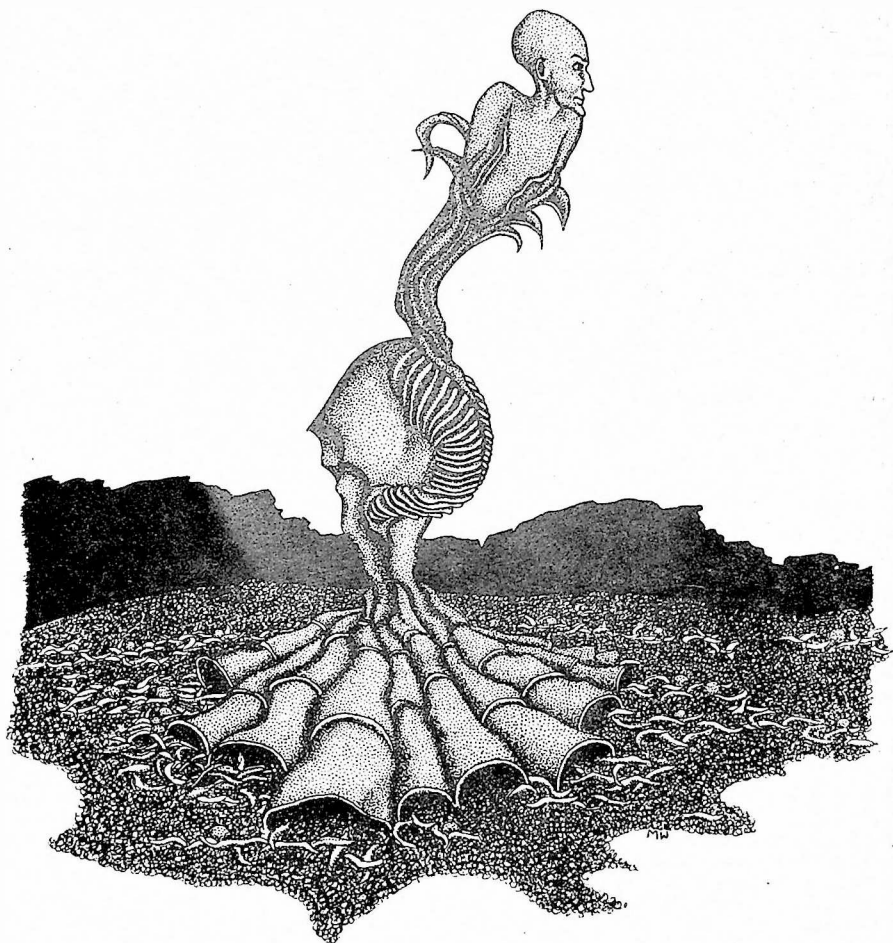


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Jim Storey (NZ): pp 4, 6.

Peter Matthews (NZ): p 8.

Harvey Kong Tin (NZ): p 11.

Jane Taubman (AUST): pp 12, 19.

Jim McQuade (USA): p 14.

Laurel Beckley (USA): p 16.

Crankshaft (NZ): p 17.

Colin Wilson (headings): pp 5, 15.

EDITORIAL

41... "Yes, Brian Thurgood from Waiheke here. You were going to send out that information two weeks ago."

"Yes, Brian. I'm sorry but we've had a terrible week. In fact, a terrible fortnight — the worst I've ever had, I think. Although the air strike has been over for two weeks we're still drastically affected by it."

"Oh, I'm sorry to hear that."

"Well, we've had to borrow equipment back, even go to other suppliers — honestly, it's been diabolical."

"In a way it's good to hear we're not the only ones with weeks like that."

"No, you're not — not by a long shot."

"Okay, we'll hear from you soon."

"Yes, I'll finish it tonight, or at the latest, tomorrow morning."

Hello again. But let me tell you the good news. Next issue, gods and demons willing, will see the introduction of the marvelous

High Tech, Silicon Chip, Laser Generated
Photo-typesetting
with new active ingredient — Regularity!

However, we shall see what happens and meanwhile enjoy the issue and keep those cards and letters comin' in.
—Brian

Collating help on issue 38 was by Kath Alber, Tony Storey, Anthony Lobb and Cherie Norton.

Collating help on issue 39/40 was by Anthony and Michael Lobb, Giget Wilson and Adele Warrander

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.

Mailing label: The number after your name refers to the last issue of your current subscription. Please renew at least one issue prior to expiry to avoid unnecessary postage and to simplify accounting. A **T** indicates a trade copy; C indicates a complimentary copy; E means an 'experimental' copy (are you interested in seeing more, trading, contributing?).

QUIDNUNC'S PAGE

Imagine there's no heaven
It's easy if you try
No hell below us
Above us only sky
Imagine all the people
Living for today

Imagine there's no countries
It isn't hard to do
Nothing to kill or die for
And no religion too
Imagine all the people
Living life in peace

Imagine no possessions
I wonder if you can
No need for greed or hunger
A brotherhood of man
Imagine all the people
Sharing all the world

You may say I'm a dreamer
But I'm not the only one
I hope someday you'll join us
And the world will be as one.

— John Ono Lennon
(October 1940–December 1980)

Science Fiction, described as escapist literature, often displays a 'positive' escapism — an escape from an often negative and stupid world; an escape into a description of a potentially pro-life and worthwhile civilization. And people other than sf authors and fans rail against the waste and hypocrisy of modern 'cultures', and call for sensibility and intelligence. John Lennon, Samuel Delany, Ursula Le Guin — these people speak to me equally. Now one is lost. Our civilization, our world — Earth has lost a lot. — Brian

MINIATURES

Ace have announced a number of significant titles, including **DIRECT DESCENT** by Frank Herbert, **EXPANDED UNIVERSE** by Robert Heinlein, **FEDERATION** by H Beam Piper and **THE FINAL ENCYCLOPEDIA** by Gordon Dickson.

Davis Publications (Isaac Asimov's and Analog) has announced a third sf magazine. It will be digest size and will feature three 25,000 word condensations of new novels each issue — it will be called, obviously, **Science Fiction Digest**. Editorial duties will be shared by existing staff and the first issue is due in August.

Both IASFM and Analog will have new logos starting with their April issues. IASFM cashes in on the selling power of "ASIMOV" and Analog is another

confusion of words and messages.

Starblaze have published a collection of Katherine MacLean's stories, including the Nebula-winning **The Missing Man** and others from "Best of the Year" anthologies.

Selected and introduced by the author, **THE TROUBLE WITH YOU EARTH PEOPLE** also includes **The Gambling Hell** and the **Sinful Girl**; **Syndrome Johnny**, **Collision Orbit**, "Contagion", and the title story. ★

BRITISH FANTASY AWARDS

The 1980 Awards for work first published in 1979 were announced at FantasyCon VI in October. Main winners were:

Novel

1. **DEATH'S MASTER** — Tannith Lee
2. **HARPIST IN THE WIND** — Patricia McKillip
3. **SORCERER'S SON** — Phillis Eisenstein

Short Fiction

- The Button Molder** — Fritz Leiber (Whispers 13/14)
2. **First Make Them Mad** — Adrian Cole (Fantasy Tales 4)
3. **Red As Blood** — Tannith Lee (F&SF, July 79) ★

STRIP NEWS

Colin Wilson's artwork has been appearing in a number of comic zines, most visible being the 3 colour cover for **Bem** 31 recently. Still haven't heard a word from the Wilson on any major works he's involved in though (he never was much at letter writing).

The Eagle Awards for 1979 work were announced recently, with **X-Men** winning the American section for the 4th year in a row, and by a healthy margin (297 votes, 2nd was Avengers with 110). Favourite new titles were **Howard the Duck** (202), **Rom** (185) and **Time Warp** (67). Favourite fanzine was **The Comics Journal** (223).

In the British section, **2000AD** (305 votes) was a clear winner over **Dr Who** (97). Favourite fanzine was **Bem** (255).

[Bem: Martin Lock, 3 Marlow Court, Britannia Square, Worcester, WR1 3DP, U.K. \$11.00/5 issues.]

Heavy Metal publisher Len Mogel is now also official editor after the departure of Ted White. There is an extensive, interesting and very informative interview with White in **The Comics Journal** 59 where he talks on Heavy Metal, Comics, art, drugs, music, artists, etc, etc.

[**The Comics Journal**: Gary Groth, 196 West Haviland Lane, Stamford, CT 06903, USA. \$7.95 /8 issues.] ★

4 QUIDNUNCs...

HUGO NOMINATIONS

Denvention Two sent out the 1981 Hugo Award nomination forms (for work first published in 1980) around Christmas. Only members can nominate and subsequently vote (there are usually far more voters than nominators).

As of their last count there were 1796 attending members and 558 supporting, including 124 (only!) for Australia and 20 for NZ. Australia in '83 is going to need a lot more than that! So join up and vote for A in '83. (See Convention listing for Denvention information -- you have to be a member to vote for the 1983 site.) *

CONVENTIONS

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.

NorCon: NZ's 3rd national sf con. Queen's Birthday weekend (May 29 - June 1) 1981. Auckland University student union buildings. \$15 attending, \$5 supporting (up to end of 1980); \$18 and \$7 thereafter. Contact Box 5651, Wellesley St., Auckland 1, NZ.

Chris Morrin (2/621 Remuera Rd. Remuera, Auckland, NZ) has advised that an Artshow is being organised for NorCon. Entry requests and contributions will be accepted until about May 22, so please let him know if you can enter any art works.

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. *





Eric Lindsay, 6 Hillcrest Ave, Faulconbridge,
NSW 2776, Australia.

Thanks for Nm 37. Is it not amazing the restricted number of nominations needed to get onto the Hugo ballot? Short story especially. Fandom being what it is, I suggest a non-existent novel be nominated next year. Interested also to see reports of so many NZ sf fanzines -- nice to see that number.

I have to fully agree with your praise of Gordon R Dickson's *THE ALIEN WAY* -- unfairly neglected.

Thanks also for Nm 38 -- don't know how you manage such regular publication.

*** I manage it by cheating. I assemble and print all of the issues for a year in advance and then leave big gaps between some issues to prove Nm is a real fanzine. ***

Don D'Amassa, 323 Dodge Street, East Providence, RI 02914, USA (29/11/80)

As always, I enjoyed the latest issues of Nm, which surfaced in my mail recently. As you may have noticed above, I have recently moved, this time for what will probably be the last time in my life. We've purchased a 14-room house with a separate four car garage that is being converted into a library with about 50,000 book capacity, I estimate. And there's an acre of land, so I can expand the library in a few years if it becomes necessary.

Back to Nm 37, it isn't true that *THE ALIEN WAY* by Gordon Dickson was largely ignored. It was a very strong contender for the Hugo the year it came out, as I recall, and I remember it being touted as the best thing Dickson ever wrote. Not true, in my opinion. I still think *DORSAL* is best, with *TIME STORM* a close second. There was at least one US reprint since the original Bantam paperback edition (expanded from a short story called "The Hard Way"), but I don't recall when or by whom.

Ian McLachlan wanted to know details about *EMPIRE* by Clifford Simak (Nm 38). It's only appearance was as a *Galaxy* novel. It's a conventional space opera with a suitably villainous villain romping across the spaceways, and a band of soft spoken good guys outwitting him in the end through superior application of perspicience. It's

typical of its type, though better written than most, but it deserves the limbo it resides in. Lacking the scope of the inferior *THE COSMIC ENGINEERS*, it has never been reprinted.

*** THE ALIEN WAY is not mentioned in Fran-son's History of the Hugo (etc) Awards booklet so I didn't know it had been a "strong contender" ***

Lynne Holdom, PO Box 5, Prompton Lakes, NJ 07442, USA

Thanks for continuing to send Nm. I've been so lax at responding, I expect to be taken off your mailing list.

I think *RATCATCHER* would have been quite a good title for *THE FLORIANS*, better than *THE FLORIANS* which shows about as much imagination as I do when I think of titles for stories. I am looking forward to Stableford's new series. The latest Stableford novel I read was called *THE WALKING SHADOW*. I found parts of it quite interesting including the idea of third level life, but it was too episodic for my taste. Also a bit pessimistic after a build-up and scope almost rivaling Stapledon's. I often think anyone who can't think of anything to write about should dip into *LAST AND FIRST MEN* at random and get a plot. Stapledon would never miss it.

SF has made it to Academia and I'm not too sure I'm happy about this. First of all sf isn't supposed to be great literature but entertainment. Yes, I know Dickens wrote primarily for entertainment as well, but... Consider the bulk of fiction written. Most of it is crappy even by sf standards. I work in a bookstore so I know what we carry and what sells. TV tie-ins (stories from *HAPPY DAYS* and *THE LOVE BOAT*). Now they are serializing soap operas as fiction and *DALLAS* has surfaced. People are recommending that these be used in schools as kids are more interested in reading this than *GREAT EXPECTATIONS*. Also Gothics, especially horror Gothics. While *THE SHINNING* may be a good book, most of this stuff is not very well written.

People aren't choosing between sf and great literature, they're choosing between sf, Gothics, mysteries, occult novels, TV tie-ins etc. We sell three copies of a so-called classic a year if lucky, unless some teacher orders his class to read it. Literary values are appreciated by an even smaller minority than sf is. I admit that I was an anthropology major rather than an English major. But I did teach high school English for one year and most students would prefer erotica or true confessions to literature of any stripe. It is sad to consider that even reading about Fonzie or JR Ewing is a step up for a lot of people.

Yes, our ecology is changing. I do get upset about it. However it can do so without any interference from man. I have heard that Mt St Helens has spewed more pollution into the air than all the factories and such since 1900. Ecologists are mad but it's very hard to argue with a volcano. Rainwater has become more acid or more base in

6 LETTERS...

the past. Something eroded and otherwise wore down the hills surrounding the Hudson which once were more like the Rockies, or your Alps.



While I do agree with some controls, people often get carried away. Change (environmental or any other) is a natural part of things. I have heard that the atmosphere was once ammonia/methane until plants broke it down to oxygen/nitrogen. Imagine the environmental impact that had. Here in NJ, they are very concerned with illegal dumping of toxic chemicals and rightly so. But the companies ask: "Where can we dump legally?" and get no answer. No one wants to have chemical dumps near them. Yet everyone says these chemicals are necessary. So someone had better figure out a way to dispose of them if we have to send them up into space.

I send out a fanzine bulk mail (roughly 300 copies) every two months. Two or three get lost in the mail. I lost more when I sent mail out by regular third class and four times the postage (40c vs 8.4c).

I didn't like *THE FOUNTAINS OF PARADISE* but then I rarely like Clarke. I preferred Sheffield's handling of the same idea. Engineering per se bores me. I can't really get into Hogan's work though *THRICE UPON A TIME* had moments. I liked it more because I have travelled in Scotland and the highlands and found the setting interesting.

A friend of mine once took a SF course in college taught by an avowed Marxist who interpreted everything by Marxist values and skipped SF authors who couldn't easily be criticized this way. Heinlein wasn't discussed, nor was Clarke. A lot of students, previously unacquainted with SF got a bad impression of it (they might have anyway but

who's to know). On the other hand, the teacher at the local Catholic HS assigned *I WILL FEAR NO EVIL*, *DHALGREN* and several novels by Stanislaus Lem to the SF appreciation class.

I agree that *THE ALIEN WAY* is one of the best, if not the best, Dickson novel. Greg Hills wrote an article in which he stated just why he was not fond of Dickson's work. The criticism doesn't apply to *THE ALIEN WAY*.

Michael Newbery, 111 Houghton Bay Road, Wellington 3, NZ. (9/1/81)

I pen an epistle to Noumenon and lo! The next ish doth straitway appear. This phenomenon hath been previously remarked on by myself and others, proof of the order inherent in the cosmos. Bruce Ferguson firmly identifies it (Nm 37) as Someone-or-other's Law. I will endeavour to invoke it should Noumenon ever again prove tardy.

Behold! another first for fandom! Proof that loquac abates glandular fever. The alternate hypothesis -- that the imminent arrival of Noumenon sets up ætheric vibrations causing the application of crayon to paper -- I reject out of hand.

Since there seem to be some STEELEYE SPAN fen among N's readers you might like to inform them that the band has reformed and a new album is due out here in March.

Sequels, ho hum. From the people that brought you Bugs Bunny and the Roadrunner comes *SUPERMAN II*, which includes a quick rerun of some of Superman I, very much like part II of a 2-part story on the box. It was at least a better way of filling in the credits than the previous effort. Christopher Reeve is as usual perfectly cast but Brando had more sense than to show up this time round.

On the plus side the scripting is very good, even witty, and there are lots of splendid visual details reminiscent of Barks' Donald Duck comics. The movie is a celebration of the comic strip -- down to the tacky plot.

For the superhero we provide some super villains. Lois Lane discovers our hero's secret identity. Superman loses his super powers, and the cast generally have a wonderful time camping it up.

Unfortunately someone also decided to stir some sex and violence into the pot-pourri and it doesn't work. As *The Empire Strikes Back* to *Star Wars*, so *Superman II* lacks the joy de vivre of its predecessor (for all that it has a Parisian scene).

For *Superman I* the publicity proclaimed, "You will believe a man can fly" -- in part II the special effects are just there, like 'em or lump 'em, and owe rather more to *Towering Inferno* and other disaster flick than anything else. The feeling is that there was just that bit less *care* expended on the movie.

Also, *Superman II* is not SF, although *Superman I* may have been. It's still good fun mind you, a worthwhile evenings entertainment, but if you want camp movies try the Rocky Horror Picture Show; if you want special effects: *Star Wars* or *TESB*; if you really want to find out why Lois Lane has a

sudden craving for Hamburger with all the trimmings at 9.30am you'll have to wait for Superman III.

THE FINAL COUNTDOWN, however, is sf -- at least the plot is. What if we could take modern weaponry and foreknowledge/hindsight back to some crucial historical event, say an aircraft carrier back to just before Pearl Harbour? Could we change history? What about the grandfather paradox?

That's the movie folks. One 'time storm' to get the USS Nimitz back to 1941 and another to haul it back to the present -- leaving the history books unchanged.

The guts of the movie is "life aboard an aircraft carrier" and very good advertising it is too. The RNZN had recruiting posters displayed prominently outside the theatre. We stay comfortably aboard the carrier -- and in 1980 -- throughout most of the movie. Cheap thrills are provided as Tomcat fighters outfly a couple of Zeroes and eventually knock them out of the sky. More cheap thrills as planes scramble from the carrier's flight deck. Plus mounting tension as it looks as if we might actually get to see the Japanese fleet blown out of the water. Sorry folks, the budget doesn't run to that -- back to 1980 via a much less expensive time storm.

The plot glosses over the changes of attitude of forty years, there is a slightly smug nod towards feminism, but the black executive officer elicits not the slightest visible reaction from the 1941 senator. In fact nearly all the interesting plot

progressions are ignored. The cast proceed comfortably through the script and at the end nothing happened. Such virtue as the movie has rests in the feeling (hope?) that something might be changed, but in the end nothing has.

A cheap, sorry, low budget movie for lovers of Warship and little boys who want to play battleships.

Since you ask, retain Rags, Solecism & Riches list if not review all NZ 'zines received -- is Noumenon not the New Zealand Science Fiction Magazine? -- plus those 'zines you like. By all means revive the sf art column, 'tho Rollo be an awful hard act to follow, and continue Starship Minstrels. And write out one hundred times: hopefully is an adverb!

Happy New Year and I await Noumenon 41 hopefully.

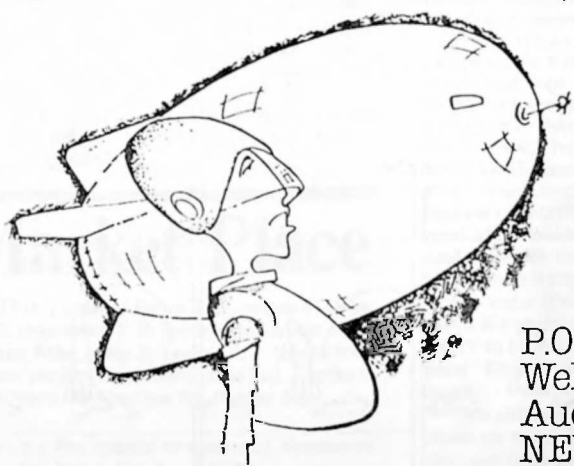
*** Actually, I just wait until I know Greg Hills, Bruce Ferguson, David Bimler, David Harvey and your good self have just about got that 'last plea' letter into the mail and then ship out the next Noumenon -- hopefully to cross in the mail with all those letters. ***

David Bimler, 199 Ferguson Street, Palmerston North, NZ.

There seems much lately on the literary aspects of science fiction: sf and games, sf in education, and so weiter. No-one could accuse Noumenon of being lightweight. But why squeeze out the letters?

NORCON 81

NEW ZEALAND'S THIRD NATIONAL
SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION...



May 29 -
June 1,
1981

P.O. Box 5651,
Wellesley Street,
Auckland,
NEW ZEALAND.

8 LETTERS...

(Nm 39/40). Surely a Double Issue could accommodate more content than 28 pages, besides simply maintaining a publishing schedule.

The Dragonrider series seems fashionable; might I ask why? I own there's enough in the basic notion -- a world protected from interplanetary blight by dragons and riders in symbiosis -- to warrant *one* novel (after an aliquot of disbelief has been hoisted safely out of the way). Ditto the recurrent subplot -- an adolescent is hampered by the barbarity of his/her surrounds. But *six*?

My misgivings took form when recently I read **THE WHITE DRAGON** (scarcely a year behind publication... we must avoid above all else seeming trendy...) 450 pages, this was, filled largely by the meticulous description of every banquet, every outbreak of festivities. The construction and unveiling of Robinton's happy retirement home take a score or two pages -- all irrelevant! And it's all in superlatives! No garment or chattel described is of less than maximum splendour.

It would be harsh to compare **THE WHITE DRAGON** with the picture on a chocolate box. No, it reminded me more than else of Celtic legend cycles. In for instance the Mabinogion, the book of Welsh tales, no chieftan offers guests a less than munificent welcome; no garment is mentioned unless it be brocaded or silk, in some primary colour; knights (the tales being influenced by legends of Arthur and Charlemagne) are never less than puissant. Anne

McCaffrey is equally unwilling to qualify her imagination.

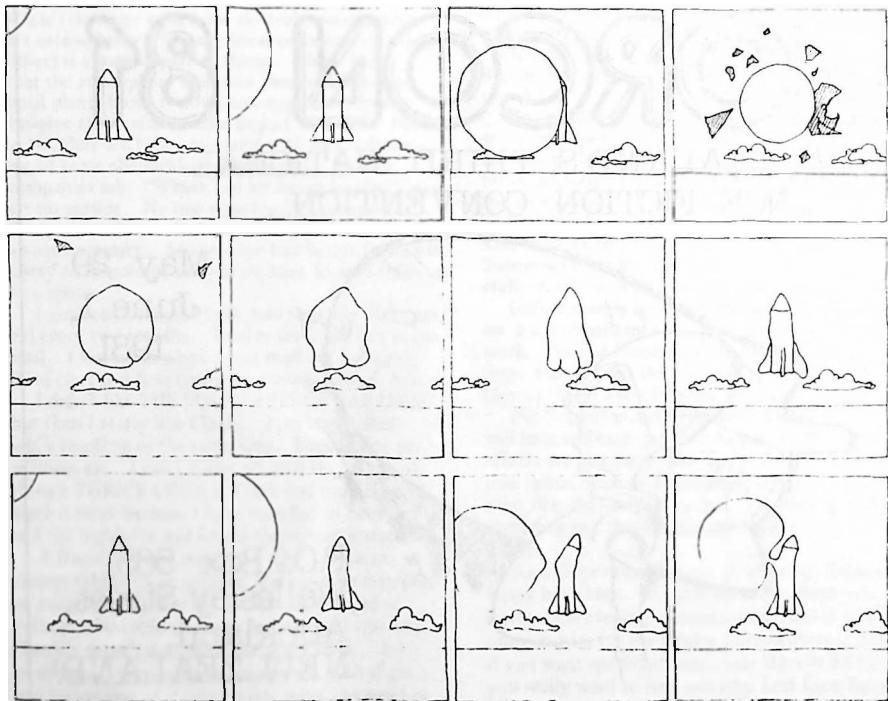
I carp this partly as a partisan of Vonda McIntyre (you recall my panegyric for **DREAMSNAKE** in Noumenon 38). In the last few Tightbeams there've been criticisms of her, condemning the characters for their unmitigated niceness -- at the same time upholding the Dragonrider series. Hence the counter-attack.

Perhaps I am a little scathing. Let me redeem myself by speaking in praise of Frank Herbert & co's **THE JESUS INCIDENT**. You reviewed it in Noumenon 35/36 as "self-consciously preachy", the product of a decadent self-indulgence. I agree that the religious parallels are transparent -- "simplistic truisms" is the phrase you use -- but submit that there is more to the book.

For the benefit of those uninitiated the book plays with ideas of theology. A ship's computer has become intelligent, and with it divine -- as one reader said, "It doesn't *think* it's God; it *is* God!" Powerful enough to experiment with crews, creating alternate cargoes of humanity with alternate pasts, the experiments are not fulfilling the object Ship has set them. The particular petri-dish culture the book deals with is the last Ship is prepared to try.

There are other themes. I found amusing the parallel between Ship's trial of alternatives, and the clones which the humans cast on the planet Pandora to colonise it.

Perhaps what irked you were the extracts from diaries and scriptures which head each chapter.



Sometimes the extract contributes to the chapter, and sometimes it's just white noise. A number of books have tried this gimmick, but to my mind here better, less self-consciously than usual.

Certainly the book differs from those Herbert writes on his own. Often Herbert densely weaves conspiracies and counterplots -- THE DOSADI EXPERIMENT, THE HEAVEN MAKERS, even THE EYES OF HEISENBERG -- and the reader must inspect each conversation on many levels to see how it advances each plot. Not so in JESUS INCIDENT. I maintain that the complexity is manifest in other areas.

I'll finish by contributing to the FOUNTAINS OF PARADISE discussion. Mike Madigan interprets it as an affirmation of the scientific method, an answer to those who'd reject technological solutions. I'm sure Arthur Clarke would not be offended by this, but I am thinking he had more in mind. There's also the conflict between engineering and religion. (With Buddhist monks appearing benevolently in THE DEEP RANGE as well as FOUNTAINS, the reader might suspect Mr Clarke of soaking a little Theravada Buddhism up from Sri Lanka.) The analogy with King Kalidasa suggests a little megalomania in the engineer Vannevar Morgan's character. In the book's odd epilogue the two sides of the conflict are united (which, incidentally, helps to link the moieties into which the novel is regrettably disjoint).

Clarke can be mystical at the same time as technological. Mike Madigan's letter mentions this, but I feel he goes on to understate it.

*** No, I didn't "squeeze out" letters at all. Mainly, I used them in other places (the McCaffrey piece, the WellCon B reports; David Harvey's travel; Mike's BLACK HOLE review) because they lent themselves to such treatment (in this nutter's view, that is).*

As for page count, there is a HUGE amount in each Noumenon because it is typeset, not type-written or photo-reduced typewriter. A page of Nm text equals between 2 and 3 pages of most fan-zines, so content is well up to par. As for 28-page doubles, two 16 page singles admittedly appear to be 32 pages worth, except the cover, page 2, and headings and service ads would be repeated, giving maybe 29 pages.

*Me thinks I've spoilt the word-addicts in the past back when paper, typesetting and postage were SO much cheaper. ***

Market Place

WANTED: Copies of Parsec 1; Illumizine 1; Strips 1, 2, 3; Noumenon 1, 2; Beyond the Hyades 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, etc; After Image 2; Tanjent 6, 7; Neocortex 2/3; any pre-Nm zine; others (send list). Replies to Philip Ivamy, 46 Montreal Rd, Nelson, NZ.

This is a free column to readers of Noumenon. Please feel free to use it. -BAT

David Harvey, PO Box 21113, Henderson, Auckland 8, NZ.

I must say that it does give me some pleasure to be NZ Mastermind in LORD OF THE RINGS. I invite anyone to try and do better, for I am sure that there are many who could, but let me issue this caveat. LOTR was done in 1979 by Bunny Rigid. It was done twice by myself, and LOTR questions were asked of Blake Shorthouse (who came second) when he did Tolkien's Fiction for his elimination. None of those questions -- like who danced the springle-ring at Bilbo's birthday party (look for the answer yourself) -- will ever be asked again, so consequently the questions in future will be fairly sophisticated. Also, there is the possibility that I will be setting them so I can make a promise that they will be challenging.

I am delighted to hear that there are proposals for a Tolkien Society in New Zealand. If there is anything that I can do to help it get off the ground, I shall be only too glad to help. I have offered my services to NorCon to do a piece on LOTR and have a number of articles in the pipeline on the subject. I take as a major premise at all times that LOTR and The Silmarillion are literature and will dispute the matter with anyone at any place. The choice of weapons will be mine, together with mithril mail. Anduril and an unlimited supply of athelas (as a aration or kingsfoil depending upon your source of origin).

Michael Newbury, 111 Houghton Bay Rd, Wellington 3, NZ. (17/12/80)

And then there was THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK -- a picture with some pretensions to plot and characterisation and therefore legitimately open to criticism of same. To wit: What does the thing in the asteroid live on when it can't get spaceships? How come said asteroid has 1g gravity? Why are the Imperial troops such terrible shots? Why a prosthetic hand -- aren't they up to regeneration? How come everywhere has an atmosphere?

Special effects are up to the usual high standard except for the Cloud City. The backdrop was not always well done -- it looked painted. Also the shadows on the spacecraft were not sharp enough for vacuum. Overall however the FX are so good that you don't really notice most of them, by which I mean that they don't distract you from the story. Also, the characters look at home with their hardware. EMPIRE continues the STAR WARS trend of believable non-humans, although they still tend overmuch towards anthropomorphism. Yoda in particular is superb.

The major criticism of the movie is probably that it is a series of incidents, part of a larger picture (part V to be precise) but lacking an emotional focal point. Darth Vader's revelation is too unexpected to qualify.

Thus although the acting is good and characterisations are nicely filled out within the limits of the plot, and although the further revelations on the

10 LETTERS...

nature of the force are engrossing, there is still the feeling that the movie is an episode in a Saturday serial. This may of course be precisely the effect that Lucas et al are aiming for.

EMPIRE lacks the Wow! sense of wonder of STAR WARS and it does not quite put up a strong enough plot in its place. And yet, I thoroughly enjoyed it -- the movie never flags, there is an awful lot going on, often very quickly, enough to make a repeat viewing worthwhile.

Noumenon's fame is spreading. The Tolkien Scrapbook by Alicia Becker, pub. Running Press, Philadelphia Penn, mentions Noumenon in a short list of fanzines at the back. They also publish "A Hobbit's Travels," being the hitherto unpublished travel sketches of Sam Gamgee, with space for notes by Michael Green.

In closing I pass on for your edification a state-

ment recently made to me "I think I'll stay feminine and keep away from science fiction"

Margaret Lambert, 2/79 Rimu St, New Lynn, Auckland 7, NZ. (22/1/81)

I went to a special showing of STAR TREK TMP put on by Stanza (Star Trek Assoc of NZ) at the Amalgamated Premiere Theatre. It's the third time I've seen it and this time I really enjoyed it.

Nigel Rowe is working hard to revive the Auckland branch of NASF but I expect he's told you all about it. We had a book sale at our last meeting and we'll probably do something similar at NorCon. We're also hoping to put on some sort of exhibition in the WEA building to coincide with NorCon -- no details yet.

*** Yes, I'm hoping NorCon will bring all sorts of people together and enable me to meet more 'people behind the names' I've got to know quite well. ***

Keep Up! Keep Up!

A Special Section of Comments on past issues and topics, superbly edited for readability, interest, and current relevance.

Phil Stephensen-Payne, shortly to move to the USA

Many thanks for Noumenon 3-15 and 19-31, and for your letter of 10th April 1978 (!). I know I'm a lousy correspondent as far as fanzines are concerned, but I guess this must be an all-time record -- 26 unlocated issues and a 2-year old letter! I proffer my apologies, but appreciate they are little compensation for such tardiness. I do enjoy Noumenon when it arrives, but it's just that I effectively gafiated from the fanzine scene in the period March 1979 - January 1980 (although surprisingly I went to two of my only three cons in that period and joined an active SF group). Reasons for much of that you will have read in PP, but alas the problems didn't even stop when I came to South Africa.

For a start we moved office (and I moved flat) about a month after I arrived here which took a while to adjust to. Then, just as I was beginning to settle I became aware that the Government was not just being tardy in giving me a Work Permit, but was actually considering not giving me one at all. This came to a head on Christmas Eve (!) when I was given two weeks to quit the country. Never one to give up I appealed the decision (more than once) and finally got my Permit. Thus at last I could settle enough to write some of those ever-so-overdue letters. Given the pile of fanzines I brought out with me I'm not sure I'll ever finish locating them all before the next upset, but maybe I can handle the important ones before then.

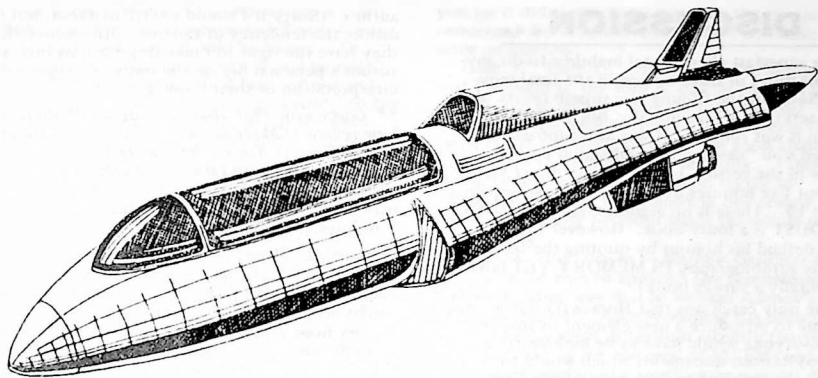
Also, numerous changes of address have not helped matters greatly.

There doesn't seem to be a lot of point in going into depth in comments on the 26 issues I have,

as even the most recent is almost a year old, and the oldest nearly 4 years old, so most of what I say will be restricted to odd comments on the last few issues. Except, that is, to say that my favourite feature remains, by far, Rollo Treadway's "View from Another Shore" and my least favourite the "Starship Minstrels"/"Song in the Depth of the Galaxies" columns.

Issue 20: Page 6. "See Andre Norton has a historical romance out . . ." **VELVET SHADOWS** was in fact the second book in her recent venture into the field, and about the poorest. Preceding it was **THE WHITE JADE FOX** and since have appeared **THE OPAL-EYED FAN** and **SNOW SHADOW**. While this is her first venture into historical romance (in the common use of the term), Andre Norton has been writing non-SF for a long time. Quite apart for her well-known **SHADOW HAWK** and **HUON OF THE HORN**, there are about 20 novels she published back in the 30s/40s ranging from spy stories to Civil War novels. I confess 'out-of-field' novels are a specialty of mine, and it is amazing how many SF authors have written some (or rather, how few haven't).

Page 31. Superb article on the Anthony trilogy, but Bruce Ferguson should be shot for saying that 'Life' was a game of Martin Gardner's. Gardner merely popularised it (very well) in *Scientific American* -- the game (and the whole mathematical theory it grew out of) was invented by John Horton Conway, a mathematician at Cambridge, England. Incidentally it is interesting to see how 'Life' has caught on with the computer field -- very few operating systems I know of do not have a version of it lying around somewhere.



Issue 22: Page 4. The Moorcock/Fontana deal. Did you know (as you don't mention it) that Moorcock revised the first three JC novels for the Fontana edition? According to his own notes, volumes 2 and 3 are not changed much, but THE FINAL PROGRAMME has substantial revisions. Not having the two editions together I regret I can't give any idea of what has been changed.

Issue 24: Page 24. Cannot agree with your review of MALACIA TAPESTRY which I found a captivating book, and definitely one of Aldiss' best. It does seem to generate extreme feeling in people and I suspect it is a question of whether or not you can feel in tune with the atmosphere Aldiss attempts to generate. If so it is very enjoyable, if not I imagine it would become just tedious (and I guess in each case of failure the blame should be laid at the foot of the author for failing to reach his audience).

Issue 25: Page 21. Similarly, but conversely. I can't agree with Cathy McGuire's review of WHERE LATE THE SWEET BIRDS SANG which I found trite and implausible. I agree with her that the collapse of civilisation is plausible, but after that I didn't find the book convincing at all. The only good thing I'd say about it is that Willhelm was clever enough to push enough 'ecological' buttons at a time when that was uppermost in the mind of the US public to get her an award.

Issue 27: Page 23. I was glad I had seen the film of LOTR, but must agree that it will probably not be much of a commercial success. I saw it here the week it opened (which was before it opened in the UK) and the audience had only 23 people in it -- on a Saturday night. One thing I did think effective, which Fred doesn't mention, was the general treatment of the villains. The heroes were all a bit wishy-washy and unbelievable, but scenes like the Black Riders at the ford before Rivendell were superb.

Page 31. It's funny, but the more time goes by the less I think of ISFY. At first I was very enthusiastic (partly probably because I'd been involved

with it) but as time passes the faults stand out more than the virtues. At first I thought of it as 'an invaluable reference book', but it has sat on my shelves for over a year and I don't remember ever referring to it on anything it could provide an answer. Quite apart from the appalling production, and lack of credits, I think the trouble is that it becomes a Jack of All Trades and Master of None. It attempts to cover all aspects of SF but each aspect is covered better, on its own, elsewhere. Maybe if it had become an annual publication it would have had value -- as a one-off I begin to doubt it.

Issue 29: Page 25. I must take issue with Fred's "the only SF fans who don't enjoy UA's new version are those..." I offer myself as a counter-example -- someone who didn't like the new version and who has never seen the old version (so I can hardly be devoted to it). I confess I found the whole thing ludicrously implausible and unconvincing. The only thing I would say in its favour is that the ending was well done -- the rest of it felt like a hack 30s alien monster film.

Page 36. As big a fan of the Riverworld series as I am, I was very disappointed by THE DARK DESIGN -- mainly because I found it suffered badly from Farmer's irritating habit of springing things on the reader without rhyme or reason. In particular in this book it was the mention of them using a computer when designing the airship. We have pages of discussion in the series on the problems of designing a riverboat, and then of designing and building an airship, but a computer it seems can be built without second thought.

Issue 31: Page 10. I am really amazed at Fred referring to ALIEN as the *greatest* horror movie yet made. It might be the most horrifying (though I'd doubt that even) but greatest implies that the film has great merits as a film, and I wouldn't say ALIEN had that. It was scary, but it was also very silly -- particularly the heroine dashing down to open the lifeboat and then running away just to give the monster time to slide in -- not to men-

12 DISCUSSION...

tion the superfast alien's total inability to do any thing but move in slow motion in the final sequence. Some of the filming was superb (particularly Giger's sets) and it was horrific, but on the whole as a film it was rubbish. I was also surprised that Fred said you "never get a really good look at the alien" -- in the version I saw it was in direct view for about five minutes during the lifeboat sequence.

Page 13. There is no arguing that THE STARS LIKE DUST is a lousy book. However I feel I should defend his honour by quoting the following from his autobiography IN MEMORY YET GREEN (incidentally a superb book):

"The only catch was that Horace (Gold) wanted me to introduce a new element of suspense. Everyone would have to be looking for a mysterious document, which would turn out at the very end to be a copy of the United States Constitution. I objected very strongly to that, saying it was corny and downright unbelievable. No one could suppose that an instrument of government suitable for a primitive nation forming a small part of a single world would be suitable for a stellar federation. Fred (Pohl -- his agent at the time) soothed me and said that I could explain that the document was merely an inspiration. It would satisfy Horace and I could take it out for book publication. So I agreed, but when I told Brad (Walter Bradbury at Doubleday), apologetically, that I would have to add this for Horace's sake, he said, "That sounds great. We'll keep it in the book version too." And he did, which is the chief reason why it is my least favourite novel."

As for McCarthy, Asimov says later in the same book: "I was certain that never in my life would I ever dislike any American in public life as intensely as I dislike McCarthy" who "was destroying the United States". Maybe it would be better if Craig Simmons checked his facts a little more closely before making such insulting personal attacks on an

author. (Sorry if I sound overly irritated, but I dislike the tendency of fanzine critics who believe they have the right to make imputations into an author's personal life on the basis of a fug-headed interpretation of their books)

** Come now Phil, that was one small phrase in a long review ("Made me wonder, since it was written at that time, if Asimov had anything to do with McCarthyism.") and it asked a valid question: was there some McCarthy message involved? A writer may be against a doctrine but still use it in, or have it influence, the writing. **

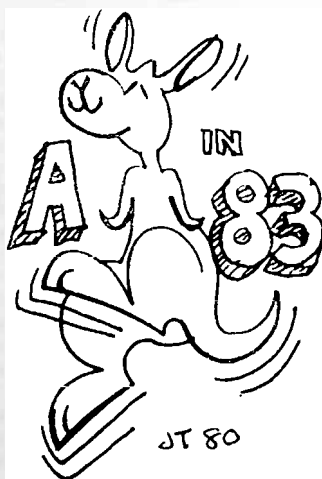
Issue 32. Page 5. Did you ever discover Clarke's solution to the angular momentum problems of the orbital tower? If so what was it: I hadn't thought of the problem. There is one problem with writing locs without preparation -- sometimes I get halfway through writing something and then think of something that invalidates what I was saying. This is an example as it has just struck me that there is no paradox involved at all -- angular momentum is mass times angular velocity, and assuming the tower to be radial the angular velocity is unchanged during the elevator's ascent or descent. Hence no problem.

Page 24. I am interested and saddened by the general reception BELOVED SON has been getting. I have for several years been corresponding with Bruce Gillespie, and reading SFC. In more recent years, however, I have become less and less impressed with SFC and with Bruce's increasing pretensions -- which seem to go hand in hand with his increasing belief in and promoting of George Turner, who always seemed to me a rather average, and at times ignorant, reviewer. When BELOVED SON came out Bruce hyped it up unbelievably (as no doubt you read) and, while I expressed my doubts of its worth, I agreed to read it and came away feeling much the same as you seem to have -- an average first novel by an average writer.

I agree far more with Don D'Amassa (N37) than with you (N33) on GLORIANA which I found to be an immensely enjoyable and rewarding book. Ah well, tastes differ.

Issue 35/36. Page 4. Like Roy Shuker I'd waited years to see DARK STAR but, unlike him, I was disappointed. Bitterly. I cannot remember the last film I saw that was so raved about and yet was such rubbish. There were some neat ideas, agreed, but much of the film was tedious (such as all that playing around on the elevator), the sets were cheap, shabby and unbelievable -- spaceships might look messy, but they will not have enough free space to look like the inside of a deserted building, particularly when they are as small as that was supposed to be. Finally the actors (when they could be heard through their mumbles) were pretty awful on the whole. For a cheap amateur affair it was not bad, and might be worth the odd run at a con, but it's certainly not the brilliant film everyone makes it out to be.

I am puzzled by Roy's comments (ibid) on A SCANNER DARKLY. He says "Indeed, it doesn't really qualify as sf and isn't, it seems, being marketed as such". I agree that it is not sf (and I never



said it was in my review) and could see some point in complaining if it was being marketed as sf -- but as it isn't surely everyone should be happy. Or is Roy disappointed because it is not sf and he only likes sf? As for Burroughs, I find him tedious and repetitive -- and certainly not very 'accessible' to the general reader. The point, I felt, about the Dick book was that it was so accessible, and hence would have a broader impact.

I would agree with your various correspondents that ALIEN was a good horror movie, and that the visual impact of the sets was superb, but I would certainly not call it a 'good, solid SF movie' for, apart from the futuristic sets and the existence of the alien there is no element of sf in it -- it is simply the standard 'Ten Little Indians' plot. The alien is not used as an sf device (ie in the realms of cultural conflict with mankind, or revelations about the past/future revealed by the alien spaceship) but is merely a creature of the night with a stereotyped role to play. David Harvey claims it is a 'carefully crafted sf movie' because the characters smoke, are tired -- but I would say that the very reason it is not a carefully crafted sf movie is that the alien (the only real claim to sf in it) does none of these things!

Page 20 Interested to see your review of TIME AFTER TIME -- have you seen the film, also very good, if lightweight. Interesting that the relationship between Wells and Amy Robbins delighted

you (as it did in the film) seeing as the two actors concerned did fall in love on the set and have since got married!

Issue 37: Page 11. Agree with David Harvey that the flight to the ford in Bakshi's LOTR is superb, and in general thought that the 'bad' characters were well portrayed (particularly the black riders and Gollum) while the good characters were far too wishy washy and silly. I thought David made a mistake, though, in trying to review the film and Day's book in one review, as they do not really fit and it made the whole piece seem patchy.

Page 14. Full marks to Mathew Gardiner-Hill for having the guts to applaud The Bicentennial Man while admitting that he dislikes Asimov's writing in general. Asimov-bashing has become a rather popular sport in fandom recently (partly, I think, because of the 'success' of IASFM) and it is not 'fashionable' to like anything he writes. While I would agree that most of his fiction is rubbish, I do think most of his non-fiction is superb (which fans tend to ignore even though it represents the vast majority of his time and output) and think that occasionally he does a good story (as in Bicentennial Man). It is just rare to hear someone who is not an Asimov fan say so.

**** Well, Phil, your time and interest to comment at such length is greatly appreciated. I'm sorry for**



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*the delays in you getting your copies, but the combination of a number of moves, the tortoise-pace Nm, COA system, and the ravages of the Post Awful are obviously too much to overcome easily. ***

Kim Huett, 18 Central George St, Cundletown 2430, NSW, Australia, (5/11/80)

Have been buying Nm when I can which isn't as often as I'd like - I'm not in Sydney that often I'd subscribe but I work for Mal (ie unemployed) so am very poor.

Have found Nm one of the best zines I have read so far, though some of the articles haven't aroused much interest in me, the main offender being "A Song..." which for me went on far too long -- not that the subject is bad in itself. Still, the reviews are as good as any I've read (with the exception of Spider Robinson) and the lettercol more than makes up for the had parts.

A few comments on the lettercols of 1979 and 1980. I see way back in the October 79 issue Nev Angrove said T3E 4 would be out soon. Well only a week or two ago I had a letter from him telling me that T3E 4 should be out in three weeks. I am seriously considering creating The Harlan Ellison Award for Slow Publishing and awarding it to him.

I see a little contention over Omni and have to partly agree with the opinions of both Chris Fountain and Geoff Holland. I buy Omni but for the price it is very low on fiction and many of the feat-

ures and regular columns are not interesting to me. However, there is some interesting non-fiction, and the fiction is of a very high quality (the latter is why I buy it, though not regularly until I saw three stories from it nominated for both the Hugos and Nebulas). Really, the only way to buy this zine is secondhand even if it is still a bit expensive.

I can sympathize with Greg Hills over the malicious activities of the post as they are just as bad over here. Already a couple of important letters sent to the USA have gone astray causing delay and endless problems and just yesterday a letter arrived from Sydney dated 3/10/80. In other words it took that letter a month to travel two hundred miles.

Back in Nm 35/36 Chris Fountain mentioned the problems of writing in New Zealand. Apart from a local medium-quality fiction zine being started up (which will probably fold due to insufficient support) the only answer seems to be to try the Australian market, which is undergoing a boom at the moment.

There is Futuristic Tales which is a prozine 34pp long and the same size as Galileo. It is very low paying and is basically a good quality fanzine with a slick cover. Michael Hailstone has begun publishing a fiction zine called Crux, which features unpublished writers as well as some of the better known local writers and some foreign writers. Crux isn't on general sale, relying mainly on subscriptions but quality-wise (if not payment-wise) it is the next step up from FT. Then there is The Cygnus Chronicle produced by Nev Angrove, which is mainly for critical review but also publishes a bit of fiction. I don't know how well it pays but Nev has and will publish stories by Bert Chandler, Jack Wodhams, Cherry Wilder, John Alderson, Albert Vann and Paul Collins. There is another zine similar to Crux called Nexus which I've never seen, in fact it's name is all I know about it. Lastly there is Paul Collins' Void Anthologies.

I have included the addresses to send stories to these publications on the off chance you would like to print them in Nm:

Futuristic Tales, Editorial Department,
PO Box 19, Spit Junction 2088, NSW, Australia.
Send SASE if return is required.

Crux, PO Box 45, Kings Cross, NSW 2011,
Australia.

The Cygnus Chronicle, The Epere x Press, PO
Box 770, Canberra City, ACT 26/01, Australia.
Void Publications, PO Box 66, St Kilda, Victoria,
3182, Australia.

I do suggest to anyone that before they send anything they send an inquiry to the publisher as some may not have much room in the near future, particularly TCC (Nev has said he intends to turn it into a SF review zine some time in the future and then start a fiction zine, so he may not want a lot of fiction in the near future). The only exception to this is FT, which could really use some quality fiction from NZ.



WHAT
REVIEWS...
WHERE?



David Harvey
Michael Lovell
Tony Lovatt
Brian Thurogood

A WORLD BETWEEN -- Norman Spinrad
(Arrow, 1980, 345pp, \$5.95)
Cover art uncredited.

This "long-awaited new novel" has received mixed reviews and I can understand why. The basic premise is stock sf fare: a planetary culture is threatened by the arrival of a more sophisticated, predatory culture, the "battle" has raged galaxy-wide, and this may be the last stand. But it is also far more than that.

The Pacifican culture is very well drawn, quite believable, and only occasionally did I feel the story stretch credibility in the Pacifican's response to the threats.

And what threats! Not just one, but two highly-developed psychosocial attacks on the Pacifican culture -- both to 'save' the Pacificans from the other and put all and sundry on the true path. The Pacifican "electronic Utopia" and its main leaders, planetary chairman Carlotta Madigan and Minister of Media Royce Lindblad, are gradually torn, politically and personally, as the no-holds barred attack on Pacifica's cultural/sexual/political balance has effect.

Who would attempt to tear down an advanced planetary culture? Well, first come the Transcendental Scientists, who offer apparently vast scientific knowledge and ability, but with conditions. Like absolute secrecy, 're-educating' trainees, few women trainees, the gradual growth of an elite, the ultimate takeover of a whole planet and its media to serve the 'grand plan'. The Masons have got nothing on these guys! (Although the Scientologists may not be far off!)

Next come the Femocrats, the all-female culture that grew out of the ruin of old Earth, who convincingly show that men at the helm were the cause of

so much suffering and disaster and who suggest they have a more humanitarian (if I can use the phrase) approach (the relegation of men to 'breeder' status notwithstanding).

Now it is true that Spinrad fails to avoid elements of cliché in his portrayal of these factions (male scientific elite vs radical feminists), but the fact remains that grossly unbalanced political systems have existed and do exist on Earth and it is not a long jump to assume the same could happen given planetary politics rather than country politics.

The ultimate stances of the Transcendental Scientists (amoral, end justifies any means) and Femocrats (overthrow at any cost) gradually become exposed as the Pacifican leaders (and society) try various measures to prevent the Pacifican culture being destroyed. But the Pacificans are slow -- they really believe in freedom of all points of view and freedom of access to media -- and it is only when their whole society is about to topple that their latent genius (a true striving for real equality) arrives at a remedial plan (which, incidentally, takes a little from both predators, and hopefully gives much to both).

The Pacifican leaders' personal problems are highlighted just as much as the political ones, while the Femocratic leaders' split in dogma and the Transies leaders' breakup are also convincing (although what Maria was doing in there in the first place is interesting to consider). These personal situations and conflicts certainly uplift the whole book -- they emphasise identification as well as provide a welcome change from the nil-personal-interaction puppets presented in most books with a similar theme.

Highly recommended. -- BAT



16 REVIEWS...

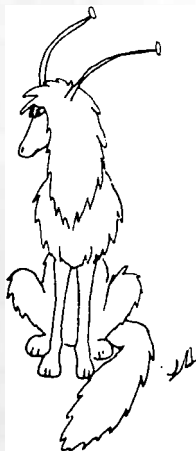
KING OF ARGENT -- John Phillifent
(Daw Books)

For some reason that I'm still not entirely sure of, this book has been re-read as often as any other book in my collection. The style is quite unexceptional, apart from heavy use of long flashbacks in the early part of the book to set the scene. The plot is interesting, but hardly unique -- tough but asocial explorer makes a rich discovery, is coerced into undergoing surgery to be able to exploit it in secret, meets boss' beautiful daughter, strikes sparks, and flees to Argent, the planet he has discovered.

Argent is not only mineral-rich, but is inhabited by mineral-rich flora and fauna. Explorer decides to go native, and begins to devise plans for convincing the industrialists that the planet is not worth the effort. Complications ensue, however, when the daughter, also Argent-modified, arrives, in pursuit of the only man who has rejected her favours. Etc.

The story is well and entertainingly written, and is a prime example of the old-fashioned (?) Man-Who-Can story. The hero, in pursuit of self-sufficiency, makes his own clothes, shoes, spears, bows and arrows, even golden drinking beakers. (It's easy: you just partially melt a golden goose-egg. . .) What endears it particularly to me, however, is in part the non-sexist approach of both the author and the hero, and in part the unconventional treatment of the romantic interest; there isn't any. Not at first, anyhow; about midway through the book the explorer and the daughter have a real honest-to-Godfrey fight and nearly kill each other. I never did believe in this love-at-first-taste bit.

All in all, **KINGS OF ARGENT** can be appreciated as a whole far better than in the bits and pieces of this review. You may not like it; but if you do, I'm sure that you'll find yourself coming back to it often. It's a pleasant entertainment, little more; but after all, entertainment is the first aim of literature. -- TL



TRITON -- Samuel Delany
(Corqi, 1977, 365pp, \$3.35)
Cover art uncredited (Tony Roberts?)

Lovers of **DHALGREN** will know the skills of Delany in bringing background details into the foreground, both to good effect and as a refreshing change from lots-a-action-but-don't-look-too-close-at-the-details. Further, this emphasis on formerly background brings many of those little quirks that influence a person's life in small but significant ways out into the open, allowing comparisons between the character's (author's) and one's own. (Well, that's revealed my obsession with my "little quirks" anyway.)

TRITON tells some of the life story of Bron, a somewhat old-fashioned participant in the medium-future world postulated by Delany, with colonies and settlements hither and yon in our solar system's heavens, differing cultures aplenty, and a few age-old problems surfacing in new ways.

For in a small way, Bron is a male chauvinist pig (using our current terminology) to a degree and he is never really happy. The novel tells of his brushes with a lifestyle guided by passion, personal ethics, art and no-holds-barred closeness. His inability to come to grips with such (and his inability to come to grips with the Spike, femme fatale) forces an identity crises and, after taking advice from "old queen" Lawrence to heart, Bron tries a sex change.

The discussion with Lawrence (three-quarters of the way through the book (pages 252-254 in this edition) is superb, the cream on a rich cake of observation and commentary, and it almost makes the ultimate irony of Bron's stance worthwhile, at least sociologically (if not personally for Bron).

"Fortunately, your particular perversion today is extremely rare. Oh, I would say maybe one man out of fifty has it -- quite amazing, considering that it once was about as common as the ability to grow a beard. Just compare it to some of the other major sexual types, homosexuality, one out of five; bisexuality, three out of five; sadism and masochism, one out of nine; the varieties of fetishism, one out of eight. So you see, at one out of fifty, you really are in a difficult situation. And what makes it more difficult -- even tragic -- is that the corresponding perversion you're searching for in women, thanks to that little historical anomaly, is more like one out of five thousand."

There are many bright spots and the joy is in the reading, not in the traditional goal/resolution/climax. Delany is a stylist, and I appreciate his work greatly.
-- BAT

Noumenon
NEW ADDRESS

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

**THE STAR KING
THE KILLING MACHINE
THE PALACE OF LOVE**

-- Jack Vance
(Coronet, 1980, 160pp ea, \$3.50ea)
Cover art uncredited

These first three novels (1964, 1964, 1967) of the planned 5-book Demon Princes series are a curious part of Jack Vance's output. The marvelous background detail (as in much of his work), the richness of the many underplayed ideas, and the subtle digs at other authors and conventions all combine to weave another rich tapestry in the first book and a-half.

By then, however, the problem of having to deal with the recurring plot line -- avenger hunting down impossible secret and powerful 'kings' against impossible odds -- makes the going tough, so to speak. This is not to say the books are tedious; far from it in fact, as they romp along at a great clip and go by interesting byways. But many of the byways are fascinating and could perhaps lead to stories of far more substance if developed.

For instance, the Institute, which appears here and there, sometimes with some detail: the chapter intro in *THE STAR KING* on page 89; and the superb 'interview' in *THE PALACE OF LOVE*, pp 109-110.

Hachieri: Is it not true then that the Institute originated as a cabal of assassins?

Jesno: To the same degree that the Planned Progress League originated as a cabal of irresponsible secessionists, traitors, suicidal hypochondriacs.

Hachieri: This is not a pertinent response.

Jesno: The elasticities, the areas of vagueness surrounding the terms of your question, do indeed encompass the exact truth of the situation.

Hachieri: What, then, in inelastic terms, is the truth?

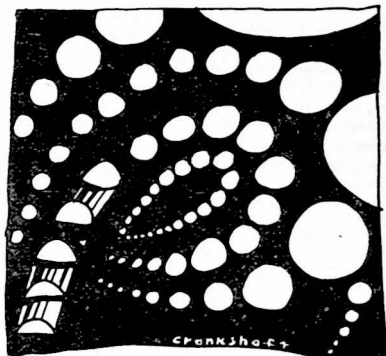
Jesno: Approximately fifteen hundred years ago, it became evident that existing laws and systems of public safety could not protect the human race from four bland and insidious dangers: First, universal and compulsory dosage of drugs, tonics, toners, conditioners, stimulants and prophylactics administered through the public water supply. Second, the development of genetic sciences, which allowed and encouraged various agencies to alter the basic character of Man, according to contemporary biological and political theory. Third, psychological control through media of public information. Fourth, the proliferation of machinery and systems which in the name of progress and social welfare tended to make enterprise imagination, creative toil and the subsequent satisfactions obsolete if not extinct.

I will not speak of mental myopia, irresponsibility, masochism, or the efforts of persons nervously groping for a secure womb to re-enter: this is all irrelevant. The effect, however, was a situation analogous to the growth of four cancers in a human organism. The Institute came into being by much the same progress that the body generates a prophylactic serum.

Such scope and depth is entirely lacking from the actual storyline by the time the quote appears, and the book rolls on to its inevitable end.

I wonder if Vance turned to other projects because of his disappointment with the limitations of the plot.

If, like me, you usually enjoy Vance enough to forgive occasional lapses you will still want to read the first book or two in the series, but don't rush out and buy them all until you've tried one. -- BAT



A FEAST UNKNOWN

(Playboy, 1980, \$3.25)

LORD OF THE TREES/THE MAD GOBLIN

(Ace, 1980, \$4.75)

-- Philip Jose Farmer

While waiting for the fourth volume of Farmer's 'Riverworld' series to reach New Zealand I have been reading two of his books which, although written in 1968 and '72, don't appear to have been released in NZ until now. According to Farmer, these three stories are the ninth and tenth volumes of Lord Grandrith and Doc Caliban's journal.

Lord Grandrith is put forth as the basis for Burrough's Tarzan novels, and not only is he aware of this but compares his real life situations with Burrough's ideals. Similarly Doc Caliban 'created' the Doc Savage of pulp magazines.

The science fiction of these stories is based on an elixir discovered in the Old Stone Age which can make people extremely long-lived (about 30,000 years) and the fact that it is controlled by the 'Nine' -- the oldest of Earth's secret masters.

Extremely violent high speed action carries the stories along from the mountains of East Africa to England and the Black Forest of Germany. Grandrith and Caliban use varieties of guerilla warfare after rebelling against the Nine for disagreeing over how the Nine are going to control over-population.

There are many intriguing references to Stone Age and Norse mythology. For instance, XanXaz or Odin was one of the Nine and several times ancestor of both Grandrith and Caliban.

Not books for maiden aunts (unless they have mentioned you in their will) but certainly ones to take you out of your nine-to-five job. -- MVL

Myth-maker

DAVID HARVEY

outlines the background to and reviews
TOLKIEN'S "UNFINISHED TALES"

One may be forgiven for feeling wary towards yet another posthumous publication of the writings of J. R. R. Tolkien. Certainly, many literary executors would not think of releasing for publication anything other than the work that was in a virtually finished state at the time of the author's death. To release anything else might do little credit to a deceased author, not to say to his literary executors and editors.

Tolkien was a most exacting writer who would not consider a piece completed until it had been subjected to an intense critical analysis from the author himself and extensive re-writing. **LORD OF THE RINGS** was 15 years in the writing before final submission for publication, and even in 1954, when the first volume was published, Tolkien was still at work on the lengthy appendices which follow the narrative in the final volume of the trilogy.

UNFINISHED TALES is a collection of writings by J. R. R. Tolkien, taken from extant manuscripts and notes commencing as far back as the early 1920s and ending towards the end of his life. Whereas **THE SILMARILLION**, also posthumously published and also edited by Tolkien's son, Christopher, was produced as a completed and cohesive unity, rather than in the form of an historical study of divergent texts linked with commentary, **UNFINISHED TALES** presents the reader with a number of stories from the Three Ages of Tolkien's Middle Earth, none of which are entirely new or without reference to any of Tolkien's other work.

To put **UNFINISHED TALES** into context in the work of Tolkien, it is important to note that although **THE HOBBIT** and the **Lord of the Rings** trilogy have been his most popular works (and in future the works for which he will be most remembered), the creation of Middle Earth, the history, the chronology, the languages and the peoples, in detail, had origins as far back as 1917. And after the publication and success of **THE HOBBIT** Tolkien was far more concerned with having **THE SILMARILLION** published, hoping to use **LORD OF THE RINGS** to effect this end, for he considered **THE SILMARILLION** by far the more important work.

ORIGINAL SOURCES

In 1916 Tolkien was encouraged to create an entire mythology, which had its beginnings in his fascination in the creation of languages and the provision of a history and mythology within which the languages could develop. His first story, **The Fall of Gondolin**, was written in 1917 and was one of the stories in **THE BOOK OF LOST TALES**, which was the original source for **THE SILMARILLION**.

Indeed, Christopher Tolkien says of **LOST TALES** in the introduction to **UNFINISHED TALES** that it is "a very substantial work, of the utmost interest to one concerned with the origins of Middle Earth, but requiring to be presented in a lengthy and complex study if at all."

The Fall of Gondolin, which in a form is included in **THE SILMARILLION**, involves the presence of one Tuor, son of Huor. The arrival of Tuor in Gondolin is of considerable significance in the history of Middle Earth and the first story of **UNFINISHED TALES** deals with this event. Although the presence of Tuor in Gondolin had been contemplated in 1917, his arrival was not actually written until about 1951, at a time when there was considerable indecision surround the publication of **LORD OF THE RINGS**.

After hospitalisation with Trench Fever in 1917, Tolkien wrote **The Tale of the Children of Hurin**, which became **Narn i Hîn Húrin**, and was carried near to completion. The tale deals with the history of Turin Turambar, a character of tragedy, and although the story carries with it ingredients from Beowulf and Sigurd in the form of Glaurung the Dragon, and from the Finnish Kalevala and Arthurian cycle with the problem of unwitting incest, the tale has elements of tragedy which make it almost Euripidean in concept. One cannot gainsay that the tale has obvious links with the themes inherent with the Greek tale of the House of Atreus, also.

By 1923, **THE BOOK OF LOST TALES** was completed in scope but it was not finished to Tolkien's satisfaction and required constant revision, which was to become a hallmark of all his essays into writing. This trait delayed publication of his translation of **Sir Gawain and The Green Knight** until after his death, for example, and resulted in the wealth of unpublished material that he has left behind.

In 1930 Tolkien commenced work on **THE HOBBIT**. This was abandoned, re-commenced at the recommendation of a member of the publishing firm of Allen & Unwin, finished in 1936 and published in 1937.

It is perhaps significant to note that the wealth of material that would comprise **THE SILMARILLION** was continually increasing with revisions and re-castings. At the time its existence was little known, even to the Inklings of whom C. S. Lewis was a member. However, it was read in parts to Tolkien's son (and now Editor) Christopher, who of Tolkien's four children was the most enamoured of Middle Earth.

In 1937 a cry went up for a successor to **THE HOBBIT**. Tolkien sent some of the **SILMARILLION** manuscripts to Allen & Unwin but it was held that these did not fill the bill. In December 1937 work commenced on Chapter I of **LORD OF THE RINGS**. From a simple sequel to **THE HOBBIT** it moved to the full-blown heroic romance of the Third Age, with the destruction of Sauron and the evil ring of power which was found in **THE HOBBIT**. It was, as Tolkien said, a tale that grew in the telling. Yet much of the foundation for **LOTR**

was already in existence -- in **LOST TALES, THE SILMARILLION** and Tolkien's other writings

LOTR AND SILMARILLION

Publication of **LOTR** was delayed as Tolkien endeavoured to negotiate an arrangement whereby **THE SILMARILLION** would be published together with it, changing publishers in an effort to attain this end, but returning to Allen & Unwin when publication of a truncated **LOTR** by Collins appeared likely.

After the initial success of **LOTR** Tolkien endeavoured to put **SILMARILLION** into publishable form. However, the popularity of **LOTR** and the demands of readers, together with one would venture to suggest, a desire to more fully round off a world of imagination, resulted in further writings of the Third Age -- including the Description of Numenor, the tale of Aldarion and Erendis, the History of Galadriel and Celeborn (Galadriel) was not in the original concept of **SILMARILLION**), the Disaster of Gladden Fields, the Tale of Cirion Eorl, the Quest of Erebor (linking **THE HOBBIT** and **LOTR**), The Hunt for the Ring and the Battles of the Fords of Isen, together with notes on the Druadan, the Istari (of whom Gandalf and Saruman were members) and The Palantiri.

Work on **THE SILMARILLION** progressed slowly because of the sheer volume of manuscripts that had been collected and because Tolkien's view of tales was not always consistent and many of the pieces required extensive revision.

Consequently, when Christopher Tolkien finally made **THE SILMARILLION** available for publication, it was a collection of linked tales. But not all the tales were complete within the creative process of the original author. For instance, some of the tales of **SILMARILLION** existed in various forms.

for Tolkien delighted in re-telling a tale on different scales and in different styles. The Tale of Turin in **SILMARILLION** is a short version of *Narn i Hîn Húrin* in **UNFINISHED TALES**, although the **SILMARILLION** version was in a more complete and cohesive form.

INSIGHT

UNFINISHED TALES must be viewed then as, firstly, an insight into the workings of the creative process undertaken by Tolkien, and secondly as a collection of writings in different stages of development, giving us insights into the author's intent within the framework of his extant completed creation.

Certainly **UNFINISHED TALES** demands of the reader a knowledge of **LOTR** and **THE SILMARILLION**. Furthermore, considerable patience is required, for the book is heavily annotated and contains in some appendices various alternative treatments of the one theme. Consequently, only a very generalised picture can be seen of Tolkien's true and final intent.

Yet perhaps within this collection of writings we gain an insight into Tolkien the myth maker. Tolkien believed that, by myth making, by becoming a sub-creator and inventing stories, man could ascribe to the state of perfection that he knew before the Fall. Myths steer towards the true harbour and it is important to realise that Tolkien was not writing fairy stories within the commonly understood meaning of the term. He was acting as sub-creator within the terms of reference described by himself in "On Fairy Stories" (the Andrew Lang Lecture delivered in 1939).

Tolkien saw a sub-creator as one who makes a Secondary World (the primary world being everyday). Within the Secondary World, everything is true and accords with the laws of that world. Once disbelief arises, the art has failed. Tolkien eschewed the oft quoted "willing suspension of disbelief" which he suggested was conceding games of make-believe. The successful sub-creator by his art must create a believable secondary world, the metres and bounds of which are accepted without question. It is the sub-creator's art which determines whether this succeeds or fails.

In **UNFINISHED TALES** we see how that art develops, for although the inconsistencies are there the reader may put them aside and be swept along by the brilliance of Tolkien's creations.

Again, within the limits of his definition of a fairy story, Tolkien succeeds. It is the mark of a good fairy story that however wild the events or amazing the adventures, when the "turn" comes it can give the reader a catch of the breath, a beat or lifting of the heart, a swelling of the throat, a closeness to tears -- therein lies the art.

Even in **UNFINISHED TALES**, where the tales are incomplete and even fragmentary, these moments or turns come -- as Isildur flounders among the blood and reeds of Anduin, as Gandalf blows smoke rings at Suruman and taunts him, as Cirion and Eorl swear great oaths together, as Turin battles the malevolent Glaurung, the author of his dreadful



20 REVIEWS...

doom, as Tuor passes through the last gate into the Hidden Realm of Gondolin.

So it is that Tolkien's art has not faded, and for those who delight not only in the tale but in the telling and would read how Tolkien developed his

world. UNFINISHED TALES is recommended for one starting out on Tolkien, it should be avoided until a reading of other Middle Earth works has been undertaken. One can be grateful that a diligent and faithful son and editor in Christopher Tolkien is responsible for preserving the integrity of the work he has elected to publish. — David Harvey

PUBLISHING INFORMATION

SF & RELATED BOOKS PUBLISHED IN NEW ZEALAND — OCT 1980-JANUARY 1981
— Listed in order under their NZ publishers and distributors

David Bateman Ltd:

TAMBU — Robert Asprin (Ace \$2.95): new edition; cover art by Rowena Morrill.

STAR WEB — Joan Cox (Avon \$3.95): first edition; cover art uncredited.

BEWARE TOMORROW — Walter Ellis (Decade \$2.95): first edition; cover art uncredited.

BASILISK — Edited by Ellen Kushner (Ace \$3.50): fantasy collection; first edition; cover art by "Rowena"; interior illustrations by T. Windling.

LIFEEKEEPER — Mike McQuay (Avon \$3.50): first edition, cover art uncredited.

TUG OF THE DWARF STAR — James Rusk (Decade \$2.95): first edition; cover art uncredited.

THE CLONES — Eugene Shaffer (Decade \$2.95): first edition; cover art uncredited.

THE SILVER SUN — Nancy Springer (Pocket \$3.95): first edition; cover art by Carl Lundgren.

IS ANYONE THERE? • JUPITER • OF MATTERS GREAT AND SMALL • ONLY A TRILLION • SCIENCE NUMBERS AND 1 • TWENTIETH CENTURY DISCOVERY — All Isaac Asimov (Ace \$3.50 each): reprints with matching cover art; all non-fiction collections of essays.

A STEP FARTHER OUT — Jerry Pournelle (Ace \$3.95): first edition; non-fiction collection of essays.

William Collins (NZ) Ltd:

PROFUNDIS — Richard Cowper (Pan \$4.95): first paper edition; cover art by Ian Pollock.

FLUX and THE TIN ANGEL — Ron Goulart (Fontana \$5.95): new edition; cover art uncredited.

Gordon & Gotch (NZ) Ltd:

SOME WILL NOT DIE — Aigis Budrys (Magnum \$4.95): first UK edition; cover art by Doug Harker.

I AM NOT THE OTEHR HOUDINI — Michael Conner (Mag \$3.95): first UK edition; cover art Tony Roberts.

JEM — Frederik Pohl (Granada \$5.25): first UK paper edition; cover art uncredited.

TIME IS THE SIMPLEST THING — Clifford Simak (Mag \$4.25): new edition; cover art by Chris Moore.

Hodder & Stoughton Ltd:

THE STARS IN SHROUD — Gregory Benford (Sphere \$6.25): first UK paper edition; cover art uncredited.

TIMEWARPS — John

THE WARP 1: The Storm's Howling Through Tiflis — Neil Oram (Sph \$5.95): first edition; cover uncredited.

EMPHYRIO — Jack Vance (Coronet \$4.25): first UK edition; cover art uncredited ("Fox").

WYST: ALASTOR 1716 — Jack Vance (Cor \$4.25): first UK edition (?); cover art uncredited.

CONAN: THE ROAD OF KINGS — Karl Edward Wagner (Sph \$3.75): first UK edition; cover art uncredited.

DEATH ANGEL'S SHADOW — Karl Edward Wagner (Cor \$3.75): first UK edition (?); cover art uncredited.

Once Upon A Galaxy: A Journal of the Making of THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK — Alan Arnold (Sph \$4.75) non-fiction; first UK edition; film tie-in; illustrated.

HARMONIC 695 — Bruce Cathie & Peter Temm (Sph \$4.95): new edition; cover art uncredited; non-fiction.

TIMEWARPS — John Gribbin (Sph \$4.25): first UK edition; non-fiction; cover art uncredited; illustrated.

BROCA'S BRAIN — Carl Sagan (Cor \$5.95): first UK edition; non-fiction; cover art uncredited.

NORSTRILIA PRESS (Australia):

THE DREAMING DRAGONS — Damien Broderick (hardcover \$12.95) first edition; jacket by Grant Gittus.

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS:

OVERWORLD — Michael Vyse (Faber h/c \$20.95): first edition; jacket design by the author.

WHOLESALE BOOK DISTRIBUTORS:

THE EARTH BOOK OF STORMGATE: 1 — Poul Anderson (NEL \$4.25): first UK paper edition; cover uncredited.

STAR RIGGER'S WAY — Jeffrey Carver (Arrow \$5.50): first edition (?); cover art uncredited.

MISSION TO MOULOKIN — Alan Dean Foster (NEL \$5.95): first UK edition; cover art by Tim White.

ENGLAND INVADED — Edited by Michael Moorcock (NEL \$5.75): first edition; fantasy collection; cover art uncredited.

LEGENDS FROM THE END OF TIME — Michael Moorcock (Star \$3.95): reissue; cover art uncredited.

MY EXPERIENCES IN THE THIRD WORLD WAR — Michael Moorcock (Savoy \$6.50): first edition; coll.

TALES OF KNOWN SPACE — Larry Niven (Orbit \$4.95): first UK edition (?); collection; cover by Pete Jones.