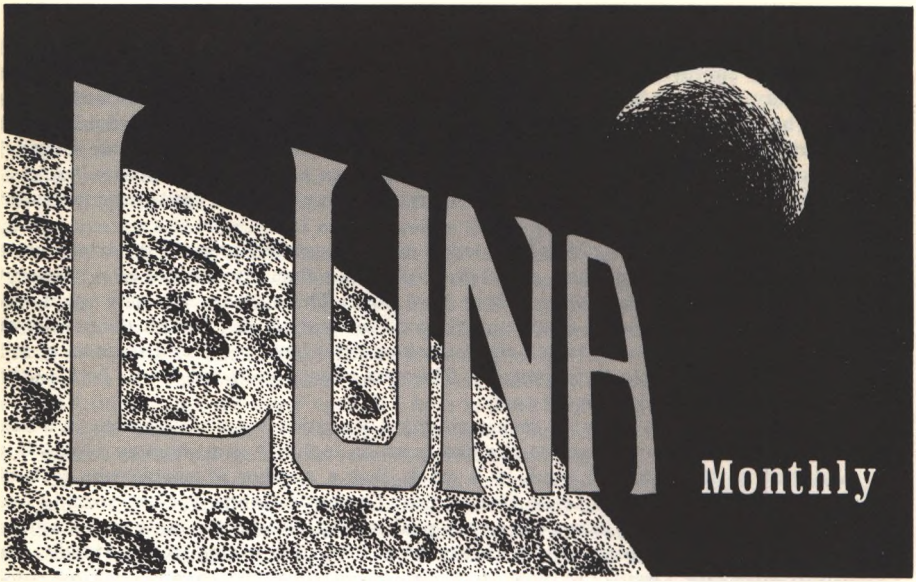

No. 46 **March 1973**

Ellison Speaks...

Maybe I was having a bad day when I wrote you last. My dog, Ahbhu, the one who caused "A Boy and His Dog" to get written, my dog died that week. He was close to being the best friend I had for eleven years, and I miss him more than I can say. Along about the time I answered your last query I found out he was dying of cancer, and I put it off and put it off and finally ... when I couldn't put it off any more I went down to the vet and signed the paper, and they brought him in to me for last moments. He was the most intelligent guy with four feet I've ever known. He was trembling, scared, he knew what was going to happen, and he was loving and nuzzled me, but he was scared because he knew. And I held his head while the vet tied the lanyard up around his right foreleg and gave him the shot, and he just quietly laid his head down and went away. I couldn't even tell the moment he passed from life to death. Then I took him home and dug him a grave and dug and dug and dug for hours, crying all the while. And I put him down wrapped in a sheet, and he was god so small. It was a very neat rectangular hole. I didn't feel too kindly for days. Maybe the day I wrote you was one of those.

I remember your first question was: "Ignoring your critics—how would you evaluate your own work? What you've tried to do, done, and failed to do?" Well, trying to evaluate your own work is, in the words of Humphrey Bogart, a muggs' game. If there is anything true and honest I know about myself and my work, it is that I am only a storyteller. Oh, there are messages in everything I write, but they are there to satisfy my needs as a thinking individual; I hope a committed individual. The story is there for the reader, to entertain him or her, to stir emotions, to cause identification with one or another character, to infuriate sometimes, to gladden, to uplift, to point a warning, but always to entertain. Beyond that is lagniappe.

For Christ's sake, people are actually writing doctoral theses on my work—and what a mindblow that is to me—but I frankly boggle at the things they find: crucifixion and resurrection symbolism, apocalyptic visions, dystopian allegories to the world of today, and on, and on. And so help me, I never put those things in my stories. I only tell a tale, and usually I do that intuitively. What I don't know about the underlayers of fiction would fill several thick volumes. So if you ask me to evaluate my own work, and I say anything more than that I've spent sixteen years plus learning how to tell an entertaining story in my own voice, I'd be hypocritical—because I'd be playing the same game the savants play.

I write because I cannot keep from writing. It is the greater, better part of my life and of my nature. I am driven to the typewriter; when I am not writing I feel guilty. I've been doing it all my life. I can't stop. I've come through all the stages of commercial writing to a position where I am not ashamed to call myself an Artist, producing what I think is Art. Though criticism still stings, I live with a kind of joy in my work that makes me secure. I write, knowing I do it with what Flaubert termed "clean hands and composure." And in that doing I fulfilled my needs; that is why I write. To please myself, not to save the world or satisfy compilers of symbols.

If I have failed to do anything I wanted to do, it is because I spent those sixteen years learning my craft in the toughest arena possible, rather than coming out of a 'literary' background as many of the newer writers have done. Those first years were spent less productively in terms of quality than I might now have wished. But I think the best is yet before me. I have many stories to tell and I think at last I have come to a sureness of self that will permit me to write them properly. The next twenty years will be my best, so the word 'failure' has no meaning for me now.

But you're going to ask what makes me think my work is Art? What makes a writer sure of his work? Well, my answer to the first question is that it is art because I think it is art. And part of the reason I think it is art is that a number of people who I think understand what art is, such as Leslie Fiedler, Kurt Vonnegut, George P. Eliot, seem to feel that what I'm doing is more than pure commercial writing. But for the most part, I believe in what I do, very committedly. My writing is my religion. I'm willing to die, literally, for the right to write what I want. I've ceased to allow editors to edit me, except in certain cases where their suggestions seem right to me. I think writing, at best, is a holy chore; and I am performing a holy chore.

Of course, I'm not sure that in a hundred years people will be reading me, but as I said, I write for myself. When I first started writing, I had dreams of being a new James

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Joyce, then I got into commercial writing and I was very much under the influence of Robert Silverberg, who was, at that time, also a very commercial writer, and it was my misapprehension that one was supposed to sell, and it didn't matter if the work was of classic stature or not because no one ever came to write the Great American Novel by trying. So I went through a period as a hack, but I did learn my craft, so when the time came when I had the freedom, I found that there were things that demanded to be written—subjects that I cared very deeply about. At that point there was anti-semitism, civil rights, narcotics addiction. Most of the themes that appear in my book, *Gentleman Junkie.*

The stories are mainstream, as are the stories in *Love Ain't Nothing but Sex Misspelled,* and they are the stories where I think the heart of my writing lies; rather than in sf, because there are constructs that have to go into sf stories, and I can get closer to what I think of as art in my mainstream work. (Although, I must confess that the stories I'm writing now have the same ambiance about them. They are fantasies, but they deal with the universe in a very special way, the way I've been looking at it, lately. And perhaps the core of what I think is my art is my ego: all I have to leave behind myself is my stories, and if I have to think they're just, as Vonnegut calls them, "harmless little untruths," then I will have worked my ass off for sixteen years for virtually nothing.)

As for the second question, what makes a writer—what makes me—sure of the work, I only know that when I'm writing something, and it holds together, and it sparkles, and it fills me with a kind of blood-thunder that makes me feel I'm doing something new and fresh and wholly my own, then it's right. I don't think it is possible to lump writers together in categories, which is why I despise the name 'science fiction,' because it ghettoizes so many different kinds of writers. Edgar Allan Poe wrote Edgar Allan Poe stories, William Faulkner wrote William Faulkner stories, and I write Harlan Ellison stories. I'm the only one that can. I have a corner on the market. I live within my own skin. I'm locked, embraced, within my own mind; and as I work, I know when something is right with the same kind of certainty as a Jesus Freak knows that He loves him.

Most of the stories that are considered my best ("The Winter of Whipped Dogs," "Pretty Maggie Moneyeyes," "I Have No Mouth and I Must Scream," etc.) have all produced in me that fever heat, and writing at that fever heat I don't have time to think whether I'm sure or not, I just do it. To be sure is to be secure within yourself that you've learned most of the craft lessons, and you can always maintain a level of expertise, if not brilliance, and knowing that, you can forget the mechanics, you can just go ahead and do whatever it is you're doing. And I'm secure within my own soul that what I'm doing is at least competent and craftsmanlike, so I am able to go ahead and experiment with my fiction.

Obviously, most of what I do I do instinctively. I have always been an instinctive writer. Guys like Bob Silverberg can explain processes. I cannot. I operate out of a kind of lunatic area in my body. I used to call it my gut, but, of course, it isn't.

* * *

You asked why I seem to prefer the short story to the novel. I've done four novels, and I have three under contract, but the novel is a more sustained work, and I haven't had the time for it. I've been busy in TV and movies. Also, I think it was time for a short story writer to make a big rep, again. The last one who did was Ray Bradbury. And I think I made my rep on short stories because there was a need for that kind of writer.

I will be going back to novels because your 'lasting' reputation depends on them. I don't know why that should be, but it does. A short story is harder to write than a novel. One has to say a great deal more in much less space, and say it much more originally and precisely. There's a kind of shorthand that's needed that a great many writers find difficult to employ. But I take them as a challenge. The more confined space forces me to be more original, more inventive, to suggest more, to use misdirection. I'm fascinated by the form.

However, if you write a bad short story, it is only a bad short story; if you write a bad novel, it's a tombstone.

* * *

You asked for my thoughts on prolific writing. The differences in skill and attitude between the slow writer and the prolific one. Is it wiser for the novice to write rapidly, or more slowly?

Oddly enough, you are talking to a writer who has been both slow and prolific. When I was writing commercially, and not putting much heart into what I wrote, I was doing 10,000 words a night. When I began writing things I cared about, I slowed down considerably. Since all I do is write, it looks as if I'm prolific, but I'm not, anymore. I can compose directly onto paper. I seldom rewrite, and mostly it is my first thoughts that get into print. However, I think a writer should write at whatever speed a writer can write. People on the outside think there's something magical about writing, that you go up in the attic at midnight and cast the bones and come down in the morning with a story, but it isn't like that. You sit in back of the typewriter and you work, and that's all there is to it.

Before I sit down to write I've had the idea in my head for God knows how long—some for four or five years—and it takes that long to get them straight. When a story can't get written I find it's because I didn't know enough to write it at that time, and if I put it aside, I know I can come back to it when I have learned enough. So writing fast is no more mysterious than writing slow.

It's a matter of being composed as you write. I write with music. I have rock going, and that juices up my nervous system so I can really get it on. If I didn't write like that, I might write quieter stories. I don't know. I'm frequently pilloried for writing with too much flash and not enough thought behind it. Well, my stories are not statues that one can walk around, touch, look at. They have emotional appeals, and they are emotional stories, and they are to be read that way. It seems to me that terms like 'fast' and 'slow' writer, 'prolific' etc. are as invidious as talking about a writer who bears the nobility of having 'starved in a garret' as opposed to one who lives in luxury. I've starved—not in a garret—but I did starve during the first years of my career, and I tell you the things I wrote, for the most part, were awful. The best things I've written have been since 1962 when I moved out here to California to what I consider luxury, making as much as $60,000 a year.

There's a kind of comfort one can buy for oneself that frees you from having to worry where your rent is coming from, or how you are going to buy typewriter paper. It also frees you from having to write a lot of things you don't want to write—having to jump at every assignment. I know there's a kind of mythic nobility that attaches to writing slow and starving in a garret, but fast writers can be just as good as slow ones.

If I wrote without rock, my stories might be slower, and more thoughtful, but I like to write fast. It works me into a mood. I get inside the story. I become the characters. I live, I walk, in their world. And too, a writer should work at the pace the story demands to be written at. But if I had a choice, I would tell novices to write faster because novices have a habit of not writing. They get involved in all other kinds of bullshit because it's easier than writing. For the most part, writing is a thankless, anguishing chore. To get someone to sit down at the typewriter and suffer that kind of anguish, they have to be dedicated. If they write slowly, it is only that much more anguish.

* * *

You ask me about writing sf and fantasy for TV and films. However, apart from two scripts for *The Outer Limits*, and one for *Ghost Story*, it has been an idiot's chore for me. Until some of our people get into positions of strength and authority in the visual media, all sf/fantasy will be on the Cro-Magnon level. But if you want to know the score on writing for TV and films, brace Henry Slesar, Robert Bloch, Richard Matheson, Ray Bradbury, or Jerry Sohl. Aside from these, and myself, no one has cracked the visual media from the sf field, despite PR to the contrary.

Not many can. There is a vast gap between setting down words on paper and creating visually. It's another way of seeing the inner dreams. It means, quite literally, having a third eye that sees into the head and runs the film and can capture it in that cunning calligraphy of screenwriting so it can be played by humans and mounted by other humans and scored and directed and edited. Consider the style of most of the 'great' sf writers. It is all exposition. They tell you all about the world of tomorrow and how it looks, but how many can show it to you? There are writers who write visually, but to most of them it is an intellectual exercise; it's just words. If they are truly creative they can tap those places in your mind and soul that open the lenses so your imagination sees beyond the words. But very few can really do that. And when they are set the task of writing their dreams so they

can be translated by a camera, they are lost.

I suppose, reading the above, you wonder at my phrase for TV writing—"an idiot's chore." Because writing for the visual media is a tremendously exciting enterprise. It is also difficult, and rewarding creatively if done with the same imagination and craft sf writers bring to their best work in print. When I say in a script: "The Witch runs down the circular staircase, rushes through the living room, knocking over a flaming brazier, then runs out the front door. The rug catches fire from the brazier, the fire spreads up the curtains—" then to watch them burn on Stage 4 at Desilu Studios with twenty-six people from the fire department standing around so the whole place doesn't go up in smoke, and watch Suzie Parker and Jan Sterling, or people of that caliber, act out your dreams for you. It's fascinating. Nobody can resist it. If I were told tomorrow that all I could do were books or magazines, I could survive intellectually and economically, but a large area of my interests would be cut off. Writing for TV and films is a fascinating life to lead.

(Too, it brings one fame, and I happen to be motivated by fame. That's what I've always wanted. The biggest thrill in the world to me would be to walk into Brentano's Book Store in New York and find a stack of my books right there beside some piece of shit like *The Betsy*. I want my work to be read a hundred—a thousand—years from now. And that motivates me to a great extent.)

When screenwriting becomes an idiot's chore is the point at which it leaves the creator, the writer, and gets into the hands of the businessmen. Films and TV are a collaborative medium; and in the main the other collaborators are just as inventive and skillful as the writer. But there are vast sums of money tied up in even a half hour situation comedy script, and the businessmen, who are not creators, and cannot think creatively, for the most part, feel they have to 'protect their investment,' which is the most insidious phrase in the industry. They debase and castrate and soften the work so it appeals to the lowest possible common denominator of audience.

* * *

But you asked me how I wrote a TV or film script.

The way I do it is: first, a treatment is written. A present-tense, straight narrative with whatever philosophical aspect I'm going to include; little dollops of characterization, etc. Then I expand from that into the script, adding camera angles, fades, dissolves, fuller characterization. It's a technical job, because it is a medium that deals with the outside of people, and to that extent, it is superficial—and I don't mean that in a derogatory sense, but superficial in the sense that we are looking at the outside of people, unable to get into someone's head, unless we do a 'voice over' as narrative, with someone thinking aloud, which is very bad. What it means is that you have to re-interpret everything in terms of what can be seen, shown, and that makes for a great deal of ingenuity. For instance, how do you indicate that that woman sitting across the room is in love with this man sitting here?

One is brought to a kind of awareness of the external world alone, and has to deal strictly in terms of physical movement and action. To write a scenario you must use all the senses, but primarily the eyes. The technique I use is to close my eyes and run the film behind them. I look at it in terms of what angles it is shot, who is in the foreground, who is in the background. And then I write down what I saw. Of course, to do that accurately, one needs to know the techniques of cinematography.

But learning to write a script is not as easy as it might seem. Some people are born to it, others have to be trained. It is somewhat easier to learn, I think, than how to write a novel well, because a novel is an individual kind of thing while a TV or film script adheres to certain universal principles (i.e. the form, the mechanics of it, etc.). But it seems to me that the same excellence of talent that shows up in a novel can show up in a script. Every year the Writers Guild of America issues awards for outstanding teleplays, and film scripts, and if you read them in conjunction with ordinary scripts, you will see there is a mark of genuine talent there. Almost universally, every one of them can see things better than other writers.

* * *

Moving on to your last question, you ask: "Many of your stories, and the stories about you, concern violence of one sort or another: physical, verbal, professional. The language of your work itself is violent, with an inherent tension that causes your stories to

explode in sudden bursts of prose. How do you feel about this?"

I abhor violence, yet I am a violent man. I emerged from a childhood, and a young adulthood, of violence, and these have had a lasting effect on me and my work. Apart from the undeniable dramatic quality of violence, there is a cautionary value that informs my work. Perhaps the ambivalence serves as a warning. People are violent. I write about people. Therefore, I write about violence.

There are many kinds of violence, and I am as fascinated by intellectual, by verbal, violence, as I am by physical violence. It is in moments of violence that we have confrontation, that we find out what we believe in, whether we have soul and spirit. They are pivotal points in our lives.

I'm a violent man. I've always been violent, as I said. It comes from my childhood, but I don't blame it on my childhood. I can no more escape it than I can escape the fact that I am an American who was raised in the forties. I've tried to break myself of sexism, but it is a difficult chore. I was brought up with certain kinds of ideas, and the fact that I know that they are no longer workable, that I am trying to divest myself of them, indicates, I think, a healthy attention to emotional and intellectual growth. But it's not easy. I'm frequently in fights. My reaction to critics is "fuck 'em"—"What do they know?"—to go and punch them in the nose. It is not something I like in myself, but it is something I cannot ignore. And it turns up in my fiction. It is partially a speaking to the times, which are violent, but again, a violence that fascinates me. I suspect it is partly a Norman Mailer machismo kind of thing, and I resent it in myself. I resent having to prove that I'm a man all the time, sexually, socially, and in my writing, yet at the same time, I cannot deny that it has lent a certain vigor to my work that would not otherwise have been there.

There are some people so secure in their manhood or womanhood that they don't have to do that. I don't know if their fiction is better or worse. I think mine is better for that need. I suspect in years to come it will be less and less, for I'm more sure of myself as a man and a writer, and I think they are the same, for me at any rate.

—Prompted by Paul Walker

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STAR TREK IN ANIMATION The word is out that Filmation is currently hiring artists to do original art for the series. Gene Roddenberry has full control over what is done, and D. C. Fontana is the script consultant. So far, they have bought or invited scripts from David Gerrold, Larry Niven and many of the writers of the live-action *Star Trek* episodes. The series is being done in full 'Disney-style' animation, which takes 4 to 6 months to complete a half-hour film. NBC has scheduled the series for a Saturday morning children's slot.

—Bjo Trimble

Alicia Austin

The International Scene

SF IN FRENCH AND POLISH: LEM'S "THE INVINCIBLE"

by Mark Purcell

This publishing season, Lem's 1964 novel, *Invincible*, is coming at the Western sf collector from two direction. So take this as a review either of the announced spring 1973 McGraw-Hill release in English [*for later information, see LUNA Monthly 45*], or the 10/72 Paris *L'Invincible* (tr. by Anna Posner). The early sixties were probably Lem's most important creative period, certainly his most philoprogenitive; and *Invincible*, unsurprisingly, has complex thematic relations to his contemporary work. But aside from my own critical limitations here, nobody wants a topheavy review, so we'll forget the analogies. Bibliographical information on *Invincible* I put below, as an appendix.

The artistic challenge in constructing such a book may be illustrated by the important median Chapter VI, "Lauda's Hypothesis"—the pp. 121-37 passage in the Paris ed.; Lauda is the biologist of the exploring title ship. In the story, *Invincible* is an advanced, totally equipped, future cruiser vessel visiting the planet Regis III on a search-mission for Condor, a duplicate of its type which has previously come to grief on this unexamined planet. The whole Condor crew has been wiped out, they find. And in attempting to explore this "primitive, lifeless" planet, the new crew begins to suffer similar human damage, section by section. (Technically, Lem is here drawing on recent memory-deprivation lab discoveries.)

For the commander and reader, biologist Lauda clarifies the plot-phenomena of the novel's first half by this hypothesis: nova-radiation eliminated human life from a technologically advanced civilization on Regis III, leaving its complex equipment masterless. Biological predators survived on land and sea. The land insects and animals 'attacked' or explored this standing equipment, which was triggered to respond to such stimuli. The 'response' not only reorganized as it reactivated the equipment; but this coalescence of the equipment's 'parts' became combined with a survival-of-the-fittest warfare between different types of computerized equipment for the (limited) energy sources which fueled their response in the first place! A cybernetic evolution set in. The surviving 'fittest' were not the more complex, but the less. (This subversion of orthodox Darwinism is defended, pp. 124-5.) The end-result is the abolition of biological land-life (Regis III's remaining oxygen derives from sea-algae) and the survival of cybernetic equipment specifically adapted not only to destroy biological life (Incincible's crewmen) but 'competing' cybernetic tools (the Invincible-Condor's tools, weapons and the ships themselves).

If Lem were constructing a monster-horror novel or script of the classic English language fantasy type, his 'villain' would not be some ecological impossibility of the Lost World-King Kong type. Lem would point out the superior survival possibilities of the backlot robots, androids, mechanized puppets and more cybernetic tools used to construct Kongs, Godzillas and their sequelling progeny. With a properly sophisticated nervous system, Willis O'Brien's backlot 18-inch steel-skeleton Kong doll would, to Lem's mind, be a bigger menace than the old Empire State ape ever was. (His first tactical move would of course be to hypnotize Fay Wray out of all that squealing.)

Lem can thus spend a whole book exploring the theoretical possibilities of the evolutionary backgrounds he projects, both biological and cybernetic. As a novel, *Invincible* is part of a kind of evolutionary trilogy: *Eden*, 1959 (now in French); *Solaris*, 1961 (in French and English); *Invincible*, 1964. (This omits the book's thematic relation to Lem's contemporary nonfiction and fantasy shorts.) In *Invincible*, the winning-losing cybernetic teams respectively mimic by adaptation the biological insects and plants they destroyed in the process of their own mechanized evolution.

Detailed exploration of theoretical possibilities replaces, for Lem, not only the individual heroics of space-opera, but its moralistic substitute in American sf, explicit social satire. There's a good deal of wit in the Lems so far translated, but his sense of humor seems to lead him towards fantasy. Space-opera action as the definition of the individual psyche seems to turn Lem off; surely an intellectual's bias, since every classical literature or genre begins in the heroic mode.

But his aesthetic problem lies not in any failure to mimic the predominant types of our own sf; rather, it is to develop personal ('biological') stories or situations not only equal in complexity with the theoretical ingenuity of his sf backgrounds. But he must also integrate these foreground stories with their backgrounds. His technical solution varies with each plot of what I call the 1959-64 trilogy, but mainly he seems to adopt the modern writer's solution of thematic parallelism. Let's restate this constructional problem Lem sets himself by recurring to *Invincible*'s Ch. VI and Dr. Lauda.

What Lauda gives the commander/reader therein, is the mystery-detective's solution to a conundrum. But there has been no previous resilient theoretical byplay, only a series of worsening disasters for separate groups of this 'impervious' crew. In the novel, the plot-point of this median explanation is that it supplies Commander Horpach with a point of view by which to rationalize further exploration (or, later, non-exploration) of Regis III. But since Lauda only provides him and us with an unverified hypothesis—for which much of the evidence is now several million years stale—the reader of the novel's first half seems to me not to have been given either a chance to match wits with Lem/Lauda or to explore the planet emotionally as well as intellectually.

With the point of view given by Lauda, the second half of the novel takes up the moral issue of 'fighting' a planet which is a programmed cybernetic man-eating plant. As I suggested above, Lem is temperamentally averse to giving some 'heroic' character's case on this issue. The long concluding chapter (11), a self-sufficient anthology piece for story-collections, shows the 'maturing' of the novel's protagonist, Rohan, which seems to me simply to be the 'experiencing' of the ideas Lauda outlined back in Ch. VI. But anyway, no question, the two Western translations bring an enormous dosage of black-coffee, hard sf onto our newsstands.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL: In Polish, *Invincible* appeared originally as the 11-chapter lead story for a collection. The Paris edition, reviewed above, translates the second (1968) Polish edition. It's still 11 chapters, so I don't know how much revision, if any, Lem did. As for the American text, I presume they're using the Wendayne Ackerman version bought from Ace.

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Have You Read?

Clavir, Judith "Movies: Black Spookery." Society, March/April, p.60-2

Hart, Stan "A Crockwork Lemon." Mad Magazine, June, p.4-11

Livingston, Dennis "Science Fiction: Scripts for Games?" Simulation/Gaming News, Sept.

"Schooling Up for a Future with the Futurists" Media and Methods, March, p.26-9+

Russ, Joanna "250 College Students vs. Paperback Book Publishers" (letter) Publishers Weekly, Feb. 12, p.32. Reply. John Waxman (Ace Books) March 12, p.21-2

Samuels, Charles Thomas "The Context of A Clockwork Orange." American Scholar, Summer 1972, p.439-43

"Voodoo U." Newsweek, April 9, p.91

Watts, Frances B. "The Magic Touchstone" (fantasy play) Plays, March, p.63-8

COMING ATTRACTIONS

Continued from Page 9

Coney, Michael G. Friends Come in Boxes. UQ1056, May. 95¢

SF BOOK CLUB JUNE TITLES

Bova, Ben, ed. Science Fiction Hall of Fame, vol. 2B. $3.50

Norton, Andre. Forerunner Foray. $1.49

SIGNET JUNE RELEASES

Silverberg, Robert. Earth's Other Shadow. Q5538. 95¢

Effinger, George Alec. What Entropy Means to Me. Q5504. 95¢

Coming Attractions

F&SF - - July

Novella
Thes White Otters of Childhood, by Michael Bishop
Short Stories
Come Dance With Me on My Pony's Grave, by C. L. Grant
Film Buff, by Edward Wellen
The Computer and the Oriental, by Gregg Williams
The Bridge on the Scraw, by Michael G. Coney
Having It, by Barbara Stearns
The Giantess, by Robert F. Young
Science
The Cruise and I, by Isaac Asimov
Cover by David Hardy

Current Issue
AMAZING - - June

Serial
Trullion Alastor: 2262, by Jack Vance
Short Stories
Adventures of the Last Earthman, by Robert F. Young
Seed, by William Rotsler
Of Course, by Betsy Curtis
The Clubhouse
The Enchanted Duplicator, by Bob Shaw and Walt Willis (conclusion)
Cover by John Pederson, Jr.
[This issue would normally have been dated May, 1973, however cover date has been advanced by one month for both *Amazing* and the next issue of *Fantastic.*]

Current Issue
ANALOG - - May

Serial
Sword and Scepter, by Jerry Pournelle
Novelettes
Naked to the Invisible Eye, by George Alec Effinger
Survivability, by William Tuning
Short Stories
How I Lost the Second World War and Helped Turn Back the German Invasion, by Gene Wolfe
With Morning Comes Mistfall, by George R. R. Martin
An Agent in Place, by Laurence M. Janifer
The Great American Economy, by L. E. Modesitt, Jr.
Science Fact
Minicomputers, by Stephen A. Kallis, Jr.
Editorial
Who's in Charge Here? by Ben Bova
Cover by Jack Gaughan from "Sword and Scepter"

Current Issue
THE HAUNT OF HORROR - - June

Serial
Conjure Wife, by Fritz Leiber
Novelettes
The First Step, by John K. Diomede
Usurp the Night, by Robert E. Howard
Short Stories
Neon, by Harlan Ellison
Loup Garou, by A. A. Attanasio
Ghost in the Corn Crib, by R. A. Lafferty
Short Shorts
Seeing Stingy Ed, by David R. Bunch
A Nice Home, by Beverly Goldberg
Night Beat, by Ramsey Campbell
Nonfiction
The Lurker in the Family Room, by Dennis O'Neil
Cover by Gray Morrow for "Conjure Wife"

MAY BERKLEY TITLES

Herbert, Frank . The Godmakers. N2344. 95¢
Anthony, Piers. Prostho Plus. S2137. 75¢

DAW APRIL/MAY TITLES

Lafferty, R. A. Strange Doings. UQ1050, April. 95¢
Biggle, Lloyd Jr. The Light That Never Was. UQ1052, April. 95¢
Akers, Alan Burt. The Suns of Scorpio. UQ1049, April. 95¢
Herck, Paul van. Where Were You Last Pluterday? UQ1051, April. 95¢
Wollheim, Donald A., ed. The 1973 Annual World's Best Science Fiction. UQ1053, May. 95¢
Tubb, E.C. Mayenne. UQ1054, May. 95¢
Dickson, Gordon R. The Book of Gordon Dickson. UQ1055, May. 95¢

Continued on Preceding Page

New Books

HARDCOVERS

Asimov, Isaac TODAY AND TOMORROW AND... (essays) Doubleday, April. $6.95

Brown, Raymond Lamont PHANTOMS OF THE SEA: LEGENDS, CUSTOMS AND SUPERSTITIONS. Taplinger, March. $5.50

Carter, Lin, ed. FLASHING SWORDS! no.1 (s&s) SF Book Club, April. $1.49

Dickson, Gordon R. THE STAR ROAD (coll) Doubleday, April. $5.95

Disch, Thomas M., ed. BAD MOON RISING. Harper, April. $6.95

Finney, Jack MARION'S WALL (supernat) Simon & Schuster, April. $6.95

Harrison, Harry & Brian W. Aldiss, eds. THE ASTOUNDING-ANALOG READER, v.2. Doubleday, April. $7.95

Peck, Richard E. FINAL SOLUTION. Doubleday, April. $4.95

Simak, Clifford D. CEMETERY WORLD (repr) SF Book Club, April. $1.49

Stoker, Bram THE BRAM STOKER BEDSIDE COMPANION (coll, ed. by Charles Osborne) Taplinger, Feb. $6.50

Valiente, Doreen AN ABC OF WITCHCRAFT PAST & PRESENT (repr Brit) St. Martins, April. $10,00

PAPERBACKS

Cooper, Edmund THE CLOUD WALKER. Ballantine 03209, April. $1.25

DuBreuil, Linda EVIL, EVIL: A STORY OF THE DIABOLICAL. Belmont Tower 50515, March. 95¢

Farmer, Philip Jose THE FABULOUS RIVERBOAT (repr) Berkley N2329, April. 95¢

TARZAN ALIVE: A DEFINITIVE BIOGRAPHY OF LORD GREYSTOKE (repr) Popular Library 00427. 95¢

TO YOUR SCATTERED BODIES GO (repr) Berkley N2333, April. 95¢

Galouye, Daniel F. THE INFINITE MAN. Bantam N7130, April. 95¢

Gifford, Denis KARLOFF: THE MAN, THE MONSTER, THE MOVIES. Curtis 02008, March. $1.50

Goldin, Stephen, ed. THE ALIEN CONDITION. Ballantine 03212, April. $1.25

Hoch, Edward D. THE TRANSVECTION MACHINE (repr) Pocket 77640, April. 95¢

Lynch, Miriam THE LIGHT IN THE TOWER (marg supernat) Curtis 09163. 95¢

Morressey, John STARBRAT (repr) Curtis 07275, March. 75¢

Noone, Edwina THE CRAGHOLD CRYPT (marg supernat) Curtis 09165. 95¢

Robeson, Kenneth THE AVENGER 7: STOCKHOLDERS IN DEATH. Warner Paperback 64-985, Dec. 75¢

Schmitz, James H. A PRIDE OF MONSTERS (coll, repr) Collier 02486, March. $1.25

Smith, Clark Ashton GROTESQUES AND FANTASTIQUES: A Selection of Previously Unpublished Drawings and Poems. Gerry de la Ree (7 Cedarwood Lane, Saddle River, N.J. 07458) March. $7.50

Smith, E. E. SKYLARK OF SPACE (reissue) Pyramid N2969, March. 95¢

Stevenson, Florence ALTAR OF EVIL (supernat) Award AN1107, April. 95¢

Stoker, Bram DRACULA (repr) Lancer 75442, April. 75¢

Williamson, Jack THE REIGN OF WIZARDRY (repr) Lancer 75431, April. 95¢

JUVENILES

Asimov, Isaac JUPITER: THE LARGEST PLANET (nf) Lothrop Lee, March. $5.95

Bova, Ben STARFLIGHT AND OTHER IMPROBABILITIES (nf) Westminster, April. $4.75

Buchwald, Emilie GILDAEN: THE HEROIC ADVENTURES OF A MOST UNUSUAL RABBIT. Harcourt, April. $4.95. Age 8-12

Fisk, Nicholas TRILLIONS. Pantheon, April. $4.95. Age 10-14

Hunter, Mollie THE WALKING STONES: A Story of Suspense (marg supernat, repr) Harper Trophy, March. $1.25. Age 10+

Kelly, Margaret Ricaud JACK AND THE FLYING SAUCER AND OTHER CHILDREN'S STORIES. Vantage. $3.75

Wojciechowska, Maia WINTER TALES FROM POLAND. Doubleday, Jan. $4.95. Age 10+

HUGO NOMINATIONS

NOVEL

There Will Be Time, by Poul Anderson (SFBC)
The Gods Themselves, by Isaac Asimov (Doubleday)
When Harlie Was One, by David Gerrold (Ballantine)
The Book of Skulls, by Robert Silverberg (Scribners)
Dying Inside, by Robert Silverberg (Scribners)
A Choice of Gods, by Clifford Simak (Putnam)

NOVELLA

Hero, by Joe Haldeman (Analog)
The Word for World is Forest, by Ursula LeGuin (Again, Dangerous Visions)
The Gold at the Starbow's End, by Frederik Pohl (Analog)
Mercenary, by Jerry Pournelle (Analog)
The Fifth Head of Cerberus, by Gene Wolfe (Orbit)

NOVELETTE

Goat Song, by Poul Anderson (F&SF)
A Kingdom by the Sea, by Gardner Dozois (Orbit)
Basilisk, by Harlan Ellison (F&SF)
Patron of the Arts, by William Rotsler (Universe)
Painwise, by James Tiptree, Jr. (F&SF)

SHORT STORY

Eurema's Dam, by R. A. Lafferty (New Dimensions 2)
The Meeting, by Pohl & Kornbluth (F&SF)
When It Changed, by Joanna Russ (Again, Dangerous Visions)
When We Went to See the End of the World, by Robert Silverberg (Universe)
And I Awoke and Found Me Here on the Cold Hill's Side, by James Tiptree, Jr. (F&SF)

PROFESSIONAL ARTIST

Vincent DiFate
Frank Kelly Freas
Jack Gaughan
Mike Hinge
John Schoenherr

PROFESSIONAL EDITOR

Ben Bova (Analog)
Terry Carr (Universe)
Edward Ferman (F&SF)
Ted White (Amazing, Fantastic)
Don Wollheim (DAW Books)

DRAMATIC PRESENTATION

Between Time & Timbuktu
Silent Running
Slaughterhouse 5
The People

AMATEUR MAGAZINE

Algol (Porter)
Energumen (Glicksohn)
Granfalloon (Bushyager)
Locus (Brown)
Science Fiction Commentary (Gillespie)

FAN ARTIST

Grant Canfield
Tim Kirk
William Rotsler
James Shull
Arthur Thomson (ATOM)

FAN WRITER

Charlie Brown
Terry Carr
Richard E. Geis
Susan Glicksohn
Sandra Miesel
Rosemary Ullyot

Lilliputia

A MONSTER TOO MANY by Janet McNeill. Illus. by Ingrid Fetz. Little, Brown, 1972. $5.50 60 p. Age level: 6-8

Joe and Sam live on the same street and are in the same class but they don't really like each other. One afternoon they find a sea monster in the pond in the park. Both feel they should return the monster to the sea. But how to do this and, at the same time, keep anyone else from discovering him and putting him in a zoo, is a problem. The boys finally hit on a very satisfactory solution but unfortunately the author uses too many words to tell the story. The illustrations are very ordinary.

—Grace Lundry

THE VISITOR by Josephine Poole. Harper and Row, 1972. 148 p. $3.95. Age level: 12 up

Witch hunters tend to find what they are looking for—but Mr. Bogle was a very strange 'witch hunter' indeed. He had strange friends, too, and a very strange effect upon the men of Cormundy. What Mr. Bogle was about, how his activities related to Harry, Margaret, Rupert, and "Fury Wood," and how the housewives of Cormundy convinced him to (literally) get the Devil out of their town, form the plot of this slight, juvenile, Gothic-type novel. There isn't really much in the line of characterization, and the story line depends heavily upon allusions to ancient curses and pagan rites. It's all right if one likes that sort of thing. Don't use it to make any converts, though.

—Charlotte Moslander

THE OLD POWDER LINE by Richard Parker. Thomas Nelson, 1971. 144 p. $3.95. Age level: 10-13

This is another time travel story, with something of the unusual added—the 'time machine' is a train, and one must get off at a 'station' after the day of one's birth or face a very unpleasant 'frontier.' What the traveler finds when he gets off the train is the same town where he got on—but at a different date. Here the time travelers are fifteen-year-old Brian, his sister's friend Wendy, and a crippled adult named Arnold Mincing, who remembers meeting Brian during one of the boy's journeys into his own past.

The Old Powder Line is intriguing because of the logical limitations put upon the movements of the main characters and the author's insistence that they be outsiders in their own town as long as they are out of their 'own' time. Within this framework a rather interesting story takes place, complete with the merest touch of early-teen romance. The characters are very ordinary people who have their ordinary reasons for getting onto that train; which makes them all the more believable, and their 'fading' as each crosses his own 'frontier' is so logical an event that one wonders why all those other writers of time travel books never thought of it.

—Charlotte Moslander

A GIFT OF MAGIC by Lois Duncan. Archway 29545, 1972. 215 p. 75¢. Age level: 8-12 (hardcover: Little, Brown, 1971. $5.95)

Each of the three children in the Garrett family has a special gift. For the oldest, it is dancing; the youngest, music; and the middle girl has ESP. Personally, I found this book fascinating and very difficult to put down, but I suspect that most fans would find it boring. At least half of the story is devoted to the oldest girl and her obsession with ballet; and since I am a dancer, I had no trouble with the technical terms and was able to identify very easily. Furthermore, the dance references are gratifyingly accurate, especially compared to some of the other fiction I have read. Therefore, I would be much more inclined to recommend this book to some of the teenagers in our dance company than to fans. However, the girl with ESP is meant to be the protagonist, and if you know anything about ballet or if constant references to it would not turn you off, you might want to give this book a try.

—Joni Rapkin

BABY by Fran Manushkin. Pictures by Ronald Himler. Harper & Row, 1972. Abt. 26 p. $3.50 Age level: 4-8

Reading this book to my five year old daughter confirmed my initial reaction. The dialogue in which the family and the baby converse before the baby is born is amusing because a young child knows such a thing is really impossible. However, the pictures of the unborn child sitting and lying in various positions thoroughly confused my daughter who does not have the experience to know not to take the pictures literally. I do not recommend this book unless you are prepared for a frustrating, confusing conversation with your child.

—Grace Lundry

PISHTOSH, BULLWASH, AND WIMPLE, written and illus. by James Flora. Atheneum, 1972. $4.50 Abt. 33 p. Age level: 5-9

Pishtosh, Bullwash, and Wimple have a special friend whom they take special places such as Upside-Down Town where everything is upside down and Chocolate Lake where the water tastes like Chocolate Milk and the fish taste like candy. But their big adventure occurs when someone steals the North Pole, causing the gravity to leak out. Some may object to the inaccurate science but the story of finding and replacing the North Pole before everyone and everything falls off the earth is great fun for young children.

—Grace Lundry

THE SWORD AND THE GRAIL, retold by Constance Hieatt. Illus. by David Palladini. Thomas Y. Crowell, 1972. 82 p. $4.50

Yet another version of an Arthurian legend, rather skillfully pieced together from several different ancient sources and presented in a form suitable for children. It is the story of Perceval, raised in isolation by his mother, who does not want her son to die by chivalry as did his father. In the forest he accidentally encounters some knights who invite him to King Arthur's court, and from that time forward his mother's efforts to keep him innocent prove to have been in vain, except for providing a few amusing episodes. Perceval goes on to defeat the Red Knight and defend the fair maiden Belisant's castle Belrepeire, and finally to heal the Fisher King of his affliction merely by inquiring about his health. In this version, the Grail is merely a horn of plenty in the Fisher King's castle, and not at all the holy cup from which Christ is said to have drunk.

Physically this is a beautiful book both in its illustrations and typography as well as an interesting variation on an old legendary theme.

—Kristine Anderson

THE SWORD OF THE SPIRITS by John Christopher. Macmillan, 1972. 162 p. $4.95

May the Spirits be praised! This is the end of John Christopher's latest Medieval-England-of-the-future trilogy! That tiresome youth, Luke, puppet of the seers, is now Prince of Winchester, but his innovative ideas are just too much for the Captains—first he makes a Dwarf into a warrior, then decides to rule conquered cities rather than exact tribute from them, and finally he has his friend Edmund arrested because he is jealous of Edmund's friendship with Blodwen, the headstrong Wilsh princess who is betrothed to Luke. The Captains mutiny, and Luke is forced to abdicate. He allies himself with Blodwen's father and, supplied with infernal machines recreated by the seers, they leave a trail of death and destruction from Salisbury to Winchester. There, those doggone Christians spoil the whole plan by offering themselves as targets upon the walls of the city. Luke returns to Klan Gothlen to plot subtler ways of getting back his city and to mourn the loss of Blodwen. Finis.

These trilogies are a ripoff—an unsuspecting kid starts one, then discovers there are two more books to be ploughed through before the story finally ends. It really isn't worth all that work—better to write straight glamorized-medieval-society novels than to put in a few natural disasters, embellish with a scientific underground, simmer for three volumes, and call it sf. These 'rousing adventures' are so dull I find myself at a loss for words when I try to describe them.

—Charlotte Moslander

Reviews

GREEN PHOENIX by Thomas Burnett Swann. DAW UQ1027, 1972. 95¢

Swann took on a job that was beyond him in the *Green Phoenix*. It almost worked but you cannot 'out Vergil' Vergil. The classic author was hired or commissioned to write a complimentary political history of Rome and its foundings. With the gusto of his time, the belief in Olympian answers to all unanswerable questions and the necessity of imperial command, Vergil wrote an epic that made his name and the legend undying. Swann wrote from a different perspective (Aeneas, the human) but got hung up in the epic.

The story centers around Aeneas, his son Ascanius, and a Dryad (wood nymph), Mellonia. These three move through the story toward a predetermined end, but they never reach it. It is left to the reader to dig up a previously published story using the same characters and settings. Aeneas is presented as a human who is ruled by duty. Vergil sees Aeneas as the Gods' chosen instrument and gives him little leeway in the actions he takes. Swann gives him more choice. Ascanius is the central male character by virtue of being present through the entire plot. Mellonia is the story's center, for the other actors come to her. She has the problems of puberty and duty to contend with. Her queen is a man hater, in general and at this moment Aeneas, landing in Italy, is the focal point of this hate. Mellonia must fall in love, lead a successful revolt against her queen and tribal customs, bear Aeneas a son, start Rome on its road, and become queen of her people to get to the end of the book. She does all this in a rather quiet, almost casual flow of normalcy.

If you look for excitement, expect tea and crumpets. If you are after sword and sorcery, you will get soap opera and mythology. This book is slow moving but if you start turning pages, you may find yourself forced to go on to the next episode.

—Scratch Bacharach

UFO'S—A SCIENTIFIC DEBATE edited by Carl Sagan and Thornton Page. Cornell University Press, 1972. xxxi, 310 p. $12.50

The AAAS held a special symposium during their December 1969 annual meeting in Boston at which a number of papers dealing with UFO's were presented by researchers knowledgeable in this field. Fifteen of these papers, mostly revised since their initial presentation, are included in this collection, along with a contribution by a non-scientist, Walter Sullivan, science editor for the *New York Times*. The first section provides an introduction to and historical perspective on UFO's and recent research, such as the famous Condon report, *Scientific Study of Unidentified Flying Objects*, edited by Edward U. Condon (Bantam, 1969), which rejected the extraterrestrial origin hypothesis. Part 2 is devoted to observations and debates on their interpretation; part 3 to social and psychological aspects, including discussions of the credibility of witnesses and the influence of the mass media; and part 4 to two papers analyzing extraterrestrial and other hypotheses, and the nature of scientific evidence. An addendum, summarizing the discussion following the original presentation of the papers, and an index complete the volume.

As interested readers well know, this is simply one of a long line of books, pamphlets and articles which have appeared since 1947, when Kenneth Arnold reported a sighting which could be considered the beginning of the UFO 'industry.' (A useful work for tracing interest in the field is Lynn A. Catoe's *UFOs and Related Subjects; an Annotated Bibliography*, Library of Congress, 1968, $3.50, which describes 71 books, 28 pamphlets and 71 magazine articles.) But it is one of the most important and comprehensive books to appear on the subject and is not only essential for all types of libraries but for anyone interested in a state-of-the-art summary.

No book will change the mind of true believers who are unalterably convinced that the USAF is covering up vital evidence, or who take seriously the work of George Adamski, for example. Even critical events often do not shake the faith of the believer, as the important but neglected study, *When Prophecy Fails* (1956), by Leon Festinger, makes abundantly clear. But there is no excuse for anyone more open-minded to be unfamiliar with this important study.

—Neil Barron

ENTRY TO ELSEWHEN by John Brunner. DAW UQ 1026, 1972. 95¢

Where and how did John Brunner go New Wave? I think that that will never be pinpointed, but it is fairly obvious that at the time of these three short stories he was toying with the idea.

The first story is entitled "Host Age" and is the most optimistic of the group. It deals with an incurable plague that is sweeping England, and the search for its carriers. They seem to exist to do nothing but spread this illness. The illness itself, for all intents and purposes came from nowhere and appeared full blown within its victims. At the story's finish, the Elsewhen has made gripping reading.

Number two, "Lungfish," adds a new twist to intergalactic colonization. There is a tremendous antagonism between the physical needs of the shipborn and the psychological, hypnotically induced, needs of the earthborn. One might say that finally, evolution and Eden were resolved and that Adam and Eve drew the high card and stayed in the garden. Brunner's ability won over here, and the New Wave receded. "Lungfish" is worth the price of the book.

"No Other Gods But Me" is the third story and it is 90% New Wave. Admitting that with this writing Brunner as usual was ahead of his time, he still followed a tired plot. His vehicle was religion and his offer was heaven on earth. Man's lack of Earth II powers was his salvation. I found deus et machina was vastly over used here. The hero first discovers an alien who has strong political powers in his own government and who is anti-establishment. He then finds great psi powers are commonplace in that world and he has them and can use them well. With the help of this knowledge, this kamakazi official and the inability of psi powers to cross from Earth II to Earth I, (our world) he becomes a small part of the defeat and destruction of "the most savage tyrant even that savage species of man had contrived to spawn." That is one point for the side of the international guilt complex team. If one were to accept the montage of mammoth coincidences involved here plus the concurrent theme of man's total inhumanity to everything, "No Other God But Me" makes an enjoyable half an hour.

Don't forsake all hope, those who enter here, just hold on to it real tight.

—Scratch Bacharach

STARBRAT by John Morressy. Walker, 1972. 239 p. $5.95 (paperback: Curtis 07275, 1973. 75¢)

In light of the plethora of 'ultimate novels' appearing in print the last two or three years, it is refreshing to come across a novel such as this—an essentially straight sf adventure that rests easy on the palate but is just as satisfying as its weightier neighbors on the bookstore shelves. It is the story of one Deliverance-from-the-Void Whitby (the Starbrat himself, and—saints be praised!—Del for short), raised by stern parents on a planet of fundamentalists, who discovers that he had been found by his parents as an infant in a crashed one-passenger rocket, a la Superman, accompanied by only a cryptically inscribed slip of paper. Del is nonetheless content to remain on his adopted planet, Gilead, and marry his childhood sweetheart Cassie; but he is carried offworld on the very day of his discovery, captive of a roving band of slavers. From there on, the book is of course the story of Del's fight to get back to Gilead and Cassie, as well as the story of the discoveries he makes about his increasingly curious origins along the way. The theme is certainly a time-honored one; yet while Morressy tells his story along standard lines, there are some pleasant modifications. The most major of these is the well-fleshed feel Morressy gives to his galactic community of worlds, tales of which are introduced in high proportion. This lends the novel a less thunderous tone than the usual sword-swinging epic done along these lines, as well as giving Del and the various comrades he acquires an air of concern about the world in which they live, making them not only adventurers but explorers in the 19th-century style as well. This notion is sustained by Morressy's use of nicely archaic chapter titles like "I board the Phoenix XXVII and acquire a crew" or "Dr. Hjalti furthers my education; the prospect of my return to Gilead." And there are some truly unique touches, such as the episode in which Del befriends an Odysseus-like warlord who wanders the galaxy in search of his wife;

not unique in itself, true, but Morressy tacks an ending onto the episode that Homer would not have dared use in the original. The ending of the book as a whole, though, is at once a bow to the great tradition of fictional heroic biography and the only conclusion that belongs there. It is the last piece in a mosaic with scarcely a hole in it, a novel for which Mr. Morressy deserves but one word of comment: More!

—Roger A. Freedman

STRANGE TOMORROWS edited by Robert Hoskins. Lancer 78713, 1972. 352 p. $1.25

Five short novels from the fifties, three of which have not been in book form before and two of which are out of print and virtually unavailable. They include "Shadow on the Sand" by John D. McDonald, "The Comedian's Children" by Theodore Sturgeon, "Firewater" by William Tenn, "The Greatest Invention" by Jack Williamson and "Planetfall" by Hal Clement. I was anxious to read "Shadow on the Sand" again after 20 years to see how it held up—after all I think I bought this originally for *Thrilling Wonder Stories*—and it is referred to now and then as a minor classic. Well, it reads all right, but let's face it, it's pure pulp with nothing too novel in ideas or execution. "Planetfall" is another story I was anxious to read and it holds up fairly well as an intriguing exercise in communication between totally alien intellects. But it is a little labored and slow. Much more labored is "The Greatest Invention" which is a kind of gag idea dragged out to ungodly lengths. "Firewater" is fun to read, despite the inevitable letdown of a predictable ending, but Tenn—or Klass if you will—has always had a marvelous style and bright amusing dialogue. "The Comedian's Children" represents Ted Sturgeon in an earlier phase and I like it. The story is carefully put together and strongly written without the near-New Wave gimmicks he experimented with later on. As a straight, emotional piece of writing it is good. For anyone who hasn't seen these five novellas before, it's a good deal at a buck and a quarter.

—Samuel Mines

TACTICS OF MISTAKE by Gordon R. Dickson. DAW UQ1009, 1972. 222 p. 95¢ (hardcover: Doubleday, 1971. $4.95)

Dickson returns to his distinctive Dorsai cosmology of *Soldier, Ask Not*, and other stories, to focus on the origins of the Dorsai military organization, and way of life, that eventually make them the best mercenary soldiers in the galaxy. (Thus, the novel is chronologically early within the framework of the author's future history.)

Lt. Col. Cletus Grahame, a military genius of the first order, finds himself assigned to the colony world of Kultis as a tactician advising Western Alliance forces. The Alliance is engaged in a brush war conflict on behalf of a local government against guerrillas backed by the Eastern Coalition. Grahame's astounding successes turn his activities into a personal struggle with the powerful and ruthless Coalition Secretary Dow DeCastries. But neither enemies nor friends can conceive the full scope of his plans, which may encompass a total realignment of mankind among the stars.

Grahame's plans (and the action of the novel as well) rely on a theory he calls the "tactics of mistake":

> "The fencing tactic is to launch a series of attacks, each inviting ripostes, so that there's a pattern of engages and disengages of your blade with your opponent's. Your purpose, however, isn't to strike home with any of these preliminary attacks, but to carry your opponent's blade a little more out of line with each disengage so gradually he doesn't notice you're doing it. Then, following the final engage, when his blade has been drawn completely out of line, you thrust home against an essentially unguarded man."

The theory in operation is fascinating to watch—and fascinating reading.

Tactics of Mistake is a fine sf adventure tale displaying more depth than the usual superficial novel of action. It is also one of the better books in the Dorsai series, and excellent entertainment.

—B. A. Fredstrom

BUMSIDER by C. C. MacApp. Lancer 7542, , 1973. 223 p. 95¢

You remember when the nesters came up against the new-fangled bob-wire fences of the big ranchers and staring wistfully across at the deep grass and fat cattle said to themselves, "By God we got as much right to the water as they have!" Nesters, outlaws and big cattlemen—transport them all to a mythical planet, give them grav cars and grav rifles instead of horses and Winchesters and what've you got? Not science fiction for sure, but some kind of juvenile hybrid which does credit to neither.

Our hero is a young outsider, or Bumsider, born on the wrong side of the Barrier—the electronic fence that separates the haves from the have-nots. Being sponsored by a politician with a little pull on the inside, he is admitted to the good life as a working apprentice and promptly gets himself embroiled in a hunt for a smuggler, the son of his sponsor. The smuggling involved is their equivalent of our 'wetback' business. Change Mexicans to Bumsiders and the Rio Grande to the Barrier and you've got it. There are also some outlaws named Sulks who shoot everybody up—but why go on? Save your 95¢, and buy a couple of steaks.

—Samuel Mines

THE MIND MASTER by Bernhardt J. Hurwood. Fawcett Gold Medal T2670, 1973. 160 p. 75¢

I read through this book very quickly, which goes to show that it kept my attention, and it was very well paced. The action keeps moving, and the movement of the story is almost a straight line from beginning to end. What bothered me was the style—journal entries are not the best of ways to carry the plot forward, but Mr. Hurwood manages to bring it off reasonably well. It does have the advantage of making it easy to get into the thoughts of the characters, and the occasional insertion of a 'news item,' or 'casebook entry,' has almost an air of John Dos Passos about it.

This book is the second in a series, and, although I didn't see the first, I assume it advances the characterizations of Larry and Petra. I definitely like the concept of the stories, and the author, a long time researcher in various areas of the occult and related fields, handles it with good logic and believability throughout. There is also a definite element of humor that manages not to become the sort of tiresome 'comic relief' which I have seen all too often in books of this sort.

Even though I didn't read the first book, I have a definite sensation of knowing the two main characters from before; they aren't quite flesh-and-blood yet, but they do have an easy familiarity about them. I can't say quite as much for the supporting cast—they are too much 'types,' although Moriarity might have had a better chance with another name—that became almost precious, naming him after Sherlock Holmes' great archenemy.

By and large I enjoyed the book, and I hope there will be more to follow, and that the writer will grow with them; he has a good idea and a nice way with it. Worth the price.

—Michael McQuown

THE BOOK OF PHILIP K. DICK by Philip K. Dick. DAW UQ1044, 1973. 187 p. 95¢

The nine stories in this book were first published between 1952 and 1955. If any have been anthologized, I haven't seen them. As in Dick's more recent work, these stories deal with various aspects of reality and delusion.

The stories range in quality from readable to quite good. "Nanny" is a nice switch on the robot nanny idea. "The Turning Wheel" is a compelling picture of the disintegration of a future America with a non-white ruling class obsessed with mysticism and reincarnation. "The Commuter" is a somewhat Jack Finney-ish fantasy. "Shell Game" is a grim story of a colony of marooned mental patients that looks ahead to the dark side of *Clans of the Alphane Moon.*

These stories are not as good as Dick's more recent work, but not many things are. The writing is sometimes awkward, and some of the endings seem forced. All the stories have some really good writing. The good stories (seven of the nine), are well worth reading, particularly "The Turning Wheel" and "Shell Game."

—Leslie Bloom

BEYOND CONTROL edited by Robert Silverberg. Thomas Nelson, 1972. 219 p. $5.95

Themes are popular in science fiction anthologies these days—a trend probably started by Groff Conklin. The theme in the seven long stories which make up Bob Silverberg's anthology is one of man's machines taking over, or going out of control or producing unexpected results. But it isn't the kind of doomsday book you might expect. Most of these stories are rather mild without the common threat of catastrophic robot control we've seen so often. An exception to that is "Autofac," a by now familiar story and a good one, by Philip Dick, in which some humans try to stop their robot factories with rather horrifying results. Otherwise—William Tenn's "Childs Play" is a mildly amusing bit about a way-out toy of the future called a Bild-A-Man set—a little pointless, I thought since I couldn't quite see what a child of the future would do with a synthetic man after he'd built one. "Adam and No Eve" is very early Alfred Bester, the point of which seems to be that maybe life on earth won't die even if all humans do, but a very slim idea stretched out. "City of Yesterday" by Terry Carr describes the feelings of a pilot who is controlled by his aircraft—making him the robot rather than the machine. "The Iron Chancellor" by Bob Silverberg describes the trials and tribulations of a household forced to diet by a pre-programmed robot cook who becomes a dictator. "The Box" is vintage Blish—here's a problem how do you solve it? The problem is an impenetrable force dome over a city and how do you break out? And finally "The Dead Past" by Isaac Asimov looks ahead to the time when both research and education will be dictatorially controlled by the government—a worthy idea, but written in 1956 not up to Ike's later expertise and much too long. On balance, a fair anthology, no blockbuster.

—Samuel Mines

MIRROR IMAGE by Michael G. Coney. DAW UQ1031, 1972. 174 p. 95¢

How to review a great book and not make it a list of superlatives is a problem that does not often happen to a critic. But, with Coney's *Mirror Image*, I find myself in that exact situation. I suppose that in order to maintain my objectivity, I must say that the book is ended on a new wave note. Yet, it happens in such a way as to make it a logical progression of the plot and a mind blowing final two or three pages.

The story is an action-packed colonization novel, with human and an indigenous planetary life form. These two groups, after discovering each other, first live together in peace and the fight a war for planetary control. The humans are lead by a planetary governor named Stordahl while the amorphs have no leader during the peace. The amorphs assume the total knowledge, physical shape and emotional make-up of the human most loved by the individual they have come in contact with. This being a purely defensive mechanism with the amorphs, they assume the pure reality of the love object, taking from their contact's mind none of the image flaws. Complications arise because the longer the amorphs stay in this situation the more permanent the image becomes.

Evil and war in the form of unprincipled egotism (the man who by the way, financed the colony and therefore owns it) arrives on the planet. He creates a perfect form of himself, which he endows with the genius of five others, and the amorph becomes evil and egotism incarnate. It was between this amorph and the human colonists that the war was fought. The super amorph leads all the image people in the colony in revolt against the humans. In time the amorph revolt is put down and the losers are forced into slavery. The amorph leader who has not yet had a chance to become permanent assumes compassion from Stordahl and because of this the owner, Hetherington, removes the governor from power. Then Hetherington creates another perfect amorph in his image and leaves the planet, not knowing that his defeat is being born in his wake.

The reader must discern this ending for himself only to find a sequel is needed. If he is anything like me, he will not mind the wait because it is one of expectation. *Mirror Image* is one of the most emotionally charged and action-packed novels I have read in a long time. I beg, therefore, of Mr. Donald A. Wollheim and Mr. Michael G. Coney, to hurry and get the next book out. I am as anxious to see the sequel to *Mirror Image* as I am to see the much overdue sequel to *Needle* by Hal Clement.

—Scratch Bacharach

AS ON A DARKLING PLAIN by Ben Bova. Walker, 1972. 193 p. $5.95

Ben Bova's *As on a Darkling Plain* is an awful novel, that is not really a novel, but two novelettes padded at either end with wasted opportunities. It seems there are strange alien structures on Titan that appear to house strange alien machinery, but no one knows who built them or why, and several generations have spent their lives trying to decipher the mystery. In quest of the builders, two expeditions leave Earth: one for Jupiter, one for Sirius; and the latter returns a century later with a clue that leads to the solution.

In fact, what we have here is a collection of three stories, and a preface that, uninterestingly, introduces the protagonists. The first is a novelette, "The Jupiter Mission," which appeared in *If* (Feb. 1970), that is too reminiscent of Clarke's "A Meeting with Medusa," and not half as good, and really does not advance the plot of the novel at all. The second is "The Sirius Mission" which is much better, although too long and old-hat, but with some good old-wave moments. The third, "Return to Titan," is what Bova tacked on to make novel length, and it ruins the book.

The riddle of the alien structures is the core of the story, and as unoriginal a core as it is, it could have served Bova well if he'd given his story a little more care. Instead, he squanders the last novelette on talk-talk-talk that leads nowhere, and on a pointless, and insipid, love story that is out of place. The riddle is solved without much drama or suspense; and the solution is incredible to me (I thought that idea went out with Gernsback.)

However, the book does have some saving graces: it is unpretentiously old-wave 'hard' sf, with the emphasis on pure, high-spirited speculation that occasionally touches the wonder nerve—in fact, it is best when it is purely speculative. The two novelettes are not bad in themselves, and the "Sirius Mission" is not bad at all. The book reads quickly, and as 'awful' as it is, technically, if you are in the mood for something light, and old fashioned, you could do worse than *As on a Darkling Plain.* —Paul Walker

TALES OF TERROR AND THE SUPERNATURAL by Wilkie Collins. Sel. & introd. by Herbert van Thal. Dover, 1972. 294 p. $3.00paper

A very pleasant introduction to the Victorian thriller; van Thal's selections (9 of his 12 choices) generally made their periodical appearance back in the 1850's. Collins was then professionalizing himself after some unimportant tyro books, but the big *Woman in White* 1860 breakthrough was yet to come. Dover's cover illo, incidentally, is the famous *Woman in White* advt. poster, from some stage adaptation, I think.

If a work of prose fiction is still readable after 100-plus years, and if the author is anticipating his four best novels (1860-68) with similar shorts and novelettes, it's customary to say that (a) the story-collection is a 'classic' but at the same time (b) 'apprentice work' for the longer books. If either of these platitudes encourages you to try out Collins, fine. But both statements are misleading. About (b), Collins was too good a technician not to master the one main scene-setting rule of the short story form. "Lady of Glenwith Grange," it's true, contains a full Victorian-novel plot within 20 of Dover's pages, and (also like Collins' novels) an interesting, underdeveloped, con-man villain. But even here notice how smoothly towards the end Collins runs over the complex sequel events, then flashbacks his pen-camera to the big confrontation scene between the French detective and the bogus baron-husband of the 'lady.'

Twenty years ago, a reviewer here would probably have recommended such plot-skill, but apologized for Collins' 'old-fashioned' talk-prose, which doesn't sound 'written.' However, the last decade or so has seen enough contemporaries loosen up their writing, so that Collins' style has returned to fashion. When a reader comes across a passage of exposition like (p.172, "A Stolen Letter")—"He had been in the army; had sold out; set up as a wine-merchant—failed—died; ditto his wife, as to the dying part of it"—the reader no longer assumes that his writer is slopping it out, but rather notices that background details are sketched in efficiently, and that the author's rhythm doesn't go dead on the page. Such a passage is only watered-down Dickens (and Charles Lamb) of course; but functional narrative prose deteriorated below this level in the later Victorian British novel.

Collins was the classic example of the commercial technician who forces the big

names to play/write by his rules; he baffled the rating codes of the more academic critics and historians then and now, because while his books have theme and characterization, these are subordinated to story-construction. Collins solved technical problems some of his contemporaries weren't facing. Marian Evans—as "George Eliot," a much more respected novelist—so took the Victorian double-plot formula for granted, that today critics and admirers quite seriously recommend that the reader go through some of her most important books, reading one plot but discarding the second. A 'mere' detective story like Collins' famous *Moonstone* or the "Letter" story quoted above, at least requires itself to be read as an integrated whole, and not as separable slices of salami, however distinguished the flavor. Probably the simplest illustration of Collins' impact would come from reading "A Terribly Strange Bed," here reprinted; and then Joseph Conrad's theft of the plot for "Inn of the Two Witches," collected 1915. Collins' ability to characterize his protagonist and simultaneously get him into his death-trap predicament, is unquestionably superior to Conrad's. In the same way, *Moonstone* stands up as a novel to the books it immediately influenced, by Dickens (1870, posthumous) and Trollope (1873)—whatever final 1-2-3 rating a critic gives them.

Does Collins date, then, in any way that will bother a contemporary reader? Well, to take "Lady" for my example once more, Collins here uses his later novels' character-situation of the dominant, unmarried girl and the more kittenish, passive heroine who makes a troubled marriage. For the plain girl's attitude, Collins provides more than enough Freudian background; the author's artistic failure lies not in failing to provide any intellectual chic for his situation, but in his inability to criticize the way the plain girl (she's the point-of-view character) handles the problem of the other girl's con-man husband. In the several versions of Collins' basic plots that re-appear in every issue of *Alfred Hitchcock's Magazine*, the usual technical solution is to make the 'victims' as tricky and nasty as the 'villains.' Such a solution oversimplifies what the author can say about life, and would have been too raunchy for the Victorian family reader, but perhaps it can be said that in these stories Collins doesn't know as much about his 'good' people as a serious writer should. I know nothing else in these selections that should bother today's reader.

—Mark Purcell

UNDER THE GREEN STAR by Lin Carter. DAW UQ1030, 1972. 95¢

It is said that mimicry is the greatest form of flattery but Lin Carter goes beyond this in what I think is a vastly improved work over his previous attempts in speculative fiction. In *Under the Green Star*, he has not copied Burroughs but has rounded him out. This is possibly the way ERB would have written for today's reading public if he lived in the 1970's.

The story finds a man who was a hopeless cripple who, through the power of his own thought and study, leaves Earth for the world of the Green Star. Here his disembodied spirit enters the preserved body of Chong. Chong is the ancient hero of the city-state of Phaolon, the Jewel City. Mr. Carter goes to extreme lengths to answer all questions of the Earthman's mode of travel, his revival and finally his heroic abilities. This takes quite a number of pages, yet when he finishes the result is good. From here the four phases of Burroughs goes by rather quickly. First, he gets lost with his queen and love, then they get found, then he becomes entangled in the planet's politics and finally, while extraditing himself and the girl, he learns that the girl loves him. He returns to Earth and swears to an unhearing sky that he will get back to his love and his life under the Green Star. The Epilogue, entitled "Author's Note on the 'Burroughs Tradition'," finds Lin Carter doing what he does best. He is the finest research analyst of the fantasy phase of science fiction today and this is a fitting example of his abilities. Here he makes the reader aware of the why of Edgar Rice Burroughs and the reasons for his overwhelming popularity.

The book as a whole starts off slowly but the love Mr. Carter has for ERB somehow overrides the pedantic explanations of the author. It picks up speed and action to a point of mandatory speedreading. It is a good beginning to a hopeful well written series. I feel that Mr. Carter should, in the very near future, turn his pen back to Edgar Rice Burroughs.

—Scratch Bacharach

ALPH by Charles Eric Maine. Ballantine 02906, 1972. $1.25

There are many ways to title a book. You may use a given-line found in the text for a title, e.g. "The Fellowship of the Rings." A description of a character is also possible, as is found in "I, Robot." "Plague of Demons," is a title designed to make the reader wonder as to the content of the book. Hal Clement on the other hand used "Needle" to summarize his whole story into a one word title. Maine or "the new Ballantine editors" use *Alph* for increasing sales purposes only.

Admittedly, there is a character named Alph in the book, one who appears sporadically over the time period with which the book is concerned. He is more of a literary center that the book revolves around rather than a complete person who is part of the story line. Alph, in other words, is a touchstone to the plot but not a major part of it.

The novel deals with a society of women in a future earth with no men and no physical need for them. The author later and through a rather wordy process tells us this need is there but it reveals itself in sexual, psychological, political and sociological terms. He leads us through one violent revolution and into the beginning of another. His characters have uni-dimensional personalities that impede the natural fluidity of reading, yet we are supposed to accept them as world-shakers. They are all Dickens types who intertwine around Alph. Major characters become minor and vice-versa, yet each must play the role, around Alph, set for her.

You will find here within the dogmatist, the accidental revolutionary, the functionary, the sycophant, the inventor by necessity and the charismatic leader. All these people and the rest of the maleless world, plus several political upheavals were set in motion by the inception of Alph. With this myriad of plot possibilities, the story line has all the excitement and verve of a ping pong ball in a box of cotton candy.

This is a New Wave novel yet the sequel (which was set up by the author in the last few pages) might bring some action to the story. As it stands, the B. F. Skinner theories have nothing on Maine's version of the raising and education of Alph. The story also has the 'matter of fact' attitude of a Skinner plan. If the author can break loose next time, the confrontation of an 18 year old Alph on a manless society with its previously written background should make one helluva novel. —Scratch Bacharach

REAL MAGIC: AN INTRODUCTORY TREATISE ON THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF YELLOW MAGIC by P.E.I. Bonewits. Berkley Medallion N2268, 1972. 271 p. 95¢ (hardcover: Coward McCann, 1971. $6.95)

This is an extraordinary book by an extraordinary author; Mr. Bonewits has done an amazing job of putting together useful information and the worst possible rubbish under one cover and making it seem cohesive. Had the author taken out the rubbish, he would have produced an invaluable work for the beginner in the field. As it is, only experience will make it possible to sort the wheat from the chaff.

On the back cover of both the hardback and paperback editions of the work appear the famous and highly-touted certificate of degree from the University of California at Berkeley, signed by—among others—Ronald Reagan. This has to be the 'snow job' of the century. What possible credentials this university has to grant such a degree is utterly beyond me; and how anyone on the faculty would be capable of disputing even a fraction of the book, or monitoring the author's course of study is a question of major importance.

There are of course, the two ingredients included which are apparently a guarantee of the popular success of such a book: the first is the attack on Anton LaVey and the Church of Satan (never mentioned by name, in order to avoid legal consequences) and second, the denial of any axe to grind. The truth of the matter seems to be that, diploma in hand, Mr. Bonewits went to the house on California Street and expected to be recognized as a peer by Anton LaVey, at which point, he was asked to leave. LaVey's attitude was that he had been studying the occult for twenty years and had founded a now world-wide movement and who the hell was Bonewits to think he could just walk in and grab a piece of the action? It is fairly clear from the rest of this section of the book that he met a similar reception from most of the other heads of occult groups; Sybil Leek seems to have been more tactful.

Aside from the aforementioned slanders, a great deal of opinionating, and a fantastic amount of superfluous verbiage and constant digression, there is a kernel of useful theory—not the wilder theorizing which even Mr. Bonewits admits is such, but the ESP-based theories of practical magic. None of this, however, is any great revelation: most of those who have done any serious work in the field have come to fairly similar conclusions. So much so, that it hardly seemed necessary to write about the obvious.

As it is, *The Satanic Bible* gives the same theory, says it all far more concisely, albeit in less detail, and avoids the endless and pointless categorizing that Bonewits inserts to make his book appear more erudite. Probably the most useful feature of *Real Magic* is the reading list at the end, and even there the author plays games, inserting the entire listing of the *Necronomicon* books, a ploy that was merely amusing the first time. Adding insult to injury, Mr. B. includes the outline for three rituals—almost identical with those of Anton LaVey. (LaVey published first by at least two years.)

For wordage, read Bonewits; for clarity, read LaVey—if you don't like the philosophy, just skip over it. —Michael McQuown

THE OMEGA POINT by George Zebrowski. Ace 62380, 1972. 169 p. 75¢

This is a fairly good action story, telling of the holdout of a lone rebel against Earth's victorious armies. The situation is analogous to that of the American Indian—almost wiped out by the invading whites and the survivors reduced to half-starved reservation people living without hope or independence. The rebel in this case however, is not without the means to strike back. He has a fabulous 'whisper ship' which the Earth fleet cannot catch, and with it he zips in and out of various planets for a quick job of sabotage or murder. His chief pursuer doesn't want to kill him or imprison him however, he has more than a little sympathy for him, but the rebel's own uncontrollable hate and hostility rears an unbreachable barrier between them. The conclusion of the story holds a minor surprise and probably represents the best way of ending the story. For the Gordian knot remains unraveled: when a man is driven to desperation by injustices committed against him and in turn resorts to injustices himself—who is to blame? It's a theme explored over and over again in fiction, and never with a satisfactory answer. I don't know that Zebrowski's answer is satisfactory either, but at least it's a science fiction answer. —Samuel Mines

THE HALCYON DRIFT by Brian N. Stableford. DAW UQ1032, 1972. 175 p. 95¢

There is an absolute ingredient to good science fiction writing that must be present in order for the book to be passable. This ingredient is called mystery, and without it the book falls flat. *The Halcyon Drift* has mystery aplenty and it keeps the reader wondering about it/them throughout the entire work. Each mystery, be it why, who, what or where is intertwined in such a way as to make the reader wonder where he is, and what he knows about the novel he is holding in his hands.

The plot starts with Granger (no other name) stranded in the totally variable and dangerous nebula known as the Halcyon Drift. He has crashed and lost his partner. His mind is then invaded and occupied but not controlled (see *Needle*) by the "Wind." He is then rescued and sued by his rescuer. In order to pay off this debt, he must go back into the Drift to find a Flying Dutchman of a space ship called the Lost Star. To do this he gathers about him an odd assortment of friends, enemies and backers plus a special sensory space ship and heads out to the rim. I could go on and on from here into other plot entanglements, but I am already lost again. It is up to the individual reader to resolve the mysteries presented by Mr. Stableford that woven together make up *The Halcyon Drift.*

I will give you this word of advice: when you come upon *The Halcyon Drift*, don't speed read. Read it slowly and carefully, you don't need to finish it in one sitting. Mr. Stableford provided obvious points in the text for putting the book down. Don't stop just anywhere, but at these prearranged points. You will find, as I did, that if you stop reading just anywhere you will have to go back and start again. For those of us who think sewing, knitting or electrical diagrams are confusing but a challenge, this book is our element.

—Scratch Bacharach

ALPHA THREE edited by Robert Silverberg. Ballantine 02883, 1972. 177 p. $1.25

These are stories which Bob Silverberg liked. Since Bob Silverberg is one of my favorite authors, I am saddened to confess I didn't like them as much as he did. Let me put it this way—each story is the work of a competent writer and inescapably bears signs of that competence, yet falls short of being first rate. In general I was left with a feeling of some disappointment as I finished each story. For example: "The Gift of Gab" by Jack Vance, a superlative adventure writer. This deals with an interesting situation—the encounter with a strange underwater form of life on another planet. Sounds as if it might be full of possibilities, but it isn't. It's a simple and totally predictable story. "Aristotle and the Gun" by L. Sprague de Camp looked like a winner—how would you like to go back in time and talk to Aristotle?—but it sort of ran down as though Sprague didn't quite know what to do with it and petered out. "Day Million" by Frederik Pohl is written with an irresistible sparkle and sense of fun, but goes nowhere either. "The Shadow of Space" by Philip Farmer is one of the better ones, dealing with the increase in mass as speed goes up and the trouble that a space ship might get into as a result. But I felt that Phil was on very thin ice in some of his assumptions and the end here too was much too obviously predictable. "Total Environment" by Brian W. Aldiss was a rather interesting tale of an experiment in creating a closed environment by sealing a group of people into a building, providing them with necessities and letting them work out their own evolution. The result, swift degeneracy, is possible; I couldn't say if it is entirely likely. But if Aldiss was making a point, I'm not sure of what it might be. If there is a net effect attributable to this anthology, I'd call it downbeat, a rather dim view of humanity's future.

—Samuel Mines

THE DREAMING CITY by Michael Moorcock. Lancer 75376, 1972. 189 p. 95¢

THE SLEEPING SORCERESS by Michael Moorcock. Lancer 75375, 1972. 192 p. 95¢

Elric of Melniboné, crimson-eyed albino, doomed Prince of a lost empire, sorcerer and wanderer, called Womanslayer and traitor, sometime slave to his evil, soul-devouring sword Stormbringer—Elric is one of the most original and perhaps the only truly tragic character creation in heroic fantasy. Little wonder that sword-and-sorcery fans resented Moorcock's decision to end his career. Now the author has decided to redeem himself by a return to his hero's earlier years for a new series of adventures beginning with the novels above. Their publication can only be something of an event for the enthusiast.

The Elric of *The Dreaming City* is a younger Elric: still unhaunted by the past, still holding ideals, still forgiving, still somewhat the master of his own destiny. Yet, Moorcock keeps him remarkably consistent with the man he will someday become.

The Dreaming City takes place before the fall of Imrryr, and when Elric was a king and in love with the beautiful Cymoril. He overcomes the deadly schemes of his cousin Yyrkoon to seize the Dragon Throne, and thwarts an invasion of his homeland. Here, too, is the tale of the two black swords, Stormbringer and Mournblade, and Elric's strange discovery and possession of the runesword that will rule his future.

The Sleeping Sorceress occurs much later in Elric's life. Moorcock skips over the central traumatic events of his hero's career to a time chronologically shortly after the events related in "The Singing Citadel" and well after the death of Cymoril and destruction of Imrryr. Elric, now accompanied by the faithful Moonglum, pursues the lustful sorcerer Theleb K'aarna for vengeance, only to uncover his enemy's plans for conquest via the black arts. Elric little realizes that his quest against Theleb K'aarna will again result in tragedy for himself, and for the Sleeping Sorceress he might have loved, at the eternal city of Tanelorn.

The two novels are fine sword-and-sorcery adventures and seem to be almost totally new material. The exception is a sub-adventure in *The Sleeping Sorceress* where Elric is joined by Prince Corum, and which also forms a part of *The King of the Swords.* The effect is irritating but not fatal.

If you enjoy heroic fantasy and haven't encountered Elric before, you have a treat coming. If you're an old fan of his, don't be turned off by the swarthy, black-bearded type depicted on the covers. It's still Elric on the inside!

—B. A. Fredstrom

THIS SIDE OF INFINITY edited by Terry Carr. Ace 80699, 1972. 237 p. 75¢

The stories in this book are all reprints, so some of them may be familiar. Included are "The Reality Trip" (Silverberg), "This Mortal Mountain" (Zelazny), "Sundown" (Redd), "Toys" (Purdom), "Ride a Tin Can" (Lafferty), "The Last Crusade" (George H. Smith), "Resident Witch" (Schmitz), and "...And the Stagnation of the Heart" (Aldiss). I am really not sure how to review an anthology like this except to recommend that if you do not already have all or most of these stories, this book would be worth getting.

—Joni Rapkin

BEST SCIENCE FICTION FOR 1972, edited by Frederik Pohl. Ace 91359, 1972. 315 p. $1.25

In his introduction, Fred Pohl says there isn't any such thing as an anthology of 'best' stories and then goes on to prove it. It is my impression that I have read few, if any, stories either written by or selected by Fred Pohl that I haven't liked. I wish I could say the same about this collection which I found fairly dull. For a quick rundown: "Inconstant Moon" by Larry Niven was well done, but a slim idea; "The Sunset, 2217 A.D." by Ryu Mitsuse, translated from the Japanese, had atmosphere, of sorts, but not too much else; "Mother in the Sky with Diamonds" by James Tiptree, Jr. verged on the hysterical; "Conversational Mode" by Grahame Leman, a conversation between a patient and a psychiatric computer was clever but not really satisfying as a story; "Sheltering Dream" by Doris Piserchia about a man who discovers he is a robot was well done; two stories by Harlan Ellison: "At the Mouse Circus" and "Silent in Gehenna" leave me more or less speechless—I recognize that Harlan is an angry young man and I'm all for that because there's plenty to be angry about—but I'd go much further with him if I could be sure just what it was he's angry about or could make sense out of his fantasies; "Too Many People" by H. H. Hollis could have been a helluva story and in fact the last half was good, but the first half was dull and how does anyone who seems to know so much about medicine and biology and virology make such an obvious mistake of confusing the Salk vaccine with the Sabin vaccine and not know that the Salk vaccine was made of killed virus and couldn't spread from person to person as the Sabin vaccine does, but the last half of the story was good; "The Easy Way Out" by John Brunner started out great—the spoiled rich playboy and the young doctor as the sole survivors of a spaceship crash—and then fizzled out at the end with a forced ending. The best story in the book was Fred Pohl's own: "The Gold at the Starbow's End." This is real science fiction, a story with intellectual clout, which is what science fiction is all about. I'd have bought this one in a minute, most likely none of the others, but maybe the one story is worth the $1.25.

—Samuel Mines

WARLOCK by Dean R. Koontz. Lancer 75386, 1972. 221 p. 95¢

The very contours of the Earth have shifted and only half understood myths of the pre-Blank world remain. A crude civilization exists among people to whom ignorance and superstition are a way of life, and the psi powers of the mutant Shakers are magic and sorcery. When the ambitious ruler of Oragonia sets out on a path of conquest, Shaker Sandow is called upon by the Darklands for aid. The Oragonians have discovered ancient scientific secrets, including flying machines and awesome weapons, in the unexplored lands beyond the Cloud Range to the East. Sandow and his two 'sons' join a seemingly hopeless expedition over the mountains in an attempt to gain the knowledge needed for the Darklanders to survive. The band must overcome not only treacherous slopes and passes with enemies waiting beyond, but at least two strangely inhuman and murderous spies in their own ranks.

Koontz here turns his hand to a rousing adventure yarn in the hallowed tradition of the heroic quest. The theme and basic plot devices of *Warlock* are old in science fiction, but the author combines and develops them expertly and adds a few interpretive touches of his own. The result is—predictably—light entertainment sufficient for all but the most jaded.

—B. A. Fredstrom

ROLLER COASTER WORLD by Kenneth Bulmer. Ace 73438, 1972. 75¢

Papa's Rad and Berries feed the people's system on Parsloe's planet. Papa's Rad is dying out. Into this confusion steps Doug Marsden, an almost hero, second best in nearly everything including sex. He's a self-appointed back-stage lover of a married beauty snob who parcels a scarce few moments for him. Her obvious aloofness inspires him to displace her husband and one can guess at the result.

Doug Marsden attempts and continuously fails to become a hero in a number of professions which are neatly enumerated into chapters. He finally achieves a modicum of fame by hanging onto the coattails of disaster which strikes Parsloe's Planet.

This story was more about Marsden than about either Parsloe's Planet or Papa's Rad. The planet and radiation were redundantly mentioned without new twists. It lacked suspense and each chapter was predictable, especially when the reader caught on to the 'Marsden is a failure' theme.

To those who have read the book: You'll probably agree that a speedy ending is the greatest merit in a boring book.

—Gloria Glick

BEST SCIENCE FICTION STORIES OF THE YEAR edited by Lester del Rey. Dutton, 1972. 250 p. $6.95

Like any anthology this is something of a mixed bag but it is definitely superior to most of the collections of stories I've seen lately. The stories have less of the pulp odor about them, and more in the way of literary quality, better characterizations and better imagination. Lester's own comment, that he picked stories he enjoyed reading, is about the best possible rule of thumb there is. And if all the stories were as much fun to read as James Tiptree's "I'll Be Waiting for You When the Swimming Pool Is Empty," this would have been the world's greatest bargain. At that, there are several superior stories. Phil Farmer's "The Sliced-Crosswise Only-On-Tuesday World" pokes fun at a suggested solution to over-crowding. "Occam's Scalpel" by Ted Sturgeon is familiar—it's been used before, but is good, vintage Sturgeon. A collaboration by Harlan Ellison and Van Vogt about a spaceship which controls its own human operator comes very close to being outstanding and loses only because of a weak, routine ending. Poul Anderson's "A Little Knowledge" has also been reprinted before—a good story. And "Rammer" by Larry Niven is a good one. The others, while I thought not up to those mentioned, had appealing aspects about them which made it easy to understand Lester's reason for choosing them. For example, "The Man Underneath" by R. A. Lafferty, while not a strong story, has a quality of fey imagination about it that some readers might like very much. On balance I'd call this an anthology clearly above average.

—Samuel Mines

CENTURY OF THE MANIKIN by E. C. Tubb. DAW UQ1018, 1972. 142 p. 95¢

Social commentators innumerable have pointed out that we have certain confused, if not hypocritical standards. For years a frank depiction of love and sex was barred from public view on the grounds that it was obscene or pornographic, while something far more obscene—killing and violence—was freely offered, even to young children who were being 'protected' from so-called pornography. Tubbs has seized upon this simple and obvious fact to create a world in which all this is reversed. It's logical enough—sex is now freely offered and completely taken for granted. Violence has gone underground and for the 'perverts' who need to slake hidden desires, there is a trade in forbidden pictures peddled like French postcards, showing scenes of violence, murder and sadism, and there are even purveyors of sadistic exhibitions for those seeking the ultimate thrill. Having set up this society, what does the author do with it? Nothing very startling. There is a lot of running around as the government forces seek to uncover the ring that is peddling the stuff and a good deal of brooding on the part of the main characters who wonder audibly if the murder and aggression in humans will ever be eradicated, and that's about it. Nothing unprofessional about the book and it reads well, but just misses being top-notch.

—Samuel Mines

THE SONG OF RHIANNON by Evangeline Walton. Ballantine 02773, 1972. 208 p. $1.25

THE THREE IMPOSTERS by Arthur Machen. Ballantine 02643, 1972. 194 p. $1.25

Since the inception of the Ballantine Adult Fantasy Series, I have lavished praise on Lin Carter for his unique, and heroic, contribution to fantasy literature; and I think he deserves a Hugo of Appreciation. However, as much as I admire, and honestly like the man, I have begun to have some reservations. While I prefer the more personal approach to literature to the strictly scholarly one, there is an annoying self-indulgence in the series, and especially in Carter's introductions, that is not doing either of them any good. Carter seems to think he is almost as interesting as the people he edits, and more and more, we are getting as much of an appreciation of him as of the authors. For instance, in his introduction to Evangeline Walton's *The Song of Rhiannon* he begins: "Since Evangeline Walton lives in Arizona and I live on Long Island, it is scarcely surprising we have never met." But who cares? Following this, he describes his first meeting with the authoress, her visit to his home, and her reaction to his collections of books and antiques, and while this gives us more than we want to know about the Carter household, and his enthusiasm for Ms. Walton, it tells us virtually zero about her. In *The Three Imposters*, he tells us how many books he reads in a year, and that he prefers some of them more than others, and what they are, and why, and this goes on for two-and-a-half pages. It would not bother me at all if he then provided more than just a sketchy biography of the author, or more than a simplistic discussion of the style and theme of the book.

Many of these 'fantasy' novels are more than daydreams, and their authors are much more than *Weird Tales* hacks, or pulp entertainers: they were great literary figures of their day, great intellectuals of any day, and they deserve more serious consideration than Carter has given them. They also deserve bibliographies that will tell us what is available and what isn't.

Furthermore, I detect self-indulgence in some of the selections, which suggests to me that Carter's infatuation with his image as a 'scholar' combined with his yen for reviving the lost masterworks has caused him to reprint works that were never lost, but abandoned, and were better off left to collectors. Haggard and Lang's *The World's Desire*, an excruciating bore is one, as well as F. Marion Crawford's trifle, *Khaled*, and George Macdonald's *Lilith* and *Phantastes*.

As for the books in question: *The Song of Rhiannon* is the third in the Mabinogion trilogy which has included *The Island of the Mighty* and *The Children of Llyr*. In correct chronology, it comes second after the events of *Llyr*, its immediate sequel, and *Island of the Mighty* follows it some years later. However, as *Island of the Mighty* is so superior to the other two, I recommend you read it first. In fact, it was the first, and only one of the three, previously published. Paul Spencer, a member of the James Branch Cabell Society, brought it to Carter's attention, and Carter found that Ms. Walton was alive and well in Arizona, in possession of two unpublished mss. that became *Llyr* and *Rhiannon*.

Unfortunately, for whatever reason, Ms. Walton did not give the latter books the thought and care she gave to the first one. They are less ambitious, less meaty, less well-written than *Island of the Mighty* and contain some small patches of awful writing. *The Song of Rhiannon* is the least of the three, apparently written hurriedly, and the result is a shadow of the characters and the action and the themes of *Children of Llyr*. Manawyddan, one of the best realized 'good' men in all fiction as far as I'm concerned, is reduced to vicar-size. He, and his young son, Pryderi, are two of the seven who survive the catastrophic war in Ireland which killed Manawyddan's brother, Bran the Blessed, who dreamed of uniting the New and Old Tribes of the Island of the Mighty in one nation. Now, even Bran's heir is dead, and the assassin, the ruthless tyrant Caswallon sits on the throne. Manawyddan and Pryderi (the true heir to the throne under the old rules) are kingdomless, and penniless as well, forced to move in with Pryderi's mother, Rhiannon, who not only greets them with open arms, but marries Manawyddan shortly after. But a curse is on the land; a vendetta against the living by the vindictive denizens of the underworld, and that vengeance is soon realized.

All of Ms. Walton's books have been flawed, and that is what irritates me the most—that they are not perfect. That sounds unfair, but Walton is so good, so capable of being so much better, that it is a sound criticism. I enjoyed *The Song of Rhiannon*, but I would have preferred to revere it.

Arthur Machen's *The Three Imposters* is a better book, and the most strange novel I've ever read. Superficially it is apparently an amiable rambling collection of background and character sketches with a few short stories thrown in, and a final sequence to unify it. Its author, born Arthur Llewelyn Jones in Wales, in 1863, was the son of a clergyman who attached his wife's maiden name, Machen, to his own while the son was still in school. Arthur adopted the name some years later while working as a journalist. His best regarded work was *The Great God Pan* a long-winded horror story first published with illustrations by Aubrey Beardsly. *The Three Imposters* appeared in 1890, also with illustrations by Beardsly, but it did not make a dime.

Carter tells us that most commentators regard it as an imitation of Robert Louis Stevenson's *The New Arabian Nights*, and Machen did credit Stevenson with being his principal influence. The novel opens with a sequence that belongs just before the ending, with the departure of the "three imposters" who reveal their identities to us, but not the "detectives." These are Dyson and Phillips; the first, "a man of letters" and "an unhappy instance of talent misapplied." Dyson is a detective of sorts, Phillips his Watson, but Dyson is the antithesis of Holmes, the scientific materialist, the anti-aesthete (as is Phillips) who solves his cases by deduction. Dyson is a mystic who says: "There are sacraments of evil as well as good about us, and we live and move to my belief in an unknown world, a place where there are caves and shadows and dwellers in twilight. It is possible that man may sometime return on the track of evolution, and it is my belief that an awful lore is not yet dead." (I believe a very similar quote can be found in Lovecraft.) This is not only Dyson's creed, but the theme of the book. An attack on the age's faith in the powers of reason.

So Dyson 'solves' his mysteries by making himself available to the improbable—while Phillips is described as a closed-book, walking the streets utterly shut up within himself, like the mind of Holmes. I believe Dyson's theory of improbability is one reason for the apparent formlessness of the book, as well as for the fact that he does not apprehend "the three imposters," because their apprehension is not the point. (Nor it seems is Dyson's investigative prowess—Machen may be making a fool of him for some reason that escaped me.)

The villains of *The Three Imposters*, judging from their opposites, are the most interesting, intelligent, and successful characters in the book, and they get off scot-free, so Machen, although he pays lip service to Victorian morality about the wages of sin, etc., may be satirizing the whole idea of the Victorian horror story in which the guilty are punished and the innocent vindicated. Certainly, the supposed villain of the book (who will remain nameless) turns out to be one of the most innocent of them all!

It is a very readable, witty, brilliantly written book, whose characters are unique and interesting, and while some of the stories are thin, the book is never dull. Machen is unique, and his book is unique, and reading it is a unique experience; and while I began this review with a sharp criticism of Lin Carter, I wish to end it, uniquely, with a call to fans to take up their torches and march upon the next con to nominate him for a Hugo of Appreciation.

—Paul Walker

BLACKMAN'S BURDEN, and BORDER, BREED NOR BIRTH by Mack Reynolds. Ace Double 06612, 1972. 137, 150 p. 95¢

This should not be an Ace Double. The two stories seem to be the first two in a series, but there is no indication of this nor even a hint of which to read first. Don't let any of this keep you from reading it, though. It is about a group of Blacks who were educated in the U.S., Europe or Russia and who have committed themselves to uniting Africa and bringing it into the present (or the future, since that is when the story takes place). I think you will enjoy these two stories, but be sure to read *Blackman's Burden* first.

—Joni Rapkin

THE OTHER SIDES OF REALITY: MYTHS, VISIONS AND FANTASIES by Walter M. Cummins, Martin Green and Margaret Verhulst. Boyd and Fraser (308 Locust St, San Francisco 94118) 1972. 334 p. $4.95paper

The spine of this thematic college anthology is a Jungian essay on fantasy, 40 pages broken into separate sections beginning on pp.viii-2-46-88-138-182-226-254. There's no doubt the literate undergrad makes a better buy investing in Viking's *Portable Jung* or *Masks of God* (4v.) by Joseph Campbell. Of course the same objection may be made to any other tidbit anthology that diverts its buyer from a bigger, more serious treatment of its theme.

Which are the selections that illustrate "the other sides of reality?"—some stock selections from English-language Romanticism (Keats-Shelley-Coleridge-Poe); a few fantasy selections surely familiar to LUNA subscribers (from Barthes-Boucher-Kipling-Borges); and finally some fresh material, folktale selections from such sources as *Journal of American Folklore* and Amerindian-Mexican fables. This folk material is unquestionably the real prize of the book, not because of any 'ethnic color' but because of its plot inventiveness and momentum. Now back to the editors' fractured essay...

Its main purpose is to soften up the mark—excuse me, educated undergrad—shelling out a fin for out-of-copyright or otherwise available material. This material is thematically organized by borrowings from the ideas of (mostly) Jung and Campbell, neither of whom will get a dime's commission from this book's sales. The 'softening' consists of instructing the student-buyer that (a) he belongs to a modern cultural revolution against scientific rationalism; and that (b) this same revolution is today leading to an exploration of mythology and comparative religion much more ambitious than anything performed by their college forebears.

Let's get Proposal (b) out of the way. The truth is, the 'rationalist' 19th century was fascinated by myth and the anthropology of religion in general. Specialized, argumentative books by professional students like Max Muller and Andrew Lang were Victorian bestsellers. The fieldwork for Frazer's later *Golden Bough* was much of it written home as reports by Victorian missionaries. No anthropologist comparable to Muller, Lang or Frazer makes his appearance in *Other Sides*; the few big names who appear in the bibliography are precisely those who would be known to English-department personnel who had never done any independent reading in the field. The religious-anthropological argument here is worked out through Freud and Jung, who are not proof-authorities as they are used in the essay. But big-name 'authorities' and historical references appear regularly, however irrelevantly, to butterfat the student-reader-buyer into the belief that he is some sort of trained scientific rationalist, now ready for a transcendental takeoff into the Age of Aquarius.

The Jungian themes that organize each section (7) of *Other Sides* are: creation-transformation-bewitchment, enchantment-'the other'-strange journeys-death and resurrection-apocalypse. The editors' (borrowed) thesis is that these different 'fantasy' literature themes, put in this particular order, recapitulate our daily sleep-wake-sleep existence, from dream-thought to conscious rationalism to dream-thought again. The main influence here is probably Campbell, who co-wrote the first book-commentary on Joyce's dream-novel, *Finnegans Wake*.

It will be noticed that none of these themes necessitate fantasy selections for illustration. The late Stanley Hyman (an anti-Jungian) wrote extremely lively criticism for thirty years by using such anthropological themes to analyze realistic modern fiction. The logical end-result was his *Tangled Bank*, where he shows that such themes imaginatively organize nonfiction 'factual' books like the classics of Marx, Frazer, Freud and Darwin.

The editors—Cummins, Green, Miss Verhulst—would I suppose argue that they're free of Hyman's prejudice against narrative fantasy. Actually, C-G-V practice the usual campus patronizing of pulp sf (pp.182-3) which developed their own book's market. They share Hyman's simplistic belief that 'science' consists of those experiments that 'work' in the 'real' world. Pp.viii-xii confuse a few industrial byproducts of our technology with actual scientific understanding. That is, reasoned thought (which pre-dates 'science' anyway) is confused with power and thing-worship. Irrationalism can then be given the moral superiority of altruism.

More subtly, the editors contrast the study of process and of laws ('rationalism') with the signals broadcast by our instinctual subconscious. This argument justifies their preference for fantasy selections. The idea is, these instinctual signals rehearse a full psychic life (birth-fruition-decay; then resurrection and apotheosis). To discuss these signals 'rationally' is only Freudian resistance to their 'real' meaning. This argument is interesting, but as you see, I find the editors confusing this proposition by such academic vices as arrogance, unrealized ignorance (of both science and sf) and idea-hustling.

Like the actual selections, the bibliography is sometimes fresh and useful—a little kooky, but what the hell. Check such books as Ussher's, Buchan's and *Jocasta's Crime.*

—Mark Purcell

MUTANT 59: THE PLASTIC EATERS by Kit Pedler and Gerry Davis. Viking, 1972. 246 p. $5.95 (paperback: Bantam T7499, 1973. $1.50)

A minor but interesting sub-genre of writing has come to the fore on bestseller lists (and off) recently, the how-it-happens novel. Past examples have included *Airport, Wheels,* and other Hailey productions, as well as their imitators—all of them concerned with fictionalized accounts of familiar modern phenomena, generally technological and monolithic in scale. Few (I'm certain) will stand the test of time. They are nothing but glorified textbooks, for the most part.

Since the emphasis is on technology in this sub-genre, it's inevitable that some of its members will be science fiction, and of a rather hard-core immediate variety. A good example would be *The Andromeda Strain,* an entertaining book, even if a little shaky in areas outside author Crichton's specialty. Crichton's novel deals with an extraterrestrial organism which creates a plague situation and eventually mutates to a harmless state. During its chain of mutations, it develops a form which devours a teflon-related plastic (further details escape me).

So here—same sub-genre, and a sequel by concept—Pedler and Davis give us an artificially tailored bacteria which ends up chewing some very important plastics into foul-smelling goo. Our world, they tell us, is plastic, and goes to hell accordingly.

The writing is even, but not polished. The reading is easy despite numerous expository lumps, dealing with everything from the function of window-seals in aircraft to the life cycles of bacteria. The characterization is standard British television, interesting but shallow.

There will be a flock of books and movies very much like this, most (hopefully) achieving a fair level of competence and a soothing level of entertainment. Our information hungry culture demands reasons for reading books, other than the good old humanistic ones, and in this extension of Hesse's Age of the Feuilleton, the average reader can put down a good how-it-happens novel with the satisfaction of having learned something. Like how window-seals work in jet aircraft.

Despite the generally convincing level of premises in *Mutant 59,* I'd like to have a good opinion on the credibility of the mutating plastophobe described. Who do I know who might have an inkling...Alicia Austin, cytotechnologist extraordinaire, what say you?

—Greg Bear

THE CITY MACHINE by Louis Trimble. DAW UQ1024. 1972. 143 p. 95¢

There's a germ of a good idea buried in this novel—a machine which once activated gets churning and churns out a brand new city from nothing; buildings, streets, all necessities and conveniences complete, and all without using or requiring any raw materials. It would be a great gadget to take along if you expected to colonize a raw and primitive planet. But author Trimble didn't seem to quite know what to do with his idea, so all he did was to hold it as a sort of threat over the reader's head while he spun out a conventional underground vs. dictatorship yarn in which the underground eventually escapes from the strong-arm and build their own city out in the boondocks. Which seems like a pity, they were doing great in a back-to-the-farm movement and didn't seem to need a new city at all. Straight pulp stuff.

—Samuel Mines

AT THE SEVENTH LEVEL by Suzette Haden Elgin. DAW UQ1010, 1972. 142 p. 95¢

The idea of a culture based on professions being assigned by testing has been used before by many science fiction writers. Usually, the stories concentrate on the taking of the test, and treat it as another version of the trial by combat. In this book, Suzette Elgin has concentrated on its social effect—in particular, on one woman.

On Abba, women are relegated to a distinctly inferior status in spite of an otherwise sophisticated society. When a girl takes, and passes with top honors, a test for the highest profession on theo planet, the social conflicts start. On the one hand we have a woman—something not quite human—an obviously inferior breed. Opposing this is her achievement of the seventh and highest level of Poet. This is an essentially religious profession and one held in the highest esteem. The result is a conflict in attitudes towards her. A situation asking for intrigue by men who resent having a woman in such a high position.

The taboo structure is so rigid that only an outsider can possibly deal with it. Thus we have Coyote Jones of the Tri-Galactic Intelligence Service (and of previous Elgin books) sent out to assist. This he does—even to the point of introducing the Poet Jacinth to sex. It appears that since she is both a Poet and a woman at the same time, no one of Abba could possibly have even dreamed of making love to her. The social structure is that ambivalent! So we have the spectacle of Coyote Jones, in previous books the complete stud, racing out of the room to ask permission of the civil authorities before deflowering their number one virgin.

The characters are interesting. The interplay of the contradictory attitudes towards women fascinating. In this novel Mrs. Elgin has made use of her own background in poetics and linguistics to highlight the Poet Jacinth's situation. In creating an interesting story, the author has also managed to point up some of the problems of being both a woman and a careerist. It is done in such a gentle manner that the point is received and noted rather than grating on current biases for or against this very pertinent problem. Instead of creating a polemic which serves only to antagonize, Mrs. Elgin has written a lyrical, piquant novel. Buy it—and think about it.

—Donald Lundry

STRANGE NEWS FROM ANOTHER STAR by Hermann Hesse. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1972. Tr. by Denver Lindley. 145 p. $5.95, $1.95 paper

The one fact true Hesse-ians will want from this review is that *Strange News From Another Star* is the first English language version of *Märchen* (1919), translated from the 8-story edition (1955) of his collected works.

Strange News From Another Star combines the smooth technical skills of a professional story-writer with a dreaminess in the prose and in the writer's experience that is adolescent (not 'childish'). This good-bad mix makes each Hesse story complex and interesting to criticize; a success like "The Poet" or "Dream Sequence" may be less impressive than the lead story, "Augustus," which gets out into the actual pre World War I student world and challenges comparisons (unfortunate to Hesse) with the Danish romances of Isak Dinesen, his contemporary. It will be seen that this reviewer's notice will be a little cool for those who find Hesse a guru, not a 'mere' writer of fiction. Yet it's the mere writer of fiction, the literary pro, I find most effective in *Strange News From Another Star.* Notice the O. Henry ending of "Hard Passage" or the structural weave of minor characters into the "Faldum" fair-sequence to prevent the blur in the reader's mind of a whole mass of people.

On the other hand, when Hesse sets to purvey conscious, experienced wisdom of life as a literary sage in his fables, I think he has none to sell. Part of this is the Bradbury-problem; Hesse's imagination works in a pre-adult world where 'goodness' can be separated from responsibility. In a story whose whole theme is maturity, the adult student-hero Augustus acquires it by an almost literal regression from adult life back to his old fireside, dreaming boyhood. This childish streak runs throughout the moral world of *Strange News.* On one page of "Faldum" a whole mountain suddenly erupts from a plain within sight of the village of the story (part of a wish-come-true plot). Hesse describes the birth of this mountain and then adds that nobody was hurt! (p.113)

Of course all writers moralize, but Hesse seems to have willed himself to become a fabulist much too young. His stories consipicuously lack the bite or feel of folk-fable or parable; the characters of fable have a hardheaded survival wit and grasp of concise expression, whereas Hesse' interest lies in people who can afford to step outside social life or simply regress. He never bombards his dreamers with the comic wit of a John Collier. Analysis is even removed from his verbal style, which relies on the linking and (which joins two items without making any judgment by its means of linking). If the plot-material were sturdy enough for this simple, straightforward, syntactical approach, fine; but even the stories like "Augustus" and "Faldum"—directly based on folk-themes—mist out into long descriptive passages. They miss the anecdotes a Senegalese *griot* or German village great-grandma would use to flesh them out. Instead of self-sufficient fables, the storylines are bent magically after a naturalistic story has begun. Wise old Daddy seer-characters float in and out, like the Narrator of *Our Town.* (In true folktales, the seer-characters are usually cynical, hardheaded, unpleasant and double-edged with their advice. *Macbeth*'s witches are more authentically folklorish than the wisemen of *Strange News From Another Star.*)

Rereading, I see I'm much too negative about a graceful little book. But the young Hesse seems to me to have fixed himself in a halfway house between folk and sophisticated fiction, which it's much easier to define by negatives. —Mark Purcell

THROUGH THE EARTH by Clement Fezandie. FAX Collector's Editions (P.O. Box 106, Naperville, Ill. 60540) 1972. 32 p. $2.50

This slim paperback is produced on coated paper as a facsimile reproduction of the 1898 serial version of *Through the Earth* which appeared in *St. Nicholas Magazine.* All of the original art appears, as well as a facsimile print of the brief epilogue especially written for the book version of 1898. In general it appears that some care has been taken in the preparation and production of the FAX edition. It isn't possible to be quite so kind in reference to the story, itself.

Joshua Giles, Earth's foremost scientist, initiates a project to bore a tunnel through the planet, to be used as a road upon which a gravity-powered car can travel at enormous speeds between the U.S. and Australia. He succeeds, but the first trip by a young volunteer proves to be somewhat harrowing. The author attempts to project scientific possibilities and difficulties inherent in the story—including the phenomenon of free fall—but the writing *per se* reminds one of musty cardboard. The publishing idea upon which FAX Collector's Editions is predicated is a good one, but *Through the Earth* is a minor curiosity at best.

Fortunately, other books are available through FAX including Bleiler's long out-of-print *Checklist of Fantastic Literature.* For a complete list of titles available, write to FAX Collector's Editions, P.O. Box 106, Naperville, Ill. 60540. —B. A. Fredstrom

YESTERDAY'S CHILDREN by David Gerrold. Dell 9780, 1972. 251 p. 95¢

Although never stated, this book is another of the many offshoots from *Star Trek.* We have a destroyer class starship, the Command and Control Seat on a raised dais, and all the other refinements of a *Star Trek* ship. The story, in fact, reads like a rejected *Star Trek* script. It attempts to show the human conflicts between a captain who wants out of the war and a first officer who wants in.

The first officer is determined to whip a weary crew and a grossly obsolete starship into shape for battle so that he can make a name for himself and obtain his own command. The captain, moreover, is satisfied to let someone else run things, while he hopes for a transfer to a desk job and then retirement. Caught in between is the crew.

The situation as set up never seems to really get moving. While there is a fair attempt at painting a full picture with much detail, some of it is overdone. For example, the idea of a crew being on full battle alert for 12 days may be impressive to *Star Trek* fans but is hardly realistic in terms of the stress and strains it puts on a crew. In a real situation it wouldn't be done. The story as a whole has little depth in the plot, making the characters seem shallow. This is a pity since another draft would probably have let this book achieve its potential. A near -miss. —Donald W. Lundry

MAGNIFI-CAT by Carolyn and Edmund Sheehan. Doubleday, 1972. 229 p. $5.95

I read this book between midnight and 2 a.m., sleepless from a foolish amount of caffein ingested in the evening, and cried at all the sad parts. It's that kind of book—set in Heaven, Hell, and Earth, with too much flowery description, a Jesus-freak oversimplification of doctrine, a very slight plot, and an intense charm for cat lovers.

Briefly, Nemrod, a cat, turns up at the Pearly Gates wearing the halo of a maximal saint, thereby setting off a crisis in the Cold War with Hell, jamming the Admissions computer, and driving Saint Peter nearly to distraction. Through flashbacks, the reader learns how Nemrod earned his halo by saving the lives of a cathedral full of worshippers, and he is finally admitted to Heaven with all due honors.

There are those who will find *Magnifi-cat* offensive, or cutesey, or trite. I shall respect their opinions. I am not objective. I live with two soft, furry, warm, purring little Nemrods and cannot imagine a Heaven without them. —Charlotte Moslander

SHAGGY PLANET by Ron Goulart. Lancer 75420, 1973. 175 p. 95¢

This is the latest installment in the chronicles of the Barnum System. Private eye Pete Torres is hired to find a Barnum agent who disappeared in Peluda Territory on Murdstone. Peluda is a military dictatorship on the verge of revolution.

I found the book disappointing. Torres runs into the usual Goulart mix of benighted characters in incongruous situations (such as a retired mass strangler running a religious retreat for cannibals). But the humor falls rather flat. Maybe the author is trying too hard, or maybe I've read too much Goulart and his technique is overly familiar. Some of the scenes are drawn out and repetitious, and I find Torres less interesting than earlier Goulart heroes.

On the private eye level, *Shaggy Planet* isn't bad. The victim's fate is truly original. This book is more for confirmed Goulart addicts than for the casual reader.

—Leslie Bloom

ALSO RECEIVED:

The Best From Fantasy & Science Fiction: 19th Series, ed. by Edward L. Ferman. Ace 05458, Feb. 95¢ (hardcover: Doubleday, 1971. $5.95. reviewed LUNA Monthly 38/39)

The Complete Art of Witchcraft, by Sybil Leek. Signet Q5400, March. 95¢ (hardcover: World, 1971. $6.95)

The Cosmic Bicycle, by Satty. Straight Arrow, 1971. $7.95 (pictures)

The Craghold Crypt, by Edwina Noone. Curtis 09165. 95¢

Doc Savage 73: The Seven Agate Devils. Bantam S7492, March. 75¢

Four for Tomorrow, by Roger Zelazny. Ace 24901, Feb. 95¢ (2d ptg)

First Lensman, by E. E. Smith. Pyramid N2925, Feb. 95¢ (8 ptg)

Jack of Shadows, by Roger Zelazny. Signet Q5140, Aug. 1972. 95¢ (hardcover: Walker, 197, . $5.95. reviewed LUNA Monthly 34)

The Light in the Tower, by Miriam Lynch. Curtis 09163. 95¢

Love & Napalm: Export U.S.A., by J. G. Ballard. Grove Press, 1972. $5.95 (British edition: Jonathan Cape, 1969. reviewed LUNA Monthly 34. Orig. title: The Atrocity Exhibition)

The Other Side of Time, by Keith Laumer. Signet Q5255, Nov. 95¢ (hardcover: Walker, 1971. $4.95. reviewed LUNA Monthly 40)

The Perilous Country, by John Creasey. Walker, 1973. $5.95 (Doctor Palfrey, not sf)

A Pride of Monsters, by James H. Schmitz. Collier 02486, March. $1.25 (hardcover: Macmillan, 1970. $4.95. reviewed LUNA Monthly 24/25)

Rogue Queen, by L. Sprague de Camp. Signet Q5256, Nov. 95¢ (orig. 1951)

Shadows, and The Wolves of Craywood, and Blood Moon, by Jan Alexander. Lancer 70409, 1972. $1.65 (2d ptg)

Strange Things Are Happening: Satanism, Witchcraft, and God, by Roger Elwood. Pyramid Family Library FN2938, Feb. 95¢

Tarzan Alive: A Definitive Biography of Lord Greystoke, by Philip Jose Farmer. Popular 00427. 95¢ (hardcover: Doubleday, 1972. $5.95. reviewed LUNA Monthly 41/42)