that being a good anthologist requires more than just selecting a bookful of good stories; the contents are carefully interrelated and arranged to present a thematic view of SF's vision of man's self-awareness--and the spread of stories gives the reader ample time to see the shifting values that are reflected in each story.

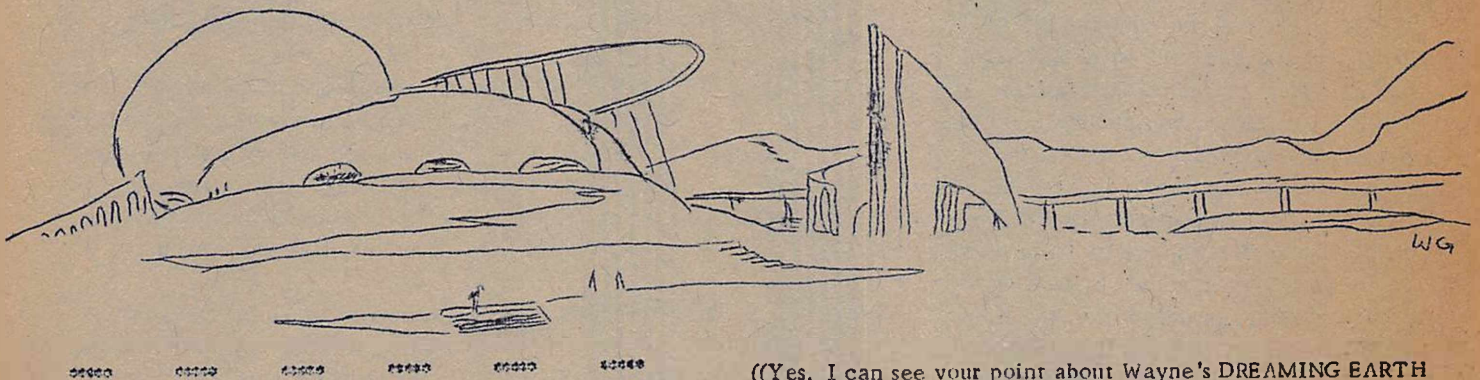
I've never been a great fan of reprint-anthologies simply because so much of the material is familiar to me when I read it again--and that still holds true here. But, while my enjoyment was hampered by the appearance of oft-reprinted stories, the selection does show some care, and the volume should be most impressive to the reader who has just recently come to SF.

"Wayne Hooks ought to check copyright dates when he does reviews. His review of DREAMING EARTH implies that Brunner wrote it while coasting between more significant works like STAND ON ZANZIBAR. As a matter of fact, THE DREAMING EARTH is a 1933 novel, was serialized in NEW WORLDS as PUT DOWN THIS EARTH, and was considered one of his better books at the time.

"Goulart the highest point of SF humor? Balderdash. He can't even begin to rival Robert Sheckley or William Tenn. Goulart's 'humor' is mostly farce, repetitive, childish and unfunny. His few real bits of humor have been parodies, such as "Ralph Wollstonecraft Hedge: A Memoir," and his masterpiece, "The Hand of Dr. Insidious."

((I don't disagree with you that YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN is an enjoyable film--but I don't happen to think that every film I enjoy deserves a Nebula. I find YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN's link to SF to be very tenuous--I see it as a spoof of horror films, as Mel Brooks once described it, and I don't feel it was intended, even secondarily, as an SF film. As a result, I don't feel it even deserved consideration, although I did find it enjoyable. That, in effect, is my main complaint; it simply didn't seem appropriate as a candidate, much less winner.

((Yes, BIRTHGRAVE should have been on the list, and was omitted only by oversight--I had marked an earlier FR review to remind me of it, and then forgot it when I began stencilling. I tend to question the inclusion of Crowley's book, though; I wasn't as impressed with it as some are, and I felt that the book was more of an immense game than a serious novel.



#### LETTER FROM DON D'AMMASSA (5-5-76)

"What's wrong with YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN, for heaven's sake? I'm supposed to be sour and overly critical of things, and I thought it was generally hilarious, particularly the scene with a blind Gene Hackman visited by the monster. I suspect that one's reaction has something to do with whether or not one thrilled as a kid to the monster's various incarnations.

"On your list of possible Hugo contenders, you overlook BIRTHGRAVE by Tanith Lee, which I consider the second best novel of the year, and the John Crowley novel THE DEEP, which I have not read but has been very widely recommended.

((Yes, I can see your point about Wayne's DREAMING EARTH review--I altered it slightly to try to remove that implication, but obviously I didn't rework the beginning quite enough. I do feel his criticisms were valid, though--even if a book is an early effort, I feel it cannot be excused for that reason, and Wayne pointed out some very real flaws in the novel. The fact that it was considered one of Brunner's best at the time only serves to show how much the man has progressed.

((And while William Tenn probably does surpass Goulart in SF humor, I can't agree on Robert Sheckley. Perhaps I should have made reference to Tenn, whose sardonic wit entertained me many times when Ballantine reissued his works in the late 60s, but Tenn's output has been hideously low, and I had intended to refer to "currently producing authors in SF.")



**FASTER THAN LIGHT.** Jack Dann & George Zebrowski, eds. Harper & Row: \$8.95. Reviewed by Susan Biggers.

Actually, **FASTER THAN LIGHT** is a rather misleading title because a fair percentage of stories contained in this book do not concern faster than light travel. If one looks at this collection as interstellar-travel-oriented, then the stories seem to fall into perspective.

Other than this very minor criticism as to the appropriateness of the title, I can find nothing else with which to fault this outstanding collection of stories. Any less ambitious anthology would have been considered complete with only a prologue and epilogue in addition to the stories, but editors Dann & Zebrowski weren't satisfied with just an ordinary anthology; they've given us not only an introduction, but four excellent and informative essays by such well known authors as Asimov, Clarke, Laumer & Bova. Not content to stop at this point, the reader is also presented with an afterword by Poul Anderson in which he informs us of some of the research being done on the possibilities of FTL flight in the near future, a short biographical sketch on each author, the editors and the artist, Tim Kirk, and, lastly, a bibliography of FTL and interstellar travel-related books, stories, articles and non-fiction for the reader who wishes to explore this fascinating idea further. As you can see, this book is chock full of goodies not only for the SF reader but for the scientifically curious reader as well.

As for the stories themselves, there were three really outstanding ones. Two of them were written by George R. R. Martin, who ranks as one of my favorite science fiction authors. The man truly has the gift of storytelling, for unlike some authors who write as though they were narrating a story and the reader is aware of this fact as he is reading, George Martin involves the reader so quickly in his tale that you become one with the character before you know what has happened. In "Nor the Many-Colored Fires of a Star King" he works his special kind of magic about a group of scientists who are trying to create a means of faster-than-light travel via a space warp and wind up creating something entirely different. The implications of this unforgettable story don't fully hit until you've finished the last sentence. Martin's second story, "Fast-Friend," is not quite as good as the first, but it, too, captures the reader's imagination with its premise of humans merging with alien creatures that travel faster than light to become an alien race themselves. The third really memorable story was by Chelsea Quinn Yarbro, "Dead in Irons," which wasn't so much a story about FTL travel as it was a story about life under a tyrant of a steward in the interstellar ships of the future. Her story has a chiller of an ending--enough to give me a nightmare the night I read it--and is not one you will easily forget.

"Sun Up" by A. A. Jackson IV and Howard Waldrop concerns a robot exploration ship that is about to be destroyed by the star it is orbiting going nova and the solution it works out to save itself with the help of an intelligent crystal growing

on the moon. "Dialogue" by Poul Anderson is an example of the lengths to which love will go to unite two people who have found each other. Hal Clement's "Longline" is a fictionalization of the theory that there may exist a tachyon universe in which the inhabitants cannot go slower than the speed of light and what happens when tardyons (us) meet tachyons. Although a novelization of Harlan Ellison's "Phoenix Without Ashes" has been published in collaboration with Ed Bryant, this is the first appearance of the notorious screenplay. A story of an interstellar ship made up of isolated fifty-mile wide communities which have been in space so long that they have forgotten their Earth origins, it is greatly enhanced by Tim Kirk illustrations. "The Event Horizon" by Ian Watson is an intriguing story of two telepaths who discover an alien intelligence existing inside a Black Hole and their attempt to join the alien in the "real" universe. In "Seascape" Gregory Benford tells us of the effect of FTL travel on a more isolated colony world of the title name and of the fateful role man's insolence and egotism play in his future. And to end everything on a nice note there is a poem, "Hyperspace" by Dick Allen.

I think that **FASTER THAN LIGHT** will prove to be one of the outstanding anthologies of the year, for not only is it high-quality entertainment, but you come away from the book actually feeling that you can talk intelligently about faster-than-light travel.

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**EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS: THE MAN WHO CREATED TARZAN.** Irwin Porges. Brigham Young University Press. \$20.

This is not a book for everyone; it is a massive book (8 1/2 X 11, 819 pages with 270 photos) entirely dedicated to toning down the legend of ERB by showing that he was a normal person trying to make a good living. It's a wealth of information for the person wanting to study ERB but it's not for the person expecting light and entertaining reading.

Its value to ERB fans might be attested in the fact that the book is now in its third printing less than a year after the original release date. It is a valuable book, well worth the price to those with a serious interest in ERB. **THE MAN WHO CREATED TARZAN** is a scholarly work that reflects years of hard work for Porges, his wife, ERB Inc., and the heirs of Burroughs. It should be recognized as one of the best researched and most complete biographies available on a literary figure.

A great amount of insight into Burroughs the man is gained; ERB, for instance, was so upset with Hollywood's versions of his books that he tried to make his own movies and failed. ERB was a failure as a soldier and did poorly in almost every job he attempted in his early life; as a writer, he found his niche. His greatest success, though, was ERB Inc., which has represented his estate since his death. Through the company, Burroughs' works have continued to live after him.



Porges tells of Burroughs' life, from his earliest years to his military life to his many failures; then, as a writer, a successful man who divorced his wife, a businessman with many financial failures and, finally, his years as a war correspondent--Porges' story goes through, in detail, the years up until ERB's death in 1950.

Porges' biography is enjoyable, although Porges writes in a very dry, scholarly style that seems quite verbose and boring in places. This dryness is hard to conceal--for the most part, Burroughs' life seems quite dry in comparison to that which he wrote about, and no author can enliven a subject so dull. But to the person deeply interested in ERB, this biography supplies a wealth of information, and is an invaluable addition to your library.

The price is prohibitive to the casual reader--and he should be glad of that, for this is not a book for casual reading--but even at the increased price, the book is worth the cost to fans of Burroughs.

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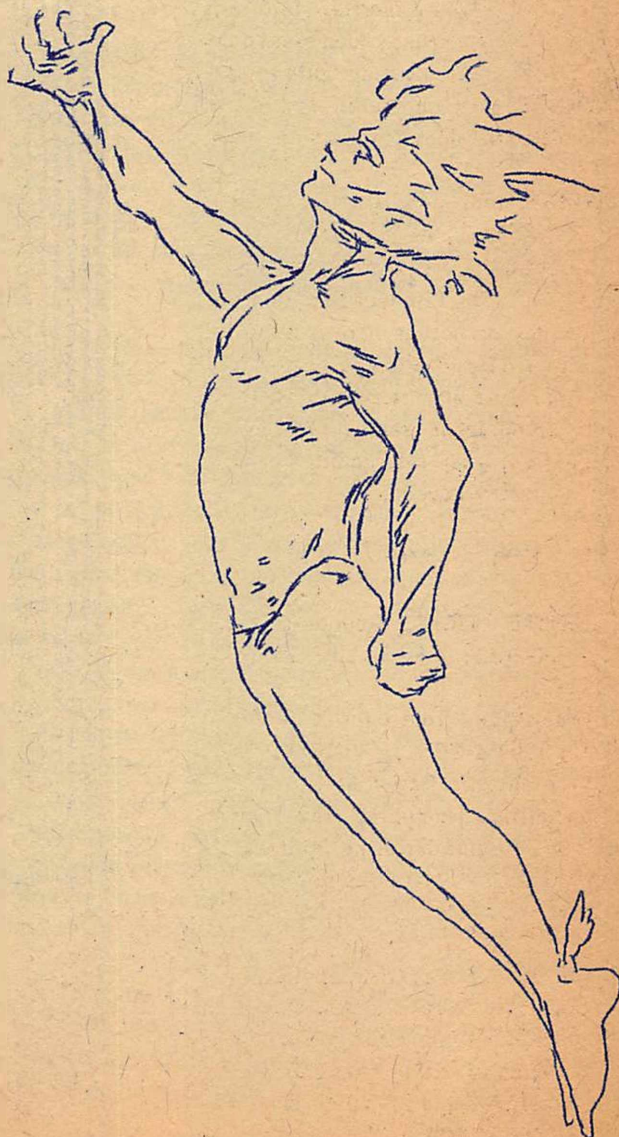
LOVE AIN'T NOTHING BUT SEX MISSPELLED. Harlan Ellison. Pyramid M3798: \$1.75. Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

When Harlan Ellison writes science fiction, it's strong stuff, full of characterization and plot and mood, and Ellison pulls no punches as he tells his story. But (as Harlan himself has stated time and time again) not all that Ellison writes is science fiction--in fact, a majority of his finest work is set outside of the SF milieu of Ellison's imagination. This volume, the eleventh in the series of Harlan Ellison books Pyramid is rereleasing, is one of the thickest in the series and is also one of the best--and the two factors are unrelated, I assure you. LANBSM is Ellison's collection of "love" stories--those tales written by Harlan which deal with love, either directly or peripherally, and seemed to have little place in any other collection.

More than anything else, Harlan Ellison is a master in his presentation of gutsy protagonists, most of whom are a great deal like Harlan himself, and realistic situations, many of which can be related to incidents in Ellison's life. Not to say that this is an autobiographical collection, though; that would, in effect, be limiting Ellison as an author, saying that he could not write that which he had not lived, and that is most untrue. Whether Ellison writes of a tragic abortion, a hardened prostitute or a racially mixed love affair, Ellison does it with painfully honest realism. The book is strong, probably the strongest thing Ellison has ever had published with his name on it, and deserves attention outside the field of SF. But the fan of Harlan's science fiction needs to read the book, too, to realize that Ellison is a talented writer in whatever field he chooses.

The Pyramid edition contains 13 of the 22 stories that appear in the Trident Press HC edition--the others have been omitted because in other Ellison collections currently in print. To replace them Harlan has added two new stories--oddly, the new stories lack the strength of the rest of the collection, largely due to the highly polished, somewhat less emotional style of Ellison today. Nonetheless, the stories are in keeping with the "theme" running through the anthology, and all in all, this is the finest of the Ellison books to be reprinted by Pyramid thus far.

Don't let the rather high cover price dissuade you; this is a "must-have" book for anyone who wants good, solid reading; if you've never met Ellison through his works before, this is the perfect book to begin with.





THE DEEP. John Crowley. Doubleday: \$5.95. Reviewed by Wayne Hooks.

THE DEEP is a very confusing book, if indeed it is a book. Certainly whether or not it actually is science fiction may be debated, despite the heading "science fiction" on its cover. Crowley's novel may best be termed as existential sword and sorcery. In this imaginary world, Reds and Blacks battle each other ceaselessly for domination. In fact, the book seems to be a dramatization of a checker game. The society is medieval, with the Reds and Blacks holding the power over the peasants, known as the Folk. Battling against both the Reds and the Blacks are the Just, supposedly defenders of the Folk and assassins of both the Red and Black lords. The neutral Greys act as arbitrators between the ever-warring Reds and Blacks. The society is stratified; rituals are grounded upon ancient custom whose reasons are long forgotten. There is no motivation, only senseless warfare and personal inertia. Into this closed universe is introduced a stranger--he is found one day after a battle between Reds and Blacks, remembering nothing of his past. This hairless and sexless stranger recuperates, and as he does, his memory returns, but he still doesn't recall why he was sent.

THE DEEP has almost no characterization, regrettably; the author persists in using the same names for different characters. The resulting kaleidoscope of similarly-named blank characters is extremely confusing. In addition, motivation is almost totally lacking; behind the action there is almost no purpose. Also, Crowley almost loses the thread of the story in random digressions; and the style often serves to telescope the action to such a degree as to render it useless. THE DEEP is interesting as a dramatization of a possible game, but as truly entertaining reading it does not succeed.

THOSE GENTLE VOICES. George Alec Effinger. (Warner Books, 0-446-86113-8 -- \$1.25). Reviewed by Wade Gilbreath.

An interesting quote from a letter by Raymond Chandler prefaces the body of THOSE GENTLE VOICES. In part it reads: "...the trouble with fantastic fiction as a general rule is the same trouble that afflicts Hungarian playwrights--no third act. The idea and the situation resulting from the idea are fine, but what happens then?" With this in mind, presumably Effinger plans to give the reader an idea fulfilled.

Taking the theme James Gunn explored in THE LISTENERS, Effinger begins his story in a New Orleans research laboratory. Scientists are examining radio astronomy tapes in the hope of finding evidence of extra-terrestrial life. Solid characterization, good dialogue and effortless prose mark the beginning of THOSE GENTLE VOICES.

Things begin to turn sour, however, when Earth sends an expedition to a nearby star system. Effinger's characters become

foils to the whims of his plotting. This transition is striking; little is believable. Perhaps a clue to this turn can be found in the book's subtitle, "A Promethean Romance of the Spaceways." If Effinger's intent is to satirize the pulpy SF of days gone by, he misses the mark with a too close imitation.

THOSE GENTLE VOICES begins like an average Analog serial of the sixties, nothing pretentious and a good evening's entertainment. It ends in a confused mire. In this particular attempt at working beyond the idea, Effinger has sacrificed his story and ignored the intelligence of his readers.

A LAW FOR THE STARS. John Morressey (Laser 72021 -- 95¢) Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

Laser has been criticized by many for presenting space opera of an outmoded tradition; unfortunately, many readers overlook the fact that Laser is also publishing a good deal of fiction of the ANALOG tradition of the late fifties and early sixties--and while the quality is variable enough that the novel doesn't succeed overall, A LAW FOR THE STARS is a story that comes very close to matching the quality of some of Campbell's serials of that period. The plot, style and slant are all Campbellian--unfortunately, Morressey's novel lacks the drive that is necessary to pull off a wholly successful novel.

A LAW FOR THE STARS is a novel of interplanetary police and the corruption inherent in an organization so widespread; in its content, it becomes almost Heinleinian, with added cynicism. But where Heinlein made his novels of this sort work by good pacing and careful writing, Morressey's carelessness prevents A LAW from becoming a memorable story. Pacing is badly handled in the book--the first segment is overplayed by the author to such a degree that it almost lost me. Ryne, the orphan who becomes a Sternverein, fails to take on real character until almost the end of the book, at which point it's too late to make much difference.

Technically, A LAW FOR THE STARS is a flawed book; nonetheless, it is a competent novel overall in that it does manage to tell a neat (if somewhat simplistic) story in a readable manner. This apparently is all Morressey intended it to do; I would have felt the book more worthwhile if the author had paid more attention to finesse, though, and given us a little insight into Ryne, making him less of a cardboard cut-out and more of a complex individual striving to maintain his own integrity in a corrupt system.

LETTER FROM JERRY PAGE (5- -76)

"... I read Buck Coulson's and Gene Deweese's NOW YOU SEE IT/HIM/THEM and enjoyed it thoroughly. Buck and Gene write excellent good-natured adventure fiction. It



seemed to me that they were a bit conservative on the fannish stuff. There could have been more legitimate tying in with their plot; and they'd better be planning a sequel, because if they aren't they blew a very well planted surprise ending.

"Incidentally, BLAKE'S PROGRESS: For a long time now I've really admired Ray Nelson. I'm not sure BLAKE'S PROGRESS is as good as it could have been, but I'm pleased Susan gave it the review she did. I think Nelson is one of our major writers and it's time we admitted the fact. And talked someone like Doubleday or Ballantine into giving him the outlet he deserves. Nelson is too good not to publish more regularly than he does!"

((I'd never read a great deal of Nelson's material--in fact, the only other thing of his I can recall offhand was his collaboration with Phil Dick quite a while back. But BLAKE'S PROGRESS is powerful fiction, and his latest novel, THEN BEGGARS COULD RIDE (reviewed somewhere in this FR) is equally powerful stuff, and my biggest regret is that all those Laser-haters are going to continue, content in their prefabricated opinions of what kind of fiction Laser is publishing, and miss out on two superb SF books.

((Congratulations are extended to Jerry, by the way, for his new job as editor of DAW's YEAR'S BEST HORROR series. The first Page-edited volume is due out this year, and Page's Arkham anthology aptly demonstrate his prowess as an editor.))

THE SPELL SWORD... Marion Zimmer Bradley (DAW UQ1181 - 95¢). Reviewed by Jessica Amanda Salmonson.

Marion Zimmer Bradley makes sword and sorcery into something almost respectable in THE SPELL SWORD, a novel of the planet Darkover. Very thinly disguised as science fiction, this is actually an heroic fantasy, filled with swashbuckling adventure, bloody combat, psi-magic and naive romance.

Andrew Carr, whose airplane crashes during a geological expedition, is a Terran suddenly thrown into the unmerciful arms of Darkover's hostile, wintry wilderness. He survives only by the aid of a ghost--actually the astrally wandering spectre of a living woman captured and imprisoned by barbarous cat-people. Carr has fallen in love with this spectre, and joins forces with her kinfolk to rescue her. Their romance is complicated not merely by the fact that it is hard to touch or kiss an astral projection, but by the fact that she is sworn to celibacy; as a powerful sorceress chosen to be a Keeper (roughly akin to a Priestess I suppose), she must remain pure, untouchable.

The plot, then, is pretty basic. The knight saves the virgin from the dragon--or, in this case, wicked ol' cat men.

But against the well-conceived backdrop of Darkover, the tale is fresh and inventive. The action is gripping; the magic is a colorful mind trip. And in the end, there are no downers. This

is, quite simply, a very good little Adventure with a capital A. I recommend it to anyone without a feminist consciousness, or one who can suspend his/her feminist ego long enough to enjoy old fashioned chivalry.

Marion's latest contract with DAW is for a sequel to SPELL SWORD. The "happy ever after" ending, someone pointed out to her, was not terribly realistic, no matter how nice a way to end the story. So the next Darkover novel has quite a potential in investigating the complexities and problems of an interracial marriage on fundamentally racist Darkover.

Considering the scope of characterization in Marion's last two novels (HERITAGE OF HASTUR and THE SHATTERED CHAIN) the forthcoming book could be quite impressive. If Marion investigates the possibilities as deeply and finely as she did homosexuality in HASTUR and female equality in CHAIN. The problems of a marriage between one of the despised Terrans and a Darkovan Keeper has its analogy in this: a Jewish seaman marrying a German Catholic nun.

#### SOME CORRESPONDENCE ON THE LASER DISCUSSION

((In the past issue or two of FR, there has been a great deal of discussion about (1) Laser's uniformity of packaging, and (2) the quality--or lack of--in Laser's line. Mike Glicksohn and Don D'Amassa have both commented on the uniformity of appearance--perhaps Laser's biggest drawback, as far as I'm concerned, for it implies to me as a reader that the book has a certain lack of originality itself--and some comments have been made as to the quality. A couple of responses came in, as follows...))

Linda Nicholls  
Harlequin Ent. Ltd.  
240 Duncan Mill Rd.  
Don Mills, Ontario  
Canada M3B 1Z4

"... As an answer to the question as to the uniformity of the Laser appearance raised by Don D'Amassa in his letter, the series, unlike much of contemporary SF literature, is aimed to capture the vastly wider "adventure reading audience. We have adopted an editorial approach to meet the desires of a broad section of the reading public, in particular two kinds of people.

"Firstly, the members of the vast and growing cult of SF fans, some 5 million in North America, who are faced with a wide assortment of different types of SF from which to choose. To this group Laser offers a consistency of style and content that is not available from any other publisher. The emphasis in content is on human adventure rather than on technology--much like the enormously popular TV series Star Trek--and upon the credible rather than the bizarre.

"Secondly, adventure and mystery readers. We believe that with these editorial criteria in mind there exists an exciting opportunity in the introduction of Laser SF to adventure and mystery readers. A great many of today's readers of ad-



venture and mystery totally avoid science fiction. Laser will offer these readers a more colorful and perhaps a more imaginative version of the kind of story that they now enjoy..."

((The following letter, also enclosed, was apparently written to Charlie Brown of LOCUS in January of this year. I talked with Kelly briefly at a recent convention and received his permission to excerpt parts of this here.))

Kelly Freas  
Rt 4, Box 4056A  
Virginia Beach, VA  
23457

"1..(the first section of the letter describes Kelly's method of doing covers--a method that involves three close readings of any book, during which time he can aptly catch any real flaws the author may have made. I summarize it so that we may get on with the letter) Frankly, by the time I'm finished, I frequently hate the story, the author, the painting and myself. Even the author's page numbering system annoys me at this point.

" "As a critic, I am a real bastard.

"And I am saying flatly that LASER Books compare favorably with the body of work of any publisher--pocketbook, hardcover or magazine--in the business. On my personal scale from 1.0 (just barely tolerable) to 5.0 (Hugo nominee; 6.0 would of course be a winner) LASER averages out at about 3.8; and there are, in the 36 books I have done so far, at least six which had they been published in ASF or FSF, would be serious Hugo contenders.

" "There are two first novels which hint strongly at the appearance of this generation's Heinlein, while owing nothing to the old master but quality. A couple of old pros have turned in fine pieces--you wouldn't think in award terms, but oh, what a pleasure to read!

"...Harlequin has opened a market where every aspiring SF writer who can tell a story at all is assured of a careful reading and the same chance of sale as the successful pro. Harlequin is aiming at the cultivation of a fringe market which hasn't had stories written for it since the early 50s; a market which just naturally loves SF, but demands well told human stories first and interesting gadgetry, technical or social, second. Pure scientific speculation and exposition comes in third but is enjoyed if well done and relevant. So far, better than half the stories meet these requirements and are good, entertaining reading. What more can we reasonably ask?"

((I was a little stunned at Kelly's overall rating of 3.8 for Laser's first 36 books--in fact, 3.8 for any company sounds like an awfully high rating. I do note that both letters keep referring to that fringe group of readers who like adventure SF--I fear that Laser is aiming too much for the fringe group and not enough toward that large body of fans Ms. Nicholls speaks of. Although it seems a minority opinion, I must admit that I've found a goodly number of strong SF works in Laser's first 30

releases--definitely enough to prove to me that those fans who dismiss all Laser books as crap haven't taken the time to read even a majority of the Laser novels--and I, for one, would hate to be a writer whose first effort (or fiftieth effort, for that matter) was panned simply because it was published by a company the reviewer didn't like.))

((On the other side, Laser does tend to aim for the Star Trek market quite often, although the majority of their books maintain a higher overall competence than ST works. This space opera tradition may be a Grand Old One, but it's one that many readers felt was best left buried. In the long run, though, I must say (pragmatically) that publishing is a profit-making venture, and if Laser can make a profit at SF adventure, there must be a market for it. I recently taught four SF classes at the high school level, and while I found a number of Laser readers who came to my class because of what they'd read, I found no one who had been turned away from SF by Laser--and I did get a number of students who were strong in their feelings against SF, but took the class to see what it was like. Laser's biggest mistake, in my eyes, was in rushing into the market with a very weak first line, rather than delaying publication and acquiring a lot of powerful manuscripts to open up with. Had Laser opened up with Pournelle, Green and Nelson, then followed with Holly, McIntosh and Hensley, I think fan reaction might have been totally different.))

HEALER. F. Paul Wilson (Doubleday -- \$5.95). Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

Science fiction can be such a mixed field that one begins to wonder what really makes a good book; does it have to have serious, literary aspirations, or must it delve into the characters' minds, or must it be experimental? With so many writers trying to fulfill these various qualifications, it becomes a pleasure to find a book that seems totally happy to do nothing more than tell an interesting, well-done story. HEALER is just such a book; solid, well-written and strong, it is one of the most enjoyable books I've picked up in some time.

Wilson's novel reminds me immediately of an antithetical PUPPET MASTERS; like the Heinleinian classic, HEALER deals with a parasite (who prefers to think of himself as a symbiote) that invades the nervous system of host-humans; 999 out of a thousand die from the invasion of their bodies, but for the one who survives, life becomes radically different. Dait is a man who survives, and finds himself suddenly possessing two personalities--his own and that of Pard, the symbiote who has become a permanent part of his body. Pard, being very much impressed with his new life, alters his host's body so that life is eternal--in addition, he makes changes in the body of his host to make life easier and more



advantageous to the partnership; and so long as Dalt and Pard remain a symbiotic pair, Dalt is a veritable superman; having the intelligence of two brilliant minds, coupled with astounding physical characteristics. Using his advanced mental powers, Dalt becomes a "healer;" that is, by entering the minds of those afflicted with the horrors, a paranoiac disease that turns people into fearful, hysterical catatonics--mentally suffering untold horrors, but physically showing little sign of awareness. A cult grows up around the Healer, and Dalt finds himself drawn into a series of unforeseen adventures.

HEALER is a well-plotted, well-paced, well-told novel, a book that doesn't set out to preach or to symbolize, but instead to tell a story, to entertain--and it succeeds very well, both in style and content. HEALER is a book well worth acquiring, and should be of particular interest to the Heinleinian reader.

COMET. Jane White. (Harper & Row -- \$7.95). Reviewed by Wayne Hooks.

There was a great deal of talk this year about how the field of science fiction has stagnated; it was charged that no memorable SF was produced last year. These charges may be extravagant, but there is a great deal of truth in them. The established authors turn out the same hackneyed themes while there is a lack of new talent. Certainly, there are exceptions, but these are the exceptions, not the rule. COMET by Jane White as an example of science fiction does not give much hope that the field will be rejuvenated.

COMET has a doomsday theme; the setting is a future where there are no machines. Technology has collapsed, and the earth is barren, wasted, worn out; the cities have been abandoned, and everything is in ruins. The population of the earth is decimated; the few survivors huddle in the ruins of houses and live by marginal farming and scavenging.

The main characters, Ruth and William, do not remember the Old Earth, being too young. Living with them in the ruined house is an old couple, Joshua and Harriet. One night, Kon and Asna come to them seeking shelter; Ruth is incredulous, because Asna is pregnant. In the New Earth, only those who are selected may have children. No one who is flawed may breed, yet Asna is pregnant and she is deaf and dumb. Such a thing is an unheard of crime in these grim latter days; yet, still, Ruth takes them in.

COMET is an uneventful disaster novel; the main fault lies in the dialogue. White's dialogue is stilted and artificial, filled with awkward tenses and phrasings. The major purpose of dialogue is to carry the action forward and to explain the motivations of the characters; in COMET, much of the dialogue is irrelevant, and there is a definite lack of communication between characters.

COMET also lacks clear motivation. For the most part, the characters stand around and utter irrelevancies. The artificial dialogue and lack of motivation combine to cripple the action of the story, leaving the novel flat and lackluster--in addition, it makes the characters pale and colorless. This is not Jane White's first novel, but it certainly reads as if it were.

CLOINED LIVES. Pamela Sargent. (Fawcett Q3529 -- \$1.50) Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

Few books really attempt to probe a subject to its limits; perhaps it's because of the fear of failure inherent in such a grand undertaking, but the fact remains that most SF books are content to merely touch on a subject and develop it only as fully as is necessary to tell a competent story. With CLOINED LIVES, however, Pamela Sargent has pushed herself to the very limits of her ability to tell a story of a man and his five children--all of whom are clones of himself. Using multiple narrators--each segment of the book is presented by a different version of Paul Swenson, showing how difficult it is for each clone to live in the harsh world that fails to accept him as an individual--Sargent presents a compelling view of the hazards of cloning, the tragic lives of the first clones, and the loneliness involved in being a scientific oddity.

CLOINED LIVES is a segmented novel--parts of it have appeared in anthologies and/or magazines in the past few years--but it stands as a solid work, albeit a work of variable quality. For, with all her ability, even Pamela Sargent had trouble continuing the level of quality she began the book with; CLOINED LIVES drags to a degree in the middle, offering little character differentiation, and the ending is almost trite and not wholly effective. Yet even with these flaws, CLOINED LIVES stands as an important novel, and one which deserves a careful reading.

Few authors have attempted such a major undertaking as Sargent set herself to in CLOINED LIVES; in the SF field, the only writer who comes readily to mind is Robert Silverberg, who used multiple narrators quite effectively in his BOOK OF SKULLS. Sargent suffers in writing from too much sameness, however; in trying to make her clones similar in their mental development, she has made them repetitive, and flat; only Paul Swenson himself and Edward succeed in becoming wholly differentiated characters. Pamela Sargent does her poorest job on Kira, the one female clone, who remains almost a background character, even in her own chapter. Had Sargent been able to overcome this and give more vibrance and excitement to the characters, CLOINED LIVES would be a major work of unprecedented scope; as it remains, its success is in the immensity of the project it undertakes, and not what the novel itself does.



POSTCARD FROM L. SPRAGUE DE CAMP (4-29-76)

"Thanks for the copy of FR6. About your review of Frank Long's book, it contrasts in every way with that of your colleague Dale Nelson of Ashland, OR. Dale damned the book up, down and sideways, so it's hard to believe you two are discussing the same book. I reviewed it, too, in the current AMRA; my review is closer to yours than to Dale's--mildly approving. But then, Frank is an old friend who hasn't had it easy in late years."

((Somehow, I don't get the feeling that you're giving the book or your readers a fair chance if you gave it a "mildly approving" review just because of your friendship. The purpose of a review--at least as far as I've been concerned--is to point out the good and bad points of a book, possibly make recommendations, and give the reader sufficient information to help him decide if he wants the book or not. Giving a book a favorable review simply because it's by a friend doesn't fit in that category. Perhaps I read into your statements remarks that aren't intended that way--if so, please correct me.))

((Bad reviews aren't always that damaging to a book--and let's face it, fanzine reviews can only cause mild alterations in sales figures, unless all such reviews are agreeable. But even with that in mind, review integrity is needed. Now, before I wear out my soapbox, tell me--did you approve of the book because it was adequate, or did you approve of it because DREAMER ON THE NIGHT SIDE was written by a friend? Personally, I came to the book with reservations--I expected it to be a tunnel-vision look at HPL--and was immensely pleased, as the review last issue showed. Had I been disappointed in the book, I would have reviewed it negatively. And that's all that I considered in my review.))

THEN BEGGARS COULD RIDE. R.F. Nelson. (LASER 72032--95¢). Reviewed by Susan Biggers.

Once again, LASER has published another extremely entertaining Ray Nelson novel; although it is not of the calibre of his previous LASER novel, BLAKE'S PROGRESS, this second book is just as intriguing in its own way.

THEN BEGGARS COULD RIDE takes place in the future where energy conservation and pollution control are the main concerns of society. The future world Nelson has created is also one in which the partial Shakespearian quote "And all the world's a stage" has become a way of life, for all the countries have been broken up into individual communities which are mimics of the various periods in history. People are free to choose which mim they wish to live in, and once chosen, spend their lives acting out a role from history.

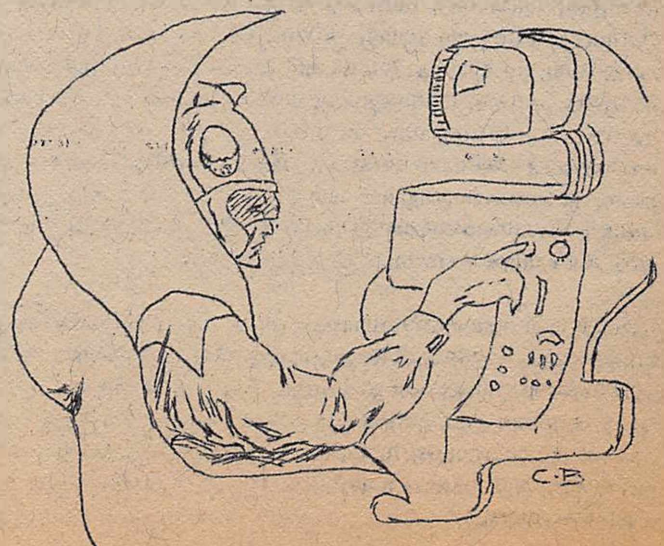
The book begins with an unsuccessful suicide attempt by Newton McClintok, a resident of the Roaring Twenties mim, continues with his therapy and his search for the perfect mim in which to live. As expected, McClintok finds at last that Utopia doesn't exist in anything man has made, but in the man himself.

Just as he did in BLAKE'S PROGRESS, Nelson has again made the personality of his characters the highlight of his book. Although plot and detail are by no means secondary, it is the characters on remembers after finishing the book--and most notably the character of Mary Arthur, a girl from Sherlock, the mim of Victorian London. After meeting and seducing McClintok, Mary helps him escape from her enraged father and they begin a flight from the authorities of Sherlock which leads them from mim to mim. Throughout this flight, it is Mary's courage and ingenuity which enables them to escape the various traps set for them.

While Nelson's male characters are always adequate and usually the one around which the story is built, it is his female characters which make his novels so memorable and outstanding from so many other books published. It's hard to separate one particular point from a story which clings together so well as a whole, but this talent of Ray Nelson's for creating a really interesting and believable female character is probably the main reason I like his writings so much. Needless to say, I'm eagerly awaiting the next Nelson book.

SANDWORLD. Richard A. Lupoff. (Berkley 23116--\$1.25) Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

For an author who has proven himself as talented as Dick Lupoff, SANDWORLD is a disappointment. It is competent adventure fantasy, but little more--and after CRACK IN THE SKY and THE TRIUNE MAN, I had come to expect more.





SANDWORLD involves three prisoners, a guard and a social worker who are transported suddenly from a highway in California to a strange desert-like world. The gimmick is the "sand" itself; rather than being sand, it is actually tiny spores that, when exposed to water, spring into full growth--and these spores include plant and animal life. Such implausibilities as this book presents hardly need mentioning--for instance, what would happen when one of these vicious (and large) animal-spores is inhaled into the moist nasal passages of one of our intrepid heroes? I'd imagine he'd have a splitting headache, for sure... In this case, the implausibilities totally outweigh the strengths of the novel, making it a weak, ineffective work.

Lupoff himself implies that this is a minor work--it is very minor, and can be passed up totally unless you go for modernized Burroughsian-type adventure with a stalwart hero, a quick-minded maiden and a few unimportant background characters fighting uglies on a strange world. The only possible merit you might find in it is Lupoff's strong pacing, which struggles to overcome a poor plot and doesn't quite succeed.

THE COMPLEAT ENCHANTER. L. Sprague de Camp & Fletcher Pratt. (Ballantine 24638 -- \$1.95). Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

There are few fantasies that manage to be delightful from cover to cover--thankfully, Ballantine has brought two of the most adventurous, thrilling and wildly entertaining fantasies from the pages of UNKNOWN, put them together in one cover, and presented them to a new audience, complete with attractive Hildebrandt Brothers cover and inside cover illustrations.

Harold Shea is a man who discovers the magical ability to go into the past--unfortunately, Shea ends up in parallel worlds, worlds that we know only through myths and legends. In this volume, Harold Shea manages to involve himself in misadventures in the world of the Norse gods, the Faerie Queen, and the mythical land of ORLANDO FURIOSO. Each of the three tales is a wonder of rich visions and magnificent situations, and the entire volume represents a reading treat that no sensible reader should pass up.

THE WIND WHALES OF ISHMAEL. Philip Jose Farmer. (Ace 89238 -- \$1.25). Reviewed by Susan Biggers.

Ace is in the process of bringing back into print the works of many of its prestigious authors, including Philip Jose Farmer; THE WIND WHALES OF ISHMAEL is such a book, and is most memorable in that it indicates things to come for Farmer as an author--this is one of the earliest examples of Farmer's work with famous literary figures, a predecessor to his novels and fictionalized biographies of Tarzan, Doc Savage, Phileas Fogg and Sherlock Holmes.

The novel is the tale of Ishmael, narrator of MOBY DICK; Ishmael finds himself transported from the seafaring world of the 1840s, in which he belongs, to a future world, where the oceans are dead and "whalers" instead chase immense wind-whales through the skies. It's a well-told adventure, although not an important contribution to Farmer's body of works in itself; nonetheless, Farmer fans might be interested in picking it up, since the book does offer a pleasant afternoon's reading. Farmer's Ace novels could do with rereleasing, and hopefully this is only one of many to come.

THE MIND RIDERS. Brian M. Stableford. (DAW UY1234--\$1.25). Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

Brian Stableford is an author capable of solid science fiction and petty space opera; his Gainger series for DAW, which Stableford himself dismissed as junk fiction in an article in Ted White's magazines, is surprisingly competent material; and THE MIND RIDERS is equally competent fiction, but on a more serious level.

Recently, one reviewer moaned the absence of good sports SF; he was answered with ROLLERBALL, KILLERBOWL, ARENA and, now, MIND RIDERS. This is a look at the world of boxing in a future where it is possible to link into the minds of fighters and experience the fight just as they themselves do; not the physical pain itself, mind you, which was felt in the sims that were used for the actual boxing, but the raw emotion, the desire to win that was in the minds of the two fighters who controlled the sims.

MIND RIDERS is a story of a grudge match, a fight between Herrera and the protagonist, Ryan Hart; Herrera is the unbeatable boxer of the sim-circuit, yet Hart had beaten him, years before. Herrera wants a chance to change that--and an incredibly wealthy man whose son died in a fight with Herrera also wants that return match--to see Herrera suffer a final, humiliating defeat.

THE MIND RIDERS is probably the best of all the recent sports SF, and shows Stableford as an intense author who can successfully tell a story in such a way that the reader is drawn into the minds of the characters. While not a Hugo-nominee sort of book, THE MIND RIDERS is Stableford's best so far, and an immensely entertaining book.

THE BEST OF JOHN W. CAMPBELL. (Ballantine 24960 -- \$1.95). Reviewed by Barry Hunter.

Ballantine's BEST OF series has been one of the best things to come out in years, and the series is now being imitated by several publishers--unfortunately for the reader, no publisher is putting the attention into such a series as is Ballantine. THE BEST OF JOHN W. CAMPBELL is the latest in



the series, and presents a good selection of fiction and non-fiction from the man who was probably more important to modern SF than any other author/editor.

The book lives up to its name, with Campbell's best fiction being presented; the book includes my favorite, "Twilight," and the famous "Who Goes There?", but it also manages to find some less-reprinted yet equally good fiction--Lester del Rey's careful editing is responsible for this, no doubt, and he deserves congratulations.

Only one of JWC's editorials is presented, and it's not one of the classics--but it gives a good view of Campbell's beliefs and his individual way of presenting them, and is a pleasant sum-up to the writings of a talented man. The Forward and Afterword by del Rey and Ms. J.W. Campbell, respectively, give an intimate picture of the man--but the book is not about JWC, it is a presentation of the works of JWC, and it succeeds admirably. This volume, as all the others before it, should be in every SF fan's library--this truly is the best of John W. Campbell, and that says enough.

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**DAMNATION ALLEY.** Roger Zelazny. (Berkley Z3123--\$1.25)  
Reviewed by Susan Biggers.

**DAMNATION ALLEY** is one of the most unusual Roger Zelazny novels I've ever read--in fact, it would be easy to convince me it wasn't Zelazny, if the book didn't say so on the cover. **DAMNATION ALLEY** is an adventure novel, a hard-hitting, action-filled story of Hell Tanner, a man who must make the trip across a devastated wasteland that once was a continent--a man whose only alternative is death. Naturally, Hell Tanner chooses to try the trip across the country in a rolling fortress.

**DAMNATION ALLEY** lacks the symbolism and metaphysical overtones that are a trademark of Zelazny; it is SF adventure of a grand sort, and the book has been out of print far too long. I feel sure Zelazny fans will grab the book if they don't have it already, but those people who were turned off by Zelazny's heavy style should give it a try, also; this book should appeal to everyone. As you may or may not know, **DAMNATION ALLEY** is an upcoming film release, also; if handled with more care than **DEATHRACE 2000**, this could be a fine SF film. The quality is there in the book, if you take the time to find it.

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**ANALOG ANNUAL.** Ben Bova, ed. Pyramid A4016 -- \$1.50.  
Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

Science fiction magazines have given way to science fiction anthologies in recent years; the shift has been obvious to everyone in the lagging magazine sales, and the problem has been lamented for quite a while in fanzines and prozines alike. **ANALOG ANNUAL** is an effort to solve the problem in an ingenious manner--publish

an original anthology that presents the best of the new authors working for a given magazine, and precede it with an editorial extolling the virtues of the magazine. In effect, publish a paperback-sized issue of the magazine to hook the readership. And with the publication of **ANALOG ANNUAL** by Pyramid, Ben Bova proves that the idea can be done very well, presenting quality new fiction--and after all, isn't quality fiction the best advertisement of all for a science fiction magazine?

The book is well worth the cost; P.J. Plauger's novel, **FIGHTING MADNESS**, is well worth the cost by itself; Plauger is a taut, lean, driving author, telling a story in a forceful, direct way. **FIGHTING MADNESS** deals with Fred Hahnemann, a former physicist who, due to an instance of insanity, is out of work; he accepts a job with **ASPERA**, only to find out that things are not working the way they're supposed to. Hahnemann is nearly murdered, yet seems unsure as to whom his murderers might be, or why--the real attraction of this novel is the strong build-up Plauger uses throughout the book, working up to a forceful climax that makes this a fine novel, one **ANALOG** would be proud to use as a cover story.

As if the novel wasn't enough, though, the reader also gets three short stories, one of which--"The Tower of Ashes" by George R.R. Martin--will probably be anthologized in a **YEAR'S BEST** next year, and a short science article (it's not really that good, but it does give the anthology the feel of an issue of **ANALOG**). The book is well packaged, complete with interior illustrations by the **ANALOG** stable of artists, and the overall feeling after reading is that you've returned, for just a moment, to the age of John W. Campbell.

This is one of the best investments you can make; if this fails to bring in new readers for **ANALOG**, it should at least prove to Ben Bova that magazines do have an alternative in format. This promises to be an annual presentation--next year's volume will have a hard act to follow.

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**A SONG FOR LYA,** George R.R. Martin. (Avon 27581 -- \$1.25). Reviewed by Susan Biggers.

At last lovers of George R.R. Martin fiction no longer have to search through countless issues of **GALAXY** and **ANALOG** for his stories. Avon has collected in one volume all the major Martin stories and novellas for devotees of his writing.

In my opinion, George Martin is one of the best, if not the best, of the relatively new writers of SF to come along in years. Few writers are able to capture my attention and imagination so well and completely as he can; but when I try to analyze in retrospect what it is about his writing that I like so much, it's next to impossible to pin down any one thing. Perhaps it's just that the talent of George Martin is so subtle that through the use of ordinary words he can make his characters become as real as people I have known; sur-



prisingly, he is able to do this not-so-simple feat with seemingly no effort at all on his part. Maybe I just happen to be in the right mood every time I read a George Martin story; if so, then a lot of coincidences happen. Whatever the reason, I am certainly glad that I decided to give one of his stories a try, for my reading would certainly be much poorer without his fiction.

The first story in *A SONG FOR LYA*, "With Morning Comes Mistfall," is my second favorite George Martin story. It is a very sensitive tale of how man's insatiable curiosity to know everything can sometimes work to his disadvantage by spoiling one of the few things that is better left to the imagination. It is the story of Wraithworld, a planet enshrouded in mists which supposedly conceal the wraiths of its name and which are responsible for the disappearance of a number of humans on the planet. Wraithworld held an attraction for the people who felt that there should be a few mysteries left in the universe, but this attraction was shattered when a scientific research team came to prove the true nature of the wraiths.

My favorite story (and the one I first read by him) is the title story, "A Song for Lya." Above all else this is a love story; a story of the love two telepaths have for each other, a love they share more completely than any other people are able to share, and a love possessed by an alien which is more complete and encompassing than humans are capable of conceiving. It is a story that, once read, is unforgettable.

The third best story in the book is "The Exit to San Bretá," and it's a haunting story--literally. Having taken many long trips on interstate highways, I now tend to get philosophic and reflective on the future of man while traveling, and this, I suppose, was what made me feel such an affinity toward "Exit." It's a story of the future when only a few cars are left and the nation's myriad highways are crumbling into dust, and of the weird encounter with a ghostly Edsel that a car enthusiast has while on a motoring vacation across the West. This, too, is a story that stays with you long after you've finished it.

In the light of these three, the rest of the book's stories seem to pale in comparison. However, even a slightly less bright Martin tale is better than most other writer's best efforts. For reliable entertainment, a better choice than *A SONG FOR LYA* can't be made; some of the best writing in the past five years is contained in this volume, and if you haven't read it yet, don't let the chance to do so go by.

THE WINDS OF ZARR. Richard Tierney. (Silver Scarab Press, 500 Wellesley, S.E., Albuquerque, New Mexico 87106 -- \$4.50) \$4.50). Reviewed by Cliff Biggers.

Dick Tierney is establishing himself as a strong figure in the modern fantasy field; with *THE WINDS OF ZARR*, he proves his ability to handle sustained action and characterization, and manages to present some compelling fantasy reminiscent of Lovecraft and Howard, but with a grandeur and scope much more modern.

Howard, but with a grandeur and scope quite unlike either author.

Tierney's novel is set in old Egypt, yet the fantasy elements are not merely adaptations of Egyptian lore; they go beyond it, establishing *THE WINDS OF ZARR* as an original work in the field, not an adaptation of this or a pastiche of that.

It's disappointing that *THE WINDS OF ZARR* failed to be published by a major paperback house; unfortunately, it's a sad statement on the field of fantasy that some of the best material continues to be overlooked. This limited edition is available from Harry Morris, Jr., as long as the 1000 copy print run holds out. Even at the \$4.50 price tag, the book is a good investment; while Tierney still has some work to do on certain elements of his style, particularly a wooden dialogue structure that inhibits the flow of his work, *THE WINDS OF ZARR* is a highly satisfactory product.

THE PRITCHER MASS. Gordon R. Dickson. (DAW UY1236--\$1.25). Reviewed by Susan Biggers.

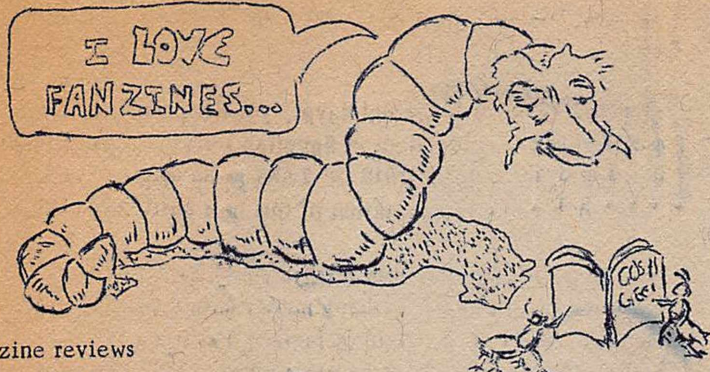
*THE PRITCHER MASS* is one of Gordon Dickson's more solid adventure stories. It is about survival in a future time when the world has been contaminated to the point of being unliveable except in specially constructed domes. However, this dome-protected existence is very precarious at best and the ultimate survival of mankind itself depends on the success of a psychic construction called the Pritcher Mass which is being built in outer space beyond Pluto and which will, on completion, locate a new world for man to emigrate to.

The main action of the novel concerns Chaz Sant and his struggle to prove that he has the necessary psychic talent to be of use in constructing the Pritcher Mass. After many futile attempts to prove his ability, Chaz stumbles onto the fact that he has been kept from qualifying by a secret organization which, for some reason, does not want him to work on the Mass.

I can only fault Dickson on two minor points in what was otherwise a very entertaining and well-done novel. At times he tended to get overly lengthy and somewhat repetitious in his explanation of why the psychically-endowed people did not catch Job'sberry rot, a fatal disease caused by exposure to the world outside the domes. Secondly, Dickson's "mind over matter" explanation of the psychic's immunity just didn't ring true for what was otherwise a very real disease.

However, as I said, these are only minor gripes and do not by any means spoil the overall tone of the book. *THE PRITCHER MASS* is good entertainment and certainly worth anyone's reading time.





# fanzine reviews

The most aggravating thing about fanzines is that so many of them manage to come out on schedule, issue after issue, and that makes reviewing all of them a horrible (and impossible) chore. Since there's no way to cover them all, I'm just going to hit a few of the more recent ones that I feel deserve mention.

Don Thompson's DON-o-SAUR definitely needs to be recommended to any and all who aren't familiar with the zine; Don's nominated as Best Fan Writer in the Hugos this year, and if you haven't seen his zine, you deserve an opportunity to read it. Don-o-Saur is available for 35¢ or the usual, from Don Thompson (7498 Canosa Ct., Westminster, CO 80030). In the newest issue, #45, Don offers a great deal of material explaining his reason for being in fandom, and why he might be folding Don-o-Saur in the near future; in addition, he offers an excerpt from a non-fiction work-in-progress that is just as powerfully done as the rest of Don-o-Saur. A reprinted con report and some LoCs make this a nice, well-rounded issue, well worth the cost.

SOUTH OF THE MOON #12 is out, and it announces that the apa-listing zine is once again changing hands. This may be good news, since Tim Marion has done a most inefficient job with the listings. Tim's problem, it seemed, was a desire to get an issue into print with the wrong information rather than take the time to research it and get it right. If you're not into apas, you'll probably find this useless--as it is, I'd wait until #13 came out before I'd order it. Order the next issue from Andrew Sigel, S.U. Box 198, Windham College, Putney, VT 05346. 25¢ a copy or trades.

Probably the best personalzine/genzine combination being done right now, though, is Mike Glyer's SCIENTIFRICTION; Mike is a writer who takes himself seriously, and makes sure that everything he commits to stencil is interesting. In addition, Mike's ability as an editor proves itself as well here as it does with PREHENSILE; STFR #5, the latest issue, is a fine mixture of natter, reviews, columns (Dave Locke's column in this issue is a wondrous one, particularly his Awards to Deserving Individuals) and locs. This is, page-for-page, the most enjoyable fanzine to cross my mailbox in quite a while, and I heartily recommend it. A sample issue is \$1 (each person may buy one sample issue--thereafter, you must contribute or trade) and it's available from Mike Glyer, 14974 Osceola St. Sylmar, CA 91324).

An interesting fannish publication, although I'm not sure if it could be classified as a fanzine, is Jim Pitts' LOVECRAFTIAN CHARACTERS, a portfolio of six illustrations from the works of HPLovecraft. Pitts' art is reminiscent of Bok's at times, but a good deal more simplified. The portfolio also comes with a brief biographical sketch of HPL by Dirk Mosig and a short biographical-critical overview of Jim Pitts by Jon Harvey. This is a limited edition of 700 copies, and the first 100 are signed by Pitts himself. The US Agent for this is Dirk W. Mosig, GSWC, Americus, GA 31709, and he has copies for \$4.00. You might be able to find copies from British dealers for the British price of £1.50, if you don't mind the long wait. The price seems a little high for only six drawings in 10" X 8" reproductions, but HPL fans will probably want it nonetheless.

CTHULHU CALLS is a fanzine that fails to deliver what the name promises (or implies)--that is, it isn't an HPL fanzine, nor is it a fantasy fanzine, but it is instead a college publication that offers art, fiction and criticism of the SF/fantasy field. Oh, yes--and SF poetry, which the editors have decided deserves more emphasis. Unfortunately, CC offers more quantity than quality, and superb reproduction hides what is often awkward writing. CC is run like a professional publication, with seven departmental editors and whatever columnists and writers make themselves available at Northwest Community College. The fanzine skips around too much to accomplish a great deal, and the end result is a mish-mosh of some fair, some bad, much boring writing. The editor is Terry Shorb, Northwest Community College, Powell, Wyoming 82435. Shorb is a new editor, replacing Robert Barthell, and perhaps he can do something to unify the publication. It's available for \$1 a copy or trades--trading for a copy is a good idea, but I can't recommend buying it; spend your money elsewhere.

If you have money to spend, though, you should really consider a subscription to XENOPHILE, Nils Hardin's fanzine/adzine of fantasy and science fiction. Nils puts a lot of work into XENO, and the result is an adzine that also presents quality articles, art and sercon material. A subscription is \$6 from Nils Hardin, PO Box 9660, St. Louis, MO 63122; the price is cheap, and the product is well worth it if you're an active buyer of OP books, like to keep up with sercon-oriented fanzines, etc.

When it comes to strange fanzines, there are none stranger than the Burbee-and-company fanzines that are passed off as FAPA one-shots. The latest in the series, THE BEST LINES ARE ~~ON~~ OFF THE WALL, is more imperfect-but-still-trying oneshotting (after all, a one-shot is by definition an imperfect product, even these "organized" one-shots that even have "gasp" a topic for discussion) by Burbee and associates, and is available from Charles Burbee, 12723 S Gabbett Dr., La Mirada, CA 90638. Interesting reading, and the subject this time is graffiti; some of the best material comes from Socorro Burbee, who points out the similarity between graffiti-writing-and-drawing and fanzine publishing and writing. Discomforting thoughts, but good views and well-written opinions--I find myself agreeing with all of it.....



For the fan who wants to see how his opinions on SF works stand alongside the opinions of other fans, Gil Gaier has solved all the problems of research that you might have; in GUYING GIRE 5/6, Gil has published an enormous listing of books, and tells how each of a number of fans involved in his Project rated the books. The reading may be dry, but it's most assuredly good for the reader who likes to compare opinions--in fact, the new SF fan might find the list quite handy as a reference work of sorts. GUYING GYRE is available from Gil Gaier, 1016 Beech Ave., Torrance, CA 90501; the standard price is 2/\$1, but I gather that this dbl issue would be a buck even.

And, lest we ignore the superb zines coming from the hinterlands of Canada (everyone knows that anything north of the Mason-Dixon line is "hinterlands"), there's always THANGORODRIM #27 to remind us that good fanac is coming from that area. THANG is patently entertaining, although it tends to the juvenile end of the spectrum at times. Patrick Hayden, the editor, is a good writer, but his fanzine tends to get so wrapped up in the middle-teenage/high school circuit Patrick finds himself trapped in right now that it becomes a little out-of-touch with us Old Fogeys who graduated from high school years 'n years ago (and some of us Old Fogeys on the other side of the fence, who teach high school!). Good locs, nice printing and a fine stable of illustrators make THANGORODRIM! a competent fanzine, one that gives a fair amount of enjoyment for time invested in it. It's 3/\$1.50, or the usual from Patrick Hayden, 206 St. George Street #910, Toronto Ontario CANADA. I might mention that according to the editor himself, THANG has the same problem that FR does--he tends to overlook layout and illustrations so that he can squeeze all the possible words on stencil. We sympathize, Patrick...

This is the late-catch-up issue of FUTURE RETROSPECTIVE; it was scheduled to end after about 18 pages, and be out at the first of this month, but material came in day after day, and we hated to put any of it aside; the end result is this, the largest FR yet, even though we've used the smallest type yet (Mike Weber swears it's a plot to make him go blind, but don't believe him; it's Ross Pavlac we're after). This is probably the largest FR for a while, too, unless the mail coming in indicates that this size zine is more effective than a smaller zine might be.

Letters of comment have been slowing down recently, by the way; we do this primarily for the feedback we get from people who agree or disagree with us, so we don't want to operate in a void. If you see something that you wish to discuss, feel free to drop us a loc and we'll probably use it--one way communication isn't a whole lot of fun. Apologies of the Issue go out to Jessica Salmonson, who sent a very fine loc that was clawed to pieces by Stormy, an overly-active (but agreeable) cat we acquired from Meade and Penny Frierson a few months back. We're weaning her on Lin Carter books, though, so she shouldn't claw up perfectly good locs in the future....

Until FR #8, then, this is it!.....



FUTURE RETROSPECTIVE #7  
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