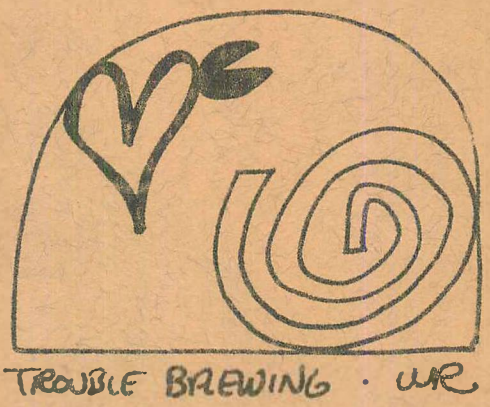

COLOR SMOLOR! WHO CARES? BUT, WOULD YOU LIKE YOUR DAUGHTER TO MARRY A MUSLIM?
Steve Stites

HOBGOBLIN



This is HOBGOBLIN 14, April 1965, published for the Spectator Amateur Press Society and several others by Terry Carr, 35 Pierrepont Street, Brooklyn, New York, 11201. The reproduction of the mimeographed pages is by the most sturdy QWERTYUIOPress, whose prop., a Mr. Ted White, also deserves thanks for technical assistance: i.e., the stencil-patching. TCarr Pub 260.

Cover by Steve Stiles. Bacover by Frank McElroy.
Interior drawings by Cynthia Goldstone and Bill Rotsler.

fonsprach

This issue of HOBGOBLIN was supposed to appear in January, but a last-minute injury prevented that. The injury wasn't serious -- just a cut index finger -- but it made typing and stylus-work impossible for a couple of weeks. All being well now, HOBGOBLIN marches on.

The cover was put on master by the artist, and run off by the artist on the artist's own ditto. Steve Stiles, the artist, deserves a round of applause for all this. In fact, Steve also went out and got the paper himself, carefully matching the stock I had used when I ran off the bacover four years ago. (You may wonder for a moment why I ran off the bacover four years ago, but of course you'll realize quickly that I am a careful, methodical and meticulous fanpublisher who plans ahead, sometimes even four years ahead. Four years are but a few moments to one who views life and fandom cosmically, as you know.) That bacover was, by the way, an attempt at mixing colors in ditto work, and I'm afraid it was somewhat less than totally successful. Sigh.

Please note that a *new address* appears in the colophon above. Carol and I have (or will have, by the time you read this) moved...two doors down the street. This may sound ridiculous to you, and in fact it may even be ridiculous, but you must realize that, to one who views fandom and life cosmically, the distance encompassed by two doors is... Oh, forget it.

READ ANY GOOD ROWRBAZZLES?

GENERAL FICTION ——

A MOTHER'S KISSES by Bruce Jay Friedman. Simon and Schuster, 1964. 286 pages, $4.95.

Friedman's first novel, STERN, was as funny a book as has come along in years, but this second one can't match it. It's written in the same style, and it's often brilliant, but it suffers from two things. First, STERN was a tragicomedy which balanced the humor with real pathos, making for a more balanced book in which the ridiculous aspects of the situation could be presented in a more believable, and therefore more effective, context. Second, A MOTHER'S KISSES is another book about Jewish and/or domineering motherhood, and there have been so many of these lately that it's trying to reap a field which is very nearly played out.

Nonetheless, the book is worth reading for the times when it does manage to be funny -- when it is very funny indeed -- and for the marvelous characterization of the Ultimate Domineering Mother.

HANGSAMAN by Shirley Jackson. Ace Star K-185. 191 pages, 50¢.

As a rule I don't review Ace books, good or bad, but I except this one because it's one in the Star line, with which I have nothing to do -- the Star line is handled by a completely different department from that in which I work.

S-f and fantasy readers are, or should be, familiar with Jackson's writing from her short stories in F&SF and elsewhere and her novels like THE SUNDIAL and THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE, all of which are at least borderline fantasy. This one is not fantasy, but it has the same unsettling qualities of the two novels mentioned above, in which you never know for sure just what's going on, or why. In THE SUNDIAL we're left wondering whether or not the world really did come to an end; in HILL HOUSE we never find out if the place was really haunted or if it was a case of mass hysteria on the part of some obviously mentally disturbed inhabitants. HANGSAMAN presents a picture of the mental deterioration of a young girl under the pressures of parental relationships just this side of perverted (but subtly, subtly), of a college atmosphere of false sanctimonious values and backbiting rivalries, and, as she retreats from these into an almost catatonic state, the warping influence of a strange girl who is obviously deranged and probably Lesbian, who becomes the heroine's

only friend on campus. The college is described in bitter humor which shows a satirical side of Jackson's writing not often displayed; the college is, I've been told, the one at which her husband, Stanley Edgar Hyman, teaches. As the book progresses and Natalie goes more and more to pieces, it becomes steadily more difficult to distinguish truth from fantasy in what she experiences -- and this, of course, is the type of writing at which Jackson is surpassed by no one.

The ending is upbeat -- I think.

THE NAKED AND THE DEAD by Norman Mailer. Signet Q2460. 559 pages, 95¢.

I'd read very little Mailer previous to this book, and what I had read had been recent stuff of pretty erratic quality -- essays and short stories blasting this way and that, sometimes biting and sometimes just grumbling. THE NAKED AND THE DEAD, though, is an extremely impressive novel, and it's easy to see why it immediately made a reputation for Mailer as a major American novelist.

It's a war novel involving an invasion of a South Pacific island during WWII, and it has the same general structure as all war novels: we're introduced to a dozen or so central characters, we follow them through battles and changing personal relationships and worries about wives and girlfriends being unfaithful back home, and we see one after another killed or wounded. But this one is done in real depth: we get background chapters on each major character, and the narrative really digs into their minds and emotions. Every character here is fully rounded and believable; some seem at first to be stereotypes (the southern cracker who's always talking about poontang; the cold, overbearing general; the idealistic general's aide; etc.), but in the course of the book they turn out to be filled with conflicting drives and fears, often unconscious. The best-developed character is Lieutenant Hearn, the general's aide, who is the character who seems to present Mailer's own viewpoint -- but Mailer is unsparing even of him, showing his idealism to falter and change under pressure. And Mailer's understanding of the subtleties of the military mind as exemplified by the general raises that character from the level of stereotype to that of archetype.

CANDY by Terry Southern and Mason Hoffenberg. Putnam, 1964. $5.00.

It isn't true that every book on the best-seller lists is junk, but I suspect that the good ones which make the list do so for the wrong reasons. That's certainly true of CANDY, which is being bought primarily because it's a sexy book -- or at least it's got a lot of sex in it. Actually, it's a satire on pornography and U.S. attitudes toward sex, and a hilarious one. Candy, the heroine (an analog of Voltaire's Candide), goes through life totally unaware of the sexual situations into which she's getting herself practically until the moment of climax in each case. Her attitudes are strictly dewy-eyed college-girl romanticism, to the extent that she's completely blind to sexual realities -- as, for instance, when she's raped by an imbecilic degenerate and she cries with infinite sophomoric compassion, "Oh, you need me, you need me so, my poor darling!" Sh lives, one might say, in the most fatuous of all possible worlds.

It all ends up with the Ultimate Seduction, of course.

THE SEX DIARY OF GERARD SORME by Colin Wilson. Giant Cardinal Edition GC-788. 212 pages, 75¢.

This is a sequel to Wilson's excellent RITUAL IN THE DARK, but it misses by a good margin equalling that book's depth of characterization and philosophy. In the present book we're presented with the supposed secret diary which Gerard Sorme kept after the events in RITD; in the Diary he details and philosophizes about his sex life and the influences on it. There are several affairs going on more or less simultaneously, and several bizarre secondary characters -- particularly Cunningham, a practitioner of sexual "black magic" who's obviously modeled on Aleister Crowley (with whom he's compared several times in the book, which strikes me as a clumsy way of handling things).

Wilson says the book "was written because I feel no one has ever treated sex,

from the man's angle, with intelligence as well as frankness. I believe a writer should, as far as he can, tell 'the whole truth' about himself. The book, I hope, speaks for itself." Well, it's a mighty effort, and the book does have its interesting moments, but far too much of it is taken up in sexual philosophizing which reads much more like rationalization -- and, at times, simply like crackpottery. I don't think Wilson has said anything valid here which he hadn't already said, directly or by implication, in RITUAL IN THE DARK.

HUMOR

CAUTIONARY VERSES by Hilaire Belloc. Alfred A. Knopf, 1962. 407 pages, $6.00.

This is an omnibus volume containing not only Belloc's CAUTIONARY TALES FOR CHILDREN and NEW CAUTIONARY TALES, but also five other books of more or less nonsense verse along similar lines. It includes the story of "Jim, Who ran away from his Nurse, and was eaten by a Lion," and of "Maria, Who made Faces and a Deplorable Marriage," and of numerous strange beasts and foolish men and women and children, all told in a verse style which suggests, to me, how Ogden Nash might have written had he been a Victorian Englishman. (Though Belloc isn't given to Nashian rhymes; in fact, when he rhymes "door" with "straw" he adds a footnote saying, "This is the first and only time/That I have used this sort of Rhyme.") It's all delightful stuff, illustrated in this edition by the original drawings by B.T.B. and Nicolas Bentley.

LAUGHTER FROM THE HIP by Leonard Feather with Jack Tracy. Horizon Press, 1963. 175 pages, $3.95.

The idea of this book would seem to be a good one -- collecting the favorite funny stories by and about jazzmen -- but in practice, at least as done here, it hasn't produced much of anything. There are some genuinely funny stories of practical jokes and oddball antics, but for the most part the stories are just "cute" or "how-about-that" tales. The general level is approximately that of an undistinguished conreport -- accounts of things which must have seemed funny at the time, but which aren't much when you put them in cold print. Oh well.

ANDY CAPP SPRING TONIC by Smythe. A Daily Mirror Book. 96 pages, 2/6.
MEET ANDY CAPP by Smythe. Gold Medal k1477. 128 pages, 40¢.

Andy Capp, the comic strip about a Cockney lowlife which has been popular for years in England, started running in U.S. papers during the past year and has apparently caught on quickly and strongly here too. I don't know if its success should be taken as another indication, along with that of the Beatles, Ian Fleming and the format of That Was The Week That Was, that the English are beginning to take over the U.S. entertainment industry, but it is interesting to see such distinctly English products gaining such popularity here.

ANDY CAPP SPRING TONIC was the second collection of Andy Capp cartoons published by the London Daily Mirror; I didn't see the first one, but Don Allen sent me this one five years ago, and I reread it recently after the strip started up over here. The gags are still funny, but there has been a noticeable evolution in the strip since the early days -- nowadays the jokes are generally less broad, the laughs less mechanical and based more on the characters of Andy and Florrie and the rest of that lot. With several years' exposure behind them, the characters can be considered familiar enough with readers to permit this kind of humor.

MEET ANDY CAPP is the first collection issued for U.S. readers, and its material is in the more recent style. I think it's loverly.

TRUE CRIME ———

CURRICULUM OF MURDER by Charles Boswell and Lewis Thompson. Collier AS 436. 160 pages, 95¢.

Ten cases of murder committed by students and teachers, the chapters having originally appeared in the late fifties in various men's-adventure magazines, primarily True. The style is smooth and some scenes and conversations are "dramatized"; this isn't just fictionalized fact a la Alan Hynd, though, because Boswell and Thompson have researched the cases well and even when dramatizing they stick closely to the facts. (My impression is that Hynd's books were researched in contemporary newspaper accounts, which aren't exactly reliable sources of unbiased fact; Boswell and Thompson have instead leaned primarily on court and police records.)

Not really a first-rank true-crime collection, but a pretty good one nonetheless.

A PICTORIAL HISTORY OF AMERICAN CRIME 1849-1929 by Allen Churchill. Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1964. 180 pages, $6.95.

This covers fifty cases, from the murder of Dr. George Parkman to the St. Valentine's Day Massacre. Churchill's text, about a thousand words per case, is adequate to give the basics of clue, motive and method, with a little left over for the strictly colorful aspects of each crime. This is certainly not great crime reporting, but it's considerably better than I had expected in a book whose primary appeal, after all, is its wealth of photos and reproductions of old prints.

Among the photos, there are the predictable bloody-ghastly ones, such as those of the bodies of Lizzie Borden's father and stepmother, and of the victims of the St. Valentine's Day Massacre. More interesting, though, are the photos of people involved in many famous crimes: mass murderer Herman W. Mudgett (H. H. Holmes), looking guileless and quite proper in a bowler hat; Lizzie Borden, described in the accompanying caption as "gentle and sensitive" yet appearing quite cold and defiant; Evelyn Nesbit, a remarkably beautiful girl over whom millionaire Harry Thaw murdered the famous architect Stanford White; etc.

A number of the reproductions of newspaper and magazine artists' melodramatic reconstructions of 19th century murders lift the book to heights of a more whimsical sort.

THE GRAVESIDE COMPANION edited by J. Francis McComas. Ivan Obolensky, Inc., 1962. 309 pages, $4.50.

This is subtitled "An anthology of California murders," and I must say that I find the method of classification a bit amusing. There's really not much -- and certainly nothing here defined -- to make California murders different from those committed in, say, Nevada or North Carolina or Illinois, so that the concept of a "regional" compendium of true murder cases is rather meaningless.

The real reason for the classification, I suspect, is that an uncommonly large number of excellent true-crime writers live in California. There's one literary crowd in particular, centered in Berkeley, which has excelled in science fiction and murder mysteries as well as true-crime, and whose leading lights are easily recognizable as members of what I think of as the Boucher-McComas coterie. Of these, Lenore Glen Offord and Miriam Allen deFord are each represented with a chapter, and McComas himself handles two chapters. Stuart Palmer lives in Los Angeles, but he's part of the same crowd at one (geographical) remove, and he's represented too. No doubt others represented here whose names I don't recognize also fit into this group.

In any case, even if the ostensible raison d'etre is spurious, the book is an excellent one. The writers all take the approach to true-crime which I find most interesting, dealing not with gory detail or shocking exposes, but with the play of personality and coincidence, and even at times a certain ludicrous humor -- in short, with those details which make murders not just newspaper-selling headlines, but authentic slices of life which reveal the murders and murderees as human beings not all that different from anyone else.

12 AGAINST CRIME by Edward D. Radin. Bantam 921. 214 pages, 25¢.

Radin is one of the stalwarts of true-crime writing, best known more recently for his excellent study of the Lizzie Borden case, LIZZIE BORDEN: THE UNTOLD STORY. Back in the forties he was a prolific writer of true-crime articles for a variety of popular magazines, the twelve articles collected here having originally appeared in Coronet, Everybody's Digest, Science Digest, Sheriff & Police Reporter, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, and Magazine Digest. The book, which deals with twelve different specialties in crime investigation, won him an MWA award for the best true-crime book of 1950.

There are chapters on handwriting analysis, detection through laundrymarks, tracking down "missing persons" (often simply husbands who have run out on their families), wood analysis, the use of psychiatry in police work, and so forth. The chapter on Dr. de River of the Los Angeles Sex Offense Bureau is a bit chilling in its portrayal of what at least one psychiatrist and a number of policemen consider proper investigatory techniques:

> Dr. de River frequently counsels detectives on the best way to break down suspects through the use of a psychological third degree. One of the most remarkable demonstrations of this technique was used by Los Angeles police who worked on a suspect for six months before they could crack through his reserve and obtain a confession. During all this time the suspect was free and not in police custody. The suspect was a wealthy nurseryman whose wife disappeared following what the husband said was a trifling argument. ... When no trace of her could be found after several weeks, police began to suspect the husband but he could not be shaken from his story that he knew nothing about her whereabouts.
>
> And so detectives embarked on a deliberate campaign to wear down the man's nerves. They would drop in at odd hours, gently chide him for holding out on them, and go on their way, sometimes returning unexpectedly. They even took him to the morgue to view the body of a woman, supposedly unidentified, although the detectives actually knew that the woman was not the missing wife. Sometimes radio cars, with their sets tuned on loud, would drive by his home in the middle of the night, focus a bright beam into his bedroom window, and then drive on. He even received clippings in the mail when other men were arrested on murder charges.
>
> It was psychological warfare in all its terrifying aspects and it continued for six wearying months. At the end of that time the nurseryman gave up and brought detectives to the spot where he had buried his wife's body...

Well, I'm delighted to hear that the man was actually guilty, at least. But nevertheless, the whole campaign against him strikes me as one of the most blatant cases of police harassment -- or psychological police brutality -- I've ever run across, and I can't help being appalled by any writer who can report such a case in approving terms. You run into all sorts of attitudes toward crime and murderers in reading true-crime books, of course: the connoisseurship of bizarre and colorful murder cases as displayed by the Boucher-McComas school, the sociological and/or psychological study in depth as in Lucy Freeman's BEFORE I KILL MORE, the legalistic studies of the great English true-crime writers, etc. One attitude which is all too common, as far as I'm concerned, is that of writers who obviously take pleasure in reporting that a criminal has been hanged, shot, tortured into confessing, etc. -- the assumption being, apparently, that criminals are not to be considered as people with human rights or entitled to human compassion. This is an easy attitude to fall into when you've seen bloody, mutilated murder or rape victims and a natural revulsion and anger wells up -- and, significantly, most of the people who hold this attitude seem to be policemen, ex-police reporters, and so on -- but the fact that the attitude is understandable doesn't make it defensible. I was sorry to see it evidenced by Radin, a man for whose research and writing talents I have a high respect.

SCIENCE FICTION

GREYBEARD by Brian W. Aldiss. Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1964. 245 pp., $4.50.

The novel of world catastrophe is one of the most popular subgroups within the science fiction genre. Men come and go, but as both the author of Ecclesiastes and George R. Stewart have noted, Earth abides despite worldwide floods, droughts, vegetation blights, renegade planets and atomic wars. Novels such as Stewart's, Max Ehrlich's THE BIG EYE, Fritz Leiber's THE WANDERER, Wilson Tucker's THE LONG LOUD SILENCE, and others have made catastrophe profitable both financially and at times literarily for American authors, but it is the English who have made the most of destroying the world. Authors such as John Wyndham, John Christopher, J. G. Ballard and even such second-raters as Charles Eric Maine have successfully devoted a major portion of their novelistic output to stories of world catastrophe.

After all these books, one would assume that the field had been pretty well exhausted -- that, in its own terms, the field would now be fallow and those who had once fed on it would become extinct. But Brian Aldiss, an English writer who has not notably written in this subgenre before, has now come up with a book which is both original and hauntingly effective.

In GREYBEARD, the human race has been rendered sterile by a sudden overdose of radioactivity in the year 1981. Life goes on for those who are alive already, but no children will be born henceforth, either to humans or to most of the higher mammals.

A less imaginative author would tell the resulting story as a straight thriller about panic and riots, the breakdown of the patterns of civilization, unavoidable anarchy and despair and eventual barbarity -- through all of which a hero, who alone among the rabble of humanity maintained his integrity and dignity, would fight his way to make a new dawn for the race. Aldiss, however, has a more exciting conception.

GREYBEARD opens in the year 2029, by which time the panic and riots have long since abated and the remnants of humanity, the youngest of whom are now middle-aged, have settled down to living out their lives and working out their individual philosophies or faiths of life. Civilization has indeed broken down, and the population has been decreased not only by plague and violence, but also -- and more frighteningly -- by the loss of the balance of birth and death. Now when a man dies, there is no baby born in the world to balance the statistics; it is one more human life irreplaceably gone.

Algy Timberlane, the protagonist of the book, "had a thick grizzled beard that grew down almost to his navel, where it had been cut sharply across. Because of this beard he was known as Greybeard, although he lived in a world of greybeards. But his high and almost bald head lent emphasis to the beard, and its texture, barred as it was with stripes of black hair sprouting thickly from the jaw line and fading out lower down, made it particularly noticeable in a world no longer able to afford other forms of personal adornment." Greybeard, as a matter of fact, is only fifty-four years old, which makes him one of the youngest men alive; his wife Martha is the same age. They have not given in to the hopeless lassitude which has taken most of their neighbors; they still feel youthful if not precisely young, and this feeling drives them to begin a picaresque journey from their isolated village down the Thames River to seek the sea and, symbolically, life itself.

There is a great deal of symbolism in the book, and even more of philosophy -- but it is integral to the book's conception and humanity's condition. At the end of life there must be an accounting, a toting-up and a conclusion, and in GREYBEARD all of the characters are consciously or unconsciously concerned with this. There are religious fanatics, intellectual dilettantes, egocentric poseurs, and senile madmen, all acting out their conceptions of personal and racial worth or guilt in alternately humorous and apocalyptic scenes. What each of them has to say is relevant to the human condition not only of Aldiss' posited 2029 but of any age: we are all dying, after all, from the moment we draw our first breaths, and we must all face these questions if we are human.

The secondary characters in the book are at times too broadly drawn, so that

they emerge from the page as caricatures, but both the physical features of the world of 2029 and the mood of the land are fitting backdrops for the grotesque. Already cities and towns are becoming overgrown with vegetation, rivers have become dammed and have flooded whole areas, and the smaller predatory animals, their larger natural enemies extinct, have multiplied and become a menace. Travellers pass on tales of gnomes in the woods.

The primary characters, Greybeard and Martha, are superbly drawn and thoroughly believable. Greybeard is an intelligent man, and a man of action, but he is no stereotyped hero. He can make mistakes, and he is sometimes plagued by self-doubts. At one point he is upset by the realization that he is almost glad the Accident took place -- for it has made a less complex and regimented world where an individualist like him can develop fully. Yet at another he berates himself as a failure throughout his life, and it takes Martha's blend of wit and sense to restore his spirits.

There are two flashbacks in the book, which serve the dual function of showing us intermediary periods in the collapse of civilization and, in countermotion, the development of Greybeard's and Martha's characters and the relationship between the couple. The latter function is admirably achieved -- they are each, in earlier periods, clearly different people yet with the seeds of their later personalities -- but the world-picture is less successful. The idea that an executive of a recording company whose clientele is primarily teenagers would commit suicide when teenagers no longer exist, for example, is over-dramatic and naive -- obviously the man would simply change his company's records to a type which would appeal to an older age-group. And it's in a flashback that we encounter the group called Documentation of Universal Contemporary History (English wing) -- otherwise known as DOUCH(E), which is about as forced a pun, given the premise of the book, as one could imagine.

But these are cavils at portions of the book which are only secondary. The essential story is that of the trip of Greybeard, his wife and companions down the Thames, of the adventures and people they meet. Aldiss displays a fertile imagination throughout in his invention of characters and situations: the mountebank Bunny Jingadangelow at Swifford Fair who later becomes a last-days messiah bringing hope to the credulous but none to himself; Norsgrey, "a lively octogenarian...a sprightly grotesque with a tatter of red and violet capillaries running from one cheekbone to another over the alp of his nose," a widower who keeps a she-badger that he's "rather too fond of," as Jingadangelow puts it; the overbearing Oxford dons who preserve and censor what's left of English culture; and many more, all sharply drawn individuals who are if anything larger than life, in the evening of the human race.

Aldiss' writing style is controlled and frequently poetic, a remarkably effective evocation of a world without a future -- a thoroughly alien Earth because one's orientation must be totally different from any you and I have known. His descriptions of the river and encroaching countryside have all the grace of the traditional English celebrations of nature -- a grotesque WIND IN THE WILLOWS. Yet he can turn around and present images filled with civilized wit: "He was a tall man, broad-shouldered and stooped, with a nervous nod to his head and a countenance so lined it looked as if it had been patiently assembled from bits of string."

The result is a novel of genuine literary merit, by the standards of the science fiction field or any other -- and yet it's a novel which also has its full measure of that most important of all science fiction qualities, a sense of wonder.

INTERPLANETARY HUNTER by Arthur K. Barnes. Gnome Press, 1956. 231 pages, $3.00.

I read several of these stories years ago in the original magazines and found them a lot of fun. Rereading them here and now was disappointing, though.

This is the series of stories about Gerry Carlyle, the beautiful, famous, daring hunter of strange animals throughout the solar system. Barnes obviously owes a debt of inspiration to Weinbaum for his approach to colorful beasties, but he doesn't come near the Weinbaum standard: the creatures here are sometimes ingenious, but they never come to life as did Weinbaum's.

Basically, the series was fine for its time and place -- the early 40s pulps --

but it's hopelessly outdated now. This is strictly juvenile stuff: the glamorous Gerry Carlyle, her longsuffering fiance Tommy Strike, and assorted space pirates, Martian prize fighters, noble criminals of the spaceways, and so on. The writing is pulp style hackwork, complete with a rather sophomoric humor.

EXILES OF TIME by Nelson Bond. Prime Press, $3.00.

More dated hackwork. The characters are stereotypes, the conversations stilted, the science ridiculous on the face of it. The plot isn't bad, for what that's worth ...but with the writing so bad, the plot never comes to life.

Lance Vidor, a robust young archeologist, is an assistant on a dig in Arabia, where they discover an ancient tomb; one of the first relics from it is a jewel set in aluminum, which surprises the hell out of Lance because aluminum was only discovered in the last century. The superstitious natives on the dig want him to put it back and close the tomb, but he dashes off to show it to the leader of the expedition, Dr. Forsythe, who promptly rattles off his pet theory to the effect that there was once a great civilization, maybe Lemuria, which was destroyed by a huge comet, and that's what caused the ice ages. (His explanation is riddled with phrases like, "Science tells us..." and, "As you know...") Then the natives revolt, and the archeologists take to the tomb for refuge; all but Lance and a beautiful native girl who's sided with them are killed, and as the natives close in the two lose consciousness.

They awake in a fantastic city, and find that all sorts of other people have been drawn here at the same time. There's Lucky Costarno, a big-time gambler; Vale Marlowe, a beautiful society girl from Philadelphia; Hymie Dahl, a disgustingly stereotyped Jew ("How I'm getting here and where I am...don't ask!"); Gordon MacHamer, "late of Edinburgh, Scotland"; and others. They've all been called back to Lemuria because, lo, there's this comet which is going to destroy the world, and the Lemurians figure that with the advanced science of the 20th century they'll be able to avert the catastrophe. So Lance and the others figure out a way to use an anti-gravity device on the comet, and they go off to Norway to set up equipment. Lucky Costarno and two henchmen have caused trouble and killed a few people, so they leave him and his henchmen on an island for safekeeping, all alone. They set up their equipment in Norway (one of the party is a Norwegian fisherman, and he recognizes in the ancient inhabitants of these parts his remote ancestors, the heroes of Ragnarok) and just as the comet's coming a batch of Vikings attack. Seems they'd run into Lucky Costarno & co., and Lucky was now leading them. Wellsir, they fight off the Vikings, but the comet device isn't totally effective and the Earth will be razed by fire anyway, so they all go underground and muse philosophically about how you can't change the course of time.

It isn't a very good book.

NO FUTURE IN IT by John Brunner. Doubleday, 1964.

Eleven short stories, of which six originally appeared in New Worlds and one in Science Fantasy. Brunner is an interesting writer: he's got a solid grounding in science and he makes full use of it, but he's also obviously devoted a lot of consideration to matters of style, characterization and story-movement. Most s-f writers can only handle the science or the fiction really well, but Brunner does both.

Some of the stories are simple conceits, such as Report on the Nature of the Lunar Surface, which appeared in Analog and must have had Campbell slapping his thigh for weeks: its last line is, "I am in a position to state with authority that...the moon is made of green cheese." The title story, from Science Fantasy, presents us with a medieval magician who tries to conjure up a demon and instead accidentally sets up a "temporal barrier" which catches a time traveller passing through.

Puzzle for Spacemen is a first-class story which successfully sets up and works out a murder mystery in science fiction terms. Elected Silence is another excellent one exploring the psychological effects on a man who's been captured by aliens and

imprisoned in a seven-foot by seven-foot by seven-foot cubicle for thirty years. The Windows of Heaven tells of the first Earthman to land on the Moon; shortly after his landing area passes into the night side, the sun novas, destroying all life on Earth. It's particularly effective because Brunner's casual command of technical details makes it so believable. The Iron Jackass is an interesting extension of the trend of the fifties to use sociology as the science in science fiction: here the science is the study of folklore and its effect on a culture.

There are two stories, Fair and Protect Me from My Friends, which strike me as overly stylized and lacking real content. The remaining three -- Out of Order, Bad-man and Stimulus -- are reasonably good s-f but not at all outstanding. Taken as a whole, the collection has to be judged as awfully uneven, but the weak stories are short and the good ones are fairly long, so on the balance it comes out pretty well.

A HANDFUL OF DARKNESS by Philip K. Dick. Rich and Cowan, 1955. 224 pages, 6s. 6d.

This English hardcover was the first collection of Phil Dick's short stories, coming two years before Ace's THE VARIABLE MAN. It provides a good cross-section of Phil's early work, and for that reason is an interesting book -- the stories themselves are no world-beaters, but they show an earlier style and way of thinking for a man who was to become one of the best talents in the field half a dozen years later.

The stories were all written during the period which served as Phil's apprenticeship in science fiction. They're mostly just hackwork -- the kind of anonymous short stories which filled so many s-f magazines during the s-f flood of the early 1950s. Yet the very fact that they were hackwork made them valuable to Phil Dick's growth as a writer, because in writing as in any other discipline, you usually have to walk before you can run; in these stories Phil was learning and practising the basics of plotting, suspense, gimmickry and concept-handling. He learned them so well that later on he was able to handle the basics almost purely unconsciously, using them simply as a latticework on which to hang the pyrotechnic displays of brilliance which characterize so much of his current work.

Many of the basic attitudes and themes of his later writing are in these stories, too. They're not carried nearly as far as he was to take them later, but in such stories as The Turning Wheel we get an early indication of Phil's fascination with Eastern culture and philosophy; in Exhibit Piece, Colony, Imposter, Upon the Dull Earth and others we see him working with themes of altered and pseudo-reality -- simulacra, subjective vs. objective reality, distorted sensory impressions and so on; in Planet for Transients and The Turning Wheel he dealt with post-Atomigeddon worlds, another of his major themes in later work.

Some of these stories are quite good enough to be interesting for their own sake: The Preserving Machine and Upon the Dull Earth are my favorites of these. By and large, though, the collection's value lies in the insight it can give into just how such an unpredictable, individual and often superb writer like Phil Dick can develop.

THE THREE STIGMATA OF PALMER ELDRITCH by Philip K. Dick. Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1964. 278 pages, $4.50.

Phil Dick's first hardcover book since THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE is in some ways the ultimate Phil Dick book. It has all the inventiveness and unpredictability for which he's noted, all the razzledazzle of idea and plot that have made him not just a worthy successor to van Vogt but an improver on the basic formula. And even though for the most part it's a pretty grim book, it does show at times good touches of Dickian humor -- as, for example, in the case of the barely subsistence-level dwellings of the Mars colonists, which they casually call "hovels". (Chapter Eight begins, "Extending his hand, Norm Schein said heartily, 'Hi there, Mayerson; I'm the official greeter from our hovel. Welcome--ugh--to Mars.'")

It also carries Phil's preoccupation with problems of the perception of reality to extreme lengths. As I mentioned above, this is one of his major themes -- his stories and novels are loaded with simulacra, hallucinations, plots-behind-plots, and so on. Ted White once characterized this type of fiction as "stories for paranoiacs,"

meaning that they appeal strongly to feelings that people-are-after-me and the-world-isn't-what-it-seems. Apparently most everybody has a greater or lesser tendency in this direction, and in any case these elements are unusually fascinating and fertile ones for science fiction writing because it's a fact that no one's perception of reality is a "true" one, so that fictional speculation on the nature of reality and its distortion is legitimate and meaningful. Phil Dick has practically made a career out of this, and PALMER ELDRITCH seems to be the culmination of all his thinking in this line: it's a book which will not only leave you wondering what really happened, but if, indeed, anything did.

A couple of quotes from a recent letter from Phil are interesting in this connection, by the way. He says, "When I do a novel, I am 'there,' within that world, among its people, involved in its idiosyncratic customs, etc. I am not thinking about it; I am participating. (I make almost no notes in advance: only the characters' names, for instance.) For me, the book occurs as I write it, just as air gets into the inner tubes within the tires of your car, so to speak, and not in advance. Like they say, my books don't signify anything; they simply are." He has on other occasions sworn up and down that he hasn't the faintest idea what the ending of THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE meant, and in this letter he adds, "This is outrageously true of THE THREE STIGMATA OF PALMER ELDRITCH; I not only cannot understand the novel, I can't even read it. Not that it's no good...what is wrong is that I can't catch the meaning of it. At least right now. It's a sort of full-scale 'MITHC ending,' that way from page one on. My unconscious, in this case, completely did the work."

6 X H by Robert A. Heinlein. Pyramid G642. 191 pages, 35¢.

The longest story here is The Unpleasant Profession of Jonathan Hoag, which was the title story of the book in its original hardcover edition from Gnome Press. It's a short novel from Unknown Worlds (where it was bylined "John Riverside") which deftly uses pulp-mystery techniques to tell a fascinating tale of Alien Menace and the like of that. The Man Who Traveled in Elephants is, as Ted White pointed out when he reviewed this book in VOID a couple of years ago, a story in the pure Bradbury vein of small town life and the childish simplicities of the carnival; unlike Ted, though, I think Heinlein failed completely in the attempt to one-up Bradbury -- at his best, Bradbury could make this cotton-candy philosophy fascinating and moving, whereas Heinlein's confection just gets sticky. "All You Zombies" is an ingenious time-paradox story told with narrative pyrotechnics reminiscent of Bester or Sturgeon. They is another good one, though again not terribly original: it's the one about the paranoid whose delusions are, of course, perfectly true. Our Fair City takes the old crusading-reporter-exposing-the-town-political-boss plot, mixes in some delightful fantasy, and comes up with a story that is in a sense a tour de force. Finally, "And He Built a Crooked House" is a classic short story of extra dimensions; firmly grounded in the speculations of Breuer and Olson in the 30s, it's a pure Golden-Age Astounding story.

All of which underlines a thesis I've held for quite awhile: that Heinlein is and has always been a pulp writer, that he does his best work using the techniques of pulp fiction, and falls on his face when he tries to go beyond the genre -- as he attempted with the Bradbury-type story in this book and in his more recent socio-political tracts.

PILGRIMAGE: The Book of The People by Zenna Henderson. Avon G-1185. 255 pages, 50¢.

This takes the popular "People" series from F&SF and attempts to shmoorge it together into a novel by means of a new opening chapter and bridges between each story. The device isn't very effective -- in fact, it's clumsy enough that at times it distracts a reader from the stories themselves.

The "novelization" attempt aside, the book is a curious one -- it's extremely good at times and extremely bad at others. The stories are a sort of science fictional soap opera, told with a fair degree of depth and a sometimes overbearing amount of compassion. The writing style is sometimes evocative and moving, at others

either turgid or Cute. I'd never read any of these stories in their original magazine appearances, but now I wish I had, because I think they'd be much better spaced apart by a few months each; the cumulative effect of 250 pages of the trials and heartaches and "questings" (oorg) of the small band of alien beings lost on Earth is enough to make anyone a bit nauseous even if he doesn't have sugar diabetes.

Recommended, but only with the reservation that you space out your reading of the individual stories.

THE GRAY ALIENS by J. Hunter Holly. Avalon, 1963. $2.95.

This is a fairly good book, certainly the best I've read by Holly. But it's the kind of book I call science-fiction-for-people-who-don't-know-a-thing-about-science-fiction: it's one of those Menace to Earth books, concerned with protectin' the womenfolk and kids while the hero runs around acting heroic in the face of overpowering odds.

It starts with people disappearing in a small town, and dark shadows seen hovering. We soon find that these shadows are "eating" people, leaving heaps of clothes, tooth fillings, watches, etc. behind as the people's bodies evaporate. The lead, a former psychic researcher, is contacted by the Shadows and told that mankind is to be destroyed because it stands in the way of the Shadows' merging with the ultimate Life Force, MIND. Our hero is given a few days to avert catastrophe. He discovers that all life is a unity -- mankind, Shadows, and the spirit world -- and that by destroying mankind the Shadows would destroy themselves. In a final burst of freestyle theorizing on a mystical level, he convinces the Shadows of this and all ends well. It's reasonably well written, but more mystic than s-f, more theoretical than adventurous.

A FOR ANYTHING by Damon Knight. Four Square book. 160 pages, 2/6d.

This is an expansion of the novelet of the same title which appeared in F&SF some years back. In the novelet, a young scientist invents a machine that will duplicate anything; he realizes that, since the duplicator can even make replicas of itself, he's invented something to free everyone in the world from having to work for anything. So he distributes the duplicators by mail, causing a worldwide turmoil and anarchy -- and the result is that, with possessions no longer valuable, the only thing valuable is human services, and out of anarchy a slave system begins to develop.

The original novelet forms only the first three chapters of this novel, serving as a sort of prologue. The rest of the book takes place a century later, in a feudal society in which Dick Jones, heir to a great estate, goes to The Eagles, a sort of military academy for young nobles, and gets mixed up in duels, intrigues, and eventually a slave revolution. At the end of the book, as per schedule, everything has fallen apart into chaos again, since slavery isn't a viable system, and Dick Jones has become a man. Well written and believable, colorful and with lots of action.

(The book was published in the U.S. back in the 50s by Zenith, but that version was heavily cut; the Four Square Books version is the complete one. It will be reprinted in the full version later this year by Berkeley.)

AHEAD OF TIME by Henry Kuttner. Ballantine #30. 179 pages, 35¢.

This was Kuttner's first paperback collection, issued back in 1953. Its contents ranged from good to very good -- a fairly high standard, but surprisingly lacking in the full brilliance which was available in other Kuttner stories not collected here.

Kuttner's fascination with psychological problems shows through in many of the stories in the book -- particularly in Ghost, Camouflage, By These Presents and De Profundis -- and, significantly, these are among the best stories here. Of the others, Home is the Hunter is a grim future-society story in the best early-Galaxy manner, Year Day seems to presage some of the later writing of Phil Dick, Pile of

Trouble is a typically broad farce about the ingenious and ingenuous Hogben family, Or Else is a somewhat simplemindedly neat little morality drama which would no doubt have sold to Playboy if written a decade later, and the rest are simply well-done but undistinguished idea-stories in the mid-forties Astounding style.

Kuttner is always worth reading, and this book is no exception. More diligent searching among the available Kuttner stories could have produced an even better collection, though.

THE TIME LOCKERS by Wallace West. Avalon, 1964. $2.95.

This is a mighty effort at tongue-in-cheek van Vogtian complexity, involving a parallel Earth in which the time rate is different, so that Terrans can go there on vacation for a month and come back two days later on our Earth. There's a takeover of the U.S. by the crime syndicates brewing, and war against this parallel Earth, Tempora, is threatened. There's also a group of people from the stars who watch over Earth and influence events for the best through telepathic dogs influencing their masters. After a lot of speculation about what are the purposes of all these groups, the lead goes into the gangsters' headquarters and shoots up the place, thereby somehow solving the whole plot.

Some of the ideas are interesting in themselves; some of the writing is amusing. But for the most part it's just a hodgepodge of confused and confusing elements, few of which are ever explained and tied up at the end.

(Chapter VIII, by the way, is a rerun of West's 1930s short story about Willy Pan, The Phantom Dictator.)

CRIME FICTION ——

COUNTERPOL by John Boland. George G. Harrap & Co., Ltd., 1963. 207 pages, 13/6d.

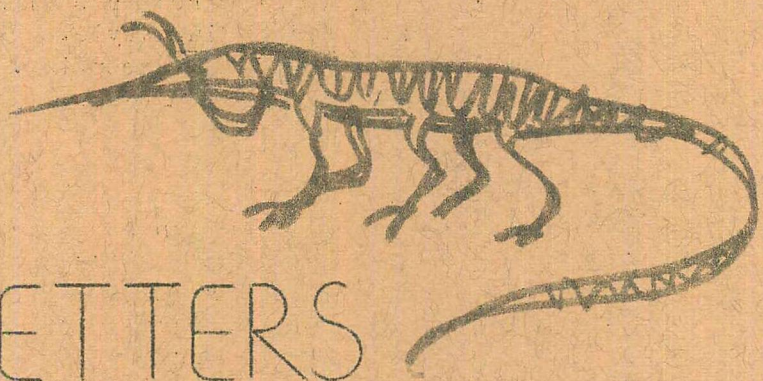
The basic idea here -- "Counterpol," an international criminal organization to organize crime and coordinate it in foreign countries, an Interpol in reverse -- is an excellent one. Boland really hasn't made much use of it, though. All he's done is set up an involved plot to kidnap a brilliant young scientist, with three different sets of criminals working more or less together, none trusting the others, everybody trying to pull doublecrosses, etc. It's a routine crime plot, no matter how involved; it all takes place in or near London, thus losing the international color that the basic idea offers; and worst of all, there's very little imagination or ingenuity shown by Counterpol -- certainly nothing to compare with James Bond or even his imitators.

There's nothing out of the ordinary here -- it's just a good idea wasted.

SAD CYPRESS by Agatha Christie. Dell D217. 224 pages, 35¢.

This was Number 12 of the Dell Great Mystery Library when it was issued in 1958 (reprinted from its original 1939 hardcover appearance), and for 200 of its 224 pages it lives up to the billing. Christie is the absolute master, or mistress, of the classic novel of detection, the type in which clue upon clue is piled up as confusingly as possible for the reader, and then the detective calls everyone into the drawing room in the last chapter and names the murderer. Ted White has frequently railed against this formula, claiming it's static and therefore uninteresting. He's certainly right that it's static, but that's part of its fascination for people, like me, who like the form: it offers a challenge for a tour de force. And novels like this needn't be dull if the writer's characterizations, subplots and bits of business are up to snuff. Christie is so good not only because her mysteries are usually so cleverly handled, but also because she makes full use of cameo characterizations of each suspect or witness. This is abundantly true of SAD CYPRESS.

Unfortunately, though, when Hercule Poirot comes to the moment of truth, we find that a crucial clue has been withheld from us, so that we had no chance all along of figuring out the mystery. This is cheating, and I'm surprised to see Christie doing it. It's a crippling flaw which invalidates the book as a whole.



LETTERS

JOHN BAXTER, Box C.39, Clarence St. PO, Sydney, NSW, Australia

Thanks for HOBGOBLIN 13.

Your remarks about me in relation to a projected TOFF trip were very kind. I've been sitting here for five minutes trying to find some way of saying "I'd like to meet you too" which didn't sound either mock-reverent or patronising but nothing comes to mind. I'll leave it to you. Just repeat the phrase over to yourself a few times until it sounds reasonably sincere, then declaim it in a loud well-modulated voice. An Australian accent is optional.

There are indications that top-drawer American fandom has discovered Australia. Your suggestion is one; another came from Bob Silverberg via Ron Smith. Ron tells me that in a recent letter Silverberg mentioned that the Worldcon might be held in Sydney sometime before 1970 and asked what he thought of the idea. Like myself Ron is doubtful that such a plan would ever work out but as an indication of interest it's very heartening. However, I have the same feeling about this idea as I have about the TOFF trip. It's nice to talk about, nice to speculate on, but there's no use fooling ourselves -- the chances of any Australian winning a trip to a US or UK con are infinitesimally small. I am no Willis -- nor is John Foyster or Bob Smith or Don Tuck.

Re your letter to Short Story International: Once or twice I felt the same irritation as yourself on reading SSI's lettercolumn. However, as there are more than enough good novels to keep one occupied without touching the short story field I removed the source of irritation by not buying any more copies. This is not to say there were no other reasons. These days I find it more and more frightening to read magazines which feature short fiction. My tentative hold on the writing game depends almost completely on my confidence. If I think I can sell short stories, then I can. As soon as my nerve cracks every drop of inspiration seems to dribble out, and a couple of good stories like those published in SSI will shatter it for sure. All those writers pouring their work into the same little market as me. To say the least, it's depressing.

Speaking of confidence, your favourable remarks in HOBGOBLIN came at an opportune time. This morning, along with the package from you, I received a letter from a chap called Leland Sapiro. Some weeks ago he sent me a copy of his fanzine along with a note asking for some material. Feeling all warm and helpful I sent him a short article on sf films together with a letter of comment. The article came back today. The letter with it condemned the whole thing roundly as superficial, adolescent and in general not fit for his publication, numbering as it did among its readers such luminaries as Jacques Barzun and Donald Menzel. As you can imagine, I am frightfully brought down about the whole thing. Fandom has passed me by. Fool that I am, I had always thought it quite a coup to have a pro writer as a correspondent. Clearly this is no longer enough. Do you know anybody who will trade one of Heinlein's laundry lists for a lock of Jean Paul Sartre's hair?

{(I'd have to side with Sapiro to the extent at least that the fact that a writer's a pro doesn't automatically make any article by him a rare treat for a faned. Depends on the article, of course, and if Sapiro didn't feel yours was too great (which I gather from the adjectives you quote) then he was perfectly correct in rejecting it. One hopes he'd do the same thing for a bad article by Jacques Barzun, of course -- or a laundry list by Heinlein.

{(However, I have no such high editorial principles, and I published your letter even though it was crummy.

{(You're perfectly correct about SSI, by the way. They've continued their idiotic letter column and I've accordingly let my subscription lapse. I don't find myself at a loss for stuff to read.)}

BILL BLACKBEARD, 192 Mountain View, Los Angeles, California, 90057

I am 100% for TOFF (fact, I dips me blinkin' titfer to the notion) and 110% for Baxter taking the first US-bound trip.

Comments on your mailing comments:

FLABBERGASTING #30: I differ with yez on covers, I think. I thought the majority of the Rogers ASF covers altogether magnificent, among the very best examples of pulp cover art extant -- ranking with the J. Allen St. John's for the Wrightzines of the early Thirties, the Rozens for many of the Shadows, the Baumhofers and the Harrises for the early Doc Savages, the Pauls and Wessos of magazine-stf's classic era, etc. Jones, on the other hand, seemed to me to have too much compulsive dependance on fecal and phallic imagery jammed horrendously and garishly into frames far too small to contain it coherently. Macauley and Bergey certainly did nothing for me, but then, neither did the very mundane and repetitive Malcolm Smith. For marked competence and imagination in utilizing the more lurid hues of his palette, I'd nominate T. W. Scott of Western Story and Boggs' Wild West Weekly fame.

THE WILD COLONIAL BOY #7: I'd say Foyster was right in his statement that there is no proof that the reading of a book has led directly to the commission of a crime. Theodore Reik (in his delicious putting-down of Frederic Wertham on crime comics) has argued to my conviction that kids and adults who put the blame for their actions on books, comics, and other printed sources are more than aware from the questioning of arresting authorities, as well as warnings in school and at home, that such a plea of uninvited corruption will remove much of the onus for anti-social acts from their own shoulders -- in fact, there is plenty of evidence that people excuse their acts in advance of arrest by such socially-prepared reasoning. Vice-squadders, book-haters and similar primitive types are genuinely convinced that there is a real human state of grace from which only a foul communication of vicious ideas and concepts, temptingly set forth, can topple children, adolescents and even adults, and even the ill-educated encounter and absorb this point of view at an early age. Basically, this form of "thinking" derives from artificial suppression (usually religious in origin) or normal sexual and aggressive urges and an accordingly vital need for a rationale to explain the continual assault on the repressing person's emotional and nervous structure of these strangled needs. "Dirty" and "criminally inciting" literature, found by these people at all levels of popular culture today (so that they are also, willy-nilly, exposed to its provocations), is a splendidly convenient scapegoat.

MEST #16: Pahrump is all very well, but I wish someone would rediscover Dave Rike to the faanish world. He managed to enter and quit fandom during my absence, and now it is painful to encounter such a talent in the zines I missed and know that I can make no use of his unique persona in QAR, or look forward to it anywhere else. His RUR was the old FANAC's most memorable rider -- although, it goes without saying, DAG's one-shot FANACHRONISM could have equalled or surpassed it had it continued.

Your letter to SSI is a Fine Thing, and if I were editor (ah, hear the plaintive Ronald Coleman intonation there?) I'd turn over the mag's entire letter column to it and respond with a sincere mea culpa. It's hard to imagine an editor of the obvious caliber of SSI's not wanting to do just that, but more than likely that Jerk Upstairs,

the publisher, is the real culprit. Possibly he picked up on the old publishers' row saw about a letter column being good for nothing but free promotional copy and insisted on SSI's being handled as such.

Wazzis about your youthful praise to FA about Alexander Blade stories? Every time I read about such early indiscretions, I thank my concerned celestial bodies for the break that exposed me (at thirteen) to WT and ASF and their high standards at the inception of my sf interest. As a result, the wretched con-schmaltz of the Ziff-Davis horrors was evident to me on initial encounter, if only by contrast. I still shudder when a LAcal fan, now of considerable reputation as a serious sf critic, tells me of his own early delight in Don Wilcox and the like in the days sf was suffering most acutely from ZD. (Indeed, as FJA remarked at the time, the Army shouldn't have limited its warning posters to VD only.)

{(If you were a Rogers fan, then what do you think of John Schoenherr's work in Analog for the past couple of years? It strikes me that Schoenherr is doing very much the same sort of thing that Rogers used to do, only doing it much, much better. So much better, in fact, that I like it very much, whereas the Rogers covers didn't move me all that much.

{(Agreed that it's too bad Dave Rike isn't around anymore. He was at the con in Oakland, though -- did you get a chance to meet him there?

{(You're quite possibly right about the raison d'etre for SSI's lettercol, but I'm not dead sure. Despite the general high standards of the fiction, I sometimes wonder about the editors' mentalities when I read their amateurish introductions to the stories. This was particularly true in the first half-dozen issues or so; in more recent issues, possibly realizing their own ineptness, the editors have contented themselves for the most part with one-line intros like "Here is a moving story about a little boy and his pet shark in New Guinea." These are shorter, at least.)}

It's been some time since we've had an installment of the now legendary SAPS serial AN INDEX OF MY WORKS, so let's get caught up to date on things:

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