

THE

LOW-DOWN

JUNE 28/60

 This is LOWDOWN, a one-shot masquerading as an objective review of the Hugo nominations. It is multi-edited by Austin, Alicia; Bourns, Maureen; Glicksohn, Mike; Labonte, Richard; Schultz, Earl; and Ulllyot, Rosemary. Contributor-in-chief, Fred Barrett; subsidiary contributor, Terry Lovekin; wielder of the whip, Richard; turner of the Pressed Ham Press, Earl. Unless you are holding this copy and didn't pay, price is 15¢, from Richard Labonte, 971 Walkley Road, Ottawa 8, Ontario, Canada. Pressed Ham press pub #2.

RAISON D'ÊTRE

It was on a
 sunny Friday

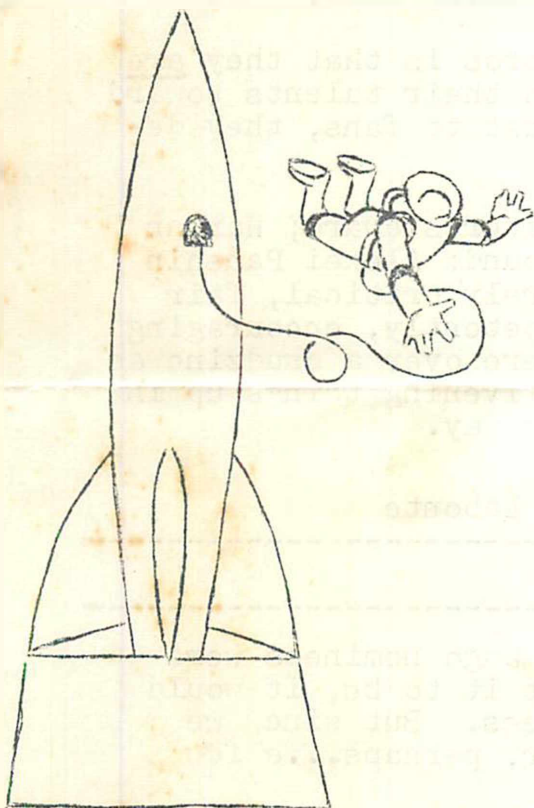
afternoon that I went mad. Pulling the stapled green and pink copies of the Accounts Payable Voucher off of the white copy of the APV, placing the green copy of the APV to one side, paper-clipping the pink copy of the APV back onto the white...this is not the most inspiring of summer jobs. But it is the most thought-provoking. Thinking keeps the creeping horrors of boredom away.

So I had this mad thought, that sunny Friday afternoon little more than a week ago. As a service to fandom, and to ease Canadian/Ottawa fandom onto the fannish scene, and to test the new gestetner Earl and I have just bought, I thought why not put out a fanzine devoted to reviews of and comments on the SF Achievement Award nominees?

One of the problems with the Hugos is that so few people bother to vote, and that popularity, not quality, is often the criterion used.

The low voting is probably a result of the universal tendency of people--fans being no exception--to lethargy on their fat apathies and not bother to participate. Add the people who never read the prozines, or only pbs, and you come up with a fair segment of people who aren't going to bother voting. And there's the problem that most of the nominated fiction appears at least a year before the actual voting. People forget, and don't bother trying to remember. The result is a low vote and an invalid representation of opinion.

LOWDOWN, then, is meant to remind you of the nominees and to foist some objective opinions on you. Vote and make the Hugos worthwhile...deadline is August 1.



BEST FAN WRITER Of the five Best Fan writer nominees, four have sold stories professionally; the only true amateur-fan is Ruth Berman, whose fan-writing is directed mainly at a Star Trek audience.

True, Harry Warner sold his stories years ago, and now is best known to general fandom for his omni-present two-page letters of comment, which are usually the best any neo editor gets for his first few issues; and Ted White is a hyperfan, sometimes seeming to write half of the interesting reading in any good fanzine, whether contributing article, review, column, letter, or diatribe; and Alexei Panshin is a new pro, a fan who made good--he was probably nominated for his Heinlein in Dimension segments printed last year.

But I can't see Harlan Ellison as a fan writer; even when he writes in a fanzine, he sounds like a pro lecturing fans.

Still, the reason those four people are pros is that they are good writers; if they direct their efforts and their talents toward fandom, writing of things fannish or of interest to fans, they deserve the award.

Vote Ruth Berman, then, for a fan fan-writer's award; Harlan Ellison for spewing emotion and exuberance around; Alexei Panshin for trying to encapsulate Heinlein in a sincerely critical, fair study; Harry Warner for letter-hacking so competently, encouraging the most neo of faneds and being just as sincere over a crudzine as over an AMRA or a TRULPET; and Ted White for livening things up in his domineering, opinionated, often worthwhile way.

I like the livening up, myself. --Richard Labonte

SaM for Best Fan Writer

BEST FAN ARTIST If this survey of Hugo nominees were everything we want it to be, it would have art by each of the Best Fan Artist nominees. But since we didn't time for that sort of thing...next year, perhaps...a few comments will have to do.

Except that none of the editorial board will admit to being qualified to comment on the art. I imagine this is something most fan artists suffer...there are very few comments on art in most letter columns, unless the stuff is absurdly rotten. Appreciation of art is a personal thing, and as far as I can see there is little difference in quality, only in style, among the six people nominated for Best Fan Artist. Each draws his own thing well. I'm going to vote for Johnny Chambers because I like his style, not because I can say with any certainty that he's the best of the lot.

But Steve Stiles is just as humorous, and just as good an artist; George Barr is a beautiful stylist; Arthur Thompson also has a flair for cartoons, and his own distinctive style; Bjo Trimble does

beautiful painting, though not as much fanzine art.

That leaves Jack Gaughan. Again, it's a case of a pro directing his talents toward fandom. Some people will object here, as with the Best Fan Writer, that a pro has no right overshadowing the amateurs. What it boils down to is the meaning of the word "fan"-- "a person interested in" or "an amateur of". Jack Gaughan, like Harlan Ellison or Ted White, is no amateur; but he is very much a part of fandom. And his artwork in fanzines is usually superior to his work in the prozines, at least as far as reproduction is concerned.

The person to pick, then, is the person who's art gives you the most pleasure.--Richard Labonte

"Austin" would look good on a Hugo plaque

BEST FANZINE The difference between a good fanzine and a bad fanzine is the editor. An obvious fact, that, but very important. The editor doesn't just decide what goes into a fanzine; he also establishes the tone of the fanzine, gives it a personality which ties all the contents together. Through the editorial, the letter-column comments, and his own writing, as well as through the type of thing he prints, the good fanzine editor makes the good fanzine an extension of his character.

The best type of fanzine, then, is the one which prints quality material in a personable way, and personable material in a quality way. All of the Hugo nominees do this to some extent.

AMRA is for the sword-and-sorcery fan; well-printed, good art, but presents material of interest mainly to the thud-and-magic-flashing-swords-blunder group of people. From Box O, Eatontown New Jersey 07724.

AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW was the best review 'zine printed last year; regular, well-printed, and of interest to almost everyone. It is a bit weaker on art than AMRA or ODD, but it had nice book reviews, articles on books or writers, and comments from writers commenting on the comments on their books. Always lively; last year it had the advantage of being regular as well. Order from Andy Porter, 24 East 82nd St., NY 10028.

Terry Carr, editor of LIGHTHOUSE, makes his fanzine more of a personable thing, almost the equal of YANDRO and PSYCHOTIC. It's not as regular as the others...but it's usually twice the size of any of them, only ODD coming close.

ODD is a beautiful fanzine--multi-lith printing, great art reproduction, and above quality reading. The personalities of the Fishers, Ray and Fisher, don't permeate the fanzine; but they don't let it run loose, either.

(continued on page 10)

BEST PRO ARTIST

Things change very slowly, if at all, in the Best Artist category of the Hugo nominations. As usual, the big five...the recurring five...of SF art have been proposed as the best; also, Virgil Finlay has been overlooked again in spite of his continual stream of fantastic interior illos. Perhaps if he did more covers? some covers? a cover? On the other hand, Chesley Bonestell has made the lineup, apparently solely on the basis of a few covers he did for Analog and F&SF. The message is clear: if you want fans to remember your works, do covers!

The two major areas in which science fictional art appears are the prozines and the pbs. The prozines can be further subdivided into covers and interior art. Naturally, one cannot really review art; one can give only personal opinions and preferences. I'll try here to indicate where one can find representative samples of each man's work, and give my own analysis of their efforts.

Bonestell had two Analog covers (Jan. and Aug.), and at least one cover for F&SF (Feb.). Apart from this no-one can recall seeing any of his work; yet he made it to the ballot. Without a doubt his work in the prozines, his creation of landscapes and his use of colour is as good as that of anyone in the field. But I can't help but feel that the "best" artist should be a more regular contributor.

Freas continued to dominate Analog. His cover art is colourful and expressive with a curiously "fuzzy" style and an extremely vivid emotional expression. His interior work alternates between a black-and-white version of his cover style, and a cartoonish style typified by the Tricon Program Book. He does only a little paperback work (several Lancer books) but a measure of the wide appeal his work has can be seen by the fact that he won four straight Hugos in the late fifties, before moving on to Mad magazine,

Gaughan continues to amaze me with the amount of top quality work he is able to produce. His distinctive style is based on a sharp line technique, and he draws spaceships, space stations, and robots better than anyone in the genre. It's probably only a slight exaggeration to say that half the pbs published in the sf field have one for every Gaughan covers. Look for him in Acc and Pyr and one for reviews. And it does If, Galaxy, and some F&SF covers. And it seems to be impossible to open up a prozine without seeing a Gaughan sketch. His interior work is characterized by a broad line and heavily shaded style that is really the opposite of his cover art and further evidence of his great versatility.

Schoenherr has a style somewhat similar to Freas', although Freas concentrates on people whereas Sch.'s forte is desolate landscape. The two of them are so much alike in style, though...JJC must like fuzzy art. He has helped to boost the sales of several Acc novels of rather dubious quality while his interior illos have often saved an otherwise dubious issue of Analog.

Schoenherr won a Hugo in '65; the next year, he produced possibly the most beautiful prozine cover I have ever seen for Herbert's novel Dune.

Gray Morrow's main market is in Galaxy, though he did a few covers in 1967 for F&SF. His covers appear regularly and his interior illos are always excellent. Morrow has tremendous ability in the field of machinery, and most of his work features an intense use of detail and fine line work. He also has a vivid imagination where alien creatures are concerned, and such beings are an important facet of his work. I find that his human figures are not as diverse or as realistic as his aliens, but he does reveal a wealth of humour in his interior art which is lacking in most of his cover work. His art has also appeared in Wally Wood's WITZEND and on the cover of the horror magazines EERIE and CREEPY. In addition, I believe he was at one time a very prolific comic artist, though I believe he now concentrates on SF.

Frazetta!! My candidate for the Hugo. Frazetta is the prime exponent of the heroic fantasy style of art as embodied by the work of Robert E. Howard. His larger-than-life barbarian heroes are without equal in the art world, while the series of covers he did for Lancer's Conan series should guarantee him a Hugo by themselves. Frazetta has a vital and extremely vivid style and excels in the representation of monsters, beasts, and assorted giant creatures. The majority of his work may be found in the pb market in heroic fiction, Burroughs, and related writing; he has also created some splendid covers for horror mags such as EERIE, CREEPY, and MONSTER WORLD. To enjoy Frazetta's work, visit any paperback stand and look for some mightily muscled hero fighting against fantastic odds and enjoying every minute of it--that'll be a Frazetta, and you'll realize why I'm voting for the man.

This can be offered only as a purely personal view of a highly subjective area, but I hope that the hints and opinions I have given will have helped to properly evaluate the merits of each artist. All of the artists are good; my favourite happens to be Frazetta. The voting is really a matter of picking a predominant favourite. --Mike Glicksohn

Frank Frazetta uses an Etch-a-Sketch

Best prozine

The swamp lies still and subdued under the swirls of a dusk-darkened mist. Putrid odours doubleback, re-fouling themselves among the bubbly belchings of the slowly shifting slime.

Un-noticed by the side of a lone clump of limpid vegetation, five mounds rise slowly, wilfully. An edge tears...a ray of pale brown moonlight strikes a glossy protuberance, reflects and rebounds. Suddenly the sky is aglow with a benevolent ~~light~~.

Carefully, but with a pride befitting the first to break

the ghetto of anonymity, an ANALOG slides sleepily from the paternal sloop. It gathers speed and soars into the fog-cleared heavens. Irrescence shimmers all around. A hunched figure sits astride the binding, guiding the Ghoddy Flight with firm twists of the front staples and succinct waves of a divining rod. The head glances aside and we recognize the cigarette-holder-filled visage of non-other than John W. Campbell.

J.W.C.'s eyes widen in sudden consternation; we follow his gaze and see, there in the swamp, the other four mounds bursting, their bursters zipping into the sky: IFzip...GALAXYzip...HE. WORLDSzip...F&SFzip.

Boggle-----OO-----what have we?

Reins tugging and whip whirring, Fred Pohl stands sternly upon the backs of his twin white stallions as the soar after J.W.C. His silver cape dribbles phosphorescence across the star-littered track.

The race is on!!!!

Moorcock pulls abreast of Pohl, his hair dishevelled by the doubting wind. The cover of his slick specificzine cants awkwardly as he planes with the slope of each new wave. He flashes his sword and leers condescendingly at Pohl.

Undaunted, Pohl bends low to one side and through a mouth working with sagacious concern chastizes GALAXY for its sloppy page-work.

Moorcock sneers superiorly and, with a cry of "fancymeetingyou here" brings his sword down to cleave Pohl's old standard soul. "Down with unreality, you turgid bugge..!" His compliment is cut short by one of GALAXY's diversionary tactics. A misplaced page plasters itself around Michael Moorcock's face and slowly works its way down his throat.

Unbeknownst to the two, Ferman, Porter, White Merrill, Asimov, and Beerdale in their super-fire Fat 319 cc, 167 F&SF special are sinuously pulling abreast of those two fighting Irishmen, Moorcock and Pohl.

With a gasp Moorcock tears away the attacker and turns to view the scene. Ahead lie ANALOG and the F&SF machine (not entered in last year's race). He shakes his head, realizing the day has been lost; but, Art's Council willing, there will be others! He sidles his eyes to Pohl once again, and decides on a grandiose plan of action.

Pohl is having trouble balancing his entries. IF seems strong but GALAXY continues to stumble over technicalities, hindering full realization of potential and prejudicing any favourable aurora.

Moorcock crouches low.

Suddenly, with a cry of, "Better the 329 than this staid stupid", he catches another new wave and slides into the path of Pohl's parodies.

IF's muscles tense and GALAXY braces for the confrontation.

Moorcock falters slightly.

"Methinks Moorcock has blundered", Pohl smirks. But then GALAXY slips and falls, throwing Pohl off balance. IF pushes on bravely for a short while, Pohl meanwhile administering to the other, it soon tires and stumbles, weak from a diet of anemic novels.

The last glimpse the FBSF gang have of the melee, as they surge after ANALOG, is of frothing waves and a sword rending tattered pages as it flashes over all.

The gang within the cockpit of the FBSF special surges towards JAC's FatMamma. Campbell's divining rod waves once... twice... three times; but the gang evades the forces of Adventurousness, Gadgetryness, and Always Correct Opinionnessness.

The finish line approaches. The two are binding to binding!

Which will win? Will it be the addictive and educative adventure of neat, trusty ANALOG? Or will it be the rich and introspective fantasy of the Gang's FBSF?

--E.S. Frederick Barrett

And now, a few dull facts about each of the Best Professional Magazine contenders: ANALOG, IF, FBSF each published 12 issues last year, GALAXY six, and NEW WORLDS, in its two decidedly different formats, eleven. Generally, ANALOG is for people who think like John W. Campbell; FBSF is for the literate; NEW WORLDS is for the daring, and the two Pohlzines offer just about everything.

ANALOG, if anything, is consistent. Some might say staid; it publishes the kind of fiction Campbell likes, and little else. Mack Reynolds is the mainstay of the magazine, and Poul Anderson pops up frequently.

The Pohlzines are anything but staid; Pohl publishes everything but outright experimental fiction, including some of the best of Zelazny and Delaney; I think one or the other deserves to win.

Dangerous Visions for best prozine

I DON'T THINK -



THEREFORE,
I AM NOT !

BEST DRAMATIC PRESENTATION

These Star Trek com-

ments are being made on the basis of what appeared on the little square screen, as this is the only fair way to judge drama. Relative judgements refer only to the rest of the episodes on the ballot; the rest is as objective as possible.

"Amok Time"--illogical

Spock is hit by the Vulcan mating urge and must return to Vulcan and his fiancée, T'Pol, a bitch who has a thing (we hesitate to call it love) for someone else. T'Pol involves Kirk and Spock in a duel to the death for possession of her off-white body. Through McCoy's skullduggery, Kirk is apparently killed off and T'Pol is given away: T'Pol arranges with the Council not to courtmartial everyone on the Enterprise; Kirk turns out to be alive; Spock smiles; and McCoy nearly gets the last word. This episode left some strange impressions: we found it hard to believe that Spock's ancestral home and mating grounds look like Stonehenge with a red sky; the costumes and ritual were very hard to reconcile with the previous image of Vulcan--too Terran except for the pseudo-Vulcan bits, which were completely unbelievable. The costumes looked better on the Romulans last year. The acting was generally good; basic plot good; accoutrements not consistent; a few good scenes, one good fight.

"Doomsday Machine"--corn a'plenty

The Enterprise meets a Berserker which has gobbled a couple of planets and wants the Enterprise for dessert. (Would you believe a cornucopia? a long rotifier? neither would we!). The only survivor of the starship that tried to destroy the machine (another of those incompetent commanders) takes command of the E. and nearly destroys the ship before committing suicide; Kirk blows up the left-over starship inside the berserker, destroys the machine, and saves the galaxy. Basic plot weak--not enough to carry an hour; dialogue often poor; some overacting, especially by the commander. Overall a weak episode.

"City on the Edge of Forever"--a cliff-hanger

McCoy, suffering from paranoid delusions caused by an overdose of cordrazene, steps through a 'time portal' on an uninhabited planet. He changes the past so the Enterprise no longer exists, and Kirk and Spock follow him to try and repair the damage. They arrive in N.Y. in 1936 about a week before McCoy, and make themselves useful in a mission run by an attractive philanthropist named Edith Keeler. A fan, she falls for Kirk despite his tales of future novels written by future novelists from "the far left star of Orion's belt". While Spock is fixing the tricorder, Kirk and Edith are falling in love. McCoy arrives, drugged, and is taken in by Edith; meanwhile, Spock and Kirk discover that Edith's death is the key to their future. So Edith dies, accidentally, and time progresses normally. Acting is excellent; good plot, rife with dramatic conflict; sadly marred in spots by some inane dialogue, like Edith's speech at the Mission. Paradox of time travel is fairly well handled for an hour show. We wonder about the arbitrary removal of that drunk, though--he may

have been unimportant to the plot...but remember what the loss of a pre-historic butterfly did to the world?

"Mirror, Mirror"--unparalleled

Attempting to persuade a dilithium-rich planet to enter the Federation, Kirk, McCoy, Uhura, and Scotty (Scotty? What's he doing here?) are caught in a thunderstorm. When they materialize on the Transporter deck, they rapidly discover that this is not their ship--the ion storm has caused an unusual transporter effect --they are in an alternate universe, a savage culture where promotion is by assassination and bedroom politics. They must find a way to get off the ship without being discovered before the barrier broken down by the storm thickens. Kirk is trying to prevent destruction of the planet, which his parallel world self would have done, without exposing himself to assassination for disobeying Starfleet orders. He is also understandably wary about (and attracted to) the other Kirk's mistress, Lt. Marlene Moreau. The alternate Spock is ordered to kill our Kirk, and corners the four of them in Sick Bay; the ensuing fight is possibly the best ST scene ever. Spock handles all comers with ease and grace until Kirk fights dirty and hits him over the head with one of McCoy's skulls. Eventually all escape, people get back to their respective ships, all to the ultimate good. The hour seemed incredibly full of action and excitement; the plot had a more solid SF base than most episodes; dialogue was good. Some marvelous scenes, including that marvelously integrated love scene with Uhura "disturbing" Sulu, that beautiful bearded Spock telling Kirk he didn't want to assassinate him, but..., and, of course, the fight. Our choice for the Hugo, though you might prefer...

"The Trouble With Tribbles"--soft, furry, and makes a pleasant sound

The Enterprise is called to deal with an emergency--Klingon attempts to capture or sabotage a vital grain shipment for a newly colonized planet. Klingons and Enterprise crew members both have shore leave on the Space Station. Enter Cyrano Jones with some incredibly prolific "flat cats" called tribbles, which have a soothing effect on humans but which have a mutual and virulent hatred for Klingons. These creatures multiply until the E. and the space station are covered. Meanwhile, in Scotty's best scene all year he begins a grand free-for-all, enlivened by Cyrano Jones's attempted alcoholic larceny. Meanwhile the tribbles have gotten into the grain (remember the grain?) and eaten it. Not a calamity, though...the Klingons had poisoned it. So Cyrano gets his--19 years picking up tribbles; the guy gets his--99 years; the Klingons get theirs--a shipful of tribbles; and Kirk gets his--a shipful of no tribbles, which must be a very lonely thing. The plot is almost non-existent, but FUN; the acting is some of the best ever seen on ST. This episode contained more good lines and scenes than all the others combined, as well as a welcome insight into a new facet of Scotty's character. Our second choice only because the SF is really only incidental to the plot. And these are the best SF dramatic presentations. --Maureen Bourns and Rosemary Ulliot

Up the Enterprise!

BEST SHORT STORY

It's interesting that the three short stories up for a Hugo are utterly different in style, intention, and execution. Niven's "The Jigsaw Man" is a standard SF story, a possible look at a future where organ transplants are easy to perform, and where human organs are therefore in high demand; the slightest offense--jaywalking, running a light--brings the death penalty and the dispersal of the body parts to different organ storage areas. It's an easy story to read and to accept; facile and glib are words which describe it well.

"Aye, and Gomorrah", by Delaney, is a dirty story told cleanly. Delaney is postulating a future where spacers, surgically altered so they can go into space, are neither male nor female. But they are the objects of a new perversion; "frelks" (an obscene word in itself) pay them for the use of their bodies...and the spacers accept the perverts with a cynical humour. Delaney is having fun with this story, and it's meant to be taken that way. It doesn't extrapolate the present in standard SF style, and it's not an emotion- or idea-charged story.

I've gotten the impression that Harlan Ellison writes himself, his soul, into each and every story he publishes. "I Have No Mouth and I Must Scream" is an emotional story. Not extrapolative, not fun to read, not exuberant, not glib. But intensely human. The setting: five people imprisoned for eternity in the bowels of an all-powerful computer. The situation: the computer refuses to let them die, while refusing to let them live...they do what it wants, and have no choice, no free will. When the hero kills his companions and thwarts the computer, it transforms him into a soft-jelly faceless creature, mouthless and faceless and sightless, unable to express himself in any way. The story ends, "I have no mouth. And I must scream." From what I've seen of his writing and read of him, I can conceive of Ellison trapped in society as his hero was trapped in the computer, restricted by society, pressured and controlled by it, wanting to violate those of its mores he sees as wrong, but damned when he does...and sometimes deservedly so.

The choice, then, is between a straight SF tale with an exaggerated idea; an unabashed invention of a new perversion; and an intense, though veiled, expression of personality. All good, but all so very different. --Richard Labonte

"The Jigsaw Man"--no puzzle at all

BEST FANZINE (continued from page 3...)

The only one of the fanzines which doesn't belong on the ballot is PSYCHOTIC; I have the feeling it's there because of what it was years ago, and of what it's become since. But issues in 1968 shouldn't count; and while the December '67 issue had good writing by Geis himself; by Warner, and by Arlie Katz, one good issue does not a Hugo make, especially when the likes of TRUMPET, SF WEEKLY, and ALGOL were around.

BEST NOVELLETTE

Four stories as disparate as "Faith of Our Fathers", by Dick; "Gonna Roll the Bones", by Leiber; "Pretty Maggie Moneyeyes", by Ellison; and "Wizard World", by Norton, make up the best novellette nominees. There's lots to choose from, something for every taste.

Dick's story was written either under the influence of an hallucinogen, or as a result of the use of one; the accounts differ. Whatever the case, the story is an experience, albeit a disappointing one. Algis Budrys believes Dick "...is on the point where he makes sense only to himself...if this is a rebellion--and I suppose it is--in fact, it certainly is--it is involuntal." Banks Mebane, on the other hand, thinks the story is "...way out...but from inner necessity, not experimentalism; his story is (excellent), and if any of these writers shock me, he's the one." I'm of two minds; if Dick was trying to portray a drug experience, the unreality/reality of me, he failed. If he wanted to write a story about a world in which the people are on psychedelic drugs (slipped into their drinking water) he succeeded. At least, that's what he did.

Leiber's story is nothing experimental, nothing shocking, nothing obscure. But it is something because it is so effectively written that it can't be forgotten. A fantasy surely, with all the trappings of the folk-legend thrown in.

Ellison's "Pretty Maggie Moneyeyes" is the story of a person trapped by a machine trapping a person trapped by the machine, the story of a one-armed bandit seducing a man who is in love with it's soul--a trapped woman. Not a typical Ellison story; it has more plot; a story of imagination, and certainly a fantasy. It's a bit like Ellison's "I Have No Mouth And I Must Scream" in that it also examines the idea of man trapped inside a machine. Is fandom a machine in which Ellison is trapped? Is fandom trapped inside a machine named Ellison?

And for the adventurous types, there's Andre Norton's "Wizard World". It suffers only from too short a length, and has all the pleasures of an Andre Norton tale--simplicity, superficiality, competence, professionalism. Pleasant but forgettable.

Something for everyone, then. Experimental psychedelia from Dick, puzzling and unrewarding; myth-making from Leiber, complete and satisfying; imagination from Ellison, stirring and exciting; and adventure from Norton, excellently standardized.--Richard Labonte

"Pretty Maggie Moneyeyes"--vegas hell

BEST NOVELLA

The novella award is the new category created by the Baycon Committee. It may or may not be legal, but I welcome it because it admits that there is a class of story close to the novel in length, and beyond the novellette in depth of character and plot development.

This doesn't mean there has to be any plot or character development in the novella. Philip Farmer does well enough with neither in "Riders of the Purple Wage"; Delaney gets along with just characters in "Star-Pit"; Silverberg, in "Hawksbill Station", concentrates on the personality change in his main character Barrett. Only Anne McCaffery with "Weyr Search" and Roger Zelazny with "Damnation Alley" develop both either fully or competently.

But they're all good stories, in their own way. Farmer's "Rider's" is a fun 30,000 word pun on the title Finnegan's Wake--highly specialized, somewhat Joycean, experimental fun; and the pun is played out against the background of a wildpsychedelic Welfare State, which, behind the grotesque humour, is frighteningly possible. Algis Budrys says, "If you are wondering how it is possible to write more and more about less and less, Farmer can show you how to pile it higher and higher." So what if the pile is high? I'd rather laugh at Farmer's ribald punnery and imagination than suffer through any dry formula-plot pot-boiler. A worthy nominee, "Rider's".

Robert Silverberg's "Hawksbill Station" is saved from the dry formula-plot fate only by the pathos of a hero who can't leave the past he had been imprisoned in. The idea of using the past as a prison, and of examining the actions of the men, is nothing worthy of a Hugo. But the development of Barrett, culminating in his realization that the past is his only home, makes the story one which makes the story stick in the mind. A character study, more than anything else...the plot itself is not strong.

In "Weyr Search", Anne McCaffrey out-Norton's Andre Norton, which will suit people who like the Andre Norton brand of idea-less story. A new plot, impressive in presentation and thorough in detail. My personal objection, though, is that it is too dry a story, too flat and pallid. It doesn't have the exuberance of "Rider's" (which gives the impression, perhaps faulty, of being a put-on fun for both writer and reader), or the slickness of "Hawksbill Station", or the depth of "Star-Pit", or the breathlessness of "Damnation Alley". It's just a story; a new idea, certainly, new characters and good writing by a new author. But nothing stands out.



an eceph
story?

Zelazny's "Damnation Alley" is more an epic than it is a story--the heroic tale of Hell Tanner, who crossed the ravaged post-war continent from the nation of California to the nation of Boston to deliver a life-saving serum. It is a very clear, powerful story, easy reading all the way. Banks Mebane says the story "...was an unforgettable

experience;" if by that he means a thorough pleasure from start to end, and a pleasant memory afterwards, I agree.

Samuel Delaney's character are real people, his stories are studies of character, and his stories are real. "Star-Pit" is the type of story which deserves a leisurely re-reading, also demands it.

Each of these novellas has its own strength and will appear to a different sort of reader. The wit will appreciate "Rider's"; the literate, "Star-Pit"; the adventurous, "Weyr Search"; the easily pleased, "Hawksbill Station"; and the literate, humourous adventure type who wants to be pleased by an easy story, "Damnation Alley."

--Richard Labonte

Oh? "Rider's of the Purple Wage"--the penis mightier than the sword

The next few pages contain reviews of the novels nominated in the Best Novel category; because of the people who wrote the reviews and their different tastes, the reviews aren't completely objective. So, to balance the views, I've stuck some quotes from other reviews by other people, to either support or counteract the comments of Mike, Rosemary, Earl, Susan, and myself.

BEST NOVEL

THE BUTTERFLY REVOLUTION by Chester Anderson

With the modern emphasis of the "New Wave" in science fiction and its devotion to symbolism and significance, it's a real joy to read a purely fun book such as The Butterfly Kid. This is basically a fairy story set amid the hippies of Greenwich village. (I refer to the ancient definition of "fairy story") in which the heroes, two hippies, defeat the evil invaders, six-foot blue lobsters from outer space, amid a wild action-filled climax.

The plot: aliens invade Earth secretly and mistakenly contact a degenerate Greenwich Village pseudo-artist, Lazlo Scott by name, as a typical member of humanity. Through him the aliens start a flow of "reality pills" to the denizens of the village. Said pills enable anyone who consumes them to give concrete reality to their thoughts, (The title comes from a drop-in who starts creating huge multi-colored butterflies each time he clasps his hands) and the resulting pandemonium when the hippies get hold of the pills brings New York to a standstill. The aliens hope to completely disrupt Earth by a flood of reality pills and then step in to take over the world as an order-restoring benefactor, but are foiled by our heroes who discover the plot through their distrust of Lazlo. What follows is a fun-filled description of how the aliens are hoist on their own petards, ending with the promising revelation that the effects of the reality pills are permanent!

As I have stated, this novel has nothing profound to say; but it has more fun saying it than any book I can remember reading. Reading it is like being at a fannish party--the style of humour and the vividness of language are definitely fannish. Example:

he was wearing^a battery-powered electric green tuxedo..." There's no literary smoothness here; you feel as if you're overhearing a conversation rather than reading a book. The plot is larger than life but there is enough atmosphere to make it quite believable once one accepts the basic premise. The characters, although fantastic, are internally consistent and there are enough hints to suggest that, just maybe, they might be real people (lucky devils!)

There is no doubt that this book is not a Hugo quality science fiction novel. It is a splendid, humorous & thoroughly enjoyable fantasy but cannot compare with the other nominees in plot, depth of character, or redeeming social importance. Nevertheless, it is the best example of humour with a scifi basis since Retief and as such deserves to be read by every fan who is tired of being baffled by mystical and often extremely tenuous symbolic associations. Enjoy this book, and if you dig it as much as I did, vote it 2 on the Hugos. Anderson deserves as much on nerve alone!

--Mike Glicksohn

And now, some other comments: "Anderson's plot (plot?) is but a pencil-sketched piece of fluff against which to tack page after page of one-line jokes, some of them repeated ad nauseum...what might have been an hilarious story of novellette length is stre-a-c-hed too thin to hold its length and amusement becomes tempered with tolerance."--Richard Delap, GRANFALLOON.

"Butterfly Kid is clever, glib, sometimes funny...the book reads like a tourist job, a facile ten-day wonder, ground out fast when the author realized that if the scene was acceptable to "Times" readers, it might be all right for science fiction too."--Judith Merrill, Feb. 1968.

The Butterfly Kid--flighty

CHTHON by Piers Anthony

"Anyone who wants to chart the eighteen parallels and their nuances and their interpretations is welcome, and I hope it helps him to appreciate the novel without unhinging his mind. The game is not entirely idle, however; if a particular episode is obscure, a study of its parallels should clarify it."

I defy anyone to try. I did, in the middle of an eye-watering, nose-running cold. It can be done but it takes time and it does not really clarify anything; and doing it makes the book seem like something studied at school rather than like SF (which I started to read in defiance of my teachers.)

The book runs on three interwoven threads, past, present, and future, a fancy bit of needlework in itself. The protagonist, Aton, has been condemned to the prison planet Chthon because he dared to love a minionette--a creature which dies if loved, flourishes if hated. In flashback scenes, Aton keeps meeting the minionette in weird places, and she assumes different shapes. Confusing, but a challenge to follow.

At any rate, Anthony has spent a lot of time putting Chthon

together; I refuse to spend a lot of time taking it apart. But the book is well-written, well-constructed, one of the best I've read in a long time. It is the most difficult of the books to find pleasure in...it lacks the beauty of Einstein, the humour (however dense) of Butterfly, the humour and the beauty of LoL, the potential of Thorns; but, like a pebble in the mind, it is a book which is not to be forgotten. --Rosemary Ulliyot

And P.Schuyler Miller has his say:

"This strange, ambitious, not entirely successful novel is supposed to have taken the author seven years to write. It is intricately structured, with past, present and future interwoven as carefully as the threads in an ancient Peruvian mummy wrapping. I confess that I haven't attempted to probe that structure as the author evidently feels I should, to relish the parallels between various parts of the thread of action. I am consequently left with the feeling that I have missed a lot."

-P.Schuyler Miller, July 1968

Chthon--thay, what's it all about?

CHTHON. IN REVIEW. III.

Chthon! God!
Prison for the dead,
Heaven to the living
Garnet mine
More.

Anthony, Author
Good, great, bad, indifferent
Effective? No
Yes.

Minionette: Mother
Lover of hate
Hatred of love
Human, but
Not.

Chthon title.
A worthy nominee!!
A worthy winner ??
Read, peruse,
Vote!

Anton, child
Search for love
Means of evil
Enslaved by
God.

Terry Lovekin

THE EINSTEIN INTERSECTION by Samuel Delaney

The most common reaction to Delaney's The Einstein Intersection is "I don't understand it;" most people insist in trying again, though--- and this is the mark of a good book.

For people willing to accept a challenge, and not such sugary pop through a well-worn straw, the novel is a treat. Its threads are intertwined with such a complexity, yet with such a beauty, that the more than casual reader has to dig within the book...and within himself...in order to come close to understanding it.

Of the novel nominees, this is the most ambitious and the most potentially rewarding: it doesn't provide the quick chuckle of The Butterfly Kid, or the veiled humour of Lord of Light; it doesn't have the single plot of Thorns or the convolution of Chthon. It is

slightly flawed gem which, nevertheless, is full of flashes of brilliance.

--Richard Labonte

And almost everyone agrees:

"It's frustrating, but thought-provoking and more satisfying as it forces the reader to join in the work."

-Evelyn Lief, GRANFALLOON.

"The Einstein Intersection blends concepts of relativity and mathematics in a way that the story itself must explain...it is a projection of the Orpheus legend into a far future... ..it offers the concept of an ancient star-race who have poured themselves into the bodies of worn-out, inbred humanity in order to force new varieties of thought, being, and experience on both species...in fact, it packs into itself enough tantalizing concepts, enough colour, enough insight for a whole shelf of books. I've lost count of the number of wares and woofs of myth and symbol that are woven into the tapestry...a tapestry with as much action and movement as the great Bayeux.

-- P. Schuyler Miller, April 1968 Analog

"The story is based on the Orpheus legend with symbolic figures for Billy the Kid, Christ, and Jean Harlow among others. The action moves swiftly, but without haste, and the plot is both adequate and coherent...his writing is beautiful.... also lucid and powerful and deceptively simple.

-- Alexis Illiland, USFA Journal 47

"In this story of, I guess, a various young man's search for apotheosis in the peculiar world of the emerging new people who have borrowed some from us---occupy our space, and intersect our heritage but are apparently free to pick what they don't want, except it doesn't work out that way--Delaney does half a dozen impossible things before breakfast, and then forgets to eat.

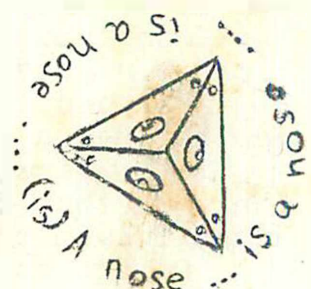
--Algis Budrys, Galaxy

The Einstein Intersection--relatively good

LORD OF LIGHT by Roger Zelazny

Imagine that once upon a future time there is a man--or maybe god--named Sam. With him and against him put assorted powerful gods, demons, and heroes, like Yama-Dharma, artificer and death-god, and Tak of the Bright Spear, now a monkey. Imagine their adventures, in a world of ageold battles and futuristic pray-machines. Tell it in the ancient polished language of sacred poems, which veers off wildly at times into colloquial modern speech and some of the wittiest puns invented. The result is Roger Zelazny's Lord of Light.

Satire: Fantasy? Science-fiction? Well, what do you call a book that opens with Sam, otherwise called Mahasamatman, or "Great-Souled Sam the Buddha" being brought back from Nirvana by the god of death? As Yama explains, though Sam had been made part of the sea of being when he lost the war against heaven, "you continued to exist in the form of self-per-



petuating wavelengths which I succeeded in capturing by means of high-frequency prayers from a prayer-machine directed at into the clouds by a metal lotus atop the monastery of Ratri. Naturally, Sam does not take kindly at first to renewed mortality. But "once a Buddha, always a Buddha", and Sam and the story are soon underway, flash-backing through a strange, primitive planet where Hindu gods literally rule the world by means of technology and an absolute power over reincarnation which can give sinners or enemies death-- or new life as a dog or a cancer victim.

Sam, the only one of "The First" not a god, feels the "First" should not refuse power and knowledge to mortal men. The gods argue that good men can reach godhood through successive reincarnations, and that Sam's attitude in wanting to "lower the requirements for godhood" is "unfair and proletarian-minded." He counters by preaching a new religion, based on the ancient teachings of Buddhism and the battle is on!

The gods feast, lust and plot in the mountain top paradise which is the Celestial City. Sam dices with a demon, which of course, is really one of the stable energy fields with egos once bound by him in Hellwell. Immortals die, and the dead return. Incident follows incident in the six fragments of a heroic epic told in vivid, almost poetic prose.

The characters, though one-dimensional, are colourful---and anyway in an epic, its the actions, not the psychology of the hero which count. The action is swift, the plot complex, the book the type which gets better the second time around, when you see past the battle of good and evil, beauty and ugliness, accelerationists and Deicrats, to the ideas and allegories which are its framework and appreciate the language in which they are told. Probably SF; certainly fantasy; decidedly fabulous. --Susan Wood (Asp)

And P. Schuyler Miller says:

"The book... is a unique blend of myth and mirth, legend and jarring anachronism. It would probably take as much time and knowledge to extract all the buried allusions and inferences as it would to check Volikovsky, but it might be more fun. -- P. Schuyler Miller, Analog June 1968.

Lord of Light--"yo Gods"

THORNS by Robert Silverberg

Thorns is a disappointing story about three unusual people: Lona Kelvin, seventeen, is the virgin mother of 100 children nurtured in plastic wombs, separated from her both physically and emotionally; Burris, a sterman, has been transformed by alien bio-engineers into a non-man, almost super, being; Duncan Chalk, a producer of entertainment for the masses, drains the emotions of his victims leaving them emotionally spent.

By promising Lona two of her children and himself a new body, Chalk manages to bring the two together to form a love affair based,

at first, on mutual sympathy. The two take a trip through the solar system during which their relationship deteriorates to one of hate and jealousy while Chalk saps their emotions, growing fat on them. When Lona and Minner discover that they have been used by Chalk for his own pleasure, they 'turn the anguish outward', flooding him with waves of their shared emotion, bloating him until he dies of indigestion. Lona and Minner thus learn how important it is to live, 'to cl, even to feel pain.'

Thorns is disappointing; it is not well-plotted, and, though the possibilities for some very interesting characterization exist, Silverberg has failed to produce any more than was necessary to tell the story. The characters of Lona, Minner, Chalk, Aoudad the philanderer, and Nikolaides the athlete could have been extremely interesting. There is some sex in the book, being almost necessary to the relationship between Lona and Minner. But the book is too flawed to be a Hugo winner.

-- Earl Schultz

And Vardeman too...

"...this book contains enough sex to fill a dozen competently written books. It does not contain enough plot for even a short short story and lacks characterization altogether. Silverberg has substituted sex for SF in a most pathetic manner."

Bob Vardeman

Thorns--"pointless"

And this has been LOWDOWN, the one-shot six days in the making, which perhaps disqualifies it as a one-shot; fan-nish rules are weird things. Art credits go to Alicia Austin, for page 1, and Jan Jurgensen, for pages 4, 7, 12, and 16. Lettering credits--the good pages are and Earl's, the bad ones are mine; stylii hate me, turn bluntly viscæus whenever I touch them. Typing credits go to my two battered index fingers, and the thumb I use on the space-bar, also to Earl, Maureen, and Terry Farrell, tru- though non-fan. Re page 3--Ray Fisher's wife is not Fisher Fisher, but Joyce. And now, at one o'clock of the day of the Toronto Triple Fan Fair, to which we are taking this, the bags under all our eyes have begun to pack up, so it's time to go. Don't forget to vote...

Richard Labonte,
971 Walkley Road,
Ottawa 8, Ontario,
Canada.



THIRD CLASS MAIL
PRINTED MATTER ONLY

TO: Lee Hoffman,
basement
54 E. 7th St.,
New York, N.Y. 10003