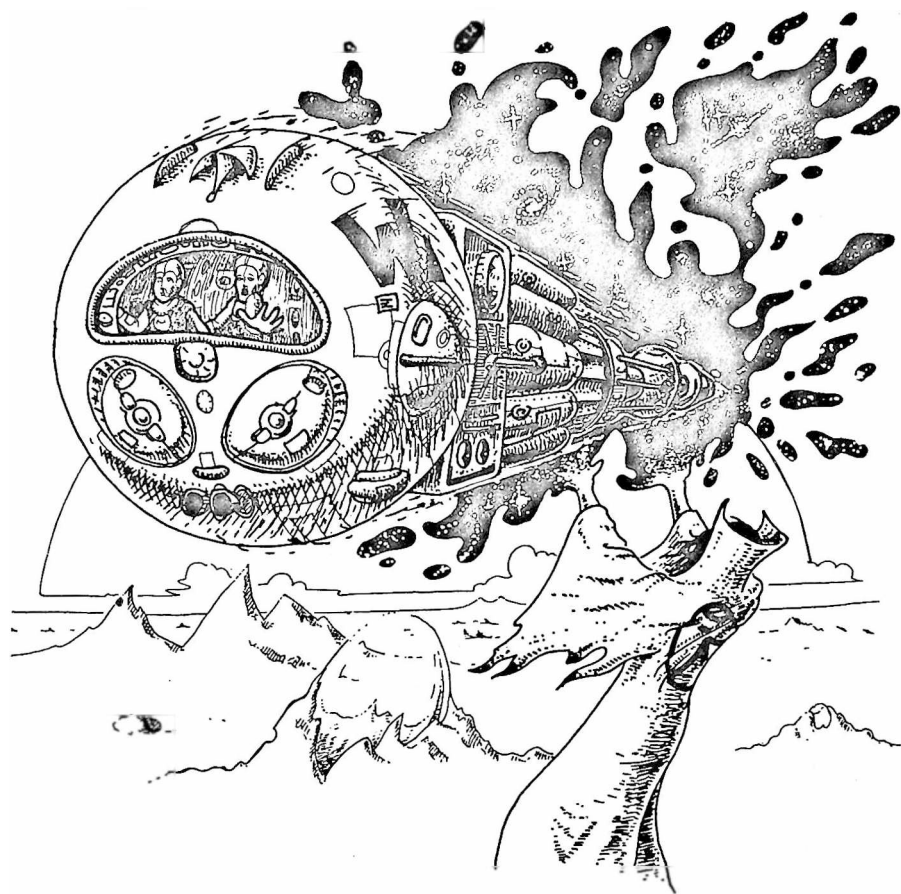


NOUMENON

The Fourth Anniversary Double Issue \$1.50



Noumenon

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Volume 4 Number 5/6 -- Issue 35/36
March 1980

Cover by MIKE POWNALL (NZ).

Interior Art by:

Jim Storey (NZ): pp 3, 23, 28.

Duncan Lucas (NZ): p 5.

Ralph Silverton (AUST): p 6.

Mike Willoughby (NZ): pp 7, 11, 27.

Jim Barker (UK): p 10.

Chris Morrin (NZ): p 12.

Tony Stowell (NZ): p 21.

Chris Johnston (AUST): p 22.

Vanya (NZ): p 24.

Colin Wilson (NZ): headings pp 4, 20.

EDITORIAL

This slightly late double issue means we've averaged a bi-monthly publication rate over the past year. Not quite what we aim for, admittedly, but there have been mitigating factors.

Like the Kinleith strike. For overseas readers I'll just explain a little. The workers, the unions, the federation of labour and the employers agreed on a wage increase for the pulp and paper manufacturing plant workers at Kinleith. So then the government, in a blinding flash of inspiration, said the figure agreed to was too high and, if necessary, they would bring down regulation to limit the wage increase. They also claim they warned New Zealand Forest Products of such a likelihood. After about 3 months of strike action, the government capitulated.

That's how I see it, but then again I'm biased as I'm the one who's had to ferret up and down the country for paper for both *Gulf News* (huge amounts) and *Noumenon* (large enough amounts to cause a few headaches).

I'm also biased because I'd planned a coloured stock cover, but there ain't none.

Speaking of *Gulf News*, that's another reason this Nm (new abbreviation, and it is a difficult word to type) is late. *Gulf News* has been going very well, which means quite a bit more work for Brian. All a little unexpectedly because we've got some of the new partners with us already, and the others are only a little overdue, but the hours they have been too few.

Which, of course, means a few things didn't make it (again) but then there's always next issue. Heh, heh.

But! A lot of good items are included and there's a few added features and frills, so I hope you like it.

—Brian

EXPLANATORY NOTES

sf is the standard abbreviation used for the term *science fiction* throughout this magazine. *SF* is considered unnecessary, and *sci-fi* undesirable.

WorldCon is the standard abbreviation for the annual World Science Fiction Convention.

GoH is the abbreviation for Guest(s) of Honour at a convention or gathering.

*1, *2 (etc) are used as the standard footnote indicators. I feel the asterisk is an under-used symbol and can be used in place of brackets in certain instances.

The following conventions are used in *Noumenon*: The titles of novels or books are in capitals, bold face. The names of films or television programmes are in capitals. The titles of stories or magazines are in capital and lower case, bold face. The titles of articles are in quotation marks. Record album titles are in capitals, bold face. Song titles are in capitals and lower case, bold face. The names of musical groups are in capitals.

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site resens... And evidence... Earth-like with... time for... produce a... Mars, suspens... nar mare. And evidence... Earth-like with... time for... produce a... Mars, suspens... ase... The red dust of... e to... The red dust of... over the... Mars and if it was... from oxidation... sky changes... returned... Mars and if it was... from oxidation... sky changes... returned...

The Wash (Warhoon 28)

The Willis issue of Warhoon (see Noumenon 21 for a complete run-down on this landmark fannish event) has been completed and first copies shipped out. The volume has 614 pages, hardcovers with gold stamping, solid binding, and quite a bit of artwork. As well as most of the Willis writings, it also includes comments and historical/bibliographic details.

It is available from Richard Bergeron (1 West 72nd Street, New York, NY 10023, USA) for \$25. He requests you use an address at which you can receive UPS, if possible, and adds that a certified cheque or bank order will ensure speedier delivery.*

1980 TAFF BALLOT

TAFF (the Transatlantic Fan Fund, created in 1953 to expel popular fans from either America or Britain for at least a short time each year) normally appeals for donations as well as voters, but this year they are appealing for more publicity and thus more voters. Anyone active in fandom since at least July 1978 is eligible to vote (and constitute at least 50p/\$1).

The candidates for 1980 are the wonderful Jim Barker and the wonderful Dave Langford. Full details of the candidate's platform and voting forms are available from the administrators (Peter Roberts, 18 Westwood, Cofton, Starcross, Nr Exeter, Devon, UK, or Terry Hughes, 606 N Jefferson St, Arlington, VA 22205, USA). *

Noumenon NEW ADDRESS

40 Korora Rd, Oneroa
Waiheke Island, N.Z.

MINIATURES

Interesting piece on Le Guin and review of **THE BEGINNING PLACE** in Time recently.

Ren Bova has moved up to Executive Editor with Omni, with Robert Sheckley taking his place as Fiction Editor.

Apparently the Wells Club is still in existence down south. David Donaldson is the new president and his address is 57 St Andrew St, Invercargill, NZ.

A note from John Burt of Hodder & Stoughton: "THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK novel will be available in NZ during May 1980 to coincide with the overseas release of the film. Price will be \$3.95 with 16 pages of colour stills.

"With a new Secret ingredient from the mind of George Lucas it is confidently predicted that the film and book will be even more successful than STAR WARS."

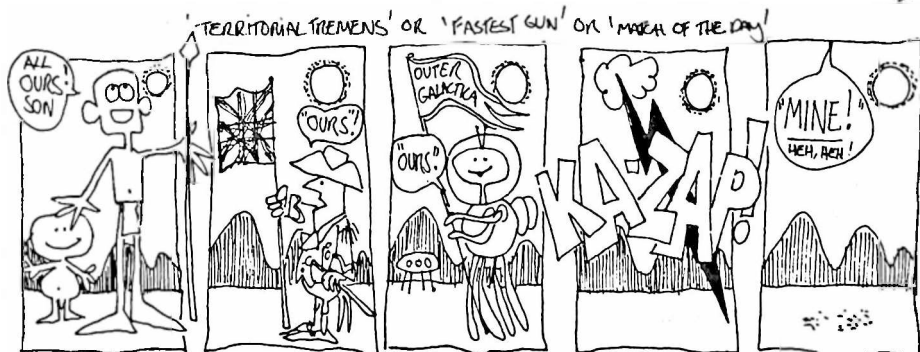
Galileo became available on general distribution in NZ recently with number 15. However, Locus reports they have announced tentative plans to drop newsstand distribution and return to subscription/bookstore sales only. *

CONVENTIONS

WellCon B: Queen's Birthday weekend (30 May - 2 June) 1980. Wellington, New Zealand. NZ's second national sf convention. No further info received as yet, except a change of address: P.O. Box 11205, Wellington, N. Z.

SwanCon 5: 19th National Australian sf con, Aug 22-25 1980. Park Towers Hotel, Perth. GoH: Anne McCaffrey. Membership \$12.50 attending, \$5 supporting. Contact Box 225, Wembley, WA 6014, Australia.

NoreasCon 11: 38th WorldCon, Aug 29 - Sept



4 QUIDNUNCS...

1, 1980. Boston, USA. GoHs: Damon Knight, Kate Wilhelm, Bruce Pelz; TM: Bob Silverberg. \$30 attending, \$8 supporting. Contact Box 46, MIT Station, Cambridge, MA 02139, USA.

Advention 81: 20th National Australian, Queen's Birthday (June) 1981. Grosvenor Hotel, Adelaide. GoHs: Frank Herbert, John Foyster. \$12.50 att, \$7.40 supp. Contact Box 130, Marden, SA 5070, Australia.

Denvention 11: 39th WorldCon, Sept 3-7 1981. Denver, USA. GoHs: C L Moore, Clifford Simak; TM: Edward Bryant. \$25 att, \$15 supp. Contact Box 11545, Denver, CO 80211, USA.

Australia in 83: Bid for the 41st WorldCon. A Bulletin is published quarterly, only available in Aust and NZ, and costs 4/\$3. Three Bulletins have been published so far. Contact Box A491, Sydney South, NSW 2000, Australia. Greg Hills is acting as NZ agent. ★

POSTER COMPETITION

Penguin Books have made available 20 copies of the poster being used in their current sf promotion, headlining the new, uniform cover design (artwork by Adrian Chesterman - see 3 examples on page 25). The poster is 22 inches wide by 14 inches deep, in full living colour, and depicts a very futuristic metropolitan skyline, sunset in the background and the lights coming on in the city.

Our competition is as follows. Senders of the first 20 correct answers received will be sent a copy of the poster. Send your replies to Noumenon.

- 1) Who wrote STARS OF ALBION?
- 2) When did Noumenon begin?
- 3) Which book won the John W Campbell Memorial Award for best sf novel of 1978?
- 4) TAFF contenders for 1980 are?
- 5) THE ART OF SCIENCE FICTION is about who?

Answers can be gleaned from the past few issues of Noumenon. Yes, there is one trick question. ★

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Roy Shuker, Education Department, Victoria University of Wellington, Private Bag, Wellington, NZ

I thoroughly enjoyed the Con, and feel privileged to have contributed to what I think will become an historic event in NZ fandom. Your idea on the Saturday to have discussion groups was a good one, which could be utilized more - perhaps with set topics which people could opt for. Being a film freak I particularly enjoyed that aspect of the Con, and Mervyn is to be once again congratulated for getting such an excellent selection of movies.

I'd waited years to see DARK STAR and wasn't disappointed. One wonders why films like it and SILENT RUNNING have received so little screening in NZ - an article in a recent NZ Listener on film distribution clearly showed the need for more flexibility for independent cinemas. WellCon has established a good standard for the future, and I look forward to the next one.

Noumenon continues to improve. I for one like the longer, in-depth articles that have featured in recent issues. I found David Harvey's discussion of 'contact sf' fascinating, and would like to see more of this sort of thing. I am currently reading THE WHITE DRAGON and agree with your review - I've enjoyed the earlier books in the series but this is the best so far. I would take issue, however, with PSP's review of A SCANNER DARKLY. Normally a Philip K Dick fan, I was disappointed with this work. Indeed, it doesn't really qualify as sf and isn't, it seems, being marketed as such. While it does reflect Dick's own recent immersion in the drug experience, the book doesn't have the impact of similar works by Burroughs. I hope Geoff Holland, who indicated an interest in writing a full appraisal of Dick's sf, will do so for Noumenon.

Keep up the good work.

*** Thanks very much for your letter and the rewrite of your talk (which, Gods willing, appears elsewhere in this issue).*

*Those longer articles depend, to a large degree, on who has the time to research and write them at any time. I must say I had originally hoped to provide more of such myself, so I'm doubly glad when they come in. ***

Bruce Ferguson, c/o D.B. Ferguson, 2 RD, Ohaupo, NZ.

Note the new address. I am about to take up a new job in Hamilton and so for a while will be using my parent's address until we find ourselves a house.

WellCon B organisation will be left in the hands of those still in Wellington and I am sure they will do a good job. I am a bit sad at leaving that behind. The new address for WellCon B will be P O Box 9314, Courtney Place, Wellington. Any correspondence sent to my address will be forwarded so don't worry.

Thanks for the photo and caption in your issue. I feel a bit guilty though. Haven't had much of a chance to contribute for ages now. Hope to rectify that in the future -- starting now with a couple of reviews which I hope you can use. I still plan to write those articles I talked to you about at WellCon, and now that I have stopped editing Warp, I think my main efforts will go into original material rather than typing (without all my usual mistakes) up other people's material.

Michael Newbery, 111 Houghton Bay Road, Wellington 3, NZ. (3/2/80)

The news of the move of WellCon B to Queen's Birthday is very unwelcome to me personally as I plan to be attending something else at that time -- also in Wellington so I may end up attempting mesomerisation, probably to the serious detriment of my health, sanity and shoe leather. But shame on you Brian, everyone knows that Wellington weather in June is *invigorating* -- your island paradise is spoiling you.

Chris Fountain, 96 Hackthorne Road, Cashmere Hills, Christchurch 2, NZ. (7/12/79)

It's good to see that you're not falling prey to one of New Zealand's greatest failings -- praising local

efforts to the hilt just because they are New Zealand-made. May I suggest to Glenn Coster (Noumenon 33) that, if he feels that his grasp of the English language is inadequate, he approach his English teacher and ask for some primers in English grammar. He sure as hell isn't going to acquire the skills through secondary schools. As a consumer I appreciate honest reviews of fanzines and/or books, he they of foreign origin or locally produced. If the "new wave" editors feel that they are hard-done-by, I suggest they sit through a few episodes of "Fair Go" on TV.

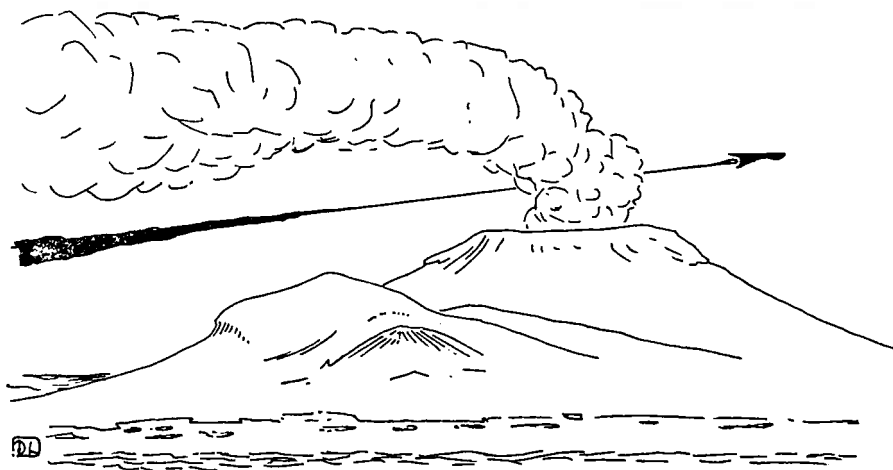
On the subject of Omni. I am disappointed with this magazine. Were it not for the fact that I don't

May I make a few comments in response to Don Long's letter (Nm 33) re sf writing in New Zealand?

pay for the copies that I skim-read occasionally, I wouldn't bother reading it at all. The articles are too superficial and they give the impression of being designed for people with a short attention span. I'm not asking for articles on the level of technical journals, but a little more objective content and references would go a long way towards improving the magazine. Or else, it could go all fiction.

May I make a few comments in response to Don Long's letter (33) re sf writing in New Zealand? There are a few hurdles that the budding New Zealand writer must cross on the way to fame and fortune -- most notably the lack of a local market. I think it's fair comment to say that most aspiring writers dream of becoming a big name and being able to make a reasonable living from their works. Let's face it, there is nothing in New Zealand (our population size being what it is) that helps achieve either goal.

Certainly appearing in local literary magazines does nothing to enhance one's international reput-



6 LETTERS...

ation, especially regarding the quality of the fiction therein (to be fair, this comment is based solely on Edge's special issue — the pits but my recollection was that Pacific Quarterly Moana was paying a pittance, so I don't expect it to be any better.)

What local writers need is to sell to the large prizes or mass market publishers or both. Omni, Analog, and Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine have the largest circulations. However, these markets publish little literary shit. If your inclination leads you in that direction, I suggest you try the local rags and save yourself the postage. Postal costs are another hurdle to NZ writers — it costs around \$15 to send a novel ms airmail to the States (without considering the return postage).

Yet another problem to be encountered is language. New Zealanders, while they may call corn corn and not maize, are not entirely familiar with the American idiom. To "see how you make out with him" has two distinct meanings, depending on which country you're in, as does to be "pissed" and to "knock someone up in the middle of the night." And for New Zealanders who are not well travelled, there are cultural differences that are beyond the experience of the aspiring writer.

Perhaps there are few indigenous sf writers because the local market cannot support them and there are barriers to be encountered on the international market that are not faced by American or English authors.

Alan Freshwater, The Editor, NZ Environmental Health Inspector, PO Box 163, Napier, NZ.

Above you will see why I have't written to you lately, though I have no illusions that my contributions were of any great note-worthiness. I think I may be better at editing though even that taxes my endurance sometimes.

Are there any writers up and coming in NZ? If anyone, you should know. I'd like a bit of sensible speculative fiction relating to public health in some way for the journal. I want to stir some of the stodgy olds off their butts. Arthur Clarke is too expensive because I'll have to pay for it from my (meagre) honorarium.

Arthur Clarke is too expensive . . .

I'd write something myself but my imagination is too tied up in the present. I don't even have the time for reading I once had.

Health inspectors (we prefer "Environmental" Health inspectors) don't normally deal with invasions from outer space, and don't normally run up against the situations seen in *INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS*, but the future holds intriguing possibilities. Consider *Make Room Make Room*.

**** I don't think you should put yourself down that much. I've always appreciated your contributions — and hope you do find time for some more.**

And if any budding writers read your letter perhaps they'll be stirred to submit something. **

Don D'Amassa, 19 Angell Drive, E. Providence, RI 02914, USA. (5/1/80)

Thanks for the latest, fine issue of *Noumenon* (32). Your regularity is impressive.

Some assorted comments. I too found the Nichols' encyclopedia impressive, despite a few glaring errors that I suppose are inevitable in anything this comprehensive. The most notable, I suspect, is the attributing of *DR CYCLOPS* to Manly Wade Wellman instead of Henry Kuttner.

David Harvey's discussion of wargames was interesting. That is another of my hobbies which I just don't have enough time for. I would like to observe that it appears that *Starship Troopers* is rather highly weighted in favor of the humans. Of course, that only emphasizes its fidelity to the book.

I disagree somewhat with Greg Hills about Stableford's *Daedalus* series. I thought *CITY OF THE SUN* was the best of them and found the 6th, *PARADOX OF THE SETS*, to be the weakest. *BALANCE OF POWER* was also indicative of a decline, and I think he tried to milk the series for one too many books, just as he did with the earlier Grainger series. It will be interesting to see what he does next.

I found your review of *BELOVED SON* to be pretty closely a reflection of my own opinion. There's some awfully good things in it, but a bit too much, and I don't think Turner was quite up to the enormous scope of his project. Promising for the future, though.

**** Thanks for the letter Don. This past couple of months I've really regretted not having the time to write to a number of regular *Noumenon* contributors, especially when letters from them have arrived. Still, at least *Noumenon* and my comments here and there help keep me in touch to some extent, even if more infrequently sometimes than others. ****



Debi Hodgson, C/- CPO, Auckland, NZ (30/1/80)

My first ever letter to Noumenon. The zine explosion is hitting NZ evidently, and the differences appear to be qualitative rather than quantitative. The NASF/Noumenon feud/nonfeud appears an inevitability. Why not? Schism is a fact of life in other important activities.

Nigel has been working very hard. (I know, he told me.) I shall be very interested in his results. Peter Graham and I are doing a zine, to add to the raft of NZ efforts: Tesseract, out soon.

WellCon reports: make me even more sorry that I didn't make it. Hence a firm resolution to make it to WellCon B, even with son in tow if necessary, as it may be. Good to see the photos; both Frank Mackasy and Tom Cardy are prettier than I expected, Bruce Ferguson older. Oh to meet such people in person... I take it Zak Reddan is a Quaker (??)

Chris Morrin's art is going to be a force to be reckoned with. Equality rules OK? He did a great cover for NASF's Warp 14, too.

Good -- a raft of reviews. Praising with faint damns. Basically, I guess the function of a review is to cause the Gentle Reader to say "I'd like to read/listen to/watch that" or conversely, "Yecch". That function being right (is it?) those reviews fill the bill.

****Yep, I'd say that's a reasonable summary of what reviews are all about. But the zine explosion seems to have slowed down enormously -- I've not seen many over the past months (including Noumenon's non-appearance too). ****

Chris Morrin, 8 Helvetia Rd, Pukekohe, NZ.
(5/2/80)

Just received Nm 34 -- so dissatisfied with the cover that I sat down and drew another. The WellCon reports made the issue a winner.

****And I like, very much, Chris' new cover, which will adorn Noumenon proudly sometime soon. Thanks Chris -- keep up the good work. ****

Greg Hills, PO Box 9314, Wellington, NZ. (2/3/80)

My present residential address -- not to be used for posting things to me, please! -- is 22 Punjab Street, Khandallah. It's a 3-bedroom house costing \$65 a week. There are 4 of us in it, so that works out at \$16.25 each. Not bad at all!

Any Noumenon reader passing thru and needing a place to crash is welcome. We have stacks of room. There are regular busses to and from Wellington, and the Khandallah 3 route goes right up Punjab Street. Fare is 50c (cheap!).

WellCon B is now taking proper shape. We have a cheque account, and three people to sign cheques (two must sign each): Bruce Clement, Kate Walton, and myself. We have a PO Box (which I have taken the liberty of also using as my own postal address). The rooms at the St George were booked by Bruce and Robyn. And memberships are finally coming in. Production of a newsletter to be sent to all

members of the last WellCon is underway. People who think they may be able to contribute a talk or exhibit or some such item to the con are welcomed with open arms at the Box.

Noumenon 34. My irritation over your comments to my letter has faded in the long interval since I first typed up a partial loc. Since you choose to label my Tanjent 10 remarks "garbage" and deny saying your own words, suffice it for me to tell you to go and leave it at that.

Photospread was interesting. A pity Warp 15's own one has come out nearer a study in black-&-white patches (despite use of the miracle dotted plastic). At least Noumenon's are recognisable. (Mental note to self: wear a suit to WellCon B, I have a reputation to destroy.)



Philip Ivamy, 46 Montreal Rd, Nelson, NZ.
(6/2/80)

I must thank you again for sending all the back issues. Will numbers 1 and 2 ever be available again?

The photo of Zak and Peter and Fantasy 1 really made Nm 34. I hope you intend to have more photos -- they really help set the mood of Noumenon.

You replied to Chas Jensen about sf films making it easier for a non-fan to have access to sf. Along similar lines I suggest that as more sf films come along, more people will see them, so it is important for the films to have better ideas and plots.

As I see it this can only happen. The current films have reached a limit to out-doing each other with special effects. So the only way they can get more viewers is to improve something else. So look out, because sooner or later we are going to get a real all-round sf film.

Before I go I must ask your opinion of THE PRISONER, rerun on TV recently. I think it is the best sf on the box -- ever. Dis/agree?

**** I have my doubts 1 and 2 will be available again. But yes, I hope to use more photos in future. I hope your confidence about better ideas and plots pays off. But it seems there's still an awful lot of people in Hollywood to be convinced first. I don't know about the best ever for THE PRISONER but it certainly ranks among the best. John Bosman and Peter Nicholls, in the entry in THE SCIENCE**

8 LETTERS...

FICTION ENCYCLOPEDIA (which is the best – ever – sf reference book in my estimation), say that in the opinion of many, it is "the finest sf television series to date", so you may be right. **

Roger de Vere, Private Bag A, Wanganui, NZ.
(7/2/80)

It is possible that some of my work may turn up at Noumenon under another name. All my mss and writing gear (files etc) went missing in Wellington last year. Can I use Noumenon to publish a list of these mss? I wrote 29 short stories last year (not sent away) and now I don't even have a carbon copy! Everything went. Ten years' effort down the drain.

The work included a neat file and records of NZ penal History, for a book on NZ penal institutions from 1840 I was about to write. The Justice Department is (was) giving me a lot of help. If necessary I shall pay for a whole page or a supplement. It may help to find them.

**** I'd say it's pretty unlikely any of your work will be sent to Noumenon, but you can certainly put in an advert if you want. ****

Collating help on Issue 34 was provided by Kath Alber, Nigel Ryan, Nigel Rowe and Gary Davies.

WE ALSO HEARD FROM

PETER ROBERTS (UK): "I enjoyed reading the WellCon Booklet and the information on NZ fandom was fascinating." Peter sent some additions and corrections, also a TAFF ballot (see Quid-nunc's).

DAVID HARVEY (NZ), another form letter, but he does promise lots of words for Noumenon readers in the near future.

ANDREW PORTER (Starship/Algo Press/SF Chronicle – USA), who mentioned that his airmail copy of Noumenon 33 was delivered via seamount. Thanks also for the SFCs and the ad, Andy.

DAVID TRUESDALE (USA), who commented on a few of the production problems with Starlog's SF Yearbook.

GARRY TEE (NZ), who mentions that copies of Sir Julius Vogel's remarkable 1889 utopian novel ANNO DOMINI 2000 (Nm 29/30) are available in the University of Auckland library.

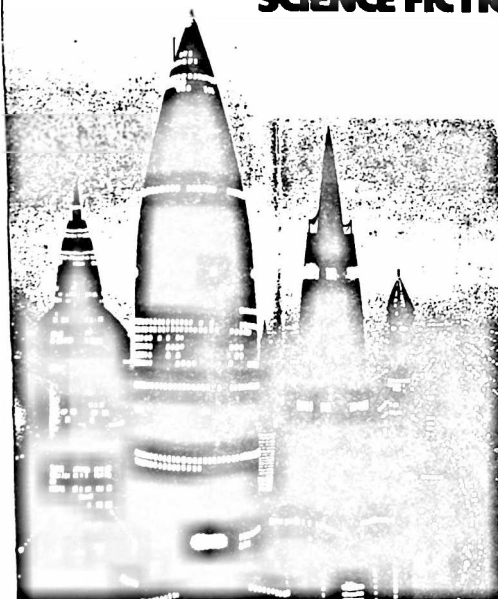
GLENN COSTER (NZ), wondering if I ever loc fanzines directly. Not usually, although I'd certainly like to do more than I have time for at present.

AND a few others, whose comments will appear next issue, especially those for the Futures/Alternatives column. *



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H. G. WELLS: UTOPIA, SCIENCE FICTION, & THE WORLD STATE

A talk delivered at WellCon, Wellington, New Zealand, October 1979, rewritten by the author for Noumenon.

Back in the 1900's it was a wonderful thing to discover HG Wells. There you were, in a world of pedants, clergymen, and golfers, with your future employers exhorting you to 'get on or get out', your parents systematically warping your sex life, and your dull-witted schoolmasters sniggering over their Latin tags; and here was this wonderful man who could tell you about the inhabitants of the plants and the bottom of the sea, and who *knew* that the future was not going to be what respectable people imagined.

In that passage, George Orwell indicates the major position Wells occupied in English literary and intellectual history. As far as sf is concerned at least, this position is based on Wells' early "scientific romances", which lead us today to acclaim him as one of the founding fathers of modern sf.

As we shall subsequently see, critics generally regard Wells' later (post 1901) sf work -- which I am here lumping together as the "futuristic/utopian" writings -- as not worthy of attention. What I want to argue in this talk is that there is a coherent thread running from the early sf onwards. The utopian and futuristic writings were the logical successors to the scientific romances of the 1890's, and, in turn, they engendered the major anti-utopian writings of the twentieth century.

The Scientific Romances:

The scientific romances are fairly well-known, and I don't want to deal with them in detail here. It is worth pointing out, however, that (1) they are still a very good read; (2) they contributed several major themes to 'modern' sf; and (3) they reflected some of the major preoccupations of late Victorian England.

Many passages in works such as **THE TIME MACHINE** and **THE WAR OF THE WORLDS** are among the most vivid and gripping in sf. Indeed, Wells' work frequently assumes an almost lyrical poetic quality, as in the time traveller's vistas of the end of Earth:

I cannot convey the sense of abominable desolation that hung over the world. The red eastern sky, the northward blackness, the salt Dead Sea, the stony heath crawling with these foul, slow-stirring monsters, the uniform poisonous-looking green of the lichenous plants, the thin air that hurt one's lungs; all contributed to an appalling effect. I moved on a hundred years, and there was the same red sun -- a little larger, a little duller -- the same dying sea, the same chill air, and the same crowd of earthly crustacea creeping in and out among the green weed and the red rocks. And in the westward sky I saw a curved pale line like a vast new moon.

The scientific romances established several themes for subsequent sf: the contact with hostile aliens, the journey to the moon, the view of science as a double-edged sword, and time travel. While these had appeared, to varying extents, in earlier writing, Wells developed them further and also established their "respectability" by the very strength of his writing.

The scientific romances were also a reflection of the major concerns of their day. They contain a strong element of pessimism, associated with a "fin de siècle" feeling -- "a certain loss of nerve, weariness with the past combined with a foreboding about the future" (Bergonzi, p 4). Linked with this was a "fin du globe" feeling evident at the turn of the century -- "the sense that the whole elaborate intellectual and social order of the nineteenth century was trembling on the brink of dissolution." (Ibid).

Evolutionary extrapolation was a major theme in the early scientific romances, and the future of the human race -- in both a biological and a social sense -- remained a preoccupation with Wells throughout the rest of his life.

These early works by Wells also showed the impact of Darwinism and the great debate over evolution. Wells had studied biology under Thomas Huxley, probably the single individual most responsible for the ultimate acceptance of Darwin's views in England. In his autobiography, Wells wrote of the year (1884) he spent in Huxley's class at the Normal School of Science in London as:

Beyond all question the most educational year of my life. It left me under that urgency for coherence and consistency, that repugnance from haphazard assumptions and arbitrary statements, which is the essential distinction of the educated from the uneducated mind.

Evolutionary extrapolation was a major theme in the early scientific romances, and the future of the human race -- in both a biological and a social sense -- remained a preoccupation with

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Wells throughout the rest of his life.

1901: the Turning Point?

The year 1901 was a significant turning point in Wells' literary career: he published **THE FIRST MEN IN THE MOON**, considered by some critics to be his last genuine novel-length scientific romance, as well as his first major non-fictional work, **ANTICIPATIONS** (of the Reaction of Mechanical and Scientific Progress upon Human Life and Thought), which represented the beginnings of a marked change of direction. This change was brought about by a combination of factors:

- (1) Wells' improved health (he had lung and kidney problems in the 1880's and 90's and was close to death for several years) at the turn of the century helped contribute to a greater sense of optimism.
- (2) Towards the end of the 1890's, Wells began to increasingly occupy himself with the social, economic, and political problems of his day, and (as **ANTICIPATIONS** indicated) some of his earlier ambivalence about the value of scientific developments was resolved in favour of science.

- (3) Linked with both the previous factors was Wells' increasing preoccupation about the future.

This preoccupation was most clearly expressed in a lecture Wells delivered in January 1902,

entitled "The Discovery of the Future". In this Wells distinguished between two types of mind – the first, oriented to the past, regards the future "as (a) sort of black non-existence upon which the advancing present will presently write events", while the second kind of mind, oriented to the future, is constructive, creating and organizing: "It sees the world as one great workshop, and the present is no more than material for the future, for the thing that is yet destined to be". Finally, Wells predicted what might be accomplished if the future-oriented mind were given freedom to express itself:

All the world is heavy with the promise of greater things, and a day will come . . . when beings who are now latent in our thoughts and hidden in our loins, shall stand upon this Earth as one stands upon a footstool and shall laugh and reach out their hands amidst the stars.

This view was still uppermost in Wells' mind over 30 years later, when Cabal states (at the end of the film **THINGS TO COME**) that for man it is "the universe or nothing". Both statements are examples of the sense of wonder that makes of what it is.

- (4) An essential part of Wells' vision of the future was his belief in the necessity for a World State; in his autobiography he describes "the structural frame of my life" as the campaign for "a world wide 'Open Conspiracy' to rescue human society from the net of tradition in which it is entangled and to

HALF-LIFE

*The life & times
of Elmer T. Hack*

THIS MORNING, I HAD A SESSION
WITH MY ANALYST...



HE TREMBLED AS HE SPOKE, AND
HIS EYES WERE GAZED!!



HE'S BEEN READING MY "GOODMAN"
BOOKS TO FAMILIARISE HIMSELF WITH
MY FANTASY WORLD



I WAS PROUD!! I THOUGHT THE RAW
EMOTIONAL POWER OF MY WORK HAD
DEEPLY MOVED HIM!!



HE SAYS MY FICTION REPRESENTS AN
ORGANIC RELEASE OF THE TURNER
MOTIV IN ME



THEN HE ASKED ME IF I'D EVER
CONSIDERED ELECTROSHOCK THERAPY!!



reconstruct it upon planetary lines."

Critics – both then and now – have tended to dismiss Wells' post-1901 work, particularly where the later sf is concerned. Aldiss notes that "the hundred books that followed (the early scientific romances) do not share the brilliance of the early handful", while Bergonzi concludes that "Wells, at the beginning of his career, was a genuine original imaginative artist, who wrote several works of considerable literary importance, before dissipating his talents in directions which now seem more or less irrelevant". Both these judgements contain a considerable element of truth, but both are also overly harsh. While, as already indicated, 1901 was a turning point for Wells, the break was not that dramatic.

The strong element of continuity from the scientific romances to the later utopian-futuristic work is most marked in the theme of man's evolution.

Although Wells at different times held varying opinions on the future of man and whether mankind was capable of establishing or maintaining utopia, his vision of utopian society remains fairly constant.

Wells is now concerned to direct human (social) evolution towards the desired goal – his World State – rather than simply let it chart its own course.

Wells' utopian leanings had also been evident in the early works. **THE TIME MACHINE**, once well-described as "an epic based on Darwinism", has the superficially Eden-like existence of the Eloi; the depiction of lunar society in **THE FIRST MEN IN THE MOON** has obvious utopian undertones; while Wells had described highly-mechanized anti-utopias in his socialist novel **WHEN THE SLEEPER WAKES** and the short **A Story of the Days to Come**.

Admittedly, there was clearly a decline in the literary quality of Wells' work after 1901. He began to subordinate entertainment to the necessity to communicate ideas. As he later admitted, this led to hasty writing and limited characterization. Given the increasingly didactic orientation of his work and his prodigious literary output, combined with a turbulent and often frenetic personal life (at one time he was alternating between three households), it is somewhat amazing that Wells' work could still occasionally touch his old heights.

THE WAR IN THE AIR and **THE WORLD SET FREE** are two of the few later works which remain good reading; in the former, Wells' description of the aerial destruction of New York demonstrates touches of the literary strength of the earlier scientific romances:

Something had dropped from the air-ship, something that looked small and flimsy. It hit the pavement near a big archway just underneath Bert. A little man was sprinting along the sidewalk within half a dozen yards, and two or three others and one woman were bolting across the roadway. They were odd

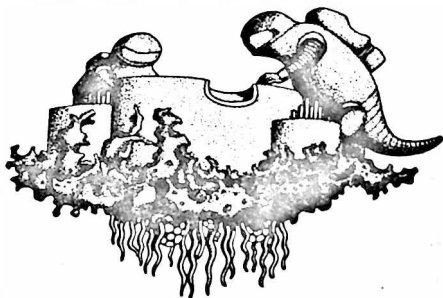
little figures, so very small were they about the heads, so very active about the elbows and legs. It was really funny to see their legs going. Fore-shortened humanity has no dignity. The little man on the pavement jumped comically – no doubt with terror – as the bomb fell beside him.

We turn now to consider Wells' vision of utopia, and the literary reaction to it.

Wells' World State:

Although Wells at different times held varying opinions on the future of man and whether mankind was capable of establishing or maintaining utopia, his vision of utopian society remains fairly constant. Accordingly, it is possible to compose an abstract of the World State from all the relevant works.

The genesis of the World State occurs in several ways: by happy accident, as when the Earth is brushed by the tail of a comet, which turns man into a rather benign altruistic being (**IN THE DAYS OF THE COMET**); by a space-time warp, transporting the contemporary narrator into the already existing utopian society (**A MODERN UTOPIA**, **MEN LIKE GODS**); or, probably Wells' favourite approach, through the collapse of civilization after a global war, followed by the establishment of the World State under the direction of a functional elite of engineers and scientists (**THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME** – in the film version these creators of a new order are variously referred to as "the Brotherhood of Efficiency", "the Freemasons of Science", and "United Airways").



In the World State racial, religious, and national factions and rivalries disappear. The benevolent, but decidedly puritanical ruling group establish modern cities, fully utilizing all available science and technology (**THINGS TO COME** well portrays Wells' vision of the urbanized utopia).

The various books depicting the World State are crowded with (often controversial) ideas, among which are state control of procreation and elimination of the "unfit"; economic equality for women; a view of sex as "a straight and clean desire for a clean and straight fellow creature" (!); and the State's maintenance of a central index which keeps track of all citizens.

The characteristics of Wells' World State are ►

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generally the result of two major underlying assumptions: Firstly, Wells assumed (influenced by Darwin and Huxley) that, in order to better the human condition, man must control, regulate and transform nature -- both the physical environment and human nature. Secondly, Wells assumed that science and technology were inherently good and could be utilized to build a desirable future. (Although he still had the odd twinge of doubt -- witness the sculptor rebel in "Things to Come".) Both these assumptions led to the picture of a scientifically planned welfare state on a global scale.

Clearly, however, the vision was flawed. George Orwell was among those who saw that the achievement of Wells' ideas would be far from "the frivolity of Utopia full of nude women and visions of super garden cities". Orwell noted that "much of what Wells has imagined and worked for is physically there in Nazi Germany. The order, the planning, the State encouragement of science, the steel, the concrete, the aeroplanes". Such an observation leads us on to consider the reaction to Wells -- the anti-utopians.

Wells and the Anti-Utopians:

Before discussing the anti-utopians as a reaction to the Wellsian World State in detail, I just want to mention the stance of "mainstream" literature here. The literary mainstream has been slow to accept sf as a distinct and valid literary genre. It has tended to claim sf oriented works by writers such as Huxley, Orwell, Zamiatin, and Vonnegut as its own, regarding it as visionary or utopian literature, while treating most commercial sf as some kind of literary ghetto. It is a moot point whether sf should bother itself about academic respectability, but I feel that we can -- and should -- claim WE, 1984, BRAVE NEW WORLD, etc as sf. Indeed, such works are part of the 10% of Sturgeon's well-known law of literature!

I want to firstly indicate the general influence Wells had upon four of the major anti-utopian writings.

(1) EM Forster's much-anthologized story *The Machine Stops* (1909) was, to quote its author, "a reaction to one of the earlier heavens of HG Wells."

(2) While writing WE in 1920, Zamiatin was also hard at work editing Russian translations of Wells' work (15 volumes in all). Zamiatin was something of an authority on Wells, whose work he praised as a fine literary mix of classical utopianism, social

Aldous Huxley noted that Wells' *MEN LIKE GODS* "annoyed me to the point of planning a parody, but when I started writing I found the idea of a negative utopia so interesting that I forgot about Wells and launched into *BRAVE NEW WORLD*."

satire, science fantasy, and the adventure novel.

(3) Aldous Huxley noted that Wells' *MEN LIKE GODS* "annoyed me to the point of planning a parody, but when I started writing I found the idea of a negative utopia so interesting that I forgot about Wells and launched into *BNW*".

(4) George Orwell was also extremely familiar with Wells' work, which he held in high regard, although disagreeing strongly with much of its ethos. Orwell's view of Wells' considerable influence, already indicated in my introduction, is shown in Emmanuel Goldstein's comment in 1984: "In the early twentieth century, the vision of a future society unbelievably rich, leisured, orderly and efficient -- a glittering antiseptic world of glass and steel and snow-white concrete -- was part of the consciousness of nearly every literate person". That vision epitomizes the World State of HG Wells.

In WE the "single state" is a highly organized, collectivized, rationalistic and scientific society organized for the happiness of all. WE shares certain assumptions with its better-known successors, *BNW* and 1984, particularly the idea that the more complex and highly organized a society becomes, the less free are its individual members. All three authors view European society as moving towards larger and more complex organization, with the consequent disappearance of the individual in favour of the mass. The three works also all have as a basic



theme rebellion against a rigid and universally enforced code of correct behaviour; this is presented philosophically as an effort to free human emotions from their confinement in a rigidly rational social structure.

In this respect, there is almost a "noble savage" element in the anti-utopians; they assume that certain (for them, indispensable) human values -- respect for the individual person, love, honour, and even poetry -- are somehow preserved at the lower and less well-organized levels of society while they disappear from the higher. This can be compared

with Wells' elitist utopias, in which order and progress (and, thereby, human happiness) is usually forced on the reluctant majority by the dominant minority.

Orwell's 1984 is probably the strongest reaction to Wells' ordered utopia, for 1984 contains scarcely a topic related to politics and social systems which cannot be found in Wells' work – the crucial position of intellectuals in the struggle for power that will take place in the World State; the importance of a simplified world language; the constraints that oblige a successful ruling class to be austere and fanatical; and the resort to "mental reconstruction" (what Wells terms "psychic surgery" in *WHEN THE SLEEPER WAKES*) in order to keep the citizens tractable. *WHEN THE SLEEPER WAKES*, the Wellsian utopia which seems to have most influenced Orwell, also contains the germ of an idea used brilliantly in 1984 – that a ruling group seeking to control the present and the future must begin by making sure of its grip on the past.

Orwell believed that the trouble with Wells' outlook was his "confusion of mechanical progress with justice, liberty and common decency". Orwell thought Wells did not sufficiently appreciate the irrational element in human motives and interests. Wells identified the scientist with progress, and science with common sense and altruism. But for the anti-utopians the equation does not hold good.

BNW, 1984, and WE are, therefore, to an extraordinary degree both continuations of the imagination of HG Wells and reactions against that imagination. As such they are reflections of the continued influence of Wells' scientific romances and his later futuristic-utopian works. Having opened with Orwell's words, it seems appropriate to close with them:

Thinking people who were born about the beginning of this century are in some sense Wells' own creation . . . I doubt whether anyone who was writing books between 1900 and 1920, at any rate in the English language, influenced the young so much. The minds of all of us, and therefore the physical world, would be perceptibly different if Wells never existed.

— Roy Shuker (NZ) 1979

APPENDIX

A guide to (some of) the Literature touched on in this talk.

1) The "Scientific Romances"

- The Time Machine (1895)
- The Island of Dr Moreau (1896)
- The Invisible Man (1897)
- The War of the Worlds (1898)
- The First Men on the Moon (1901)

2) The Futurist/Utopian Works

- When the Sleeper Wakes (1899); reissued in slightly revised form in 1910 as *The Sleeper Awakes*
- Anticipations (1901)
- The Discovery of the Future (lecture, 1902)
- The Food of the Gods (1904)

- A Modern Utopia (1905)
- In the Days of the Comet (1906)
- The War in the Air (1908)
- New World for Old (1908)
- The World Set Free (1913)
- Men Like Gods (1923)
- The Shape of Things to Come (1933)

The development from (1) to (2) reflects Wells' interest moving from a fiction of wonder to a fiction of social concern and commitment; also his greater optimism about the future. Wells' view of utopia (his World State) was to engender much subsequent utopian fiction – see (3).

3) The Reaction to Wells: The Anti-utopians

- EM Forster: "The Machine Stops" (1909)
- Eugenij Zamiatin: *We* (1920, 1924)
- Aldous Huxley: *Brave New World* (1932)
- George Orwell: 1984 (1949)

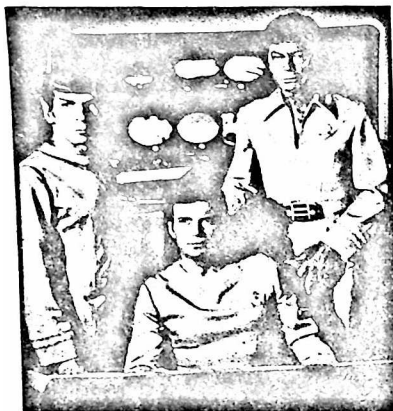
4) Critical References:

- Brian Ash: *Faces of the Future* (1975)
- Brian Aldiss: *Billion Year Spree* (1973)
- Sam. J. Lundwall: *Science Fiction: What It's All About* (1971)
- Bernard Bergonzi: *The Early HG Wells, A Study of the Scientific Romances* (1961)
- Alfred Borrello: *HG Wells, Author in Agony* (1972)
- Stephen Gill: *Scientific Romances of HG Wells, A Critical Study* (1975)
- Ingvald Raknen: *HG Wells and His Critics* (1962)
- HG Wells: *Experiment in Autobiography* (1934) *



Do you want to know what Robert Shekley plans to buy as Omni's new fiction editor? What's happened to Heritage Press? How robots are selling Coca-Cola? What publisher signed Carl Lundgren to work for them only? Information about the new *Covenant* trilogy? Where SF artists are showing their work? The effects of Ballantine and Warner merging their sales forces? Why L&SF is raising their price and when? Details and covers for upcoming books from Arkham House, DAW, Doubleday, Pocket Books, Del Rey, Dell, etc? Isaac Asimov's publishing problems? Who sold what to whom? The latest SF film and TV deals? What publishers are buying SF stories and novels, and what they can pay details of exactly what editors are looking for? Who's autographing at your favorite SF store? What the critics say about that book before you buy it?

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Two science fiction films hit New Zealand over the Christmas period. Both of them had had a remarkable amount of prepublicity and it is obvious that their release was timed to coincide with the availability of holiday audiences. Both were designed to cash in on the SF film fever created by STAR WARS.

STAR STEK -- THE MOTION PICTURE was, of course, a must for Trekkies, but I would venture to suggest that others, like myself, were attracted perhaps as much by the potential possibilities that a wide screen feature film production might have over a small screen, limited-time TV presentation. What we saw was an extended and I would venture to suggest pedestrian script which bore a startling similarity to the TV shows of ten years ago.

A Klingon patrol is wiped out by an amazing energy cloud, which conducts similar depredations against an Earth space station, so obviously the beastie doesn't care whether it wipes out goodies and baddies. Meanwhile Spock on the planet Vulcan fails to achieve his Doctor of Logic degree and somehow establishes some sort of mental contact with the thing. We find out that the cloud is moving towards Earth. Cut to Starfleet HQ at San Francisco where we meet Admiral Kirk, assigned to a newly refitted "Enterprise". Coincidentally enough all his old crew -- looking ten years older -- are assigned as well. We could forgive that wee touch of nostalgia.

But the disappointments begin when we are taken on a tour of the newly refitted "Enterprise" in "drydock". Kirk gets misty eyed at the sight of the old girl and lovingly inspects every millimetre from a small shuttle craft. And so, unfortunately, do we -- for about ten minutes. The show comes to a standstill as we are treated to angle after camera angle of the refitted Starship in a

sequence which reeks of mawkish sentimentality. One wonders whether the emotional feelings that Kirk experiences were shared by producer Rodenberry and Director Wise when they realised they were back with Enterprise again at last.

Once we got under way we are treated by Kirk to uncharacteristic displays of emotion and foolhardiness as he fires the ship into warp and then has problems. Does he think that Enterprise won't let him down. Does Rodenberry feel that, in the absence of a decent plot line, and a total lack of characterisation and development, Enterprise and

Does Rodenberry feel that, in the absence of a decent plot line, and a total lack of characterisation and development, Enterprise and the name Star Trek will carry the day?

the name Star Trek will carry the day?

As usual we are treated to the time honoured burring bleats from Mr Scott in the engine room, warning the skipper that the engines are going to go nova any moment. Either Scott is a doom bug, a hopeless engineer, or Rodenberry didn't remember that in virtually every ST TV episode over ten years ago, Scott moaned and wailed in similar if not identical words.

So after we have met a few new additions to the crew and a few conflicts of personality have taken place, we reach the cloud and once more are treated to an indepth visual display of something so big that it is meaningless and bears absolutely no relationship to anything insofar as shape or scale are concerned. After penetrating layer after layer, vocal contact is established, the thing is called V'ger, it invades the body of a bald female navigator with a high libido (she has to take vows of chastity before she joins the ship) and finally we

W IT CONTINUES!



find out that the whole evil thing is a Voyager probe transformed into a technological monster by a highly advanced civilisation, and it refuses to believe that puny humans were responsible for its initial creation.

Then the bald navigator and the handsome captain whose command has been taken over by Admiral Kirk engage in a spot of symbolic love-making and the film, and presumably they, reach a cataclysmic cosmic climax as V'ger vanishes. Enterprise is released, and despite orders to return home, Kirk decides that he will give Enterprise a real shakedown cruise. There will be no sequels for, as a result of this piece of insubordination, Kirk will be demoted from Admiral to civilian and will never see his beloved Enterprise again.

The purists who read this will say that I have oversimplified a deep and meaningful story about the possible future development of the human race. Let's face it, SF is about alternatives. Some of the writing can be taken seriously, but there is little that can be taken seriously in the recent crop of film extravaganzas, and anyone who takes ST seriously just doesn't know the meaning of the word serious. The movie is a letdown on a grand

I have always felt that, except for the chauvinism and "us and them" nature of the TV stories, Star Trek has been sitting on a ton of potential.

scale. One must beware of Hollywood pre- and in-production publicity at any time, but there was always the hope that, with the budget, the talent and the latest development in special effects, STAR TREK could have been one of the most significant SF movies made to date.

I have always felt that, notwithstanding the chauvinism and "us and them" nature of the

TV stories, Star Trek has been sitting on a ton of potential. I always believed that once Rodenberry got onto the wide screen we would be treated to something that was not only visually splendid, but would stand as a meaningful comment, have good character development, a decent plot line, and a good message as well. All the elements bar the first were conspicuous by their absence.

As far as comment is concerned there is none. The human race, having reached the stars, seems to have reached utopia. Sure we have petty jealousies and grumpy doctors, but all is well at home. As far as characterisation was concerned I saw little if any, and there was certainly no character development at all. Kirk was older and was anything but wiser as he blundered nostalgically about the re-modelled ship. Surely if he had achieved the rank of admiral he would have been aware of space navy etiquette which demands that the captain commands the ship notwithstanding someone aboard who outranks him. And if the senior officer is going to pull rank he will act as a commander and not as a petulant school bully.

I have already commented on the sheep-like Mr Scott. McCoy never changes -- irascible and therefore rather humorous, but a good guy whom you can rely upon in a spot. Spock is Spock. Need I say more. Mr Sulu maintains a degree of oriental inscrutability as he mans the helm. Chekov is still the mad Russian, probably with a bottle of 150% proof vodka (sorry, wodka) under his bed.

Nothing happens with the characters. They seem uninfluenced by the events in which they are enmeshed. They are static, lifeless and cardboard. I do not attribute this to the actors, for they can only work within the script and screenplay. The fault must lie with the creators. Plotting, as I have said, is bare and at times nonexistent as director and producer indulge themselves to excess in nostalgia and sentimentality.

If anything rescues the movie from failure then it is the special effects.

If anything rescues the movie from failure, then it is the special effects. I found these superb, and obviously producer and director were aware that there were things they could do in 70mm that they could not do on 35. Furthermore they had a technology available, together with two experts in Dykstra and Trumbull, and with all of those ingredients it is hard to imagine they could fail in this aspect. Enterprise entering wrap space was particularly impressive, and I give the movie ten out of ten for it. Indeed it is regrettable to say it, but I think that the FX are what will save the movie from being consigned to the Hollywood Hall of Flops.

From a pure entertainment point of view, STAR TREK - THE MOTION PICTURE was good fun. What I regret is the potential that has been wasted and should Rodenberry make a fortune from the film, I can only say, from my own disappointed point of view, that it has been earned by a second rate product. He could have done better. ►

16 FILMS...

ALIEN is basically a horror story in a sf framework. Horror or monster movies follow a similar pattern. People create, meet or otherwise get involved with monster (vampire, mutant, dinosaur, whatever). Monster, generally possessed of superhuman power or powers, thereby making it difficult to kill, engages in antisocial activities such as eating people, sucking their blood or whatever. Monster must be destroyed, but how? Coupled with this simple story line is the fear, suspense or terror which must be created and coupled with the monster's activities. This can be created in a number of ways.

In the film **JAWS**, the shark actually had a musical theme which was rather related to a heartbeat and respiration rate. As the tempo picked up, so did the heartbeat and respiration rate of the audience. Coupled with this was the visual thing. The audience knew what the shark was up to. The characters in the film did not.

Alternatively you may have the situation where the monster has a habit of leaping out from behind corners. The film maker will make every corner an excuse for creating tension. And it is this that is important in any suspense movie, which includes many films apart from monster or horror films.

He has to get his audience to the state where they react to what is going on, the reaction in this case being one of fear.

The film maker must actually convince his audience that what they are watching goes beyond a strip of celluloid and a silver screen. He has to get his audience to the state where they react to what is going on, the reaction in this case being one of fear. The success of the film depends upon the maker's ability to achieve this end.

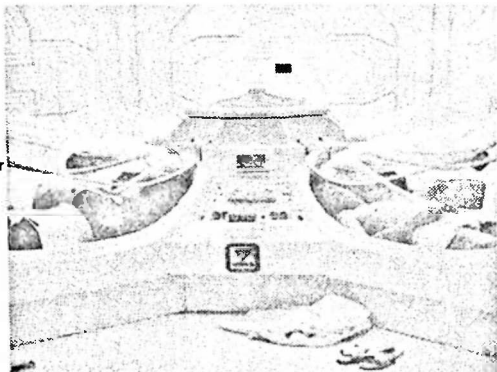
When I go to a horror or monster movie, I can be pretty sure what I am in for as far as plot line is concerned. What I am interested in is how the director creates his film to produce the reactions he desires from his audience. (Such an assessment is true for any film, TV show, book or whatever. With horror movies it is more important because their success depends upon the terror aspect.)

It would be quite easy for a director to use explicit ghastly violence to engender his reaction. However, the thought of Frankenstein's monster tearing someone limb from limb, literally, fills me with feelings of nausea, rather than fear. What the director must do is make us perfectly aware that the monster is *capable* of this, build a leadup to such an act, and allow it to happen off-camera. The human imagination has always been better

ALIEN

Directed by Ridley Scott.

Screenplay by Dan O'Bannon & Ronald Shusett. Dallas (Tom Skerritt); Ripley (Sigourney Weaver); Lambert (Veronica Cartwright); Brett (Harry Dean Stanton); Kane (John Hurt); Ash (Ian Holm); Parker (Yaphet Kotto).



Neotrom's computer, "Mother," wakes the crew from hypersleep.

than explicit representation in these things, for the latter, once seen, can generate feelings of revulsion rather than terror.

Take, for example, the movie **THE OMEN** and its sequel. **THE OMEN** was a superb story of mystery and terror. It did not fail in any area. Photographically it was delightful; plot, characterization, theme, all good. Even an on-camera decapitation was executed (if you will excuse the pun) with magnificent style and with considerable discretion. Having seen a sequence of photos of an Arabian decapitation I can assure you that **THE OMEN**'s effort was watered down, thank goodness.

Now compare all this with **OMEN II**. It doesn't merit comparison. The style, skill and workmanship in **OMEN** was not present in **OMEN II**. **OMEN II** was no more than a snuff movie where people were killed in a variety of gruesome and very explicit ways. There was little dread engendered apart from the dread that the next explicit death would be more explicitly gruesome than the last;



Kane (JOHN HURT), Dallas (TOM SKERRITT) and Ash (IAN HOLM) plan their descent on the uncharted planet.

it did not have the sinister qualities of OMEN. There was not even a conflict between the devil's child, Damien, and the forces of good in the sequel. From Damien's point of view the whole thing was a game, and the human's didn't have a show. So, whereas THE OMEN was a brilliant film, OMEN II which had so much potential, was a total failure.

Having ventured away from the specific film ALIEN and digressing into a discussion on the constitution of a good horror movie, let us return. ALIEN is about a space tug towing a huge space factory complex. The crew is in hibernation and are awakened when a signal, presumably distress, is received. They land on the planet of origin of the signal and encounter a weird spaceship, in which are a number of egglike containers. The contents of one of these containers leaps onto the face mask of one of the crew, eats its way through and attaches itself, like a leech, over his face. The crew member does not die and is taken back to the



Kane (JOHN HURT) explores a vast underground chamber in the derelict ship.

ship. The thing finally falls off his face but, as we later find out, this is only one of many stages of its lifecycle, and the final and most deadly stage erupts out of said crew member's chest at breakfast time. From then on the story is basically hunt-the-monster-before-it-eats-everyone.

In a science fiction context there is possibly more scope for a film maker to examine the nature of horror and suspense. It has been done very badly in the past, but in my opinion ALIEN succeeds and succeeds admirably.

The Alien itself is not a simple monster – we are treated to a thing that progresses through a number of stages in a life cycle. None of these stages are particularly pleasant and all help to develop the feeling that the thing is alien and most unpleasant. Even the conception of the thing by German surrealist artist Giger is alien. Its biology also makes for problems in its destruction for instead of bleeding a harmless liquid it bleeds a powerful acid. If this acid breaks through the hull of the space tug,

it will be the end for alien and crew as well. Therefore, the only way to get rid of it is to push it out the airlock. Not easy when the alien is possessed not only of superb survival instincts, but intelligence as well.

The aforementioned emergence of the final stage in the lifecycle of the alien is the only explicit piece of nastiness in the film. From that stage to the end, the suspense and horror are developed in a basically traditional but highly effective way. When the final fate of the alien is resolved, one never really knows what the outcome will be until the very last moment, and this perpetual query is as effective in building up suspense as anything.

But ALIEN is not only a carefully crafted horror movie – it is a carefully crafted sf movie as well.

But ALIEN is not only a carefully crafted horror movie – it is a carefully crafted sf movie as well. The characters are real. They smoke, are tired, get tense, work, complain, sweat and have their problems like all the rest of us. They are not space heroes like Kirk or Luke Skywalker. They are people doing a job. The space tug Nostromo isn't a hero either. It is a machine which can, and does, go wrong. It is a working vessel, not a spotless dreamship. Everything that happens helps maintain a considerable degree of credibility. Despite the fact that the story is set in the future we are able to identify with the characters and their reactions. And the characterisations and development are all good and believable. Furthermore, the basic plot has some interesting twists and subplots built into it. The alien is not the only surprise in the movie.

At a time when sf movies are becoming very popular, a good, solid SF movie rarely makes an appearance, and when it does it is refreshing. I would put ALIEN into the same category as 2001, DARK STAR, and SILENT RUNNING. All of these were thoughtful and thought provoking films. STAR WARS and STAR TREK may be good adventure stories but have little to recommend them apart from spectacular special effects and a bit of goodies and baddies action. – David Harvey, 129 Forest Hill Rd, Henderson, Auckland 5, N.Z.

ALIEN. Yes, very scary movie, well acted, well produced, competently plotted even. Except, how did the alien get so big before it ate anybody yet? And how did the robot's masters know about it in the first place? And what is with shuttle/lifeboat holding less than full complement of crew? Not since the Titanic mate!

The combination of Foss, Geiger, Cobb and Moebius was most fruitful . . .

The combination of Foss, Geiger, Cobb and Moebius was most fruitful; now if they had only got Druiellet too – then again, it is probably just as well for the audiences' sanity that they didn't. It was interesting to see how O'Bannon handled his

18 FILMS...

DARK STAR alien hunt second time around. Also, who else noted the resemblance of the burning robot's head to a certain politician?

We got to see yet another fancy explosion – the chief virtue of STAR TREK, THE MOVIE was its tasteful lack of exploding freighter/Deathstar/planet.

Some suggestions for dealing with the alien: spray with superglue – all those teeth get stuck together; set the cat on it – anything that doesn't get bit may well bite back; import crowd of peasants with torches – never fails.

I haven't really much to say about Alien that Fred Patten did not say better. Interesting about 'subliminal' dialogue – I just thought (and so did the Evening Post's film review) that it was the usual abysmal quality of the local sound systems. It should be noted that the local cinema a) inserted an interval – which rather spoils a suspenseful movie like ALIEN, and b) played the soundtrack from 2001 for, aft and in the interval.

ALIEN, yes, very scary movie. Stanley Kubrick is at work on THE SHINING, which is supposed to be scarier. Pass the valium please. –Michael Newbery, 111 Houghton Bay Road, Wellington 3, NZ.

Gothic castles have got *nothing* on the dark, creaky, nerve-jangling places in the ship. Menace is everywhere . . .

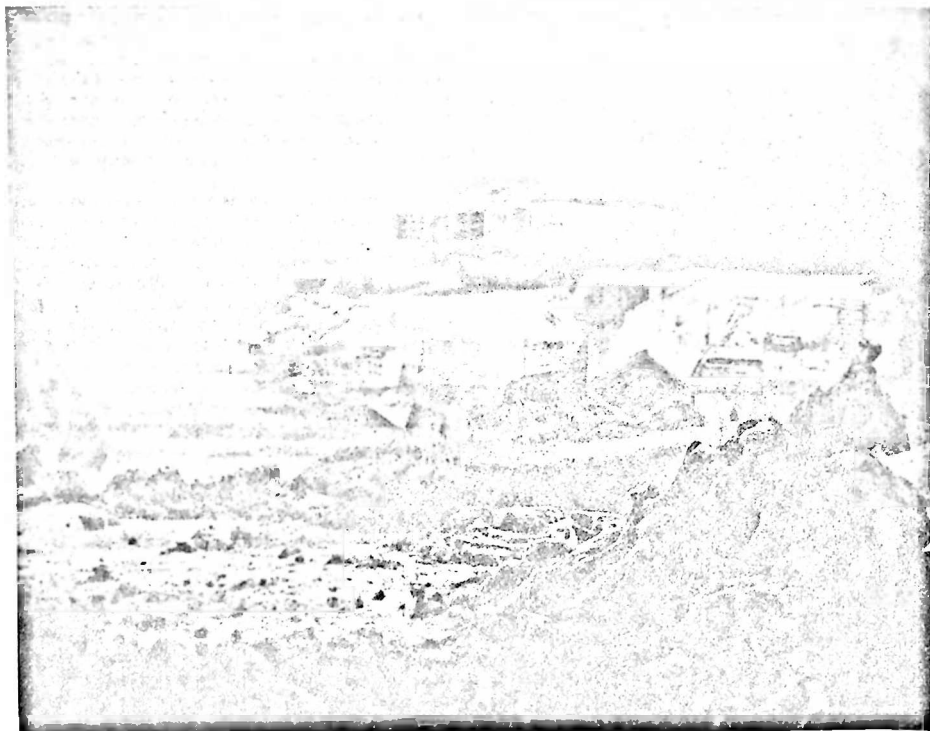
I came out of ALIEN jangling with thoughts and impressions. There were a lot of good bits, a number of very noticeable weaknesses, and the film was a marvelous indulgence of crazed visions (Cobb, Giger and O'Bannon especially).

First the good bits. The sets and atmosphere are superb. Gothic castles have got *nothing* on the dark, creaky, very nervy places in the ship. Menace is everywhere – the new and unknown have few bounds in such a setting – even before discovery of the alien.

The highlight of the film was probably big, black Parker's comment: "It has a wonderful defence mechanism – you don't dare kill it!"

But the film relied very heavily on maintaining the audience's tension. The plot elements were a bit thin, making the film too long to fully sustain that tension, with subsequent lapses being a bit too obvious. For instance, it was dumb to try for the second scare with the cat.

The over-riding worth of the film, and I've seen little comment on this elsewhere, must surely be its wonderful portrayal, in wide-screen technical-



The shuttle, based on Rob Cobb's designs.

our, of the Cobb sets (the spacetug, the shuttle), the Giger elements (the alien spacecraft, the alien itself), and O'Bannon's script (in many ways a re-run of DARK STAR elements).

This is an *art* film! Cobb's mixture of medieval castles, 1970's throwaway consumerism, and 2080's technology is outstanding. Giger's bleak, menacing, horrific, *ultimate* monster is a masterpiece. O'Bannon's subtle and witty social commentary is in evidence just enough to make me wonder how much of it was ditched to make way for the 'studio wishes'.

In summation, then, only the lapses in the horror genre elements grafted onto the science fiction core reduced ALIEN from being an all-time sf great. —BAT

A few comments on ALIEN. I am not drawn into the fabric of the story for various reasons.

I found there was a lack of sophisticated weaponry available to the crew. Various blasters have been featured in other films of course, and yet in ALIEN they are limited to primitive weapons. Their sensor relying on "changes in air densities" seems totally inefficient, for example.

A good idea that was handled about was of freezing Kane and the alien, when the medical implications were apparent. The idea of a small sizeable alien inhabiting Kane's body, for some time unnoticed, seems hardly believable. The omission of a medical checkup of Kane when the face hugger disappeared is conveniently overlooked (or else, the alien would have been discovered). The astronomical growth of the alien from its technical exit till its attack on Brett is difficult to swallow. Granted it is supposed to be a silicon-based creature, but is this supposed to be one of its properties?



SIGOURNEY WEAVER is Ripley, the space-tug's warrant officer with Jones the cat.

Apart from the physical settings and props themselves, the major visual impact must lie with the bio-mechanical effects, which make you believe that the various stages of the alien are alive.

I do not wish to put down this film but too many people seem to have raved over it while ignoring the holes that are apparent. For some of the above reasons, I would rate this film as Science Fantasy rather than hard-core Science Fiction, but, then again, it was another Horror film. I am apt to ask the naive questions, but why shouldn't one question the basics? (In everything.) —Harvey Kong Tin, 49 Richmond Street, Dunedin, NZ.

** See also Fred Patten's feature review of ALIEN in Nourmenon 31. **



The search goes on.

WHAT REVIEWS... WHERE?

Reviewers:

Bruce Ferguson
Tim Hassall
Deborah Knapp
Michael Smith
Garry Tee
Brian Thurogood
David Wingrove



TIME AFTER TIME

Karl Alexander
(Panther/Granada, 1980, 320pp, \$4.95)
Film tie-in edition.

You've probably heard of the plot of this one but I'll outline it briefly. H.G. Wells has just built a time machine, circa 1893, when Jack the Ripper steals it, forcing Wells to follow... to San Francisco in 1979! The story revolves around Wells' hunt for 'Jack' and a lot of sticky (and pleasant) situations Wells encounters.

The writing, especially in the first half of the book, is excellent, convincingly portraying Victorian London, modern San Francisco, and Wells struggling with both.

The problems for Wells, the visionary and futurologist, when he finds his faith in science and technology's ability to deliver man from 'evil' seriously challenged by modern American society, is cleverly developed. Alexander has done a masterful job of research and forethought.

A couple of plot elements are questionable - why didn't Mitchell check the Ripper's fingerprints against Wells' fingerprints, for instance - but the whole thing hangs together fairly well. It is a possibility that sf fans will find some of the discussions and explanations a bit wordy, but I imagine the book was written for a general audience, who would not necessarily be familiar with many standard sf concepts.

Wells is also a little bit too bumbling at times, I feel, but the delightful relationship between Wells and Amy Robbins, and the overall verisimilitude of the work, far outweigh the small quibbles. -

BAT

HITCH-HIKERS GUIDE TO THE GALAXY

Book and Script by Douglas Adams.
Book: Pan, 1979, \$3.25, 160pp. Cover by Hipgnosis/Ian Wright.

Radio Series: BBC, 6 half hour episodes.

Cast: Peter Jones (the Book), Simon Jones (Arthur Dent), Geoffrey McGivern (Ford Prefect), Mark Wing Davey (Zaphod Beeblebrox), Susan Sheridan (Trillian), Stephen Moore (Marvin), David Tate (Eddie), Richard Vernon (Slartibartfast).

"In many of the more relaxed civilisations on the Outer Eastern Rim of the Galaxy, THE HITCH-HIKERS GUIDE... has already supplanted the great Encyclopaedia Galactica as the standard repository of all knowledge and wisdom, for although it has many omissions and contains much that is apocryphal, or at least wildly inaccurate, it scores over the older, more pedestrian work in two important respects. First it is slightly cheaper; and secondly it has the words DON'T PANIC inscribed in large friendly letters on its cover". It is also a lot of fun.

Douglas Adams was travelling around Europe with a standard guide and got the idea of HHGTTG. It's first appearance was as a radio series broadcast by the BBC in March 1978. Our own National programme has played it twice to date.

The book and show tell the story of one of the researchers of the book. He has been trapped on Earth for the last 15 years and has just discovered that Earth is about to be demolished to make way for an interstellar hyperspace bypass. (You can see that Adams uses all the buzz-words necessary to any space opera.) The main characters hitch a ride and have various adventures, meeting lots of interesting people, aliens, pandimensional beings, and machines.

To say that this is a comedy would be an understatement. It is overflowing with irony, puns, and all that is best in British humour. Adams has a fine sense of the ridiculous and it is put to good purpose in this story.

The radio programme has a lot of verbal humour too. The voices of Marvin and Eddie and Deep Thought are difficult to recreate in a book, for example. But in the book each joke can be met at the reader's own speed. The humour in the books is far easier to enjoy than the machine-gun delivery of a radio script. Some of the humour is not found until the third or fourth listening whereas it is immediately apparent in the book. My only other criticism of the book is that several episodes are missing. I suspect that Pan wish to double their return by putting the remaining episodes in a sequel book. I hope they will eventually reappear.

And finally, good news for GUIDE fan. Word has it that Adams is working on a sequel script, and film and play versions have also been suggested. The world has not seen the end of Arthur Dent, Ford Prefect, Zaphod Beeblebrox and Trillian. Highly recommended. — BWF

Starlog's SCIENCE FICTION YEARBOOK — Vol 1
Edited by David Gerrold
Compiled by Dave Truesdale
(Starlog, 1979, 116pp magazine, \$3.95)

Okay, so I know Starlog magazine is a bit slick, hooked into media more than fiction, and relies heavily on hype and merchandising. But they could and should have done better.

For instance. The two half-page illustrations over the introductions (pp8-9) are rather strongly reminiscent of the space art pieces they sell. The convention section (p10) begins with a ¼-page 'advert' for Starlog. The records section (p29) begins with a ¼-page 'advert' for Starlog Records. Three out of the first four sections.

For instance (p12). Brian and Debbie Thurogood (?!) were no such thing, and they certainly didn't start Noumenon after the 1978 UniCon in Australia (Noumenon began in March 1976).

For instance (pp 20-22). Two 'feature' reviews are printed twice, and Vonda McIntyre wrote **BELOVED SON** (?!), in a very poorly laid-out section.

For instance (p 34). The cover of Noumenon 20 is reproduced, *totally* without permission, no supporting text (I understand there was supposed to be something — perhaps it got lost with lots of other things. Like, care, professionalism and honesty). Oh, that cover is now the property of O'Quinn Studios Inc, according to the copyright notice on p 4.

For instance (p 83). Half of the 1978 Golden Scroll Awards list was lost somewhere in the production. The top and explanatory half, actually. The bottom half, however, contained a footnote saying how Starlog won a Merit Award. Such blatant self-serving is totally reprehensible.

For instance (pp 82-84). There are two photos

of Ditmar Awards and are of the Balrog. The written material on both the awards got 'lost'.

For instance (pp 85-92). This 7-page section is devoted to a Starlog poll (*all* the other awards were squeezed into 3 pages!). The results are almost totally worthless because no figures are given, even in the extensive comments.

For instance (p 93). The blurb for the Perspectives section promises 4 leading personalities. There are only 3. Was the other contributor 'lost' also?

Those are editorial and production goofs which suggest a careless and half-assed attempt at something worthwhile.

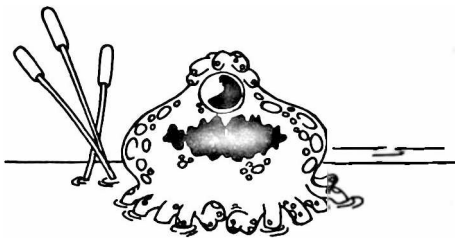
What about context?

The Literature section has four short, extremely repetitive pieces on the sf publishing year, little more than briefly annotated lists. This is also a problem with lots of other sections. There are lots of pretty pictures everywhere (many reprinted from Starlog and Future) but the written material comes across as very thin (even the Film section, which I thought they might have been able to do properly — too much studio publicity hype I'm afraid).

There's quite a big section on prozines. Omni gets half a column; Starlog, Future and related titles get 3 columns, with photos (no photo for Omni; 2 for Starlog, 1 for Future, 1 for Fangoria).

The Awards section is too flawed, as indicated above, and David Gerrold's summing up is a dreadful piece of work — talking down to an excessive degree, using cliché after cliché, and written in a totally inappropriate staccato style.

May the great Ghu spare us from another such abomination. — BAT



ALIEN EMBASSY — Ian Watson
(Panther/Granada, 1979, 200pp, \$5.35)
Cover Art uncredited.

"With this book, Watson has finally escaped any sign of the woodenness that occasionally belaboured and almost marred his first three books. This work flows in the most thoroughly entertaining manner. Levels of illusion are cast aside until the final revelation is made about the true nature of the new utopian world. It is possibly the best written sf book seeing first publication in Britain in the last six months. DW"

[From the review of the Gollancz edition, *Noumenon* 20, March 1978]

22 REVIEWS...

THE JESUS INCIDENT

Frank Herbert & Bill Ransom
(Gollancz, 1979, 405pp, \$16.50)
Jacket illustration by Terry Oakes.

Herbert has used the system of cutting back and forth to different story lines very successfully in the past, notably with *DUNE* and *THE DOSADI EXPERIMENT*, and it usually builds a lot of tension. Halfway through this new book I found the system irritating.

There are certainly a number of very interesting characters, and the main themes are worthy of any Herbert story, but there remained a feeling of something missing. This feeling grew so strong that I recapped on the book shortly before the end.

The realistic characters struggle with convincing dilemmas and problems. Their unusual, often partly hidden circumstances force them to ask many questions, both of themselves and of others.

But when the final pages are turned and the many themes are drawn together, and the questions are answered, the overall impression is one of disappointment.

It seems to me that the realistic characters and questions were tacked onto a cardboard story concept. It crumples under the weight of such an excellent superstructure.

I don't know what part Bill Ransom had to play in the writing of this book, but I hope the book is not an indication that Herbert is falling into the trap of recent Heinlein — self-consciously preachy and embarrassingly egoistic.

Herbert has created many modern/future myths, and perhaps it is too much to expect that he come up with a winner every time, but I do wonder why he constructed this tale around such simplistic truisms. — BAT

THE COURTS OF CHAOS — Roger Zelazny (Avon, 1978, 142 pp)

Cover illustration by Ron Walotsky.

To date, Avon have produced an attractive boxed set of the four Amber novels. Be warned — here is the fifth novel in the series! The good news is that the main stream of the series now looks complete. The conflicts, first revealed in *NINE PRINCES IN AMBER*, have now been satisfactorily resolved. The truth behind the creation of Amber and the true intentions of all concerned is revealed.

NINE PRINCES IN AMBER began with a right royal conflict between the various princes for the throne of Amber. We find Corwin trapped on Earth for centuries by the scheming Eric. Random appears and helps his brother to regain his memory and then the assault on the throne begins. During the struggle amidst Shadow and Amber the primal pattern of the world is damaged and a black road from the heights of Amber to the depths of Chaos is created. The forces of Chaos are trying to regain Amber and some of the princes have joined forces with Chaos to overthrow the brothers.

I won't reveal more of the plot except to say that Amber is one of the major series of the genre. It presents a new and interesting creation myth and has fantastic characters, conflict and plot. Events do not always turn out as the reader expects, but the results are always satisfying. And in this book, all the major questions are resolved, although other books may follow on — the author says no, but don't be quite so sure...

Highly recommended, but insist on reading the series in order: *NINE PRINCES IN AMBER*, *THE GUNS OF AVATON*, *THE SIGN OF THE UNICORN*, *THE HAND OF OBERON*, and now *THE COURTS OF CHAOS*. — BWF

THE INCANDESCENT ONES

Fred & Geoffrey Hoyle
(Penguin, 1979, 155pp, \$2.95)

Cover art by Adrian Chesterman.

Once you have read two or three books by the Hoyles you know what to expect from them. This new title maintains that standard — neither more nor less. A young American exchange student headed for the Soviet Union finds himself enlisted as a spy — but he has no idea what the mission is. He discovers along the way that both he and his missing father are not entirely human... and from then on it's all typical Hoyle. Not outstanding but quite competent. — MKS

LAST ORDERS — Brian Aldiss (Triad Panther, 1979, 220pp, \$3.75) Cover design uncredited.

This collection presents 5 of Aldiss' thoughtful enigmas and 9 of his best mid-seventies short stories. They display his astounding eclecticism and prove once again that sf can still evoke exotic imagery and intelligent ideas in the hands of its best practitioners. — DW



GATEWAY -- Frederik Pohl
(del Rey, 1978 reissue, 315pp, \$2.95)
Cover art by Boris Vallejo.

"... one is Bob Broadhead. He makes three FTL voyages which show him more of space than he ever wanted to see -- and the reader is enlightened about the thoroughly unglamorous realities of space travel.

I remarked to Pohl at a recent convention that the book would make a fantastic film; he replied that he was delighted to find someone who agreed with his own opinion ... and that he was working on it. An extremely well-written and suspenseful novel -- and an obvious Hugo nominee. — MKS"

[From the review of the Gollancz edition, *Noumenon* 19, January 1978. It is worth noting that *GATEWAY* went on to win both the Hugo and Nebula best novel awards of the year.]

THE OTHER LOG OF PHILEAS FOGG

Philip Jose Farmer
(Hamlyn, \$2.85, 1973, 166pp)
Cover art by Tony Roberts.

To me, one of the most interesting events at Well-Con was a talk about Riverboats and Re-incarnation. In it Jeff Rowe gave an opinionated talk on what he thinks Philip Farmer is really up to. And I agree with him.

The recent themes in his books are: nothing is ever finished, there is more going on than meets the eye (the conspiracy angle), and a few others which aren't quite so relevant here. Farmer also tries to overlap fiction and fact -- note his biography of Tarzan (and Doc Savage); and his Sherlock Holmes novel has the headnote, "All the characters in this book are real; any resemblance to fictional characters is purely coincidental".

In *THE OTHER LOG*, Farmer reveals the true reason for the hectic tour around the world in 80 days by Phileas Fogg (again the initials PF and PJF recur in almost every novel). There are two interstellar races struggling for survival and against each other on Earth. Fogg and his servant have importance and their journey is vital to this struggle. The book is written in a drier style than Farmer's other books -- almost as if he were trying to imitate Verne's original -- but on the whole the book is satisfying. Recommended. — BWF

THE SPACE MERCHANTS
Frederik Pohl & C M Kornbluth
(Penguin, 1979 reprint, 170pp, \$2.95)
Cover art by Adrian Chesterman.

This is undoubtedly one of the classics of sf. While the basic idea -- Earth under the control of advertising agencies -- may seem somewhat minor to readers today, the book is so well written, and contains so much social observation, that any reader should be impressed. Though the ad agency mentality is lampooned (as it should be) and satirised, this is not the whole of the story. The "Consies" are a marvelous invention, especially as the book was written in 1952-53. (Why haven't other authors dealt with this theme?) And the writing is so smooth that you glide through the book, chuckling with both mirth and enjoyment at how the authors treat both the main characters and other vulnerable aspects of our society.

THE SPACE MERCHANTS is still a compulsive and delightful read. — BAT

[From *Noumenon* 7, September 1976.]

THE GODS THEMSELVES

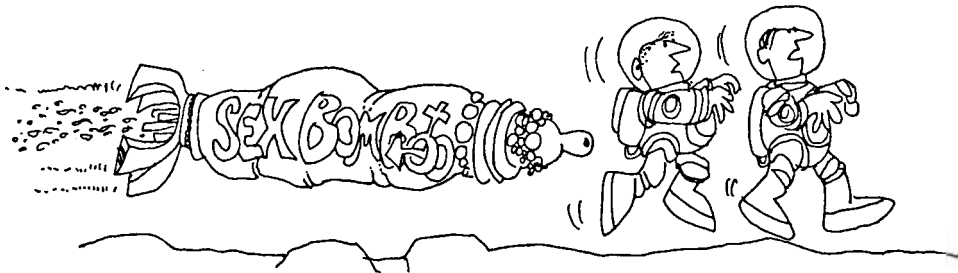
Isaac Asimov
(Panther, 1978, 255pp, \$2.50)
Cover art by Chris Foss.

Attractive but totally inappropriate cover by Chris Foss (a nearly nude Selene Lindstrom I. a la the brass-bra'd sex-obs of yesteryear would have been apropos for gosh sake ... but who said a cover artist had to read the book!).

I read the rave reviews in the mags three or four years ago, and got the hard cover edition out of the Papatoetoe public library. The copy on my desk is from the "young adults" fiction section of the Grafton library ... if only ten percent of other library sf was as adult as this!

The publisher's blurb says "Asimov's best ever!" I agree ... tho' *Currents of Space* (3-part serial, ASF ca. 1952) runs *THE GODS* a close second in my opinion. It is my usual opinion that the good doctor is better at science fact articles than he is at fiction ... remember *Thiotime*line? But *GODS* is the exception that proves the rule.

For instance, it has what Lewis Taine considered the hallmark of the sf story -- one change in the known laws of science and on this peg a novel has been hung. The peg? The existence of parallel



24 REVIEWS...

universes, accessible only with difficulty, each with different sciences based on different laws. A nutty fantasy? Read **ASTRONOMY AND COSMOLOGY: A Modern Course** by Caltech Professor Fred Hoyle, especial Chapter 18, p682 seq.

The novel is in three parts. The first and third are set in a near future, a population-declined Earth, energy hungry, with University politicking familiar to Associate Professors from the Banks of the Charles making and breaking the careers of the ambitious and the innovative, and an extremely believable colony on the Moon. The core of the book is the most original, an empathic, truly alien civilisation in the "para-Universe". I frequently re-read sf novels that have impressed me, seldom at less than five year intervals.

If by quirk this humble usher could grade the Professor this assignment would be given full marks. — TRCH

PRISONERS OF POWER

Arkady & Boris Strugatsky (translated from the Russian by Helen Saltz Jacobson). (Gollancz, 1978, 286pp; £5.50).

In this complexly-structured novel, space scout Maxim gets marooned on a planet on which the human population lives amidst the ruins of a nuclear holocaust. The planet has an atmosphere such that the horizon appears to curve upwards (as on Mesklin in Hal Clement's **MISSION OF GRAVITY**), but the authors make little use of this

feature. Maxim appears to be a curiously passive character for a scout; he observes what is happening but seems to display little initiative, reserving his enormous strength for defence rather than for attack. He displays superhuman powers of recovery from injury and has phenomenally sensitive senses, which can detect radioactivity.

He finds himself caught up in harsh tyrannical societies struggling desperately to survive, but devoting most of their efforts to attempt to destroy other societies. One exception is found amongst the survivors of a fortress devastated by its own side, who are guided by a young mutant wizard who holds a lengthy debate on ethics with Maxim. Another fortress is found to be inhabited by intelligent mutant dogs. Near the end of the book Maxim finds the various tyrannical bureaucracies intolerable and attempts to destroy them; but with unsatisfactory consequences.

Although **PRISONERS OF POWER** is well-written and competently translated, I found it to be less satisfactory than a previous novel by the Brothers Strugatsky on similar themes, **HARD TO BE A GOD** (reviewed in *Notmenon* 10). — GJT

DYING OF THE LIGHT

George R.R. Martin
(Panther/Granada, 1979, 315pp, \$4.95)

Cover art by Chris Foss.

"George Martin once again needs mention here. (This novel) is a debut of considerable power. Starting from the end of the shorter *A Song for Lya*, it is an examination of alienation which hints that



CHILDREN'S TOYS OF THE YEAR 2000 NO.5: WALKING THE MUTATIONS

Martin, rather than Varley, will be the writer to watch in the 1980's. — DW"

[From *Noumenon* 22/23, June 1978.]

"This is George R.R. Martin's first novel and I am truly amazed at the depth, imagination, and caring detail with which Martin has developed the story. It is the most moving, compassionate and sad story I have read in a long while. The characters are very believable people, with more emotion shown than in most science fiction novels. There is dignity and honour in their social setting, but underneath there is a tremendous understanding and perception on Martin's part — so much so that the reader is able to relate deeply to each character, even the bad-guys.

"To laboriously describe further events would only detract from the overall beauty of the book. — DMK"

[From a feature review of the Gollancz edition in *Noumenon* 24, August 1978.]

VISIONS AND VENTURERS

Theodore Sturgeon
(Gollancz, 1979, 300pp, \$15.25).

This collection of stories from various years (1942 through to 1965) show the many strengths of this masterful writer, plus a few weaknesses of, I suggest, the genre rather than the writer.

The Hag Seleen, The Martian and the Moron and Talent, for example, are somewhat typical of their eras and markets — Weird Tales and the familiar-turned-weird plus sentimentality. Thus they are reasonable in that context, but dated now.

The Nail and the Oracle, a clever piece with plenty of subterfuge and guessing, and Won't You Walk —, a good and typical example of Campbell's Astounding days and the emphasis on the power of the mind, display many of the talents Sturgeon

honed to such a degree in his best work.

And the two longer tales in this collection, *The Touch of Your Hand* and *The Travelling Crag*, are both excellent examples of those talents. The first could surely be the basis for a number of wonderful other tales, it's that rich, while the second, although typical of the better writing of the 1950s, transcends most other examples in the strength and subtlety of its writing (surely Ellison draws on such forerunners).

As the best stories from this collection have not been collected together elsewhere I have little hesitation in recommending the book highly. —BAT

XANTHE AND THE ROBOTS

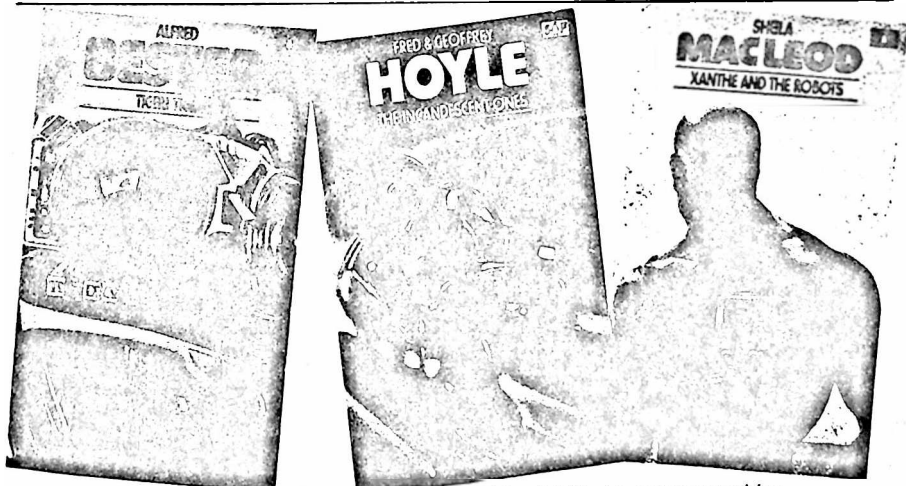
Sheila MacLeod
(Penguin, 1979, 250pp, \$3.30)
Cover art by Adrian Chesterman.

Although starting with an interesting idea — the developing sentience and self-determination of robots (although cyborg may be the more accurate term) — and presenting clear (if archetypal) characters, this debut sf novel gradually falters in one area after another.

I will allow a certain amount of character explanation at the start of the story, but the character(s) must sooner rather than later stand on their own feet. MacLeod is forever explaining her characters — thoughts, motives, schemes, psychological background and god knows what else — and this detracts mightily.

MacLeod's rigid development towards the obvious conclusions doesn't leave much space for sub-plots, nor adventure, mystery or vibrant writing. The whole is like a dry, academic, sophisticated exercise. The writing is slightly stilted also, but I wonder if MacLeod had some model in mind — classic Greek or something?

Whatever, a disappointing book. —BAT



Covers from Penguin Books' new sf promotion — see page 4 for details of a poster competition.

PUBLISHING INFORMATION

SF (& RELATED) BOOKS PUBLISHED IN NEW ZEALAND — JANUARY & FEBRUARY 1980

—Listed in order under their NZ publishers and distributors

Associated Book Publishers (NZ) Ltd: none advised

Beckett Sterling Ltd: none advised

Wm Collins (NZ) Ltd: none advised

Gordon & Gatch (NZ) Ltd: (including a few from December 1979 not previously listed)

LAST ORDERS—Brian Aldiss (Triad/Panther \$3.75): First paper edition; cover art uncredited.

TIME AFTER TIME—Karl Alexander (Panther/Granada \$4.95): Film tie-in first edition.

THE ALIEN—Victor Besaw (Fawcett \$2.60): First edition; cover art uncredited.

EXTRO—Alfred Bester (Magnum \$3.35): New edition; cover art by Chris Moore.

THE HAVEN—Graham Diamond (Magnum \$4.95): First British edition; cover art by Melvyn.

THE SWORDS OF LANKHMAR + SWORDS AND ICE MAGIC—both Fritz Leiber (Mayflower \$3.35ea):

Books 5 and 6 in the Swords series; reprints; cover art on both by "PF" (Peter Elson).

GET OFF THE UNICORN—Anne McCaffrey (Corgi \$4.95): Collection; first British edition; cover art by Dave Roe; includes introduction and annotations by McCaffrey.

THE FATE OF THE PHOENIX—Marshak & Culbreath (Bantam \$2.95): A Star Trek novel; first edition; sequel to *The Price of the Phoenix*; cover art by Bob Parkin.

DYING OF THE LIGHT—George R R Martin (P/G \$4.95): First British paper ed; cover by Chris Foss.

THE CARNELIAN THRONE—Janet Morris (Bantam \$2.95): First edition; cover art by Bob Parkin; fourth in the Silistra series.

SONG OF THE PEARL—Ruth Nichols (Bantam \$2.60): First paper edition; cover art by "E Malizynski".

BANDER SNATCH—Kevin O'Donnell Jr (Bantam \$2.95): First edition; cover art uncredited.

SEX IN THE 21ST CENTURY—Edited by Parry & Subotsky (P/G \$3.75): First edition; cover art uncredited.

THE MAN WHO ATE THE WORLD + SURVIVAL KIT—both Frederik Pohl (P/G both \$3.35): Collections; originally published as *The Frederik Pohl Omnibus* in one volume by Gollancz; cover art works uncredited.

STAR MAKER—Olaf Stapledon (Magnum \$4.95): New edition; cover art by Peter Goodfellow.

OF MEN AND MONSTERS—William Tenn (Magnum \$3.75): First British paper ed; cover art Tony Roberts.

ALIEN EMBASSY—Ian Watson (P/G \$3.35): First British paper edition; cover art uncredited.

THE MICRONAUTS + THE MICROCOLONY—both Gordon Williams (Bantam \$2.95ea): First editions (?); cover art works uncredited; interior art on *Micronauts* by Boris Vallejo.

Hedder & Stoughton Ltd: (including a few from December 1979 not previously listed)

THE SALIVA TREE—Brian Aldiss (Sphere \$4.75): Reprint; cover art uncredited.

THE ENEMY STARS—Paul Anderson (Coronet \$2.90): Reprint; cover art uncredited.

IF THE STARS ARE GODS—Benford & Eklund (Sph \$3.45): First British paper edition; cover art uncredited.

STOLEN FACES—Michael Bishop (Sph \$3.25): First British paper edition; cover art uncredited.

THE DEATHWORMS OF KRATOS + THE RINGS OF TANTALUS—both Edmund Cooper (Cor \$3.30ea):

New editions; first published as *Richard Avery's The Expendables* series; cover art works uncredited.

THE ALIEN WAY—Gordon Dickson (Sph \$3.70): First British edition (?); cover art uncredited (Roberts?).

THE LAVALITE WORLD—Philip Jose Farmer (Sph \$4.20): First British edition; cover art uncredited.

PARADISE 1—Alan Harrington (Sph \$5.75): First British edition; cover art uncredited.

THE STAINLESS STEEL RAT'S REVENGE + THE STAINLESS STEEL RAT SAVES THE WORLD + THE

STAINLESS STEEL RAT WANTS YOU—all Harry Harrison (Sph \$3.70ea): Reprints except last (first British edition); cover art works uncredited ("PE"?).

EARTH BLOOD—Keith Laumer (Cor \$3.55): New edition; cover art uncredited.

THE THIRD WORLD WAR—General Sir John Hackett et al (Sph \$6.75): First paper edition; speculation.

LIFE CLOUD—Fred Hoyle (Sph \$4.75): First British paper edition; "origin of life in the universe".

DOOMSDAY: The Science of Catastrophe—Fred Warshofsky (Abacus \$4.75): First British ed; speculation.

Hutchinson Group (NZ) Ltd:

KINSMAN—Ben Bova (S&J \$17.35): First British edition; in the Quantum series.

GATEWAY TO LIMBO—Chris Lampton (S&J \$17.35): First British edition.

THE ULTIMAX MAN—Keith Laumer (S&J \$17.35): First British edition.

DRAGONDRUMS—Anne McCaffrey (S&J \$16.95): First British edition; jacket art by Colin Saxton.

THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE TALISMAN—Clifford Simak (S&J \$17.35): First British edition.

Penguin Books:

TIGER! TIGER!—Alfred Bester (Penguin \$3.30): Reprint; cover art by Adrian Chesterman.

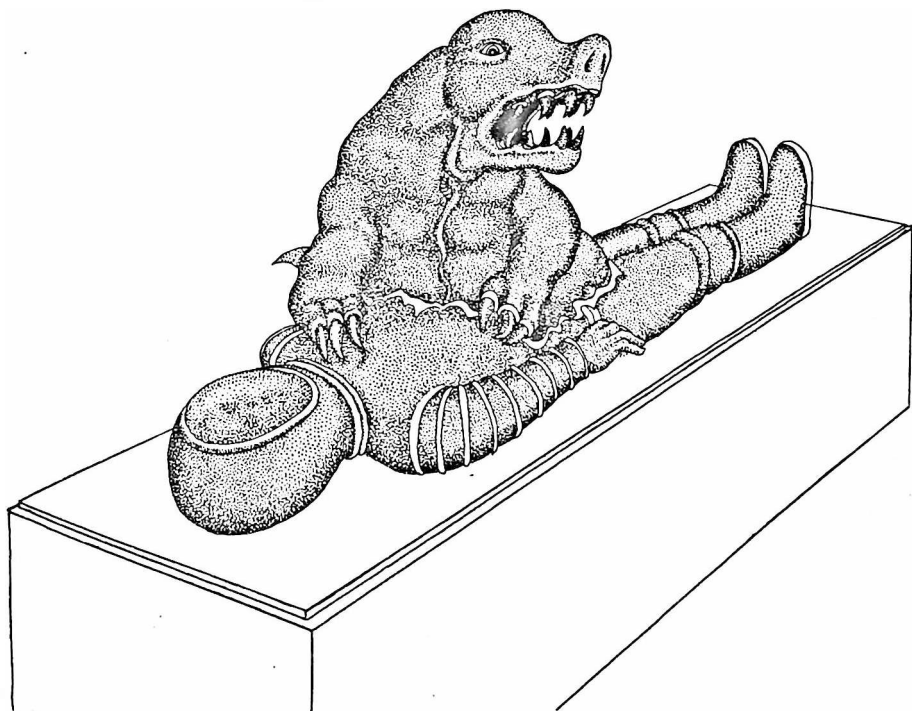
THE INCANDESCENT ONES—Fred & Geoffrey Hoyle (Pen \$2.95): First British paper edition; cover art by Adrian Chesterman.

IN SOLITARY—Garry Kilworth (Pen \$2.95): New edition; cover art by Adrian Chesterman.

XANTHE AND THE ROBOTS—Sheila MacLeod (Pen \$3.30): First paper edition; cover art by Chesterman.
ALTERNATING CURRENTS—Frederik Pohl (Pen \$2.95): Reprint; cover art by Chesterman.
THE SPACE MERCHANTS + WOLFBANE—Pohl & Kornbluth (Pen \$2.95 ea): Reprints; cover art works by Chesterman.
THE STATUS CIVILIZATION—Robert Shekley (Pen \$2.95): First British paper ed; cover art Chesterman.
MORE WOMEN OF WONDER—Edited by Pamela Sargent (Pen \$3.30): First British ed; cover Chesterman.
THE DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS + THE MIDWICH CUCKOOS + TROUBLE WITH LICHEN—all John Wyndham (Pen \$3.30; 2.95; 2.95): All reprints; cover art works by Peter Lord.

Wholesale Book Distributors: *(I cannot certify accuracy for WBD's publishing dates — sometimes I receive the same book two months running, other times titles will come up to a few months late)*

THE WARRIORS OF DAY—James Blish (Arrow \$3.95): First British edition (?); cover art uncredited.
THE STARFOLLOWERS OF CORAMONDE—Brian Daley (Del Rey \$2.95): First edition; cover uncredited.
SORCERER'S SON—Phyllis Eisenstein (D R \$2.95): First edition; cover art by Darrell Sweet.
ALIEN—Alan Dean Foster (Futura \$3.75): First British edition; film tie-in with colour photos
ORPHAN STAR—Alan Dean Foster (NEL \$3.25): First British edition; cover art uncredited.
COLD WAR IN A COUNTRY GARDEN + FRATICIDE IS A GAS + KILLER PINE—all Lindsay Gutteridge (Futura \$3.25ea): New editions of a trilogy; cover art works uncredited.
THE LOST CONTINENT—C J Cutcliffe Hyne (D R \$2.95): Reprint; cover art by Dean Ellis.
THE EMPIRE OF TIME—Crawford Kilian (D R \$2.60): Reissue (?); cover art by Carl Lundgren.
BATTLESTAR GALACTICA 2: The Cylon Death Machine—Larson & Thurston (Fut \$3.55): First British ed.
IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE ABOMINABLE SNOWMAN—Josef Nesvadba (NEL \$2.95): First British paper edition; introduction by Brian Aldiss; cover art uncredited.
PILLARS OF SALT—Barbara Paul (Signet \$2.95): First edition; cover art by Paul Stinson.
GATEWAY—Frederik Pohl (D R \$2.95): Reissue; cover art by Boris Vallejo.
STARDANCE—Spider & Jeanne Robinson (Fut \$3.95): First British paper edition; cover art uncredited (Pete Jones?); in the Quantum series.
STAR TREK: The Motion Picture—Gene Roddenberry (Fut \$3.75): First British edition; film tie-in.
THE WORLD IS ROUND—Tony Rothman (D R \$2.95): Reprint; cover art by Ralph McQuarrie.
LORD TEDRIC: The Space Pirates—E E 'Doc' Smith (Star \$2.95): First paper edition; cover art uncredited.
GLORYHITS—Stickbold & Noble (D R \$2.95): Reissue; cover art by Richard Newton.



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