### SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW

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JUNE 1970
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SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW, sometimes known as Poor Richard's Monkey-on-the-Back, is edited and published by the old-fan-by-the-sea name of

ABOUT EIGHT TIMES A YEAR

RICHARD E. GEIS P.O. Box 3116 SANTA MONICA, CAL. 90403

SUBSCRIPTIONS: 50¢ each issue for as many as you wish to gay for in advance, in U.S.A. and Canada... But please pay from Canada in Canadian P.O. Money Orders in U.S. dollars.

FIRST CLASS RATE: 75¢ per issue in U.S.A. and Canada. \$1.00 per issue overseas.

SFR's agent Over There is...

 Ethel Lindsay Courage House 6 Langley Ave.

U.K. Rates: 4/- or 5 for 1 pound

.. Surbiton, Surrey,

UNITED KINGDOM

SFR's agent the Other Way... John Foyster

··· 12 Glengariff Dr.

Mulgrave

Victoria 3170 AUSTRALIA

AUSTRALIAN Rates:

50¢ each

SFR's agent Further Over is...

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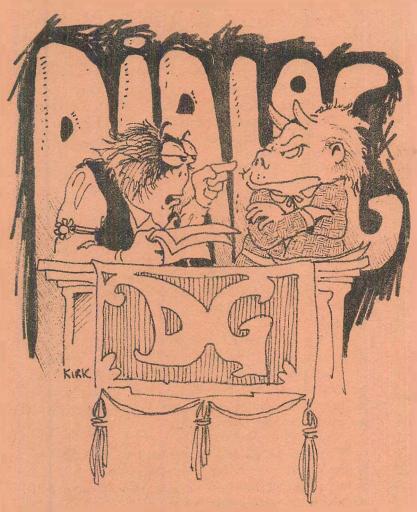
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"Geis, you have a thoughtful look in your eye."

"That is because, Alter-ego, your eye is always bloodshot and bleery from poker-playing late into the wee hours at Bruce Pelz's place. Somebody has to keep track of things like Wither Fandom and Wherefore Science Fiction. These things call for deep thought, and—"

"I didn't hear any call. You been into the peach brandy again?"

"I have not had a drink for weeks...days..."

"Aha. While I play my guts out trying to win us a bit of money, you souse it up—"

"Alright, Alter, how much did you win?"

"I won 55¢ in a mere five hours last Thursday night, Geis, after you lost about \$20 in weeks past. So you stick to deep thoughts and leave the gambling to me."

"Yes...all right. Now about my reflections on the State of fandom Today——"

"You go ahead and declaim, Geis. I'm going over to my side of the brain and catalog a few hundred used synapses. I'm pretty far behind."

"Stay."

"But---"

"STAY! It is in your contract. It says you have to contribute to at least two pages of "Dialog" each issue. I do "Monolog" all by myself. The least you can do—

"Oh, Christ, Geis: All right. Get on with it. What about fandom today?"

"There is Something going on in the old, established amateur press associations. I have read that the Spectator Amateur Press Society (SAPS) is now languishing, in need of members after having been a center of fan-publishing activity for lothese many years. Now the waiting list is gone and memberships are easy to come by."

"Come to think of it, we haven't heard much about SAPS in the last couple years. But surdly, Geis, surely the oldest of the old, grand old Fantasy Amateur Press Association (FAPA) is still hale and hearty."

"Moooo, it, too, is suffering a relatively rapid turnover. Why, a few years ago we were #50 or so on the waiting list, and now, with the loss of a few members each mailing, we are #20. At

this rate..."

"Five years to go, Geis. Mark my words."
"But the Old Guard is going."

"So? Alright, how do you account for it?"

"I have more data. About the time I revived this magazine (then known as PSYCHOTIC) in late 1967, the apas were going full throttle. Then, relatively suddenly, fan activity turned to publishing fanzines for a general circulation, not strictly limited to an apa membership."

"You think you sparked that, do you, Gais?"
"Partly. The revival of OOD and WARHOON halp
ed. But now, several years later, the gen-zines
are diminishing and fan activity is being concentrated into the hands of a few active fans...and
the professionals!"

"Eh?"

"More and more fans are becoming observers, consumers, of a few fanzines which are so much better, with professional writers contributing, and pro-quality artists contributing, that the ordinary young fan feels overwholmed and inferior."

"Uh, Geis...the margin--"

"Yes, it's true, and yet, there is a phenomenon like APA-L, a weekly apa centered in the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society which has reached as high as 119 pages per...week...and what did you say about margins?"

"That gap to the left of us, blockhoad!"
"Oh...yes..."

"That's better. Sometimes, Geis--"

"Where was I? Yes...my conclusion is that the amateur publishing associations will grow popular again, but on a small, local level, while the old, national agas will continue week and the gen-zine field will continue to be dominated by a few high-quality zines."

"Would you say, Geis, that we need a review of fannish history by those old greybeards of fannish eras, Bob Silverberg and Ted White? To say nothing of Harry Warner, Jr?"

"Yes. Are we still in Seventh Fandom? Have we entered

Eighth Fandom? Speak, fan historians!"

"Now can I go back to my collection of synapses, Geis?"
"No. We have one more page to fill."



"Geis, I note a new name in the Agents lîne-up. Wha hoppen to John Bangsund? He is no longer our agent in Australia?"

"Mope. Around the first of the year John went into a seizure of convulsive gafia."

"G-gafia? The dreaded disease that struck us down for twelve years? Getting-Away-From-It-All has Banger in its insidious clutches?"

"All I know is that he wrote that he had sold his duplicator—"  $^{\rm H}$ 

MAbhill

torn up the stencils for the then forthcoming issue of his fanzine SCYTHROP---

1100000 111

"-resigned his agentships--"

"Urrg!"

"-given away all his fanzines-"

"Hooo!"

"---except WARHOON and HORIZONS---"

"Guess that puts you in your place, sh, Geis?"

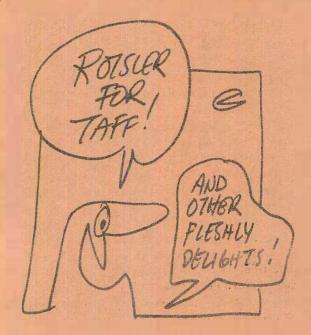
"—resigned his apa memberships and even relinquished his place on the FAPA waitinglist..."

"Incredible!"

"And he ends with: '..apart from self-immolation on a pile of AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION REVIEWS in Somerset Pl., I can't think of anything more melodramatic than that."

"That's the most serious case of GAFIA I've heard of in a long time. And it can strike so suddenly! Shocking!"

"There is hope. I received a letter from Bruce Gillespie, publisher of S-F COMMENTARY, who said that Banger was showing signs of recovery in that he was stenciling again, showing interest in ANZAPA, the local apa, and I note that the recent, May issue of the FAPA official organ, the FANIASY AMATEUR, shows his name still safely ensconced in 19b place."



"He is recovering. I'm glad."

"But in the meantime, John Foyster has leaped to the forefront, quivering with eagerness, and volunteered to be SFR's Australian agent."

"Quaking with fear, you mean. If he comes down with GAFIA, then .."

"Pessimist! Welcome to SFR's happy family, John Foyster!"
"Geis, I'm not happy! You can't go hiring people off the
street without consulting me! Who the hell do you think you
are—President Nixon?"

"I Am The Editor!"



"I note, with a smile on my lips and a song in my heart, Geis, that you caved in and bought envelopes for SFR."

"It was this way: by using a third class bulk mailing permit and switching from Gestetner Duplitone paper to Kelly Paper Company's Fibretint, I save enough to be able to afford the envelopes."

"It's a lot of extra work to sort by zipcode and bundle the mailing and bag the bundles and tag the bags, isn't it?"

"True, but here's something: I had thought that the rate per pound for 3rd class bulk mail was 22¢. What I didn't know was that there is a book rate for third class bulk mail——16¢ per pound. One cent per ounce!"

"That's quite a saving, Geis!"

"Of course not all fanzines can use this rate: they have to have a mailing of at least 200 copies, have to be 48 pages at least, and each piece must be identical. Also, the sorting and bundling is complicated, now that the P.O. is requiring sorting also by Sectional Centers."

"Still, Geis, a little quick arithmetic shows me we saved something like thirty dollars on that first mailing."

"Offset by the mailing permits which cost \$45.00. The mailing of this issue will show some savings. Next one even more."

"Well, anyway, SFR is protected. No langer is it condemned to go maked into that dark, mangling machine known quaintly as the United States Post Awful."



"Come on, Alter-ego, ask me the question "

"Don't bother me now, Geis. Hey, you ever see a used synapse shaped like this?"

"Yes. Now, ask the question. Then you'll be through for this issue."

"All right. What you got lined up for next issue?"

"I'm not sure."

"GEIS---"

"It's this way: I hope to have Harlan Ellison's highly entertaining and controversial 1969 Westercon speech in the next issue. It is titled, "Cop-Out, Sell-Out and Self-Rape—The Exploitation of Speculative fiction By Its Writers, Its Fans and Its Apologists". It runs 44 ms pages. If not, then Damon Knight's Balticon speech, "Pretentious Intellectuals, Sniveling faggots, and the Milford Mafia", plus Poul Anderson's "Beer Mutterings" and an article on Ferry Rhodan plus the departments"

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### A Column By Ted White



umn in SFR #33. I was struck by an observation of his:

"Ted White is in Hell. He is forbidden to admit it, for that is part of the torture, and at times he almost confuses it with Heaven, but he is damned. He is forced to defend policies he knows are indefensible, to publish writers he'd rather take apast, and to speak softly to foul-mouthed bastards and to carry a load second only to the burden of Atlas and to be condemned whenever he stumbles."

That's the kind of observation that strikes you square between the eyes. I have savored it (the sauce is sweet and pungent), and aside from the overabundance of "and to"s, I kind of like it. Makes me think of Prometheus or some other tragic figure of a minor god. Nice imagery. Effective.

But not very accurate, sad to say.

So let me tell you something about Hell, as I experience it...

I walked into my job with Sol Cohen, Ultimate, AMAZING STORIES and FANTASTIC with my eyes open. My eyes were so open that I set very low standards of achievement for myself. They went along the lines of "If I last six months ..." and "I don't expect I'll be able to do much about basic policy," and similar cop-outs designed to keep the stars in my eyes from totally occluding my vision.

Recause, sure, it had to be the most bitter-sweet experience imaginable:

Reading through Piers Anthony's col- editorship of the oldest magazine in the field, but the one now sunk the lowest and apparently chained to a bulk-reprint policy. Every fam's dream come true, but with a very low pay-scale, both for me and for my writers. So I said to myself, "If I think small, work in small ways, I'll have fewer disappointments, and maybe even a few successes."

> And ever since then I've been revising my sights upward. Shall I tell you how it was? I inherited an inventory that was unbelievably bad. I found a few stories in it I'd rejected years earlier from F&SF. The "name" stories were largely junk that had been (rightfully) bounced from every other market-very possibly including Doc Lowndes' mags. (Barry Malzberg's first words of advice to me were, "Forget the inventory. Start buying stories you like and use them immediately. You won't last long-no one will-but at least you can get the satisfaction of putting something you like into print." He added that at least 70% of the inventory was stuff he'd inherited before me.)

The magazines at that point had a policy of publishing no more than 20,000 words of new material, or 30,000 words when an installment of a serial was present. And that out of 70,000 or 80,000 words in an issue.

The "science column" was devoted to reliashed reviews of 2001 and republished speeches the author had given elsewhere and thought he could get more mileage from. The "movie reviews" were the eap-expressions of the reviewer, and sophomoric as legitimate criticism. To make matters worse, the reviewer also doubled as an editorial writer.

The sole bright spots were the presence of James Blish and fritz Leiber as book reviewers. And Blish was agitating for the use of a column heading his wife had done for his column. (It appeared in print only once—in the March, 1969 issue ---before I killed it.)

That's what I started out with.

Only a couple of months after I took the job, our typesetter went out of business. He was too good to be true—he not only had a lovely, readable typeface, but he had a proofreader who caught more errors than I did. That is truly rare. We switched to another typesetter who, in "matching" typestyles picked one of the most weirdly inappropriate typefaces I've

ever seen (July AMAZING, August FANTASTIC). Two months later be "computerized" his equipment and without warning substituted a typeface with no Italics—they had to be set separately and stipped in. (That was the December FANTASTIC.)

So much for "Hell." I moved slowly in sweeping out the features I disliked, because at first I didn't want to rock the boat and I really was not at all sure how long I'diast. However, with the advent of the 60g issues I think I can safely say that I'm very happy with all the features, and f course those issues saw the relegation of the reprints to ten pages or so in the back of the book, where they are tolerable.

Anyone who wants to count the words or the pages will find that almost every issue of each magazine contained more new fiction—and considerably more new non-fiction—all at the expense of the reprints. This was something of a covert victory for me, but when Sol would call up to say, "The contents page looks a bit sparse, don't you think we need another new story?" I admit my reaction was ne of pleasure on each occasion.

And of course we turned the corner with the 60¢ issues.

At the St. Louis convention David Gerrold came over to the poolside area where Greg Benford and I were sunning ourselves with our respective wives, and in the course of the conversation, he said something to the effect of "Sol Cohen, that monster," or similar words. I fixed him with my jaundiced eye and asked him if he'd ever met Sol Cohen. He said he hadn't. I asked him if he'd ever had any dealings with Sol Cohen. He said no. I asked him where he'd formed his opinion of Sol. His answer was vague, but boiled down to heresay.

There's aclot of that floating around. Until I met Sol
I accepted it as uncritically as anyone else.

Sure, Sol was morally contemptable. He was all of science fiction writers. He was—(fill in your own favorite epithet)!

Implicit in Piers'

TED WHITE!

evaluation of my life in "Hell" is the attitude that my boss must be Lucifer incarnate. God knows his opinion is hardly unique. Since I took the job I've seen letters and/or received letters from various writers either warning me that I was working for a morally indefensible individual or charging that I had joined him because my own morals were no better. Robert Moore Williams wrote me that he was picketing newsstands which carried AMAZING and FANTASTIC.

If life with AMAZING and FANTASTIC is hell, it is so because that hell is populated by a passle of small-minded, avoracious little demons who call themselves Writers.

Let me tell you about it.

When AMAZING and FANTASTIC were offered for sale by Ziff-Davis, it was because sales had slipped so badly that each issue was running in the red. Z-D wanted to sell the magazines simply because refunding the subscriptions would have cost several additional thousands of dollars, while unloading them on another (sucker) publisher would net a small profit.

Sol Cohen did not go directly after the magazines. He was acting publisher of GALAXY and IT when they were offered to Robert Guinn, who was not interested in them. Sol was, but required a partner, whom he found in Arthur Barnard, a publisher of men's magazines. Barnard had bought up a stable of men's sweat rags and was systematically reclipping old issues into new ones. Low overhead and nice profits. He pointed out that AMAZING and FANTASTIC had a nice backlogue of similarly reuseable material.

Let us face facts. who would buy proven money-losers and continue them under their money-losing policies? Only a foolish millionaire. As viable properties, the magazines were shot. Existing with a staff of one (Cele Lalli), in a nook of a large publishing empire, they lost money. Yaking advantage of favorable printing contracts, riding the distribution of POPULAR PHOTOGRAPHY, CAR & DRIVER, STEREO REVIEW, et al., they lost money. And they were losing readers at a steady rate (about ten thousand a year for three years running).

Z-D had only one item of value to sell: the rights to the stories already published. In most cases second world serial rights, and in some cases all world serial rights. (In other words, in all but a few cases, Z-D owned first reprint rights:

in many cases—most of the older stuff—they owned infinite reprint rights. These are magazine reprint rights, however: not book rights. Z-D owned no book rights, and sold none.) These reprint rights were the magazines only assets.

It is time now to pause and ask oneself, where did Ziff-Davis get these reprint rights?

You'll laugh when I tell you the answer: from the authors. Ziff-Davis bought those reprint rights from the authors of the stories. (Those occasions when the rights were not purchased are those occasions when the authors in question refused to sell reprint rights. Heinlein was one; Lester del Rey tells me he is another.)

One may question the moral right of Ziff-Davis (or AMAZ-ING's previous two previous publishers) to buy reprint rights at such a niggling word rate, but one must also remember that it was, throughout the thirties, forties and fifties and even in some cases now the custom for all sf magazines publishers to buy at least second serial rights

Few if any writers in those days eager to take home that big penny—a-word thought about the fact that they were selling more than the first publication rights of their stories. Few cared, even knowing.

Put simply, so long as no one used those additional rights, writers didn't care what they sold.

Let me tell you a parenthetical story:

One evening a couple of months ago I was at a fan-gathering where a copy of an index of all the sf published in Italy was being passed around.

"That looks keen," I said. "I wonder if I'm in it?"

Terry Carr and I had sold our pseudonymous <u>Invasion From</u>

2500 to an Italian publisher some years back, and I expected to find a listing for it, but out of idle curiosity I looked up my own name as well.

And there, to my surprise, I found a listing for a story I'd written.

It was "I, Executioner," a story I'd written with Terry, and sold to If. It appeared in the March, 1963 issue of If. Somebody had translated it into Italian and published it in Italy. "That's piracy," I exclaimed. "I've been pirated in Italy!"

The next day I called up Terry and told him about it. But, in the middle of our conversation a sudden doubt came to me. "You don't suppose we sold Itakian rights to If?" I wondered. "Does IF have ties to that magazine?" Terry suggested I call Bob Silverberg, who knows about such things."

And Bob told me quietly and calmly, even a little sadly, that yes indeed If did sell stories to the publisher in quest-ion—had sold a number of Bob's stories, in fact, including a novel which had killed the Italian book sale for him—and that since If bought world serial rights, IF kept all proceeds from the sales.

"I see," I said, and I did indeed see. For my share (50%) of 1¢ a word, I'd sold the rights to resell that story throughout the world.

It is, granted, a deplorable situation. But I haven't noticed an SFWA boycott of GALAXY or IF. Nor of f&SF, which publishes or resells to foreign editions. I know that if f&SF was deprived of those foreign sales, it might just find itself too deeply in the red to continue in business. It is quite likely that GALAXY and IF (which have lost money for several years now) have also been saved from bankruptcy by those foreign sales. Somehow, people seem to understand: half a loaf is better than none. And if one wants to "do something about it," the obvious thing to do is to refuse to sell those foreign rights. Or those reprint rights.

AMAZING and FANTASTIC presently purchase First North



American or First World Serial Rights, depending on the author's desires. (Since world rights are bought in anticipation of foreign editions and we have none, those aren't being used for now.) We buy noreprint rights on newly purchased stories. Most of the other magazines still do.

Why were AMAZING and FANTASTIC boycotted, then? And why is there talk of resuming that boycott from the less responsible quarters?

Because many authors are concerted asses.

Because they are willing to sell the most extravagant rights—provided no one ever makes use of them.

Because they like to see Sol Cohen as the Devil Incarnate.

One might with justification ask why Pines Publications /Popular Library has not been boycotted for its annual reprint magazine, WONDER STORIES/IREASURY OF SF/SF YEARBOOK. The answer would seem to be purely one of degree: they don't reprint enough to bother anyone. More recently they've been republishing Hamilton's (and others') Captain Future novels, also without payment, and I understand the moral outrage is again building in the ranks of the SFWA. It is hard to understand why. Lester Dent (or his estate) is getting nothing from the republication of the Doc Savage novels. Walter Gibson is getting nothing for the republication of his early Shadow novels. This hardly outrages the SFWA at all. In each case the situation is the same, the original publisher orig—

inated the concept and farmed it out to writers. Captain future wasn't Hamilton's idea—although I understand he reformed it greatly—and he wrote it on assignment, like any other pulp hack of the period. The property was Pines' from the beginning. It still is.

The moral question, you see, is not one-sided. And it involves several separate outlooks. The writer's outlook is that the work he has created---no matter if he hacked it out for the rent check-is an Immortal Work, and that publishers exist purely as tolerated middlemen to purvey the Work to its Public. Publishers take a rather different view. They look upon their publications (magazines, books, etc.) as the essential commodity, and stories simoly as the filling, like the creme in a cupcake. They are concerned with battline out contracts with typesetters, printers and distributors (each of whom regards himself as the central character) and somehow squeezing out a penny a copy or less (usually much less) in profit as a return on their investment. There is something to be said for each viewpoint, and all are required to keep a publication alive.

It's a shame writers are so shallow and/or near sighted that they cannot see this.

It's the goose and her golden eggs again: several writers (attempting to cloak themselves in the abstract person of the STMA) decided to kill off AMAZING and FANTASTIC rather than see those magazines publish properties which they legally owned. And those who objected to this policy did so in the name of sentiment: "It's the oldest title, and we owe it that..."

These writers announced that the reprints of their stories financially hurt them. This is very unlikely. One writer claimed he'd lost a book sale (a collection of short stories, I'd guess) because his stories had been reprinted in AMAZIMG, FANTASTIC, and various of the quarterly reprint titles over a four-year period. This has to be a cop-out: magazine publication of stories has hardly any bearing on their consideration by a book publisher, some of whom, if they considered the question at all, would think the reprints an example of the stories' popularity, and thus a good omen for book publication.

Other writers have claimed that the reprints were squeezing out new fiction, and therefore hurting their chances for future sales. (Just as a note on that, let me point out that now that we're buying new stories in volume again, these writers have been conspicuous by the absence of the new stories they've submitted.) It seems obvious and elementary that if a magazine in financial trouble must choose between ceasing publication or resorting to a majority of reprints, that the latter is the lesser of two evils. It preserves the hope of a future market, and even keeps the door open for a minor one in the present. If the magazine dies, it kills everyone's hopes and can hardly be said to be making the author any money at all under any circumstances.

That this is true became obvious with the November

AMAZING and December FANTASTIC. At last these two titles had—after some four years of second—hand existence—returned to the fold as major markets in a diminishing field.

If the writers had any sincerity in their claims, they should have greated this news with cheers and the increased submission of new stories.

They didn't. They haven't. They are still out there screaming mournfully into the night of their own souls about the "Moral Infamy" of Sol Cohen, Ultimate and AMAZING and FANTASTIC.

I regard this as moral bankruptcy.

And I indict those writers who have revealed it of themselves. They know who they are: perhaps you do too. Just look around for the source of the noise.

I charge these people with being cheap, double-dealing blackmailers. They have made and sold a product and when it has been used, they have screamed foul. They sold their stories with their eyes open. They sold away their rights. They have no legal legs for their complaints to stand upon. But they scream and they—for god's sake!—picket, because suddenly they see those worthless rights being used. Like the man who sells his worthless land only to find it had oil under it, their outrage is the outrage of a cheap grifter who defauded himself. And it is far easier to blame a man who honestly and legally and for good money purchased those rights than it is to admit that they originally gave those rights away.

Sol Cohen's motives are not idealistic. He didn't buy AMAZING or FANIASTIC in order to subsidize them as landmarks. Put bluntly, he bought them as a retirement project: a little something to provide for his later years—which he is now in. If they lose money, he can't balance their losses against other profits. They have to earn money—a minimum of profit—or he might as well fold them.

They could earn money only in one way: they had to be produced on a rock-bottom budget. Originally there was no editorial budget. Sol's original plans called for no new stories at all. He viewed the magazines as a marginal investment.

He doesn't live lavishly. His "offices" are his modest home in suburban Queens. He is active in Jewish charitable organizations, to which he donates a percentage of his time. He lives in semi-retirement.

The man has treated me with every fairness. He has gone along with just about everything I've proposed. He has given me total control over the editorial content of the magazines, and most recently over the selection of illustrators, covers and cover designs. I see him several times a month, and talk to him on the phone almost daily. And in that time I've had to reconcile my attitude towards the man with the image of him I'd picked up from others.

They don't match up.

from other people I hear stories about his willfully withholding checks. He has not only paid me promptly , he has

paid everyone I know promptly. (His bookkeeping is sufficiently disorganized that he has on two occasions overlooked checks I've authorized. As soon as I've discovered this from the authors in question, I've called him to ask him about it. In both cases the checks went out immediately, something to the surprise of the recipients.) I received a letter from Piers Anthony, in fact (written after his column about Hasan), stating his pleasure and surprise with the speed of payment (he'd expected payment on or after publication, although I'd told him this was not the policy as I understood it), and, ultimately, the treatment we gave his novel.

I've heard stories that paint Sol with malice and victousness. Again, I've never seen these characteristics in the man. It is true that he responds to hostility with hostility—and that he walked into a king-size amount of hostility when he took over the magazines and launched a reprint policy—but he also responds to kindness and courtesy with their like, something people seem loath to credit him for.

No, Sol doesn't make the magazines hell for me t edit. I could wish for more money—and I do—but I get a lot of intangible pleasure out of changing and improving the magazines. It's one in the eyes of my detractors to do a better job than they could do. And the writers I do deal with have told me such things as "I'd rather sell my good stories to you—for less money—than to the other magazines."

It becomes heli only when I am confronted with the moronic prejudice of the ego-oriented Gim coGimmee writers,
who, in their blind flailings try to tear down the constructive changes I've made, try to prove that it really
doesn't make any difference that we dropped the reprints,
as long as Sol publishes the magazines. I've had it with
the vituperation of these senior citizens of sf. Their only urge is to destroy. Like radicals in other areas of our
life, they are totally unconcerned with possible change for
the better. And their contempt for legal rights, when the
law doesn't favor them, is frightening. They've learned
that if you throw a big enough tantrum, you can usually
impose your will on others, regardless of the rights in the
case.

Fuck them. Fuck them all, each and every one. They are moral hypocrites. I think it's time the spotlight is shown on them for a change.

Well, so much for the "foul-mouthed bastards," Piers. Whaddya say you and I go down to the bar now?



#### MONOLOG CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3 9

of checks, etc., because I'm not a dealer and don't want to take the time. But a "you help me, I'll help you" is ideal. For that matter I can't get all the Essex House and I've no one willing to send any overseas. So anybody want to trade? Address: Billy Pettit, Control Data Ltd.,

22A St. James Sq., London S.W.1. ENGLAND.



P.O. BOX 3116 CONTINUED FROM PAGE 47

BILL GLASS presents a problem which is chronic, and I wish I could do more than say I'm sorry, Bill, but from your 4 page letter, subjective and analytical, all I can publish

"GALAXY certainly deserves recognition for running "The Region Between" (including the word "fuck", slightly unallowable under the former editor), Harlan for writing it, and Jack Gaughan for graphically realizing it. I think it's Hugo-worthy, but I don't see how it could go to Harlan alone. It would have to be a special award acknowledging both Harlan's and Jack Gaughan's contributions."

BOB BLOCH postcarded: "I'm late in soying thanks for SfR—and I may perhaps actually be seeing you in a few days if you happen to turn up at the Bouchercon at the Royal Motor Inn—but I do want to say that this last was an exceptional issue—everybody seems uptight over something! About philately—of course stamp collectors are mentally ill. I ought to know—been one for 43 years!"

Well, we said hello at the Bouchercon...and I must say, Bob, you don't look like a collector of sticky bits of paper.

DAVE PIPER of England mouned in a letter that his copy of SFR 36 had arrived with its mailing page interb--but ales, without its cover. I fear that experiment was not a goodun.

ED CAGLE, from his teepee in Leon, Kansas, signaled in part:"Some say Chief Campbell speak with tongue forked too far to right. ... Most bad talk come from people who not like way Chief Campbell speak mind. They not listen. They shout loud cries in wind. They shout new legends. They say old Chief trying to force old ways down throat. If they listen they know old Chief only offer wiedom of ages. Him not say, 'You do as I do.' Him say, 'Here what I did, here what I do, here way old life went, here way I learned.'"

And so on with hundreds of coiffs in sky.

JEFF SMITH also wrote a highly quotable letter about Paul Walker's taste in reviewing, AMALOG and Campbell, but it is so interwoven I can't extract anything. But the letter goes to Walker for his agonized perusal.

MARK MUMPER, too, sent a letter that I wish I could publish, a report on the fantasy festival held recently at Univ. of Calif. at Santa Cruz. The festival's title was "The Corridors of Time" and Poul Anderson was the featured speaker.

AND NOW, alas, time for mere name-listing. PAUL ANDERSON...
BRIAN SCHUCK...SANDY MOSS...GEORGE FERGUS...MARK L. STILLWAGON.. JOANNE BURGER...LON JONES...BETH MYERS...H. HOWARD
COLEMAN...ALEX KRISLOV...DICK ELLINGTON...JEFF SOYER...DOB
SANKNER...THOS. R. OLIVER...OSVALD P. DYCK...JEFFREY MAY...
JEROME E. NELSON...BILL BLISS...JEFF COCHRAN...MARK BARCLAY
...ROGER C. LEWIS...J.J. PIERCE...MIKE JURGENS...JERRY LAPIDUS...NEAL GOLDFARB...PAUL GIÚSTER...D. HULVEY...N. BLACKI

# NOISE LEVEL-john brunner

#### a column

THIS FUNNY JOB

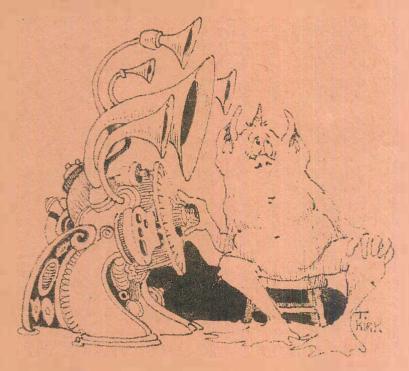
What funny job?

Being a writer, of course. At the risk of giving further offence to people who say things like, "Surely there must be better subject material for authors than themselves?", that's what I propose to discuss right now, on the grounds that I don't know a single working writer of any stature who isn't continually concerned about the nature of his work and the-sometimes uneasy, sometimes exciting-relationship he maintains with himself because of it. If that sounds schizophrenic, that's intentional. In at least one sense there is a division (more exactly an interface) between the ego of a writer and that portion of his consciousness which generates concepts, images, narrative and the other constituent elements of the finished product.

For some writers this interface is relatively permeable; for others it's like a heavy solid door that keeps swinging shut unless they exert tremendous effort to hold it open. Sam Youd (John Christopher) was briefly in London last week — mid-february— and over a lunchtime drink we got on to this subject, and I learned somewhat to my surprise that he is so far from being the natural, fluent writer I'd always imagined that he had to give up virtually everything else in order to maintain his concentration on his work, he dare not, he told me, indulge in even so innocent a pastime as gardening because he may find himself using it as an escape from the duty of attacking his current assignment.

Similarly, Jimmy Ballard, who was here the other day at a small get-together, informed me that he sets himself a target of no more than a couple of single-spaced pages a day, yet frequently fails to achieve more than a third of that and almost never exceeds it. At a Globe meeting a month or two back Christopher Priest told me that the physical effort of producing some seventeen hundred words in one day had left him positively tired, but he couldn't figure out why—the work involved in hitting typewriter keys, even on a manual machine, is not intrinsically so exhausting.

It seems to follow that what absorbs the energy is just what I referred to above: forcing back that interface between the personal and the auctorial layers of the mind, which possesses a kind of surface tension and is furthermore opaque until sufficiently stretched to become trans-



lucent.

Forgive me for exploiting this image to such a degree. but it does strike me as being the most vivid I've yet come up with in order to try and make clear to the non-writer what it is that happens inside the mind of a professional author when he is turning a mood, or a plot, into a communicable form. If one is blessed (as I seem to be) with a comparatively low degree of surface tension at that interface, it's frequently possible——though not by any means invariably——to work as fast as one can type, to come to resent the need to change the paper in the machine because one has come to the foot of a page, to seek faster and ever faster ways of getting the words out because dimly beyond what's of current interest one can discern the germs of yet other material, and the risk of being distracted stems chiefly from one's own fertility of imagination. (You've probably heard the term "talking writer", meaning a person who is prodigal with storymaterial by mouth, yet unproductive of it in written form. this, I believe, is often symptomatic of an irritating affliction, to wit that when the poor fellow goes back to the material he was so enthusiastic about verbally to his friends it's acquired a vague "second-hand" feeling and no longer carries the impetus required to overcome interference from minor physical events, such as door-bell ringing or lunch being announced!)

Now neither of these extremes—great fluency, or the experience of unaccountable fatigue—can be called typical of "a writer", any more than it can of any other (save the mark) creative artist. But...

When I first moved to London I knew a number of outstanding jazz musicians, some of them so much in love with their work that after completing a club engagement that required them to play for four or five hours they would go on to jam somewhere else until three or four in the morning. The celebrated pianist Solomon had formerly lived a few doors along from the place where I was then lodging; my landlady told me that in summer, in spite of there being g gangs of kids yelling and screaming outside, he would sit happily with his windows wide open, practicing for two or three hours every day and then playing over sonatas and concertos from memory——and he carried twenty major concertos in his head. But, as he once remarked to an interviewer, "It's dreadfully easy to perfect a wrong note!"

Likewise, at a time when we were very much involved with the London folksong scene, people used to come along to parties of ours from various clubs that closed down at eleven, midnight, two a.m.—and keep right on going. The entire Ian Campbell group once descended on us, and five minutes after they'd been offered drinks one of them was at the piano and another was trying out my century-old seven-string banjo, and... Most memorably of all, Sandy Paten once turned up after a session at the Troubadour, which didn't shut until two o'clock, sat down on the floor and proceeded to sing ballade for an hour and a half, high as a kite on love of his own talent.

The man who is, I suppose, my oldest friend, the only person who was at my twenty-first birthday party whom i'm still in touch with, is an expert in theory of games and committee theory. He's also a long-time SF fan. Once, like most fans, he decided to try his hand at a story; however, he got so engrossed in the idea he'd hit on, he produced an extremely technical article instead...

Constable, according to a TV programme about him that we saw recently, was satisfied to paint one major picture a year. By contrast, between 16in March and 5th October 1968, Picasso produced 347 brilliant erotic engravings (I have, and can recommend, the selection of them published by AVANTE-GARDE).

So here is why I call being a writer a funny jobfunny very definitely peculiar. Though some of the musicians I've known were bored to tears by having to sweat through dull commercial dence-band stuff for the sake of the pay, they were the people who voluntarily carried on to cellar clubs where they could relax playing jazz with a scratch group. Though most of the painters I've known didn't make enough to live on, Friday evening couldn't come too soon for them, and they'd protty well run for their studios so that even if the light had gone they could at least think about their current picture, before settling down to concentrate on it over the weekend. I know potters and sculptors who, rather than do the same kind of thing, put up with a hand-to-mouth existence for years while struggling to organise a co-operative or secure reliable commissions from outlets whose managers liked their work.

Only among writers have I found people who on their own

testimony are suffering from their gift (I mean emotionally, not because it pays badly and they're living on baked beans and sandwiches). I... (Sorry, you—all: I'm going to say it anyhow!) I love what I do for a living; I get miserable if I'm kept away from it. I've equipped myself with everything I can think of to stop mere physical inconveniences from getting in my way; I work on an IBM 72 for the same reason a guitarist wants a Martin or a Gibson—to have the finest tools of his trade. (I'd like a Martin, too, but I have a Conn saxa—phone and an Adler recorder and that'll have to do for the time being!)

And, for no particular reason, I will sometimes sit down at this machine and simply use it. The result may be a poem, and that won't make me any money... though, admittedly, they have started to pay me for poetry-readings now. What I'm driving at is that it's not commercial. I don't hate the bloody thing because it spitomises a painful task that has to be struggled through when I'd rather be doing something else. A book has to go very badly wrong before I find myself thinking that. On the contrary, I'm more likely to find myself laughing aloud when I have to break off and head for the bathroom, because something totally unexpected has percolated out from that aforementioned interface between me out here and the store of inchoate imagery that I keep somewhere at the back of my head, and I can't wait to get back and see what happens next.

A very funny jeb--isn't it?



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HUMOUR IN A SF VEIN
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I PALANTIR, the Tolkien fmz published by Bruce Pelz & Ted Johnstone back in 1961-3 will be reprinted by Alpajpuri. Copies of the four issues will be 75¢ each. Pre-publication price for the set is \$2.50; after publication—\$3.00. I PALANTIR is really a collector's item—a must for every Tolkien fan. Alpajpuri, 330 South Berendo St., L.A., CA 90005

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# SOME COMMENTS ON SCIENCE FICTION CIRCULATION by JERRY W. KIDD

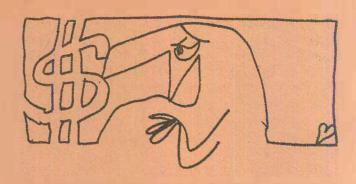
It has now been ten years since magazines were first required to print circulation information once each year. For the years 1960, '61 and '62 they were required to give only the paid circulation per issue, but for the last seven years they have been required to give additional information on total number of copies printed (net press run), newstand sales, subscription sales, and free distribution. I thought that it might be interesting to compare distribution figures for the six science fiction magazines that survived throughout this decade. They are: ANALOG, THE MAGAZINE OF FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION, GALAXY, IF, AMAZING and FANTASTIC. The results of this comparison are presented in a series of graphs.

The first graph shows the average paid circulation per issue for the last ten years regardless of frequency of issue. It shows that GALAXY, although published bimonthly, initially had the largest circulation of any science fiction magazine, but this lead was lost to ANALOG and by the end of the decade ANALOG had pulled far ahead. THE MAGAZINE OF FANIASY AND SCIENCE FICTION maintained a remarkably steady paid circulation of around 50,000 issues per month throughout the entire ten years, while the circulations of IF, AMAZING and FANIASTIC fluctuated widely with marked losses being registered during the past year.

The second chart shows the ratio of total sales to total issues printed for the last seven years. The Galaxy magazines and ANALOG had the highest sales ratios for most of the decade, but during 1969 this sales ratio dropped off sharply for GALAXY and IF. F&SF was again consistent throughout the time span with a sales ratio of from .45 to .50. AMAZING and FANTASTIC had not only the lowest total sales, but also the lowest sales ratios for the period with the ratio being particularly low for the last few years.

The third chart compares newsstand sales and subscription sales as functions of total paid distribution. This comparis n indicates that only ANALOG and F&SF sell a significant percentage of their magazines through mail subscription. ANALOG now sells 38,000 copies per month through subscription (more than the total circulation of AMAZING or FANTASTIC and almost as much as the total circulation of IF). This comparison is important since subscription sales are more profitable than newsstand sales (no middlemen).

The fourth graph shows the percentage of the total six magazine market held by each over the last ten years. This comparison may be somewhat unfair since it is weighted in favor of the monthly magazines (although a monthly had less per issue sales than a monthly, during a year it might have more total sales and therefore a larger percentage of total magazine market since it was published twelve times vs. six times for the bimonthly). But it is still good information for trends if we recognize its limitations.



The last chart shows the total sales during each of the last ten years for the six magazines under study. The total market remained remarkably steady at around 3.5 million copies per year but individual market penetration varied.

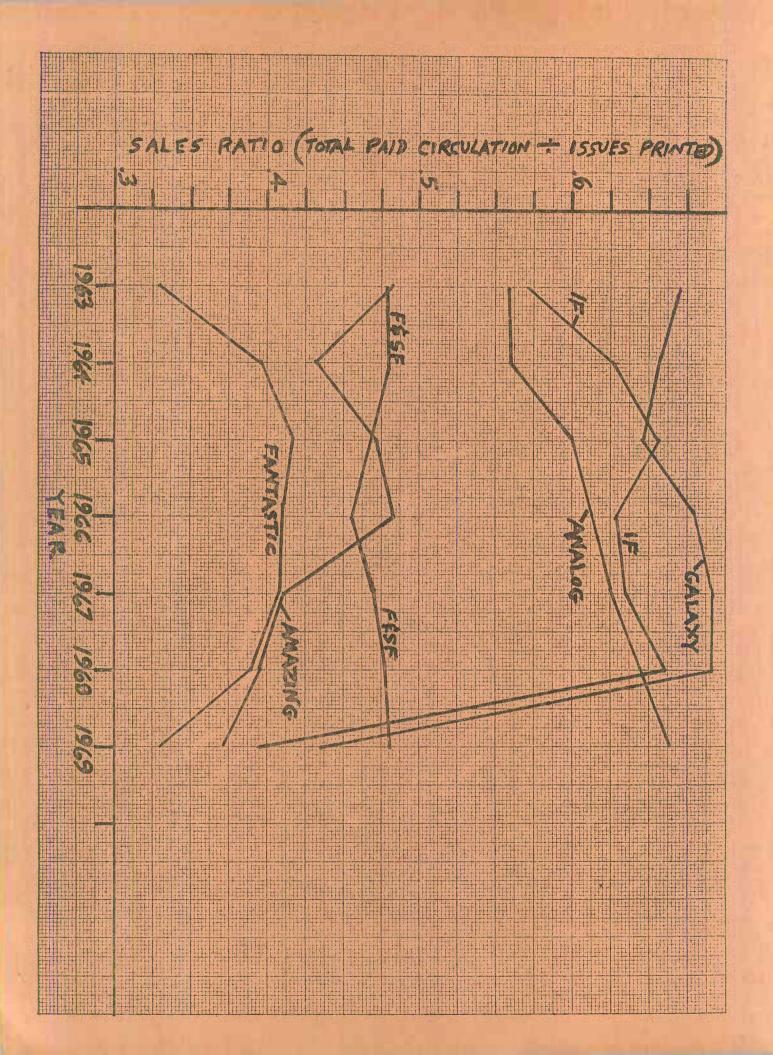
Only ANALOG showed consistent gains throughout the decade with total paid circulation increasing from 74,000 in 1960 to 108,000 in 1969 and market penetration increasing from 26% to 39% during the same time span. Since the total circulation of the six remained about constant, most of these gains were apparently registered at the expense of AMAZING and FANTASTIC but the large gains during 1969 appear to be at the expense of GALAXY and IF. F&SF continues to maintain a stable circulation. GALAXY and IF showed large losses in circulation and sales ratio in 1969 while AMAZING and FANTASTIC continued to slump in circulation.

Based on the results outlined here, the following conclusions appear reasonable: 1. ANALOG is the most economically sound of the six, with high sales, good sales ratio, and high subscription sales. 2. At the present time F&SF seems to be in the second best position with consistent sales and a high subscription sales percentage. 3. GALAXY and IF went from a position of good health to a shakey stature all in the short span of one year. Paid circulation and sales ratio both decreased dramatically in 1969. The new management must do something to regain the lost ground or the magazines cannot remain economically viable. AMAZING and FANTASTIC are about at rock bottom. I have a feeling that Sol Cohen's reprint magazines are about all that keeps the firm in business or else he has money that he can afford to lose. If the first suppositi n is correct, circulation must go up fairly soon or these two magazines wall fold.

The results of this study raise some intriguing questions. Most fans that I have talked to have very little good to say about John W. Campbell, Jr., and ANALOG; in spite of this, AN—ALOG is dominating the market at an increasing rate. Why? The Galaxy magazines have plummeted sharply in sales during 1969. Can the change in publishers and editor explain this? If not, then what is the answer? Why are AMAZING and FANTASTIC still losing circulation in spite of publishing good new stories and editorial material? Comments on these questions will be appreciated.

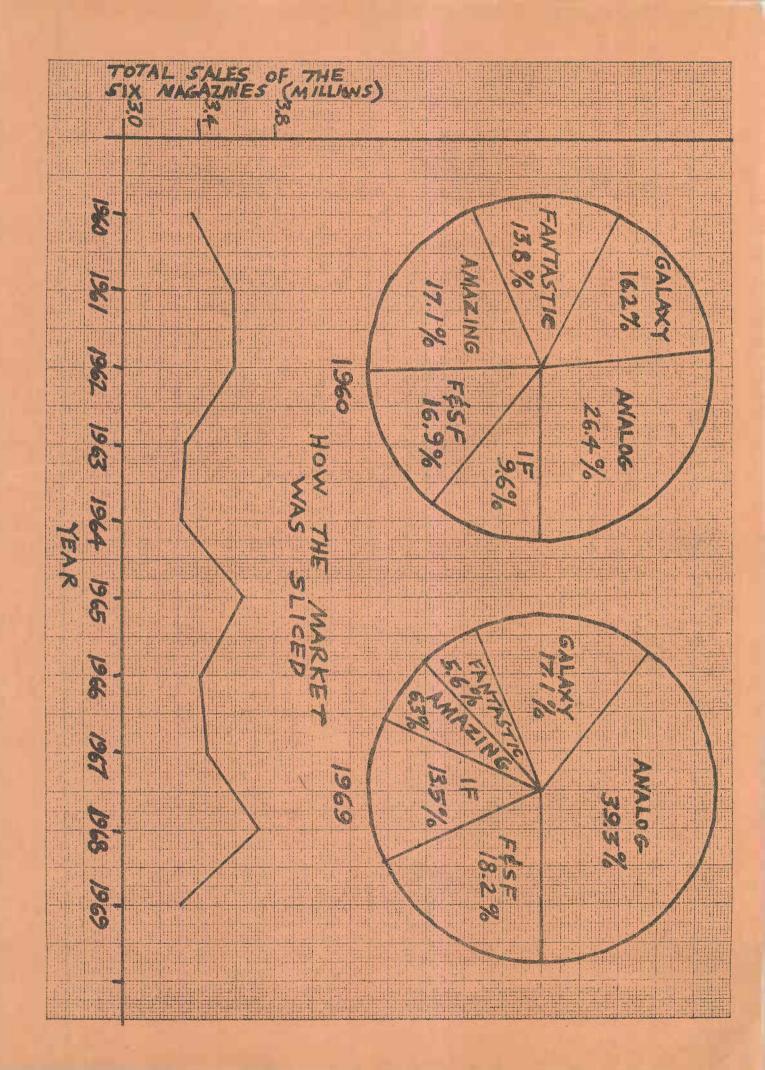


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#### TED WHITE

# COMMENT

Jerry Kidd's piece is a good example of the sort of erronious conclusions that can be drawn from raw data when you're unaware of the circumstances which produced it.

Here are some additional facts.

- 1. Although the circulation figures are supposedly sworn to be accurate, they are not always so. Sometimes it is a matter of sloppy accounting. Sometimes it is a matter of deliberate falsification. In the case of GALAXY and IF, the figures published by robert Guinn during the time he was publisher are false. I'm told it was a matter of pride with Guinn to print boastful figures. In most cases the circulation and sales he claimed were about double the actual figures.
- 2. As I understand the figures, the actual newsstand sales of GALAXY, IF, F&SF, and AMAZING and FANTASTIC are all roughly the same: hovering around 30,000 copies.
- 3. It is my opinion that the figures published by Universal for the most recent year of GALAXY and IF are also less than factual. Based on the figures supplied by their distributor, these figures are still optimistic, if less so than Guinn's. I suspect that Universal was reluctant to show the actual drop between Guinn's inflated figures and the actual sales, and that Universal is gradually adjusting the figures downward-perhaps in hope of meeting rising sales somewhere midway. (But the production problems which plaqued GALAXY in particular last year, resulting in the distribution of issues during the month of their cover date the off sale date seems to have hurt the magazine badly. I'm told some issues had actual on-sale periods of only a couple of weeks, and that the resultant loss of sales has that magazine up against the economic ropes. One hopes it can survive-the field is too small to easily survive the loss of any one of the remaining magazines.)
- 4. It is unlikely that the subscription sales figures reflect much, if any, profits. Both F&SF and ANALOG are part of the Curtis Circulation Plan, and I believe also of the other major subscription services. These are the plans used by high schools for fund-raising, and while they do sell copies, they do it at such a low rate that it is dubious if these sales represent more than a break-even on the actual costs of publishing those copies. Sol Cohen-whose background is in sales and circulation—refuses to make

use of any of these plans; he says they are so cut-rate that he would actually lose money. The bulk of F&SF's subscriptions come through the subscription plans; the remainder come from extremely generous subscription discounts (like the half-price student subscriptions). Any profits on these must be quite marginal. I am not aware of ANALOG's position, but I suspect it makes little if any money on most of its subscriptions. (F&SF and ANALOG are the only sf magazines with really substantial circulation by subscription.)

- 5. As a result of both points 2 and 4, F&SF is as marginal a money-maker as AMAZING, FANTASTIC, IF and GALAXY. As I understand the magazine's actual operations, it would not run in the black but for its subsidiary sales: the anthologies and the foreign editions.
- I've heard some speculation about ANALOG. You will note that although it sells the most number of copies, it also prints the most-more than twice as many copies as its competitors. The actual profit factor is dependent upon the percentage of copies sold. ANALOG actually has the best percentage as well, but it is not much above 50%, and it looks good only in comparison with the percentages of the other magazines. (If one discounts those hefty subscription figures as low-profit or non-profit, the percentage falls alarmingly.) One is tempted to observe that if all sf magazines printed around 200,000 copies, sales might beywell up all across the board. Whether percentages would rise much is another story—although more copies on display will tend to insure a better proportion of sales-to-returns. However, there is an additional factor: the editorial and production budgets of ANALOG must be at least double those of other magazines. The editor alone draws no less than \$20,000 a year (if speculation is to be believed). and the story rates average about double the bulk of the competition. Art rates are also high—and the art is lavishly used—and the magazine is obviously the work of a first-rate art director. Printing and paper are tops. I have no idea how the budget of ANALOG compares with its profits, but I have heard educated speculation that the magazine is probably only marginally profitable, and may not outlast its present editor-
- 7. Despite the conclusion about AMAZING and FANTASTIC. both magazines show thin profits, due largely to their extremely low overhead. Thus far no money has been lost on them, nor on the reprint titles, which have effectively no editorial or production budgets at all, costing only what it takes to print them. Sales on both AMAZING and FANTASTIC fell with their first 60¢ issues, apparently reflecting the reluctance of readers to pay 10¢ more for what they imagined to be substantially the same 40-60%-reprint magazines. This sales drop was immediately reflected in something like a 50% reduction in the number of letters those first 60¢ issues drew, but although figures are not yet in on more recent issues (they take five to six months from the date as issue goes off sale), the lettercount rose sharply again with the March and April issues. which I think bodes well. (We are again averaging roughly a hundred letters an issue---which I suspect is a good many more than our competitors draw.) As to the question about why we're "still losing circulation," this is due to any number of factors, some of them extraneous to the actual quality of the maga-

zines, five years ago, sales went up quite sharply (roughly from 30,000 to 50,000), simply as a reflection of the obvious change in the magazines at that time (more pages. bigger names, editorial enthusiasm, etc.). Then, as the reprint policy set in and the magazines became again quite predictable, sales slacked again. They continued to slacken right up to the point when I became editor. My editorial changes were at first gradual, and if my way of editing a magazine is going to sell more copies, we won't know until the end of this present year, at the earliest---reader inertia has to be overcome and reversed, and this is not an overnight proposition. The first issues which I felt were really "mine" were the first 60¢ issues—and even those reflected my lack of package control. Since the March and April issues I have had control over the covers (subject to the publisher's prejudices), and I now have a staff of artists of whom I am proud.

However-as I've told various people around here recently-I'm not convinced that my efforts are going to be effective. I do believe that I have done substantially what I said I'd do and what I wanted to do (the only restraining factor that remains is the low budget). But sales are based on so many imponderables---only one of which is the actual content and quality of the magazine in question-that I am beginning to grow skeptical. Just recently, for example, we discovered that although we were supposed to be on the Union News stands at the airports and railroad stations in this city, we weren't. We weren't because a self-important junior executive in the local distribution company was goofing off. And in the Washington, D.C. area the local wholesaler demanded an additional 5¢ a copy (blackmail) or he'd cut our draw in half. Which he did. Now five hundred, instead of a thousand copies go to serve that entire area. I wonder if many are actually getting displayed. When these things happen the national distributor wants the publisher to cut back his print-order to compensate. The distributor virtually dictates the print-order on most magazines, particularly the "high return" turn" items like of magazines. He can institute a stranglehold which it is impossible to break free from.

Those are only a few of the complicated factors which influence of magazine sales. Every magazine is wrestling with them. All are hurting because of them. It isn't a healthy situation for any of us. Yet, what power we have as a field is based on our collective number: our ability to carve out a niche on each newsstand for sf magazines. It gives us a place to cluster in communal warmth——it gives the newsdealer something to do with us (rather than return us undisplayed) and it gives the reader a place to find us (rather than searching among the non-sf titles). for that reason I want to reitterate an earlier point: none of this should be construed as an attack upon any of my competitors, because I need them, just as much as they need me We all need each other. The death of any single sf mag will hurt us all. The birth of every new sf magazine should be cause for rejoicing among us all. We are not in direct competition with each other. I don't think that the reappearance of VENTURE, say, hurt any of us, and I

wish WORLDS Of TOMORROW would come back. The single most important thing we can do is to nourish and help the sf communitygrow as a whole. We'll all reap the rewards.



ANT POEM

these brown ants

stealing sugar from the kitchen

to
think
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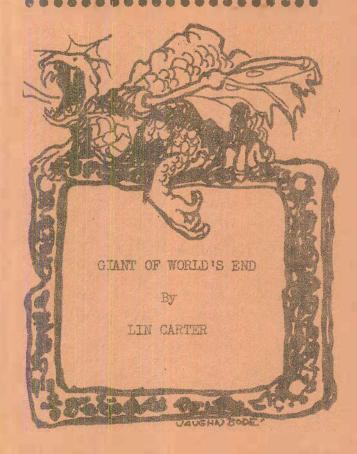
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—redd boggs
from Hand in a Window



### John Boardman



"'My masters are greater then yours, for they have accomplished by their arts what Yezdigerd could not with a hundred thousand swords.'" —Robert E. Howard, "The People of the Black Circle."

"Somewhat he knoweth of art magical, yet useth not that art, for it sappeth the life and strength, nor is it held worthy that a Demon should put trust in that art, but rather in his own might and main." —Eric Rücker Eddison, The Worm Ouroboros.

There are two stock characters, whether hero or villain, in the sword—and—sorcery novel. One is a man of war, strong, mighty—thewed, skilled in armed and unarmed combat, of dauntless courage (if a hero) or overbearing pride (if a villain). The other is a magician, deeply learned in arcane arts, the master of spells which can blast or heal.

Earlier writers of sword-and-sorcery fiction, going back past Malory to the composers of such sagas as The Mabinogion or Amadis de Gaul, were on the side of the swordsmen. This is understandable, since they were writing for swordsmen, the members of the feudal gentry who were their patrons. There are in the epics evil swordsmen, but they are portrayed strictly as individuals, not as representatives of a social caste. Wizards are usually villains. Even the famous Merlin first enters the Morte d'Arthur as the accessory to a rape. And he is written out of the story fairly early, probably because everything comes so easily

for him that if he keeps advising King Arthur there will be no conflict in the plot.

The place of a wizard in such a story is a difficult thing for a writer to formulate. The capabilities of a swordsman are limited and well-known; there are things which a writer simply cannot portray a swordsman as doing. But the capabilities of a wizard are limited only by the writer's imagination. If the wizard is a villain, his powers must be circumscribed in such a way that the hero can overcome him. If he is a hero, then his powers cannot be so great that all problems can be settled by a flick of his wand. Thus, while the powers of the swordsman can be delineated the first time he encounters an enemy, the powers of the wizard must be meticulously outlined so that there is still a plot.

Wizards generally get treated rather harshly in the older sword-and-sorcery fiction. (The Kalevala, the Finnish national epic, is an outstanding exception. Väinamdinen is a heroic wizard, Ilmarinen is a competent wizard, Lamminkainen is a selfish and unreliable wizard, and Joukahainen is a boastful and incompetent wizard, but they are all wizards first and swordsmen later.) Merlin and his mentor Bleise are about the only sympathetic wizards in the medieval epics—and Merlin, though one of the good guys, was begotten in the same manner as Rosemary's baby.

To get to our own century's stories, every wizard in Howard's Conan tales is a villain except for Pelias, and Pelias is scarcely sympathetic. The Pelias of "The Scarlet Citadel" helps Conan only as a way to get back at a black magician: the Pelias who comes on scene again in the Nyberg-de Camp pastiche Conanthe Avenger is, like that book's Conan, a pallid imitation of the Howard creation.

And this is the heart of the problem in modern fiction. Nowadays a writer is expected to be an Intellectual, with a class loyalty to other Intellectuals. This is not a label that could be affixed to the money-minded Edgar Rice Burroughs or the visceral Robert E. Howard. (In fact, a survey of the letters and privately expressed thoughts of Howard leave the uncomfortable impression that had he survived until World War II, his name today would be under the same obloquy as those of Knut Hamsun and Wyndham Lewis.) So their wizards were caricatures of Intellectuals, embodying all the faults that common repute finds in that class—cold inhumanity, a lust for power, remoteness from ordinary human concerns, and possession of a stock of learning best left hidden.

The modern writer isn't buying this stereotype. In fact, he realizes that in the classical sword—and—sorcery epic the wizard is a hostile stereotype of the Intellectual. Knowing himself to be an Intellectual, he must perforce make the wizard a sympathetic character. So we get the genial, sympathetic Pelias of Conan the Avenger, the powerful but affable Gandalf of The Lord of the Rings, and Zolobian the Magician of Lin Carter's Giant of World's End (Belmont 850-853, 50¢).

en the famous Merlin first enters the Morte d'Arthur as the mane is reminiscent of the partnership of Flash Gordon and Dr. accessory to a rape. And he is written out of the story fairly early, probably because everything comes so easily a sword, and Zarkov is presented as a super-scientist rather

than a wizard, these stories are really in the sword-andsorcery class. The two men act as a team, using preposter ous feats of arms along with preposterous feats of science in defeating the eternally resilient Ming.

Carter's Thongor of Lemuria series reads like the result of a head-on collision between Burroughs and Howard. Giant of World's End represents an advance in Carter's technique; it reads like a head-on collision between Clark Ashton Smith and Jack Vance. In a foreword Carter acknowledges his debt to Smith's stories of the last continent, Jothique; he leaves unstated an equal debt to Vance's The Dying Earth.

In our scientific age, every author of a sword-and-sorcery novel has to come to grips with the question of science. Do magic and science co-exist in the world of his novel, or has magic replaced science, or are the effects called "magical" only the operation of scientific principles unknown in our world?

The first of these solutions is seldom seen, because spells and the technology of modern science are jist too much to fit into one book. (When it is tried, as in Mark Geston's Lords of the Starship, the result is a godawful mess.) The second solution characterizes the Harold Shea stories of L. Spraque de Camp and the late Fletcher Pratt. Shea and his collaborators find that "magic" is just the natural law of other universes than ours, so that, in the world of the Norse gods, pistols don't work but cosmetic surgery by sympathetic magic does. It is unclear whether science co-exists with magic in Randall Garrett's Lord d'Arcy stories, but magic definitely dominates. In Poul Anderson's Steve Matuchek stories (shortly to be collected into a book) the third solution is taken—magic is a level of technology beyond our own, but amenable to and interconnected with known scientific principles. (For example, spells can convert lead into gold, but if you're not careful you'll get radioactive isotopes thereof.)

Carter follows Vance and most modern sword—and—sorcery writers in making magic a form of technology. Zelobian is an adept of the school of Phonemic Thaumaturgy, which means that his spells are set in motion by a careful enunciation of the right syllables. This ties in with a "scientific" interpretation of magic, whereby the vibrations of properly chosen sounds cause the deserted effect. But, when the adventure ends in the ruins of an advanced technological civilization, Zelobion settles down among the still—functioning computers and robots where "Here was a new Empire for him to explore...the Empire of Science...Of all the three who had set forth on the greatest Quest of Man, he alone had found happiness."

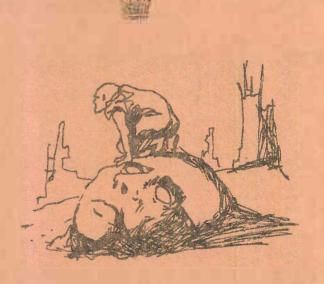
As the story begins, the Earth is in imminent danger of destruction as the Moon (whose weight is incorrectly given with a figure appropriate to the Earth) comes closer and closer. Unless something is done, it will break up, showering the Earth with huge fragments and destroying it also. Carter, in the foreword, explains that he gets this notion from several occultist texts. He does not get it from astronomy; what will actually happen over long eons of time is that, due to tidal friction between Earth and the Moon, they will

gradually get further and further apart.

Ganelon Silvermane, a gigantically strong android fabricated by the Time Gods and released at this crucial moment of history, teams up with Zełobion to find a lost "thetamagnetic" device which can avert this calamity. The device is explained in terms of the "electrogravatic" and "magnetogravatic" spectra. The explanation of apparently magical effects by these "spectra" is pure gibberish, but it is gibberish sanctioned by along tradition in science-fiction, including Heinlein's Sixth Column and de Camp's The Glory That Was. Where two engineers have led, a poet can but follow.

The journey of these two heroes and an Amazonian warrior maid who accompanies them is filled with the usual adventures and mis-adventures. Along the way, of course, they are captured and thrown into a Roman-style arena to be devoured by a monster. But, instead of clobbering the monster and gaining the grudging admiration of the spectators, they clobber both monster and spectators, with a neat teamwork of swordplay and "the Vocable of the Unwearying Constrictor."

Side-stepping the issue of how an android can have a lovelife (poor Amazon) Carter has set up this novel for a sequel. Zelobion is safely studying science in the ruins of Grand Phesion, and Ganelon can be whisked back on stage at a moment's notice. He's no Conan, but he's several cuts above Thongor, and he would be welcomed back



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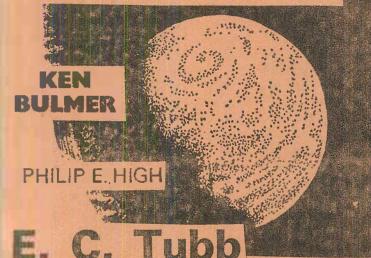
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# ·· BOOK REVIEWS ··

FOURTH MANSIONS by R. A. Lafferty-Ace 24590, 75¢.
Reviewed by Hank Stine

As of this book, R. A. Lafferty is the greatest living practitioner of the science fiction novel, inheriting the title directly from Samuel R. Delany who has held it since the publication of Babel 17. In these days, when the old and new waves contend for the right to be regarded as the only true form of science fiction, it is, perhaps, fitting that this book, which is neither science fiction or a novel, establishes Lafferty's claim to the throne as undisputed master of the field.

Just as Samuel R. Delany, like the last truly brilliant talent before him, Alfred Bester, synthetized and catalyzed the entirety of the field behind him, starting out with all the freshness and drive of a youthful imagination and, treating the genre as a springboard to a new plateau of literary endeavor, so Lafferty has reached the focal point of the last few years' achievements and taken science fiction to a new level. Where Delany, Moorcock, Ellison, and Zelazny, among others, have begun to people the greatness of the genre with great symbols, images, and archtypes, Lafferty has suggested figures and symbols so primal and overpowering as to be nearly pre-verbal in their impact.

It is of no particular importance that this book might well be considered a spiritual sequel to Past Master, his first novel, and his only previous Ace Special; or it might be more precisely argued that in view of an author's desire to come to terms with his subject, Past Master was an overture to fourth Mansions. The subject matter of the two books is so similar that only the fact that the two attacks have come from almost unthinkably opposite directions prevent one, at first, from seeing how like they are. In this alone lafferty reveals a mind more flexible than any yet shown by any other science fiction writer (or indeed any other writer of whom I have read). That the beginnings and ends of both books have exactly the same structure leads one to suspect that the author made a deliberate and conscious effort to come to grips with things he had not quite got right before.

Lafferty has, of course, brought relevance back to the chapter title (if indeed it ever had relevancy before) and made it seem like an integral, exciting part of the book.

Fourth Mansions has titles like: "I Think I Will Dismember The World With My Hands"; "Revenge Of Strength Unused"; and "I Did Not Call You' Said The Lord". They are not merely inventive, amusing, witty or whimsical, they cut right to the heart of each chapter, pointing the way, guideposts to the meat of the book.

In a recent issue of this publication, A. E. van Wogt's books were defended as being like literary Rorschach tests, thus defying normal analysis. I personally, being who I am, would prefer to say that the works of A.E. van Vogt were the Rorschach blots of the old wave and that Lafferty's works are the Rorschach blots of the new wave.

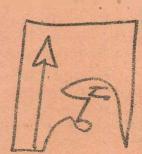
That Lafferty is in his 50's, a correspondence school electrical engineer, and an ex-alcoholic merely adds seasoning to the stew. It demonstrates that old and new wave lies neither in age or background, and that its division, if anywhere, is to be found in the minds and souls of men.

It is difficult to say exactly what the book is about. The plot (when the characters or author can remember what they said it was) concerns a great number of improbable things such as: the reader as common man portrayed with just that touch of the uncommon which convinces everyone they are unique; seven people who claim they are going to take over the world and recreate it in a better mold; the quardians of humanity; God; people who have lived before and will again; and an assortment of the most outrageously clever, prodigiously unbelievable, and unmitigatedly willful characters ever used in any science fiction novel anywhere, any time. What they are doing, and its rationale, changes paragraph to paragraph, sentence to sentence. Everyone explains what he or she is doing, or isn't doing, in such elaborate and deliberately contradictory detail that not one single element moves from beginning to end of the book without a complete transformation (no time for evolution

In fact Lafferty seems to have achieved what Samuel R. Delany tried in <u>The Einstein Intersection</u>: the setting of a story in a universe undergoing change where the characters and nature of the story must change so much that at the end one finds oneself reading a different book, a book with different problems necessitating different solutions, and yet a book which lets the reader feel that it was all simple and easy to









understand. Not an easy thing to do. It is not surprising that even Sam Delany was unable to completely bring it off.

Why, then, does this book, which is in no way a science fiction novel and which is never at any time believable (the story does not take place in this universe, a future universe, an alternate universe, or any universe that might ever exist throughout the continuum), make Lafferty the current king of science fiction writers? It is simply that this book, first among all others written in our time, strikes directly to the core of that which is uniquely science fictional and is the quintescence of the genre. It displays that evocation of wonder, that clearness of vision, that rearrangement of reality possible only in our field.

Roger Zelazny says "the closest comparison I can think of is a psychedelic morality play where the Virtues and Vices keep sneaking off stage and changing masks." Almost perfect, I think. But one might add that the script was conceived by McGochan and written by the Marx Brothers.



Poul Anderson's <u>Satan's World</u> is incompetent hackwork. What is a "hack"?

He is generally defined as an extremely prolific writer whose literary purposes are commercial. The connotation implies he is vulgar, mercenary, and without integrity. The reality does not agree.

Every writer longs to be a hack. Every hack longs to be a better one. I know because for years the sight of a hack sent me into livid rages. For years I became indignant at any criticism of my story structure. The notion of outlining struck me as sacreligious. The incomprehension of my readers affirmed my convictions of their spiritual blindness and stupidity. Writing, to me, was a spontaneous act of creation. Iruth and beauty flowed from one's fingertips. Even retyping my mss. for submission seemed immoral.

No, friend. I was neither arrogant nor simple-minded. I was the purest form of the most respected legion in literature. I was an Author. I had heard my adolescent credo espoused from the most noted of critics and intellectuals, while successful Authors sat at their side, bobbing their heads in total agreement. The only thing that stood between me and them was that they went hack in time.

Even so, there are libraries of "finest novel of the year" that no one remembers or ever will. There are armies of "spokesman of a generation" who vanish into the grave weekly. They went hack in time, but not far enough.

Writing is a commercial proposition. Before the "Communication", there is an editor. Will people buy it? If they buy it — if they love it — will they buy another? There are bookstores full of 2nd novels by the "Sensation of Our Decade" what's-his-name?

The principal difference between an Author and a hack is always simplistically defined as economic. It is much more. The principal difference between an Author and a hack is that the Author is writing primarily for his own benefit, to satisfy his ego's visualization of an idea, while the hack is writing for a reader. To the Author, it is caprice or theory which structures his work. To the hack, it is reader psychology. To the Author, the purpose of writing is ego-gratification. To the hack, it is entertainment.

A hack writes a book to be read. If he is good, he may pad it or distill it into any form he wishes and still achieve a definite, satisfying effect. His knowledge is based on experience self-taught over years of writing and reading voluminously. It is in his fingertips. The essence of his instincts. Yes, he may be sloppy, overwritten, loose, or unrealized. But he knows how much the reader will tolerate, where and when to pad, what to leave unexplored, and how to guide the skillful reader through the garbage to the real feasts.

He is a writer whose work is dominated by his respect for honest communication.

Dostoevski was a hack. Mark Twain, as well. F. Scott fitzgerald and John Steinbeck. William Saroyan and Jean-Paul Sartre. Most every good writer is a hack. Not all are good hacks. If Twain MANKIND WENT had been a better one, his books would have been more JM 70successful. <u>Huckleberry Finn</u> and <u>Life on the Mississippir</u> are both diluted by capricious interludes. Saroyan has practically killed himself the same way. It is not entirely their fault; the demands of LITERATURE inhibit their natural hack abilities and drag them off into Authordom

In Sf, where LIT. demands are less—reader demands insatiable, there are many fine hacks. Heinlein, Silverberg, Sturgeon, Simak, etc. But in Sf there is less excuse for bad hack work. Poul Anderson's <u>Satan's World</u> is one of the poorest.

His characters are some of the most likeable in SF. His narrative is dramatic, colorful, and compelling. Even his science is interesting! Yet he fails miserably.

Satan's World is an incompetent book Not bad, not mediocre. (In fact, it is "excellent.") But incompetent.

I began it eagerly, for Anderson is a writer I have been ignoring for too long and not knowing why. He wrote the second Sf book I ever read and I still remember it fondly. From the first chapter, he disappointed me. He deceived himself and me into thinking his padding was worth reading. It was not. He was obviously so interested in everything he had me wandering all over his landscape until I became irritated with impatience for the story to begin. The story seemed very promising.

Shortly, I found it was inaccessible. Vital information was concealed in lengthy, padded paragraphs or between long passages of anachronistic science gibberish. And I had to plod through almost everything.

Finally, there was his dialogue. Reams of it. Too much chit—chat. Too much plot. He had characters describe adventures he had not bothered to write. That was unforgive—able.

His minor faults are tolerable. His major ones killed the book for me. I could not finish it. It was like being hungry and standing with your nose pressed to the window of a restaurant. You can see the sizzling steaks, sniff them, reach out for them—but never, ever, touch them.

If it was anyone else, with Anderson's experience, I would not hesitate to say I would never read another book by him. But Anderson has written much, and I have read very little of it. Most of Mark Iwain is not worth reading. Possibly I have chosen the one Arderson clinker in the lot.



MACROSCOPE by Piers Anthony—Avon W166, \$1.25

Reviewed by Richard Delap

To date Anthony has ranged all over the scale, from the successful braintwisting of Chthon to the seriously-under-pinned swore saga, Sos the Rope, to the frantic but funny fantasy of Hasan. His most noticeable artistic failure was Omnivore, a good novelette arabesqued into a novel with all its clumsy seems in unsightly display; but, at least, each book was clearly of its own, with meritorious qualities so

varied and distinctive that Anthony has quickly become a very prominent name within the sf field.

Now, with <u>Macroscope</u>, the poor man has gone mad with power and has dumped everything into one outsized and undignified pot. The result is a rather smelly potpourri.

The title refers to a giant chunk of "unique" crystal housed in a space station a million miles from Earth. The crystal's abilities are largely untapped but, most importantly, it seems to be a sort of receiver for messages hurtling across the galaxy from 15,000 light years away. The problem lies in trying to unravel these messages, for the information invariably drives men mad. And here Anthony makes his first mistake: he offers no convincing backbone to the argument that man must uncover the "material and technology of the stars," other than having one character determinedly mouth "The macroscope evidence...is inarguable." (p. 51) But that's not so bad, you say, lively super space-operas have been built on less valid suppositions? Ok, then, score one chalkmark for the author (but make it small, please).

A visiting senator provides a handy peg for simple politics and some testy but tepid discussion of philosophy, and author's contrivances begin to pop up with unabashed regularity. The senator dies — well, politicians are known for being too nosy — and the macroscope crew is forced to flee for their lives with an illegally—armed UN ship from Moonbase hot on their trail. Before a single zap!, however, one of the crew miraculously (hoo—ray) discovers that the macroscope is just loaded with answers (with Einstein's Unified Field Theory tossed in as an intellectual accruement) and may offer ameans of escape. Now the error has been compounded with melodramatic claptrap that has no place outside of Flash Gordon serials. But, you say, it adds color and fun and excitement? Yes, but if you can't believe a word of it... Oh, all right, give him half a chalkmark, and keep it very small.

They finally land on Triton's moon (don't ask me to explain that one!) and set up temporary housekeeping. And if you think the characters have been confusing to the present—oh, I haven't mentioned the copious mind—leaps to characters of the 1800s, or the repeated discussions of astrology, or racial prejudice, or homosexual childhood games, or the man who changes into a "thing," have I? — you simply have no idea what's really going on, do you? One important character, a sort of offstage threat of dehumanization, has yet to make a direct appearance though he is almost constantly under discussion. Surely you've got this straight now?

We mustn't forget how badly things are going back on Earth, so Anthony gives us pause to shed a few tears over the rampaging poverty: "Roaches peered from the hole in the wall where the yellow plaster had fallen away." (p. 243) Fortunately, such nonsense as peering roaches doesn't last too long, I would guess because we're already half-way through the book and nothing much has yet happened and this story has got to start sooner or later.

Next, the crew "jumps" across the universe, gets lost outside the Milky May, and returns just in time for the author to step in and deliver a slickly introduced history on the form-

ation of our solar system. Finally, they find what they're looking for (hoo-pant!-ray) — a giant complex that draws them into the worlds of symbology of the horoscope. And here Anthony makes his final, unforgiveable error, for the following hundred or so pages is what we've all been waiting for. So what do we get?....some of the most contrived and clumsy symbolism anyone has ever had the unmitigated gall to offer as an acceptable climax to a most unacceptable novel. Destiny becomes a pawn of psychological naivete and Motive becomes a victim of circumstance. As if this weren't enough, the final question of predestination is left hanging...by the neck until dead, I should hope.

So the fatal flaw in <u>Macroscope</u> is that it all adds up to nothing in particular. Unlike a mosaic, it has no pattern of beauty and comes out instead as a pretentious jumble of spilled pieces. Anthony, familiar with them all, apparently has no trouble connecting them up properly in his mind; as for me, I've better things to do.



TIME AND AGAIN by Clifford D. Simak—Ace 810CO, 75¢

Reviewed by Paul Walker

Originally published in 1951, and probably serialized in something before that, this is a dramatic, fast-paced future adventure of Time Travel, galactic intrigue, and mysterious aliens. Simak invests old ideas with amiability and color. His hero is worth rooting for. His plot interminably complicated and engrossing. But the book is irritating despite all its virtues.

It reads like a precocious first draft
(which it may have been). What might have
been a swinging short novel is dragged out
to 256 pages. Words, words, words! At
first, they are tolerable, then irritating,
then boring. If I had nothing better to read—if I was desperate—this would be welcome.

The cover illo by John Schoenherr is worth a glance.



THE STANDING JOV by Wyman Guin—Avon V2314, 75¢
Reviewed by Bruce R. Gillespie

The search for a legitimate Superman story has been long, intensive, and mainly fruitless. In his novel, The Standing Joy, Wyman Guin makes yet another attempt, and the reader can only be fascinated by Guin's unerring ability to make all the old mistakes.

On the surface, The Standing Joy may claim some originality. Collin Collins, born in 1914 in the U.S. Midwest of undistinguished parents, receives artificially stimulated sexual potency at the age of 14, and proceeds to demonstrate his new-found abilities with the local ladies. At the same time,

one Boris Boritzsch is born on the same day in Russia, and Guin hints that the two are "destined" to meet sometime in the future.

Colin Collins, in the meantime, is not only blessed with one arrow in his quiver (so to speak). Within the first few pages of the novel, the author tells us that, juvenile though this brat is, already he is "the best student in the state" and "captain of the basketball team and the track team." Within a few pages he fulfills such other roles as psychological councellor to the local young 'uns and—the reader blinks his eyes at this point—student of economics, finance and banking law. He has already built himself a sizeable fortune, receives admiring letters from a mathematics professor and can influence anybody he meets to do anything he wants with hupnotic suggestion.

Such people exist—perhaps—and even if they did not, Guin could justify the creation of such a character in order to find out just what is a Superman (or Super American?). Many other people are too timid to use the abilities they do possess. What can we learn from the great, if anything?

But there are certain difficulties inherent in the Superman story
that Guin must recognize, and overcome. Firstly, if the author calls
his hero an intellectual genius, then
he must get around the difficulty noted
by Franz Rottensteiner in ASFR 19. Franz
was referring to A. E. van Vogt or some

such: "But such is the characterisation in sf: on the one hand sf authors claim the utmost brilliance for their characters, and on the other they make them say the stupidest things that you would expect more from morons than from scientists."

Ideally, a novel about a genius could only be written by a genius; otherwise the portrait would lack all substance.

Secondly, if a Superman has sufficient abilities to accomplish whatever he sets out to do, then he cannot be defeated. How will the author write an interesting novel when the hero is certain to win?

Guin fails both these tests of the "superman" story. Colin Collins shows no particular maturity of speech or thought anywhere in the novel. His reactions are always the most violent—he "aches", "cries", "nods sincerely", talks in grandiloquent phrases and simplifies the complex wherever possible. There is little evidence that he thinks analytically.

far more importantly (and this contradicts the whole idea of a Superman story) Colin could be free to do what he wishes, but he exhibits nothing but the corniest conservatism. Colin plays a pretty sneaky trick on his father, and then sums up his thoughts in the following fashion: "Colin looked down on his father with proud affection... Mr. Collins took the children on his farmers as seriously as he took his own children. Out of this one county he had taken two boys from red-dirt

farms to Chicago as national 4-H Club champions, a seemingly impossible feat. He had probably had a character-forming influence on more young people than any other man in the .county.... In short, Mr. Collins was building a world."

(Pp 26-27)

Colin does not question all the corn-cob Puritan virtues that comprise his father. He just copies them, and justifies them with Victorian cliches. This may seem fair enough—Colin is still only 14. The teenage revolt has not yet begun, and what is this other than a stretching of wings, a redefinition of the boundaries of personal power? But Colin already has far more personal power than his father. He has superceded him in every way, and could feel free to jump the roost entirely. That is, if Guin is really talking about a Superman.

But what do we find in the last pages of the novel? After a particularly sentimental episode: "Presently, he found

that his mother was kneeling on the floor beside him. She lifted his head into her warm lap, and after a while his sobs began to subside. She was holding his head and rocking slowly back and forth and humming.

"Colin fell into a deep sleep with his chest spasming only occasionally, and he hardly came to consciousness when she substituted a pillow for her lap." (p. 216)

The freudians among us can make what they like of that. On even the most obvious level, we see that Colin has not developed emotionally in any way throughout the book.

When Colin is not delivering eulogies to his mother, father, sister, relatives, and friends, he indulges in a kind of round-table petting session where where the other characters admire him. Particularly comical, or horrible, if you want, is Colin's meeting with his "great friend" Jesus Rappaport: "Colin gawked at the man's shocking presence and then at the improbable name.... It was a stunning moment in which a world-historic friendship arose full bloom. There had been no one in Colin's life before this moment—his parents and sister, Miss McAllister, Pretty Quinlan, Mr. Marty McCord, young Mr. Norton of the banks, Mrs. Tompkins the educational director-all of them remained back there in the dumbshow. Here was a man who could voyage in the abyss." (Pages 105-106)

I suppose people sometimes do form friendships this quickly, without the usual social maneuvers and contracts that form the basis of most friendships. But Mr. Guin gives the reader no real idea in the text of the reasons for this sudden change of allegiance. Take Guin's description of Rappaport objectively, and you merely have a picture of a side-show freak with plenty of teeth and an odd face. Both he and Colin come across as hysterical, childish and supersilly.

Colin binds himself with the superficial morality of those around him, but for some reason that entirely escapes

me, the strongest taboo of Midwestern society, that on promiscuous sexuality, is the taboo that Collins ignores altogether. This means his personal "goodness" wears rather thin at times—he idealizes "Miss McAllister" but rapes her without compunction at the earliest opportunity. But when Pretty Quinlan refuses to take him ontil he can pay like all the other future customers, Colin accepts the situation quite meekly. He races around himself, but he expects his sister and friends to fall into the most predictable monogamy.

Colin Collins makes no psychological sense, and so no reader can identify with him. The centre falls from the book. And it remains very important throughout the book that Guin should bring his characters to life, for there isn't much else in the novel but the people. Colin talks a lot of rot about his new "mathematics of magic", but this makes no sense in any part of the novel. On the other hand the book is compulsive

reading, for it has a superficial reality to it that could have made up for all the faults of its main character. The lives of the ground-down, harassed Midwesterners of the late twenties emerge through several sharp observations. For instance, Pretty Quinlan, who majors in prostitution, does not interest us much, but Guin snaps a neat picture of the family that could breed her.

Wyman Guin can write accurately, and does so often enough to keep most people reading. He is a sort of van Vogt of sociology, and writes just as badly for just as long. But there are two chapters that are splendid (Chapts. 12 and 13) and Guin may have been laughing at his nonsensical, narcissistic hero all the time. Adolescents under 13 with guilt complexes about girls may find this book entertaining, but nobody will find much about Supermen except byman Guin's wish fulfillments.



LILITH by George MacDonald—Ballantine 01711, 95¢
PLAYER PIANO by Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.—Avon NS16, 95¢
Reviewed by Paul Walker

A bad book is a bad book to everybody. That is not true of a good book. There are times when a good book can change a man's life; oth-

ers when it will bore him. There are times when a book will seem the definitive answer to all life's questions; others when it will seem like putting your head under a pile-driver.

Vonnegut's <u>Player Piano</u> and George MacDonald's <u>Lilith</u> are perfect examples.

If I had read either of them ten years ago, I would still be raving about them. I would say that Vonnegut was the most mature, compassionate, gutsy SF writer around. His <u>Player Piano</u> is a nightmare, tempered slightly by a sense of humor, but as broad and powerful as they come. Its characterizations are excellent and compelling. Its background is real enough to touch. Its climax is damn exciting. Fen years ago, I probably would have said that.

2:7

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MANUAL PROPERTY

Presently, the book is tedious, overwritten, with a sledgehammer subtlety about a subject (Man vs. Machine) that has been done almost to death. The hero's malaise got boring almost immediately and the plot failed to materialize fast enough to keep me from skipping whole sections. Besides, the point of the book is that men need to work, and that is far more alien to me now than ten years ago.

However, I should add for those not acquainted with Vonnegut's work that <u>Player Piano</u> was his first novel. If you have not read anything more recent by him, I urge you not to begin with it. His later work is completely different and far superior.

George MacDonald's <u>Lilith</u> is a much better book by all standards. It is beautifully written and conceived, easing the reader into a fantasy world that is as real as Lewis Carroll's. In fact, it is more real. It is also far, far more contemporary; I would not believe it was written almost a hundred years ago if the introduction did not tell me so. It is about a man in search of his soul (which is to say nothing much); but a search that so parallels today's variety (i.e.LSD) that it should be an underground best-seller.

Ten years ago, it would have been my favorite fantasy. Foday, it slowed me to a crawl. Yes, it was all very nice, but I've seen it done so often. And NacDonald's symbolism is as quiet as a Harlem rat.

In sum, these two books may be the apple of your eye, or as dreary as that cliche: If you are under 21, buy them. If you like "intellectual of or fantasy," buy them. If you are sure, absolutely sure, you would not like either of them: by all means, buy them! If you are over 21, like most everything, and think the two books sound great, I am confident you will be as disappointed as I was.



THE SAVIORS by Evelyn Raynor Slim—Meredith, \$5.95
Reviewed by Ted Pauls

She begins by breaking one of the cardinal rules of straight science fiction by, in the opening paragraphs, basing the entire story on an extraordinary

happening—effectively, a miracle—without
even attempting
to explain it.
And I think she
gets away with it:

"It could have had some thing to do with the acci dent at the AEC installation a few miles from the city. Perhaps. Or was it a one-in-a-quintillion just-right combination of chemicals in the air, water, medication? A meteorite from space? Coincidence of evolution? Divine intervention? None of those, or a little of all?

"No matter. Whys and Hows collect dust on library shelves, but it's the Whats that happen. Enough that it happened. Nine babies, conceived within a few minutes of each other, without regard to race, creed, color or national origin, in widely separated sections of Denver, Colorado, on a night otherwise untouched by distinction. Six male, three female, a division that might be either profound or completely insignificant. Genius does not define their intellects; far less does any word describe their way of thinking. Nine months later, to the day, they were born. And that's when it really started, of course."

The plot is not extremely complex. The super-children are brought up by their various parents in various environments. In addition to massive intelligence, they have in common a conspiratorial frame of mind, so that their principal concerns are concealing their true level of intelligence from everybody else and finding each other (each knows, senses, that there are others, and all know that the group is complete when it reaches nine members). Five of them are in contact by the time they reach their sixth birthday, and the others are added to the group over the next two years. Their cold intellectual superiority is complemented (if that is the word) by an emotional flaw, a common inhumanity and lack of comassion, so that, for example, there is no remorse when they drive a 5th Grade teacher permanently insane in the course of an elaborate practical joke (playing practical jokes on the poor normals is their prime form of entertainment). They are not cruel; they are simply detached. In other instances, they help individual normals and, eventually, the world, but they do that, too, with the same essential indifference.

One of the Nine, Lewis Bolger, discovers as a byproduct of some research in his (and thus their) seventeenth year a means of generating a force-field which neutralizes the atomic reactions necessary to allow nuclear power plants----and nuclear bombs-to function. Concluding that no single government or group of governments can be trusted with this discovery (since any government or governments which managed to install the generating devices first would be able to wage one-sided nuclear war against nations less fortunate), they undertake to secretly blanket the planet with these fields before revealing their existence. To gain the necessary capital for this considerable project, they blackmail an up-andcoming financier, Alton Lamier, into acting as a front-man while they use their superior intellects to make vast sums on the international stock and monetary exchanges. The international political situation is deteriorating consistently (it is somewhere around 1975 by this time, though years are never specified), so it becomes a race to see whether they can get the fields installed before World War III erupts. They do, and each government is then informed of the location of generating units on its territory and instructed in their maintenance.

The novel ends with a party aboard a yacht off the Baja

Peninsula where the Nine (as the author refers to them in third person narrative passages) are celebrating the completion of their project. What appears to be a casual and idle discussion of economics-in which several of them became interested while manipulating international finance through Lanier—culminates with this exchange: "The whole thing,

you know, is a house of cards.'

"Liz modded slowly, her finger idly tracing a line down his bare chest. 'Given enough economic power, it should be entirely possible for one person or group to engineer a world depression.

""We'll get started on it Monday, ' Alan promised."

That is the final line of The Saviors.

What is exceptional about the novel is the portrayal of the group, the Nine, and the characterization of its members. All nine are unmistakeably individuals, despite their sharing a common attitude toward the world. Slim devotes a chapter to each of them in the first half of the book, and manages to follow the common threads in their development while at the same time showing what is unique to each individual. The chapter devoted to Andrew covers the period from his birth until he is about 18 months old; Nancy Jame is seen at age three; Alan and Earle at five; Liz at eight; Lewis, Mark and Dolores at ten; Nathan at thirteen. Furthermore, each is used as viewpoint character in segments in the second half of the book, which further sharpens the characterization. A few of the subsidiary characters— Lanier, an FBI man named Tolan, Earle Whitcomb's fatherare also well-drawn, but almost of necessity these minor characters are submerged into the background:

As effective as the individual portrayals are, it is in characterizing the group as an entity that Miss Slim excells, writer. On the other hand, the writing itself suggests that and it is this that makes The Saviors truly worth reading. The very way they think as a group---the alienness of which is conveyed in one brief chapter that depicts a brainstorming session held in the rear of a schoolbus-, the way they speak to one another, their constant underlying indifference to anything (including their own deaths) except the intellectual exercise in which they are involved at the moment. Their attitude toward an FBI agent who stumbles onto them while investigating Alton Lanier. They accept him into their circle in his quise as a free-lance writer, although they are aware of his true identity, and he spends the next three months in close proximity to the group, falling in love with Liz in the process (the Nine are eighteen years old by this time) It is Liz who is given the task when the group decides it is time to kill the infiltrat-. or: "All feeling was drained out of him now, leaving noth-

ing but resignation. 'How long have you known?'

"Within twelve hours after Mark ran into you, we knew, Jerry.' She cocked the gun with more emphasis than was nceded. 'It was fun, having you around. Stimulating. Kept us on our toes. We find it helps to have a challenge like that. You're not bad in bed, either.'

"And now I've finally gotten dangerous...?" "'Oh, no, not at all. It's just that it's become a

drag. Your being around doesn't amuse us any longer. Maybe they'll send somebody more clever now. His face erupted before he had time to hear the shattering blast of the .44, and the impact toppled Hislifeless body into the ravine."

Another element in the characterization of the group as a whole is sex. The Nine share it, completely, as as much of a natural thing as blowing your nose. The author does not succumb to the temptation to make a big thing of this. There is only one



"sex scene" in the 300 pages of the novel, and it runs less than a full page. It involves Lewis, Andrew, Nathan and Dolores, in every combination and permutation possible for three guys and a girl, but it is handled so casually and naturally that it is not in the slightest "shocking" or even surprising. Throughout the rest of the book, the author, without employing explicit references, quite effectively conveys the impression that any two or more of the Nine may whenever the need is felt step into the next room and swing.

The total absence of any biographical data on the dust jacket of this remarkable volume leads to a suspicion that "Evelyn Raynor Slim" is a pseudonym for some established SF the author is a newcomer, albeit one sufficiently acquainted with the field to avoid the neophyte's usual awkwardnesses.



ADVENTURES IN DISCOVERY, Edited by Tom Purdom-Doubleday, \$4-95 Reviewed by Paul Walker

This is a very pleasant book. It is ideal for the young science buff and will be equally interesting to every veteran SFer, for its primary value is not academic, but aesthetic. Mr. Purdom, in his first brief introduction, says the point of this anthology of articles by science fiction writers about scientists is to give the reader some of the reasons men engage in research and how they do it; but it is that and more. By implication, each article explains more why men pursue science at all than any book I have read in some time.

Identifying oneself as a science fiction fan does not simultaneously identify one as having an iota of scientific knowledge or even interest. The most hard-nosed Old Waver may think of science as a materialistic bore, vaquely, if not blatantly, repulsive. That science could appeal to any but a statistician's heart is not believed by many people.

This book goes a long way toward correcting that belief.

It is not really an education in fact or history, though both are present. The science is intelligible to anyone with a junior high acquaintanceship with it. What the book does in convey the fascination, the genuine affection, men such as James Blish, Poul Anderson, and Robert Silverberg feel for what is obviously to them not a study diametrically opposed to art, but a compliment to it. So this book is an education in sensitivity toward an increasingly vital area of knowledge.



THE NEW ADAM by Stanley G. Weinbaum—Avon V2288, 75¢

THE BLACK FLAME by Stanley G. Weinbaum—Avon V2280, 75¢

Reviewed by Darrell Schweitzer

I guess we should be thankful to Avon for bringing these two books into print again. They've been unavailable for an ewfully long time (26 years for the first, 17 for the latter) and they are of interest to the modern reader for making comparisons between them and the SF of today.

Both books were ahead of their time, so much so that neither was published until after the author's death when every editor in the field was scrounging around for a "last" story of Stanley Weinbaum. (And, by my count, they found eleven, including three novels.)

The New Adam is a serious philosophical novel with its emphasis on thematic content and character development, and nearly devoid of plot. Anyons who reads beyond the first few chapters can see why it never appeared in the pulps until its serialization in AMAZING in 1943 (Feb-Mar) when Ray Palmer was desperate for a new big name on his covers.

Adam is the story of one Edmond Hall, a mutant superman with a double mind capable of thinking two thoughts independently, and his attempts to adjust to a world populated almost entirely by normal human beings. His most serious problem is finding a purpose to live for, since he is not interested in the power he could easily attain with his vastly superior intellect, and the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake strikes him as futile. He marries a normal woman, Evanne, whom he knew as a child. However, he is not happy since she cannot provide the kind of intellectual companionship he needs. He then meets Sarah, who is of the same mutant race as he, but is again disappointed by her lack of sexual ap-

peal. Edmond begins seeing Sarah while living with Vanny who in turn begins to have an affair with Paul Varney, her highschool boyfriend. Edmond despairs, concluding that intelligence is a curse and he has been "poisoned" by emotion, while Paul discovers that Edmond is the father of Sarah's child and seeks to right the wrong that has been done to Vanny. Edmond allows Paul to kill him, making it look like suicide.

Add a few more love scenes and

you would have a potential replacement for DARK SHADOWS.

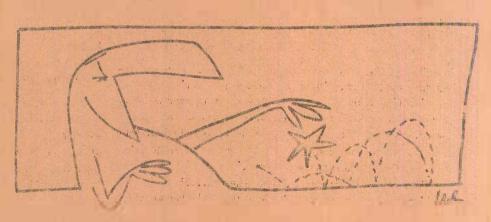
This might have been an enjoyable book, perhaps even a meaningful one, if Weinbaum, who was somewhat lacking in literary skill in 1932 when this book was written, had lived to revise it. As it stands it is an ambitious attempt to depict a Superman who actually thinks and acts like a non-human, and a thundering failure to do so. The potentially fascinating concept of a person who actually practices total fatalistic pessimism as a life philosophy is so badly mishandled that it doesn't come off at all. The main fault lies in Weinbaum's failure to realize that he, being a human being, couldn't write about the thoughts and motivations of a being as far above man as man is above an ape...and make it believable. Edmond Hall doesn't seem to be a real character. His motivations are unconvincing, and the fascination of the other characters towards him is not conveyed to the reader at all. At crucial points in the book emotions are not aroused as they should be and Edmond becomes a ridiculous shell of a god-man. His love affairs fall flat, his deep philosophical monologues evoke nothing but a few yawns, and his "tragic" downfall conjures up little or no sympathy. The other characters, human, should have been easy to portray, but Weinbaum created only cardboard puppets who love or hate or kill whenever the author pulls the proper string.

For the most part the writing is abominable. The influence of the Gernsback magazines show clearly in paragraphs that are just dripping with pseudo-scientific gobbledegook, like this one:

"He tipped the bit of metal to a leaden disc, stepping back to a far corner of the room and thew a switch. The generator hummed; the tube of niton glowed with its characteristic violet, now through the clear half of the bulb he believed a stream of cosmic rays to be pouring—not the diffuse and mild rays that flowed out of space, but an intense beam like that of a searchlight. Yet the potassium remained unaltered." (p. 44)

Now this might be alright for a superscience story, but in the kind of novel Weinbawm was trying to write, ramblings like this only impede the progress of the story.

One thing that might be cited in the book's favour is the introduction of the "interior monlogue" technique into science fiction. This is really very simple; it involves the character thinking out loud for the benefit of the reader. However,



Weinbaum couldn't do even this right, for his monologues are wooden and unnatural. Consider this example:

"He continued his gloomy reflections. It is a curious fact that all speculations concerning the superman have made the egregious mistake of picturing him as happier than man. Nietzsche, Gobineau, Wells—each of them falls into this error when logic clearly denies it. Is the man of today any happier than Homo Neanderthalis in his filth-strewn cave? Was this latter happier than Pithecanthropus, or he happier than an ape swinging through the Pleistocene trees? Rather, I think, the converse is true; with the growth of intelligence, happiness becomes an ellusive quality, so that the Superman, when he arrives, will be of all creatures, the most unhappy. I, his prototype, am the immediate example." (p. 138)

The whole book is like that—a fine way to rationalize your suicide, but it hardly makes good reading.

The Black flame was written several years later when Weinbaum had learned a lot more about writing, and is a much superior book. It consists of two stories, The Dawn of Flame and The Black flame, which are really two different versions of the same story with only superficial differences.

The Black flame is the longer of the two and—surprisingly, since it is a later version produced when the first was rejected for not being "scientific" or fantastic enough—the better.

It is the story of Ihomas Connor, a man from our time who awakens in the distant future when the world has suffered a disasterous war and the survivors are ruled by a race of immortals who conquered them thereafter. One of the most important of these is Margaret of Urbs, sister of The Master, about whom many legends have sprung.

Since the immortals refuse to allow the masses to have their secret, it is only logical that there is discontent. Spurred on by Evannie Sairra "witch" (scientist/doctor) with whom he has fallen in love, Thomas gets involved in what has got to be one of the clumsiest revolutions ever depicted in science fiction. To the author's everlasting credit, it fails quickly (However, the readers at the time of original publication wouldn't necessarily expect it to, since all revolutions in SF were done that way. See Edmond Hamilton's The Man Who Lived Twice for a perfect example.), and Thomas is captured by the immortals. He then meets Margaret, a ravishingly beautiful, near-superwoman, and the same conflict between the two types of women depicted in The New Adam appears again.

The difference in quality between The Black Flame and The New Adam is incredible. Margaret Of Urbs is a vividly real person, the first believable character in the history of SF, whose motivations are quite understandable and convincing. With the exception of an exceedingly clumsy opening written in by editor Mort Wessinger, the plot never becomes strained and the string-pulling so rampant in The New Adam is not present at all.

And Weinbaum was in complete control of his material, too. All of the social and psychological implications of

immortality are worked out in logical detail. For the first time in SF history, the suicide/survival conflict in an immortal, that Roger Zelazny has dealt with so splendidly in recent years, is introduced.

Stylistically, The Black Flame is Weinbaum's best. The sense of poetry that he rarely displays is beautifully obvious. Some of the images it creates will not be forgotten easily. Urbs tecomes a real and wonderful place, its citizenry and social problems as vivid as the front page of a newspaper, and the surrounding area nostalgic memories. The reader feels he has really been to Urbs, met the Master and his beautiful sister, and wants to return again and again.

With its emphasis on sociology and character, and its logical plot structure, <u>The Black Flame</u> was the very first modern science fiction novel ever to appear in the magazines. It lacks the obsession with action and gadgetry that marked (and marred) the primitive Gernsback era, and thus becomes something far more mature and meaningful.

In a tribute to Weinbaum in the January 1939 STARTLING in which it first appeared, Otto Binder heralded The Black Flame as a masterpiece. He was right.



EIGHT FANTASMS AND MAGICS by Jack Vance—Macmillan, \$5.95
I SING THE BODY ELECTRIC by Ray Bradbury—Knopf, \$6.95
Reviewed by Paul Walker

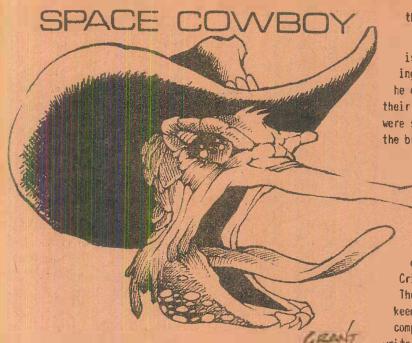
Is it possible to treat two so dissimilar writers in the same review? Frankly, it did not occurr to me until this minute. My answer is no. I read these books one after another, and they complemented each other beautifully. They are two works of magic, one by a magician, the other by a wonderer. They are two works of fiction. Two reaffirmations of literary existence. Two definitions of SF life spanning over twenty years. They are two entertainments. Two memorable experiences.

Whenever I thought of Sf, I never thought of Jack Vance. He was an old-timer, wasn't he? Sort of a hack? Well, your opinion may have been considerably more complimentary; but I am willing to bet it is not as high as it will be after you read his new collection.

Lin Carter describes him very well in <u>The Young Magicians</u>:
"He writes with a great sense of style, with polish, sparkle and wit. The surface of his prose glitters with exotic, fascinating names. It blazes with pyrotechnic ideas and original concepts, which he seems to toss off almost effortlessly. He is as once one of the most entertaining, and talented, and thoroughly original of all science-fiction writers."

I would disagree with the next to the last part of Carter's comments. Vance only seems to "toss off" things. Prolific as he may be, he is a brilliant craftsman and scenic designer. His dialogue is long-winded and often irritating, but it takes effort to find an unnecessary paragraph.

He is a weaver of spells who from first sentence to last creates a compelling story illusion that is wholly delight—



ful. He blends sword-and-scientificsorcery so naturally it never shatters his fantasy
world nor imposes an unexpected realism in it which diverts
the reader from his fairy-tale wonder. And he can create
a romantic or alien landscape without peer. Because he is
so brilliantly talented, so attentive to detail, he never
makes the reader feel childish for indulging so deeply in
such a rich imagination. He is intelligent and perceptive.
His visions are never cute or phony. He is always Jack
Vance and that is what makes this such a beautiful collection.

Bradbury is not a weaver of spells. He is just enough of a magician to communicate his observations. His work is the language of magic. It is the moving, terrifying, occasionally hilarious, and always the almost unbearably human language of a poet who refused at some delicate age to surrender his fascination with the magic of everyday life. It is the language of an extraordinary rebel, who carries on his own crusade against The Ages of Enlightenment and Reason, and who probably could not care less about the Age of Anxiety. It is the language of a man who is less interested in what he sees clearly before him, than what escapes the corner of his eye.

To Bradbury, Truth is the love you feel for things. It does not matter if they are a book one hundred years old or the barber down the block. If you love them, only then are they Irue, only then are they Real. And only what you love really exists.

It would be expected at this point for me to accuse Bradbury of sentimentality; and any other writer doing Bradbury's thing could not escape it; but Bradbury does not give a damn what I think. He is not performing to amuse me. He is not proclaiming his convictions. He is simply telling it like it is for Bradbury. Without shame, without self-consciousness, without any care to persuade anyone to his perspective. In doing this, he is creating works of art

that will live for however long a literary forever is.

The greatness of Bradbury, and his burden, is that he is a short-story writer, who seems destined to write nothing longer as successfully. The courage of Bradbury is that he does not try. Others, like Saroyan and Updike, have blown their talents on longer, lesser works, when their best efforts were short pieces. They do this I am sure hoping for The Book, the breakthrough into instant fame and fortune. While they may find fortune, they never find deserved fame.

Bradbury's resistance to The Book has deprived him of the immediate, and often temporary, wealth of the latter (though he will probably make as much in the long run); but it has not deprived him

of a more careful appreciation by readers and literati.
Critics dispense with Updike and Saroyan with short sighs.
They may rarely mention Bradbury, but when they do it is with keen interest and respect. This is because the short story is comparatively unpopular to the novel and because those who write them exceptionally well are best understood after a life's work. A good short story is not a microcosm, it is an atom of the artist's universe. It takes many to make a clear picture. The exceptions are so remarkable because they are exceptions.

Ny respect for Bradbury is great not because of <u>I Sing The Body Electric!</u> alone, but because of 20 years worth of sensing his loyalty to a perspective, his consistent honesty, his steady maturation as an artist. I will risk saying that unless you are well acquainted with his earlier work you may not understand and may even dislike some of his best pieces in this collection. They will seem indefensible as works of art because you read them out of context with many other things Bradbury has done.

His belief in the relevance of imaginary literature to everyday life ("The Kilimanjaro Device"—a slice of genius!—
"Downwind From Gettysberg" and "Any Friend of Nicholas Nickleby's..."); his love—hate/doom/salvation relationship to technology ("Tomorrow's Child", "I Sing the Body Electric!", "The
Lost City of Hars" and "Night Call, Collect"); his bizarre indulgences ("Heavy-Set"); and his interest in the ghoulish possibilities of nature ("The Women").

Nothing I've said or could say in a volume could adequately aquaint a non-Bradbury fan with the subtleties of his work. Firstly, because they are so many, so intricate. And secondly, because I am not that perceptive. But from any standpoint, Bradbury is a unique and unforgettable experience. He is not only the best SF writer alive, he is one of the best American writers ever.



ORBIT 5 edited by Damon Knight——Putnam, \$4.95

Reviewed by Richard Delap

Knight's now semi-annual anthologies have already produced three Nebula-winning stories and various Nebula and Hugo nominees, and have produced them with a regularity that is, to say the least, impressive. As might be expected, this current volume has its share of fine stories, only this time that share is much smaller than usual and the disasters, by sheer number, are frustratingly overwhelming. Knight apparently realizes this and has discarded the usual laudatory introduction to each story.

The best story, Kid Reed's "Winston," is a humdinger about a couple who buy a small child with an I.Q. of 160 and who proceed to use him as a status symbol. Symbols, however, have a way of not always being what they're promised to be, depending upon how they're put to use. Reed has always shown a remarkable talent for writing some of the most vicious combinations of humor and horror in the entire sf spectrum, and this complacency—shaking fittle item is out of the top drawer.

The better-than-average runners-up include Ursula K. le Guin's "Minter's King," in which the author returns to the planet Winter, introduced in the widely praised novel The Left Hand of Darkness. The effectiveness of this tale of a king forced to flee Winter through both time and space will come across strongly to those already familiar with the novel, though others may find it a bit confusing.

C. Davis Belcher's "The Price" wonders if the donor of a transplanted organ is still legally alive and, if so, to what extent is he entitled to the protection of a court of law. It's mordant but strangely, delightfully funny at the same time.

Sinking a bit lower (but not too much) we find "Paul's Treehouse" by Gene Wolfe. Against a background of intense rioting (in which it's never made clear who's against whom) a father is concerned with the task of getting his son down from the treehouse retreat in the backyard, and the symbolism of the "generation gap" works passably well.

Kate Wilhelm, in what seems to be an elaborate exaggeration of a Bradbury theme, tells the story of a scientific experiment with dreams and comes out with a moody, murky piece of horror, confusing as to real intent but nevertheless interesting for its pervading sense of dread. "Somerset Dreams" is just plain weird, that's all.

Now, as the heady waters of the sf lake begin to creep up to our necks, we find Avram Davidson's "The Roads, the Roads, the Beautiful Roads," a weak updating of mythology that seems to have been written solely as an elaborate leading to the silly final sentence.

At chin-level: Carol Carr's little miscegenation twist in "Look, You Think You've Got Troubles" — a Jewish girl marries a Martian — is straight from vaudeville...and that, you know, died some time ago.

In Langdon Jones' "The Time Machine," the reader is bounced so often between subjective erotica and the symbolical-objective view of the subjective that he will likely give up his tennis ball position and leave before the game is over.

Stories like 'The Rose Bowl-Pluto Hypothesis" by "Philip Latham" are supposedly farcical, which I suppose is as good a camouflage as any for its rather glaring illogic.

Water's at the nose: A continuing, unfulfilled dream-

quest proves destructive to both patient and analyst in R.A. Lafferty's "Configuration of the North Shore," a heavy and generally weary sybolical thing (yes, <u>another</u> one; so you've noticed it too).

In "The History Makers," James Sallis' creation of a "palmisest city," which moves through an endless cycle of rejuvenation and destruction, is lovely; but Sallis has chosen to tell another of his stories in the form of a letter from an artist, and the result is more numbing than enticing.

And, finally, here we sit in the sludge at the bottom of the lake, with nothing to do but read Norman Spinrad's story of the day when the government couples its propaganda with the power of an opinion-molding, acid-rock group. The result fiction-wise is (literally) explosive, but that dead-white thing you see floating belly-up is titled "The Big Flash." Weakly plotted and vulgar, laden with Spinrad's abominable and clumsy dialogue, it would be more aptly titled The Big fizz. (I think it would be nice if one day soon Spinrad would lay off the contemporary garbage and start writing science fiction.)

So, one precious gem and a

couple of semi-prec-



ious decorations might be worth the price of a paperback reprint, which usually becomes available from Berkley within six months or so. At six bits, you won't feel quite so rooked. (Berkley S1778, 75¢)



THE WATCH BELOW by James White—Walker and Co., \$4.50
TROUBLE WITH LICHEN by John Wyndham—Walker and Co., \$4.95
Reviewed by Paul Walker

When you read one good book right after another, one of them is bound to suffer. This has been true for me for so long that I have not questioned it until now. Now, it has suffered a serious exception. I enjoyed both these books so much I cannot decide which I enjoyed more. Nor can I calmly state one is superior to the other in any respect. Both are so nicely done, so entertaining, there is simply no point in debating their respective merits.

James White's The Watch Below treats realistically an idea so horribly fantastic it is close to awesome. A small group of men and women, one a doctor, are sealed in the watertight hull of a sinking ship, torpedoed in WMIL. The ship is so constructed that it does not sink at once but drifts along just below the surface, finally settling in shallow water. The trapped inhabitants know there is no escape. They survive. They propagate. They breed a small society which traditionalizes, thanks to an ingenious "Game" the Captain of the first generation invented. Simultaneously, an alien ship heads toward Earth, fleeing a dying, aquatic world. They, too, survive and propagate. The inevitable meeting of these two factions and its consequences for all Earth constitute: the climax; but that will be evident by chapter three. It is the "how" of their survival, of their propagation, that is the meat of White's book and he has developed his case so neatly, so well-detailed, with so few words, that his achievement almost equals his characters. This reminds me very much of Alistair MacLean. It is an adventure, suspenseful, compassionate, and genuinely compelling. Please do not miss it!

Wyndham's book is not an adventure. It has its suspense, its compelling qualities, but it is the story of a group of people with one helluva problem. Iwo scientists, a man and woman, have discovered a lichen which grows in sparse supply in remote Hanchuria. When processed this lichen prolongs life. Should they announce this to the world? Claim their Nobel and place in history? Or is it as simple as that?... Mr. Wyndham presents some damn interesting arguments for and against. I have not been left hanging by such arguments in an SF book for some time. This is a book worthy of some debate.

But there is no debate about the book's quality. Its treatment is mainstream to the point where you wonder whether this is science-fiction at all, from time to time. Its characters are fully developed and its pace swift. There are no ambiguities; no vagueness; nothing you accuse as padding. The book is slightly repititious. It is not as exciting or as broad in scope as it might have been. But when a

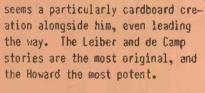
ious decorations might be worth the price of a paperback re- book keeps you reading until 2 in the morning, quibbling about print, which usually becomes available from Berkley within its faults is futile. This is one for the "mustreads."



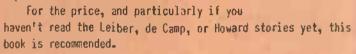
THE MIGHTY BARBARIANS, ed. by Hans Stefan Santesson—Lanser 74-556, 75¢ Reviewed by Fred Patten

This could be a good primer to the sword-&-sorcery story, although as such it's no better nor worse than any of the others that've been compiled in the last five years. Indeed, one of the stories — Kuttner's "Dragon Moon" — has already been reprinted in de Camp's The Fantastic Swordsmen (Pyramid 1967). There's a Mouser & Fafhrd story, a Conan story — pure Howard, thank Roscoe! — and de Camp's "The Stronger Spell"; all old friends.

There's also an original adventure of Thongor the Barbarian, which luckily (for it) appears before the Conan story. In fact, I wonder if "A Witch Shall Be Born" is the last story in the book by accident, or if Santesson realized that Conan is too powerful a figure to be put elsewhere without paling the others who would come after him? Jockstrap seems a particularly cardboard cre—



The cover
by Jim Steranko is adequate and
will blow
the minds
of all the
Comics fans
who have
been wondering what he
has been doing since
he stopped drawing Marvel
superheroes.





THE PRISONER # by David McDaniel—Ace 67901, 60¢

Reviewed by Paul Walker

I am going to be plainmasty and say that anyone who writes a book like this, based on a movie or TV idea, deserves to have it read. It was only my warm heart and generous nature that kept me from reading all the way through Mr. McDaniel's potboiler. Besides, page one so bored me I had only to glance through the remaining ten to thank the Good Lord for tipping

I was never a fan of THE PRISONER series on TV, though I

3/2

liked almost every aspect of it. Somehow, it consistently bored me halfway through. What made it tolerable that long was the handsome production, the considerable presence of Patrick McGoohan, and its interesting situations. What inevitably made it boring was what will condemn Beckett, Genet, Ionesco, and the whole Theatre of the Surreal to the back shelves of every library in a few years—when you seen one: you seen tem all.

The first time an absurdist play is wildly fascinating. The second time it is very interesting. And the third time it is easily forgettable. When it is a weekly series, minus the eloquence of a Genet, it is worth about one-half-hour of mild curiosity.

I imagine, at the risk of being attacked as a snob, that the kids who go for THE PRISONER have not seen a real absurdist play and find the week-by-week innoculations, which are very mild, cumulatively as engrossing as an evening of RKINOCEROS.

The book is another matter. According to the inside pages, Thomas M. Disch did the first one. I think Disch is an incipient genius, who I have been expecting to bust SF wide open with a masterpiece. Why he should waste his time on this trash not even the profit motive can explain to me.



THE SHIP WHO SANG by Anne McCaffrey—— Walker and Co.,\$4.95 Reviewed by Paul Walker

Each Sunday morning there is a ritual in
my home. I rise promptly
at noon and jog through the
bathroom, into my clothes, and
out the door. Exhausted, I arrive at the candy store where I down

extortionately priced bad coffee and eat stale glazed doughnuts left over from Saturday. The owner presents me my TIM-ES personally. (He could not sell it to anyone else.) While I peruse the front page, he explains it to me.

Meanwhile, my mother, who has risen sometimes in the murky depths of the sunless morning, is laying her traps for me. The most sure-fire is the sofabed she sleeps on. She spends many hours folding it precisely and positioning the pillows in such a manner that no human posterior lands in the same spot more than once in the lifetime of the piece.

About them I return and attempt to find some small comfort in the livingroom. My favorite spot is the sofa-bed. I mean, I live on that sofabed. Reading, writing, and booktube indulging, all on the sofabed.

Yet, the moment I land on it, all hell breaks loose. I am plagued from the sofabed, from the room, and almost from

the apartment. I stand there, staring at my oasis, helpless. My mother painstakingly tidies every wrinkle. "Don't sit on it eyet," she insists.

"When?" I ask.

"Later," she says.

"Later? Five minutes? Five hours? When is <u>later</u>?"

She throws up her arms and stalks from the room, bewailing her lost art, her destiny, and me, most of all.

#### And that is what is wrong with women writers!

Take Anne McCaffrey, respectfully, gently. She is a female Zelazny. Only more mature, more skillful, more perfected. In the Ship Who Sang she creates a character who is unforgettable. The character is a woman. The woman is a spaceship She places this character in brilliant situations. Matches her against finely drawn characters. Delves into all the depths any reader could possibly wish for. And polishes the concection to a splendid sheen. Yet it is long and boring and only sporadically alive.

Why?

There were five novelets. With expert skill she blended them into one novel. Unfortunately, the relationship of the five only holds at the beginning of each story. They still end like separate pieces. This makes the novel attempt a bit self-conscious; and the constant efforts to tie the stories together are tiresome. Unfortunate, but forgiveable.

What kills the book is a woman's inclination for detail. A man is the slob he is because he is after all life at once. Or, at least, some aspect of it all at once. Not a woman. To her, each item of life must be catalogued and numbered, placed in its precise niche and dusted twice daily. Invariably, the details of life occupy her attention more than does the whole of it. And while a man can admire, even wonder, at the perfection of her final design, it does not compel him to involve himself in it. It creates a gulf between him and the design.

This is the reason I did not enjoy Anne McCaffrey's novel. It is not a reason for everyone. Women will flip over the book. Wales, who appreciate fine writing and good structure, will flip over it. In fact, everyone is provided something to flip over somewhere in the book. I could quote pages of some of the best imagery in Sf.

But I've stated my reason. I stand by it. I would not be surprised to hear the book referred to for some time. But not by me.  $n \le 7 P_{\rm F}$ 

TO ALL FAMARTISTS: The fanzine EMBELYON has in the works an art symposium. 20 fan artists will be represented. We need a full page of art from each artist (either one drawing or connected series) and a full page of text explaining everything possible about the drawing: the howe, whys and wherefores of the illo. Art will be done photo-offset. Send the art to either Dave Burton/5422 Kenyon Dr./Indianapolis, IN/46226 or Lee Lavell/5647 Culver/Indianapolis IN 46226. Deadline is June 30. Instruction sheet sent on request.

# And Then I Read....

by .... the ... editor

It's curious, why a story sticks in your memory, and another doesn't. Why, after approximately a month, do I recall clearly "Dragonrider" by Anne McCaffrey, and remember less clearly "Mother to the World" by Richard Wilson, from among the stories in <u>Nebula Award Stories in (Doubleday, \$5.95)</u>, and remember not at all "The Dance of the Changer and the Three" by Terry Carr, "The Planners" by Kate Wilhelm, "Sword Game" by H.H. Hollis and "The Listeners" by James £. Gunn?

I don't know. They're all fine stories. I remember being irritated by Anne McCaffrey's "feminine" style and use of "said-bookisms" and... Well, the dragonrider culture is vividly presented and the story has suspense. But that the story won a Nebula I find puzzling.

"Mother to the World" has basic, human power and is written in a smooth, deep-running style that complements the story perfectly.

This volume was edited by Poul Anderson.

4++

I read The Waters of Centaurus by Rosel George Brown with some curiosity. The author died in 1967 and is beyond this review, I imagine. Just as well.

I enjoyed the book. It has pace and inventiveness and a certain charm and excitement. It also has a sinewy toughness that matches its heroine, Sybil Sue Blue, and a pulp plot that shows its bones and roots.

The story is about saving a world from drowning, an unstable but attractive villain, an underwater base, a drug that enables humans to develop gills and breathe water... within hours. Incredible, but fun. (Doubleday, \$4.95)

+++

I had heard a great deal of John Brunner's The Squares of the City and was delighted when Ballantine reprinted it. It is perhaps the untimate novel of apparatus, a gimmick book, the gimmick being that the plot is an actual game of chess played by American master William Steinitz and Russian master Mikhail Ivanovich Tchigorin. Characters in the book take the place of chessmen and pieces.

It is absorbing and interesting, but essentially unbelievable at the end when it is revealed how the two players, Vados (Presidente of a outh American country and mayor of the city) and his right hand man (and enemy) play a game with people's lives; they assembled dossiers on their "chess pieces" and moved them by subtle and not-so subtle pressures-economic, social, psychological.

The problem, as in MISSION IMPOSSIBLE's intricate plots; people just don't respond all that predictably, and certainly not to the detailed requirments of both MISSION and the players in The Squares of the City.

I think the book was too long, too. But Brunner may have had a problem in writing it: if the action is too swift and mechanical you lose the human element. He spent a lot of time in characterization and background to compensate, but slowed the pace too much for my taste.

Brunner had not yet, in 1965 when this was published, achieved the sure mastery of all his tools as a writer that he has recently displayed in <u>Jagged Orbit</u> and <u>Stand On Zanzibar</u>. But even so he was a very good writer then, and this book is smooth and slick in style. (Ballantine 01886-9, 75¢)

+++

Astrosex by George Shaw, is an attempt to write a science fiction novel with sex that comes acropper over its need to justify the \$1.25 price by emphasizing the sexual to the degree of erotidism the writer—or editor—thought was acceptable to the distributor of the books. The result is neither fish nor fowl; An Earth agent is sent to a pleasure planet to uncover a subversive organization. His cover is an emotional problem—his inability to feel true love or empathy. The sexual-emotional therapists are all the most accomplished, most attractive men and women, carefully trained, groomed, chosen.

There are many sexual therapy scenes with a variety of characters. The writing is an adroit style replete with sexual euphemism that was hot stuff five years ago but tame now.

It's not a good of book and not a good sex book; the two elements interfere with each other.

By the way, the hero cannot feel love because, it is revealed at the end, he is a robot. (Midwood M-125-41, \$1.25)

I have reached the point with Bob Silverberg that I will seize anything he has written that is new and retreat to a corner of the cave to consume it with slavering greed.

Thus with <u>Nightwings</u> (Avon, V2303, 75¢). Bob has an many styles as he wishes: soft, hard, smooth, delicate, funny, bawdy... He's a compleat pro, and this study of a future Earth beset by conquering aliens in a time of fractured sciences and fragmented culture, of castes and varieties of humans, is calmly gripping. The book scems to move with the central character, a Watcher in his fifties or sixties, who

loves a slight girl who flies with butterfly-like wings....

I was as usual enthralled with the past history of Earth that Bob presents from the far future, and impressed with the wholeness of his society, a crumbling civilization waiting for an alien invasion long promised, not quite remembering, until it is too late.

The novel is in three sections—three novelettes first published in GALAXY and/or If...I'm not sure...but the edges have been fitted together very nicely and without prior knowledge I doubt if I'd have suspected.

You can't go wrong with Silverberg, Dick, Brunner, new Moorcock, etc.

+++

lancer has reprinted Isaac Asimov's The Naked Sun and further enhanced his reputation and bank balance. This novel of science fiction crime and of a human detective having to work with a robot detective on another world is written in a solid, basic, invisible style that is like granite—it endures. Asimov tells a story without frilly look—at—me stylistic touches. He is at the service of the reader and he feels the story is the master. (Lancer 74644, 75¢)

Also reprinted by Lancer, for the first time in paper-back, apparently, is <u>Iceworld</u> by Hal Clement (75128, 95¢).

I remember reading this in serial form in ASIOUNDING, ages ago. It is still an entrancing story because of the aliens and their alien view of Earth and Earth life. They are a race that breathes gaseous sulphur and drinks molten copper chloride. So how can a planet as <u>cold</u> as Earth support intelligent life?

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I bought a copy of Michael Moorcock's The Winds of Limbo (original title: The Fireclown) (Paperback Library 63-149, 60¢) and was disappointed. It must be very early Moorcock, for the writing is average and the plot average to dull and I wouldn't recommend it.

There are satirists who are vicious. There are satirists who mock us, but with a certain warmth, all the while knowing they are subject to mockery, too. Ron Goulart is this way in After Things Fell Apart, the Ace Special I kept away from SFR's other reviewers because I liked the Dillon's cover and wished to sample Goulart's writing.

It is a sort of grotesque private-eye adventure set in a future, nearby, in which the United States ain't united no more. It has balcanized to the point of a San Francisco enclave, city-states, independent towns, even villages... where segments of our present culture are exaggerated and lovingly shown with all their vulnerable hypocricies hanging out. Here there are all-purpose robot-computers who talk back, make mistakes, think they know better..., the die-hard remnants of the FBI who run a motel with delicious paranoia, a group of women who want to control the country and kill all men, a Fort Baker Bunch dressed in pioneer out-

fits who are battling with the Saucalito blacks for toll-taking privileges on the Golden Gate bridge, the Mafia, the Amateur Mafia (no Italians allowed) who claim they can do a better job at handling the crime potential....

Wacky. A joy. Go unarmed into the book and with your eyes wide open. (Ace 00950,  $75\phi$ )

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I have concluded that Roger Zelazny is an entertainer first who uses a sparkling imagination and solid research to weave his tales of myth-adventure. He likes powerful, psy-psi oriented heroes who are immortal and superior. Real heroes who battle and win. Under the flash and color and style and wild technique there is solid story structure.

This Immortal is described above; fine, entertaining, worth every cent and every moment: (Ace 80691, 60¢)

I had not read <u>The Long Result</u> by John Brunner before, and I'm grateful to Ballantine for re-issuing this and <u>The Squares of the City</u> along with <u>The Whole man.</u> This kind of promotion is one of the advantages of winning a Hugo, I imagine.

The Long Result is good Brunner and good science fiction.

I like his ability to create highly believable futures, with everyday details of living and working all unobtrusively in place and functional. (Ballantine 01887-7, 75¢

The Steele Savage covers for these three are very fine.

Also received from Ballantine is a "new" Edgar Rice Burroughs book, John Carter of Mars, the eleventh book of the famous Martian series. Richard A. Lupoff has an introduction here which explains the background of the two stories which make xup this volume ("John Carter and the Giant of Mars" and



"Skeleton Men of Jupiter"). I find the narrative style unreadable—a kind of simplified essense-of-pulp—but for collectors this book is likely a must-get. (01531-2, 75¢)

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Exploring the Occult by Douglas Hunt arrived in the same package with the Burroughs book and is subtitled "A Study of Unexplained But Absolutely Authenticated Phenomena Occurring in Various Aspects of the Occult."

I dipped into the volume and read enough to want to read it thoroughly later. Food for thought, here, fans. Also raw material for sf-fantasy stories. (01936-9, 95¢)

There is a new Ace Special out...it should be on the newsstands now...and it is R.A. Lafferty's first collection of short stories.

It is <u>Nine Hundred Grandmothers</u> and I have misplaced the note Terry Carr sent along which gave the Ace number and price, but I suspect it is 95¢. Whatever, it is well worth the money, for it is a fat collection (318 pages, 21 stories.).

And it is Lafferty pure and simple, pure and complicat—. ed, pure and bitter, sweet, rancid....

There are some things you must realize about R. A. Lafferty. He does not write stories. He tells tales. His reality is not our reality. His begins somewhere a hundred yards or so off to the left, down that crooked little alley over there... His characters are not characters as we usually think of them, they are all the voice of Lafferty. His children speak Lafferty, as do his adults, his aliens and his computers.

Lafferty is an ordinary fiftyish man of the Midwest who is self-described as a "correspondence school electrical engineer." But he has the mind of a goblin.

He does not like establisments—they suffer at his hands, as when in "Name of the Snake" a missionary seeking sin to combat on an alien world so irritates the aliens that they boil him in an antique ritual pot and eat him.

And his people should not be taken seriously, for they often die unpleasantly, though usually without much pain. They are only parts of his tales, after all. Devices. In "Snuffles" I made the mistake of feeling for two people who were being pursued around an imperfectly created world by its maker, a big teddy-bear creature who had taken offense at their attitude and had killed the other members of their scientific mission. God killed them, too.

I will leave to others the analysis of tafferty's symbols and Meaning. I like his tales, his goblin stories from his other reality and I'll go there willingly to read his future tales. He's a fine writer.

I doubt that his tales are science fiction, though. They are fantasy. They happen to appear in science fiction magazines and have to be categorized somehow, and so because he utilizes the outword forms, the "furniture" of sf, he is

so labeled. It doesn't really matter.

Avon has published an unexpurgated Behold the Man. This Nebula winning novela is a mind-blower. The Man is Christ... or is he? Religious readers beware; Mike Moorcock has written a book so "blasphemous" you'd be hard put to imagine something worse. (Avon V2333, 75¢) A striking set of covers.

+++

Ace has issued the fifth Perry Rhodan book: "The Vega Sector" by K.-H. Scheer and Kurt Mahr. (Ace 65974, 75¢)

And Ace has issued <u>Tigers and Traitors</u> by Jules Verne. This is the "Fitzroy" edition of Verne. Edited by I.O. Evans. (Ace 80900,  $60\phi$ )

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Pyramid has reprinted E.E. Smith's Skylark Three (I-2233), The Skylark of Space (I-2232), Skylark of Valeron (I-2237), and Skylark Duquesne (I-2238), all 75¢ each.

These are what is called "classics", but their simple pulp style and reflection of old-fashioned morality make them unbearable to me. I met E.E. Smith at Don Day's house about twenty years ago in Portland, Oregon, and I enjoyed his writing them. How things have changed.

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Bantam continues to reprint the Doc Savage novelas of the thirties. The feathered Octopus is #48. (Bantam H5367,  $60\phi$ )

In <u>How To Foresee and Control Your Future Harold Sherman</u> posits some moot premises and requires more self-discipline than the average person possesses, to make the book's title come true. But he is right—we all are prisoners of our thoughts and thinking patterns. (Gold Medal 12234, 75¢)

## MAIL ORDER INFORMATION

ACE BOOKS (Dept.NM), 1120 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10036. 10¢ handling fee.

SIGNET—New American Library, P.O. Box 2310, Grant Central Sta., New York, NY 10017. 10g fee.

BERKLEY Publishing Corp., 200 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016. 10¢ fee.

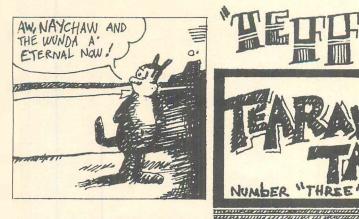
PAPERBACK LIBRARY, Inc., Dept. 8, 315 Park Av. South, New York NY 10010. 10¢ fee.

BELMONT BCOKS and HIDWOOD-TOWER BOOKS, 185 Madison Av., New York, NY 10016.  $10\phi$  fee.

LANCER BOOKS, 1560 Broadway, New York, NY 10036. 10¢ fee. BALLANTINE BOOKS, Dept. CS, 101 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10003. 5¢ fee.

AVON BOOKS, 959 Eighth Ave., New York, NY 10019. 10¢ fee. FAWCETT GOLD MEDAL BOOKS, Greenwich, Conn. 10¢ fee. DOUBLEDAY & CO., 277 Park Ave., New York, NY 10017. No fee. WALKER & CO., 720 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10019. No fee. DELL Publishing Co., 750 Third Ave., New York, NY 10017. 10¢ fee.

BANTAM BOOKS, 666 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10019. 10¢ fee. G.P. PUTNAM'S SONS, 200 Madison Av., New York, NY 10016. No fee

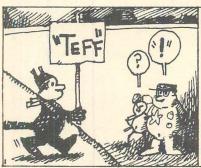


























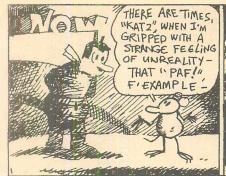












































HI THERE, BOYS AND GIRLS! DID YOU ENJOY THIS STORY? THEN FILL OUT THOSE TAFF BALLOTS, AND MAIL THEM TO STEVE STILES, AT 427 57th STREET, BROOKLYN, NEW YORK, 11220! FOO LOVE YOUR



+ I talked to Harlan Ellison on the phone yesterday. He had some words about Ted White's letter in SFR 37. I made some notes and, going also from memory, here is what Harlan said: "Ted White's comments about 'Shattered Like a Glass Goblin' are the result of Ted's completely wrong idea of my attitudes toward drugs and the sub-culture. Anyone who reads my FREE PRESS columns can see that Ted is a million miles off the target, and he (the reader) will have a better idea of my position on any given Thursday than Ted, who is thinking with data ten years outdated. Though I have reservations about some drugs, no worries about others, and the usual non-doper's store of facts, myths, observations and gut-feelings about what drugs do to people (and of course I don't include grass in this), none of these went into the thrust of 'Goblin.' Drugs were used as a devise in that story. It was honestly written. That led takes such offense at the story, when whole college auditoriums of heads find it straightforward and relevant, suggests to me that Ted is selective in what sacred cows he will allow to be slaughtered. I don't particularly mind Ted's hating the story, but I don't think he has the right to say I 'profess to loathe drugs and hippies' since he doesn't really know whether I do or not, and since he incorrectly states that I have ever professed to loathe either. Ted is my friend, and much of the time Ted is an honest man, but this time Ted is not telling the truth."

+ Michael R. Lauletta, of the Promotion Dept. of Belmont,

had this to say in a recent letter: "RUNTS OF 61 CYGNI C (875-2062) by James Grazier, 75¢. An original sci-fi novel of the 21st century. Two beautiful astro-scientists explore the planet of Cygni C and meet a race of friendly 3-toed, 3-fingered, noseless runts. Charming escape reading for all ages."

+ Hank Stine reports: "Becoming a father can be distracting and my correspondence is far, far behind. "M" son, Mark Demian Stine. "My Prisoner novel is coming, and to add to everything else, there are three major misprints, and one place where the printer ran two chapters together without even a line break; a terrible, terrible mess. "Morking on a mainstream novel now, and may not go back to sf for a while. I'm trying to get some grip on myself as a writer and to do the things I can do well. Which seems to be mundane or realistic novels. Working on a book called The Dealer, and most of the characters are from So. Cal. fandom. Ho, ho, ho..."

George Senda has moved : c/o Wortzman, 4407 Lorna Pl., Las Vegas, Nevada 89109.

+ Ulf Westblom is now at: Studentbacken 25C/103, S-115 40 Stock-holm, Sweden.

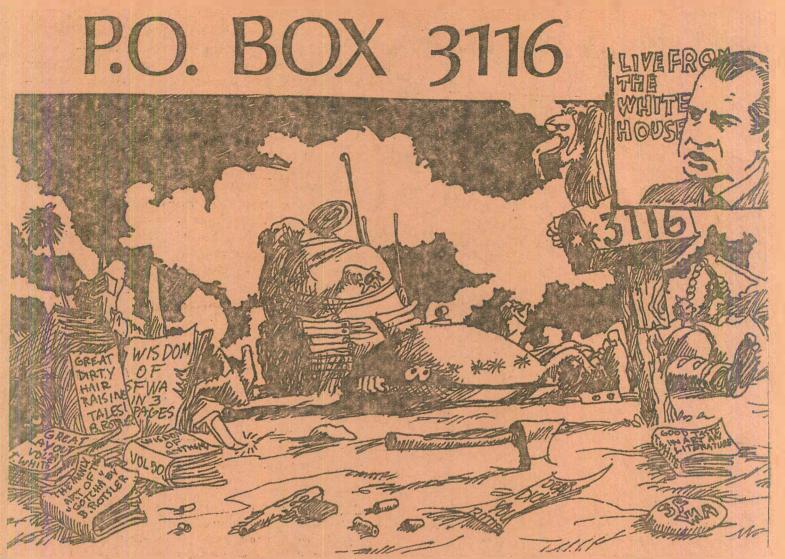
+ Andy Offutt reports happily: "Paperback Library just bought my speculative fiction novel Let There Be license for an above average contract. It is about the U.S. under a religious dictatorship, The Pastorate."

+ James Blish writes: "You will be pleased to hear that <u>Doctor</u>
<u>Mirabilis</u> is going to be published in the States by Dodd,
Mead (though this is not the same publisher who inquired about the novel in response to your notices). The only matter
remaining at issue, apparently, is whether they will use
faber and faber sheets, or will allow me (as I would greatly
prefer) to revise and expand the book. #Also, the last copy
of the mimeo edition has been sold."

The Science fiction Book Club selections for October, 1970 are The Year 2000, edited by Harry Harrison, an anthology of stories written for this volume, each about different aspects of the quality of life in the year 2000, at a club price of \$1.49 ... and Phoenix by Richard Cowper, a novel, at \$1.49.

The club selections for November, 1970, are <u>Ice Crown</u> by Andre Norton, and <u>Orbit 7</u> edited by Damon Knight. Both at \$1.49.

Billy Petit wrote: "Very happy to see the Asterix series get such a good review because it is an adult series. And both the French and English versions are rampant with puns and double level gags, as well as visually satisfying. However the prices given seem a bit high. I can get the French books for 5-8 francs, depending on when I get to the remainder stores. That's 80¢ to \$1.26. In English, 12 bob or \$1.44. Iell you what. If any of your readers want some, I'll trade for current sf mags. I can't get any of the Lowndes magazines. And I've yet to get a copy of COVEN 13 or SPACE STORIES to read. I'm willing to trade value for value (list price?) and we each pay for the postage. Would rather not have lots



"My fellow Americans. Regarding the fighting in SFRobia: let me make one thing perfectly clear——I am the President. Now, it is regrettable, but it may be necessary to destroy science fiction in order to save it. The enemy attacks in human waves, new and old. He keeps fading away into the future...."

PHILIP JOSE FARMER 824 S. Burnside Los Angeles, Cal. 90036 Everywhere I turn I run into J.J. Pierce in one form or another. I was looking through a SCIENCE WONDER STOR-IES, March 1930, which I had borrowed from Charlie Tanner (Tumithak of the

Corridors, a story I've never forgotten, was my first Tanner story). On page 895 is an article and photo of John Pierce, second prize winner of a story contest conducted by SWS. He was a student at the Cal. Inst. of Technology, and his chief hobby was gliding. I'm inclined to think this is our J.J.'s father, since the photo looks much like descriptions of J.J. which I've heard from various people. The story is definitely Old Wave. How about it, J.J.? Was that your father?

A new trend is just getting started. First, B. Aldiss

requests that you discontinue sending him SFR; then, Harry Harrison. Now Harry has requested that BEABOHEMA drop him from the mailing list. I see a Secondary Wave where the pros request they be dropped from mailing lists until, finally, only one pro is left writing to any fanzine. SaM? Ted White? Who will follow Aldiss and Harrison? It seems to me that Piers Anthony made a similar request to some fanzine not too long ago. This is the next wave of the future, men. Pros devote their time to fiction and evade being bugged and insulted and decried and shafted and needled. Fans tear into each other and write stories and critical articles which only they read Suddenly, some of the fanzines turn pro, publish nationally. This is the Tertiary Wave. Soon, a thousand prozines struggling on the stands. Even more suddenly, the complete collapse of science fiction. No more s-f magazines or books; everybody's had it up to here. The writers go on the breadlines and sell apples or turn to armed robbery, since the Depression has struck. And all this stems from Dick Geis and his SFR. You better start looking for a good place to hide, come the Armageddon, Dick.

((I'll seek refuge in your house, Phil. Surely you'll grant Sanctuary?))

Paul Walker's stuff was, to me, interesting and well thought out and stimulating, until I ran across his letter defending Campbell and ANALOG. Sure, ANALOG publishes good stories now and then and an occasional classic. But it's not adult, and the editorials are blatantly racist and many stories racist by implication. And when I read the editorial which I title the GRASSHOPPERS ARE GROOVEY editorial in the Nov. 1969 ANALOG, I just threw up (my hands) and said, "This man is completely divorced from reality and isn't too well attached to feelings of humanity, either!" That was it. I will no longer succumb to the urge to open an ANALOG at the newsstand and peek into Miller's reviews and John's essays. I haven't purchased a Campbell magazine for seven years. I have read some stories and editorials now and then because friends gave me some copies, though I didn't ask for them.

No, I don't think Campbell is a monster. He has many fine qualities. He fools himself quite frequently and is inconsistent in his professed opinions and behavior, but who doesn't? But he's honest, which is more than I can say for one editor currently rising to prominence. (And don't ask me his name; I won't be sued if I can help it, though I could prove my contentions.) John is also, in many ways, one of the biggest men in character, not to mention physical size, that I know.

But, contrary to what Walker says, John is "right wing." But he does buy stories from people, like McCaffrey and Harrison, who cannot be called right wing or even centrist or, in the case of Harry, anyway, even moderately left wing. Harry is way out, and I'm right there with him—on most things.

Well, to wrap up my comments re Walker's comments, there is no prejudice by writers against Campbell. Prejudice is judging without knowing beforehand. I wasn't prejudiced against John before I came to know the demons that possess him. I was prejudiced for him. And I'm not prejudiced against him now. I formed my present opinions after I learned what he believe. And I'm not antagonistic against John, really. I hate his opinions. So does Harry, but that doesn't keep Harry from submitting and selling to him I don't bother submitting any more because it's no use. I realized that the difference between us was just too great. I can't write a story he'll accept. Now, even if I could do so, I wouldn't. The gap is too great. The world is dying, and the dinosaurs don't know it. They keep bellowing the same old discredited opinions.

Aside from my difference with Walker about Campbell, I find Walker's reviews and essays very profitable to read.

I don't know for sure what Poul was getting at with his PIGS essay. Blowing off steam more than anything, though

justifiably so. He must be getting tired of being called a fascist. I don't think he's a fascist. I disagree on some things with him, but I don't believe that he would like to set up a repressive government and establish his way of life, his opinions, his attitudes, etc. He's very reasonable and rational and a deep thinker. He can be wrong, I believe. He has been. But he's no fascist, and he's been remarkably restrained

Now, you take Rottensteiner. He comes from a land with a history which makes him especially sensitive to accusations of fascist. So he bends backwards to avoid them; he sees fascists behind every bush. Hence, his accusations against Heinlein. Now, all Germans, von Geiss, as we well know, are not pigheaded or fascists or junkers, and a man who comes from the land of Mozart and Freud can't be all bad. He writes an interesting analysis, and that's about all I can say. He just doesn't understand Heinlein because his resonances don't phase in with Heinlein's. He's out of step; he'll never understand Heinlein. Some of the things he describes as being in Heinlein's works may be true. But he doesn't comprehend the in toto Heinlein. There's a mismatch somewhere, and this is the feeling I get when I read Rottensteiner. Not just when he's talking about Heinlein. About other English writers, too. I think that Rottensteiner may be having trouble with the subtleties of the English speech. Some other time, if I ever get the time, I'll try to back up my thesis with specific examples.

(I realize I should rewrite this letter. But, like most of my correspondence, it is being done at white-hot speed of finger and brain. I don't have the time to rewrite letters.)

I just wrote fifty-five pages of a crime novel and the outline of the rest and sent it in. I have to get into other fields of writing besides s-f. This book, if it's published, will be under a nom-de-plume. Not that I'm ashamed of s-f. But I'm tagged as an s-f writer, and this mitigates against the acceptance of my story in another field. Also, if the novel becomes the first of a series, it will be better to have a name associated with that particular series. And it will prevent people from buying it who might do so because they'd think it was s-f.

I'm also plotting out a book about the s-f world based on notes and memories. I may title it THE KONSTER THAT ATE ITS OWN ASS. I'm just kidding. It'll have a very dignified title and be a serious fictional treatment of a rather strange world as seen through the eyes of a man who has read s-f since childhood but had no contact with the world itself (fans, writers, editors, publishers, etc.) until he sells his first story and then comes to his first convention. It's not a Grand Hotel sort of story in which the action is confined to the convention. It will cover a period of ten years or more.

One of my characters is a young and ambitious man who figures out a way to climb the ladder to editorship of an s-f magazine house. He is working as an assistant editor for a small house but knows he's not going to get any place there. So he sits down evenings, weekends, and also during work and writes literally hundreds of letters to fanzines. It's impossible to open even the cruddlest without finding a long letter from

Dexter Gift with analyses of the latest books and movies, opinions of previous letters, opinions on writers, critics, and publishers. Everything.

Just as Gift figured out, the time comes when the fans equate quantity with quality. His name is on everybody's lips (framed with praise or curses). He wins a Hugo. He is fired from his job for writing letters on company time. He can't get another for some time. He makes a little money selling a few stories, but he is shabby and underfed. But he buys paper and stamps and ribbons and pounds out the hundreds of letters. His wife leaves him; a young fan (girl) falls in love with him and marries him and helps support him.

A schlock publisher who is looking for an editor who will work for peon wages hears of him and gives him the job. Gift has talent, no denying that. Despite a penny ante budget. long hours, and hassles with his lout of an employer, he brings the chain of magazines up in quality. To do this, he has to ignore the numerous and bloody shaftings that his emplayer gives his friends. He has to defend his employer ag against charges from the writers' quild. The charges are true, he knows, but he writes replies that justify, or try to justify, the base policies and baser actions of his employer.

The magazines slowly build up more circulation, gain in quality, and are much esteemed by the fans, because Gift tries to please them. In the process, he angers many writers by his vitriolic and invalid attacks, knowing that this is a crowd-pleaser for most fans. He also becomes arrogant. Rather, his hitherto somewhat suppressed arrogance is no longer under the lid.

But as a compulsive letter writer, he still pounds out hundreds, neglecting the reading of Mss submitted by writers without agents or not well known. His enployer comes under the increasing censure of the guild. Many of his friends, rightly recognizing that he could quit his job if he really disapproves of his employer's practices, drop him. But if the magazines do go under, and they may because of his employer's greediness and stupidity, what the hell! He has established a reputation as a crackerjack editor, and he'll be able to get a job which pays and which will have real prestige. His plans are paying off.

Unfortunately, an old writer who has been the subject of many savage attacks from Gift deeply resents these. And he is unstable. In fact, he is about to break. He centers his hate on Gift and Uppenpriest, the employer.

Gift asks Uppenpriest for a raise, since he's built the magazines up to the point where they're doing quite well. The employer says he'll give him a slight raise, pleading peverty, current expenses, etc. Gift knows he's lying; he knows Uppenpriest too well. What he doesn't know is that Uppenpriest, primarily because of the increasing pressures of the quild, and because he is basically paramoiac, suspects Gift of betraying him. When Gift gets an offer from another publisher, he accepts. He knows that the goose is cooked for Uppenpriest; he is being sued because of publishing stories without legal right to do so; the guild is about to demand a concerted action against Uppenpriest.

Der Tag arrives. Gift has just sold a novel, which he wrote on company time, for a good price to a big house. (His boss is angry about this because he wanted to buy it for much less.) Gift's wife has decided not to leave him, since he will be quitting Uppenpriest. And he will be going to work for a publisher who will afford him a big opportunity for advancement.

The old insane writer appears at the offices. Gift tells his boss he's quitting. They have an angry exchange. Gift tells him off. The boss a WMII Marine, goes after Gift with the bayonet he keeps in his desk. Gift runs down the hall. The insane writer shoots at him but misses. Gift turns around and runs back. The boss skewers him and drops dead of a heart attack.

The insame writer regains his senses. He begs Gift's forgiveness, forgetting that Gift should be asking for his. He asks Gift what he can do for him to ease his dying moments. Gift says, "Take a letter..."

These are just some of the many characters who may or may not be used in the novel. Of course, they don't resemble anyone I ever met or heard of in the s-f world. They're purely fictional.

Now, I've got a character named Hobart Attick, a regular Count Bruga, and he...

I'm not proofreading this letter, Dick, and I get the feeling that I may have contradicted myself here and there. But Whitman and I are quite able to contain our contradictions. It was fun writing this, and if I let it cool off I'd either never send it or have to take a lot of time writing it over, and I can't afford that.

((My alter-ego is muttering to himself. He sees a direct connection between himself and "Gift"-

"Damn right, Geis. You are "Uppenpriest" my boss! The magazine chain is actually meant to be SFR (which I edit brilliantly), and the insane old writer is actually young Dean Koontz! Furthermore, I see through Farmer's clever scheme! I'm on to you, Farmer! You're insanely jealous of my editorials! You want to discredit me! But I'll sue! I'll drag you through every court-"

Back...down, Alter! Sorry, Phil.))



JERRY R. MCHONE P.O. Box 17287 Charlotte, N.C. 28211

A friend recently sent me seven back issues of SfR, #28 through #34, inclusive. It caused so many reactions, most of them good, that I had to write and let you know about

((Jerry commented on Old Wave/New Wave, Pierce, Ellison, my editorials, and finished with:))

Also was entertained and informed by the book reviews. Thanks to SFR, I now have a Reading List of about 15 books, before I can even get caught up on current sf. (And by the time I finish them, there will be that many more, new books out, so I'll be behind again.) I disagree with someone who said (some-

where in some section of one of the seven issues mentioned) that contradictory reviews cancel each other out. The two reviews of The Jagged Orbit, for example, served to make me decide to read it myself and see who (if anyone) is right about it. Behold The Man, I blush to admit, I had never even heard of til I saw SFR's review, and now it is on my must-read list. (As I have this Thing about Jesus books.)

Geberal comment on fanzines, and SFR in particular: as an Moutsider", I am pleasantly surprised at the time and trouble taken by the pro's, in contributing to and otherwise supporting fanzines. As far as I know (not far, I admit), no such thing exists outside the sf field. A cynic could easily say that the professional types are more than happy to keep their names and book titles before our eyes, as free publicity is its own reward. (Or something.) But part of me is naive enough to want to think it is more than personal reward/commercialism on their part.

I find that strange entity known as Fandom an interesting, amusing, enlightening, all—American slice of true delightful madness. I salute it/them/you!



BOB BLOCH
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Los Angeles, Cal. 90046

Sorry to be so remiss in acknowledging SFR 36 but we've been through a siege of painting and redecorating and I had no chance to

catch up until now. Particularly wanted to assure Avram Davidson that when I say "provocative" that's exactly what I mean—provocative of thought, of positive or negative reaction to his clearly-voiced opinions. Shalom, Avram (I think that's a skiing term). The contents in general are stimulating and reassuring, but Tim Kirk's cover stopped me cold. Laurel and Hardy? And early L&H, too—that hat Hardy wears is from PUTTING PANTS ON PHILIP (1927)!



ELAINE LANDIS GEIGER Editor Science Fiction Book Club 277 Park Ave., New York, NY 10017 I am writing in response to Avram Davidson's comment in your letter column in SFR 36 questioning if the Science Fiction Book Club is paying royalties to the Burroughs estate for The Princess of Mars.

Indeed, we are paying the estate our standard royalty and quarantee for book club use of the book.

Since Mr. Davidson raised the question, the reason I decided to do The Princess is because I feel that the Science fiction Book Club has neglected Burroughs and I suspect that the members of the club would welcome a hardcover edition of Princess. I have commissioned Frank Frazetta to do a four-color jacket and three interior line illustrations which I feel will give the book added appeal. If I find there is enthusiasm for this book I shall likely go on with the rest of the Mars series.

MIKE GILBERY 5711 West Henrietta Rd. West Henrietta, NY 14586 I can't see fed White's criticism of me and Tim Kirk—

A. Because we were not doing the same as Jack Gaughan and Vaughn

8ode—we weren't trying to impress anyone but were having fun and hope others enjoy what we do—evidently White wants "finished" cartooning.

- B. I don't even dignify his "stealing" statements.
- C. You can't judge Fim or me from a comic art standpoint!



SANDRA MIESEL 8744 N. Pennsylvania St. Indianapolis, Ind. 46240 "Who's Afraid of Philip K. Dick?" ((In SFR 36)) stirred me to child—alarming wrath. Dick a sneering nihilist? Sure. And

Alexei Panshin condones planetary genocide, too. How could Walker make such a drastic misjudgement?

Certainly Dick's personal interest in Oriental philosophy shows in his work. But the concept of the Veil of Illusion does not automatically lead to nihilism any more than the Western Christian view that we are all thoughts in the Mind of God. But I digress. This is no place for a long critique of Eastern thought.

Dick asks more questions than "What is reality?" His is a moral as well as a metaphysical vision. Virtue and beauty are values in themselves—the Japanese link othics with aesthetics. Our reality may be an illusion (or a delusion), says Dick, but stopping wars is still a good thing, creating beauty is still a good thing, maintaining individual integrity is still a good thing.

The Man in the High Castle rates our world the best of the three alternates. The world in which the Axis won WMI is disintegrating. Survivors from the wreck of this disolving dream can be drawn over to our timeline with handmade jewelry as one passport. The most powerful evil is insubstantial.

Dick not compassionate? What does he say in <u>Oo Androids</u>
Dream of Electric Sheep? Compassion is the distinguishing
feature of humanity, a quality which makes feeble men superior
to the arrogant androids. The impression the body of Dick's
work leaves with me is surprisingly optimistic, as though "
"hope" was scribbled on Maya's veil.

Now before anyone snarls: "This is all in your head," let me quote a few remarks from a letter of Dick's in THE RIVER-SIDE QUARTERLY following an article on The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch: (RQ V. 3, no. 2, 1968)

..."The novel depicts relative good attempting to combat absolute evil, and in the end the relative good—in the form of Leo Bulero—triumphs. I think it is important to note that this man, with all his failings, does triumph, and the record of his triumph is found not in the body of the novel but in the paragraph coming before it, his memo dictated after his return from Mars to Earth.

...

... "The victory is achieved by a "small" man... He is not

a titan. But he is determined to remain himself, to achieve victory over a curse or contamination."

Or as Dick says through Bulero's memo: "'I personally have faith that even in this lousy situation we're faced with we can make it. ""

Oh, I could go on typing a paean to Dick's artistry and artistic courage but your lettercol space is limited. However the annoying Walker article also reminded me of how much wretched "Objective" criticism-both fan and pro-I've seen in my few short years as a fan. People are forever rendering false verdicts on material they've failed to read carefully -like the two different mundame reviewers who thought Canticle for Leibowitz was a bleakly pessimistic book. Or Judith Merril's overlooking the satiric nature of Bill, The Galactic Hero by Harry Harrison. Does anyone agree or have suggestions es into magalomania. for improving the situation?

((He is real. Aren't you, Paul? Paul?))

"Beer Mutterings" and the cartoon war were wickedly funny but I kept having the disconcerting feeling reading John Brunner's column that his critique of Barefoot in the Head was as much a critical spoof as "IIIYOU" which preceded it. A highly erudite and intricate spoof, of course. Sigh, but I know it wasn't.



PAUL WALKER 128 Montgomery St. Bloomfield, NJ 07003

I have a sad ambition. It is to win an award. To stand up on a dais, the audience applauding, the air still vibrating from a cyclone of encomiums

and, blushing appropriately, take the gold-plated statuette in my hands; step up to the microphone, clear my lump-filled throat, and add my iname thanks to the library of forgettable acceptance speeches. It is a sad ambition.

What I really want to do is write. The challenge of it is herculean. The reward of it is the most satisfying of all: the light in a reader's eyes. That luminous expression that spreads across his dismal features when he drops the ms to the table, shakes his head, and tries to think of something that will accurately describe his pleasure without swelling my already bursting skull. Anyone can seduce a woman; most often, it is feminine rape. Anyone can impress anyone else; simply agree with them. But to touch someone, to stimulate their minds, as deeply as is necessary for a story to succeed. is a kind of efficacy that affirms all the good in you; that redeems all the sliminess. And I don't care if it's Conan the Conqueror or The Brothers Karamazov, both appeal to the same depths.

I know a few writers. I know they feel the same way. It is sad then that so many of them spend so much precious time, suffer so much heartache, and expend so much bitterness because of something which has nothing to do with their profession. Not with the heart of it.

In prozines and fanzines, in talk and letters, I hear of

the battles, the accusations, the grudges, the frustrations of enormously talented young writers (and older ones, who should know better). I see evidence of promising careers abandoned out of the irrational indignation ("Nobody loves me!"). I read books I reglize were written under the obsession for awards. And each year the list of winners is the best evidence of the invidiousness of literary awards. Not even their proud authors would claim that their work was the undisputed best, or representative of the taste of fandom as a whole.

## Is it worth it?

Perhaps you think so because you like to see a good fight. The old John Wayne syndrome. But the literary landscape is strewn with the torn and bleeding egos of potential talents whose obsession with the Award channeled their creative impuls-

Despite this, I am not against awards. I want to see the Didn't I hear somewhere that "Paul Walker" is a pseudonym? SF field prosper, and that Hugo label sells books. It is natural for a writer to want fame and fortune. It is the American Way (no put-down intended!). And it is just for a popular writer to receive his acclaim, as it is just for a "serious artist" to receive his. But I believe the system should be revised to eliminate its destructive aspects.

> For one thing, I would eliminate the "Nebula". I do not question the sincerity of its judges; but it is a "snob" award. Any award given for intellectual achievement (of any kind) by fellow intellectuals is inherently "snobbish", conducive to clique politics, and vulnerable to the kind of inadvertant corruption that can seriously smear honorable professionals.

Furthermore, it is asking for a "house-divided-against-itself." It must create dissention and distrust. It must break old friendships and taint new ones. If writers have any business meeting one another, it should be to open one another's minds and hearts, not to adversely prejudice them.

Secondly, I would eliminate the present Hugo system.

SF, no matter how you define it, no matter whether you include Nabokov and Vonnegut, is a fan field. Most writers began as fans and still are active. Many who aren't simply have not the time. But fandom is the great motivator of our pros. so it is only right that they should pick the winners. Not the winner, who reflects the mood of one convention or period; but the winners who reflect the great variety and enthusiasm of all

I suggest a year-long vote, with fans able to submit their choices, change their minds, as often as they like. I suggest there be at least FIVE Hugos for best novel, and as many for all other categories. In fact, I would suggest as many novels and stories would win as topped an estimated number of votes.

It really does not matter if there is a best. In literature, what survives meaningfully generation to generation is the best. And it would not degrade the Hugo's status to be spread a little thin. It would encourage sales. We are not a bestseller herd, but a pack of gluttons!

I am for a special award. There are writers whose careers have deeply influenced SF: Heinlein, for one. There are writers whose careers have been remarkable for their capacity for

growth and innovation; Silverberg, for one. There are writers whose careers have promoted the reputation and validity of the whole SF field; Brandbury, for one. These men are not fly-by-nights. They have spent many years growing and enriching our field. They deserve a tribute, not for one work, but for a lifetime of admirable effort.

This seems a little contradictory after what I said above. But I believe a fair, workable system of voting could be arranged. A system based on the voting of many years, not merely one.

This is the kind of award I respect.

Of course, for a guy who never ties his shoelaces the same way twice, systems analysis is a losing game. I do not offer my criticisms or suggestions for reform as definitive, but for what they are. I believe the current system of awards is injurious to SF; the field, its fans, and most of all, its very human professionals. I believe something should be done-now-

((OKAY! All in favor.... Seriously, Paul, before we shatter the Way Things Are I'dlike some documentation of your assumptions. Name the torm and bleeding egos of potential talents whose lusts for AWARDS has undone them. And is the fault with the awards for Tempting these highly seduceable egos, or in the weak characters of the writers whom you seek to protect from themselves?

Which books do you believe were written under the obsession for awards?

You say not even the award winners under today's system can claim their work was the undisputed best. Wow. Who ever claimed the Nebulas and Hugos were undisputed? They are awards given to the majority winner of those voting.

You want perfect, total agreement? Total democracy? No way. Too many fans don't care enough to vote. Too many members of SFWA don't care enough to vote, let alone read enough of the books and stories nominated to be able to cast a knowledgeable ballot.

Any system of voting will involve human failings and thus be imperfect. I'm sorry.

You say most of writers began as fans and still are active. How do you know this? What stats have you seen? I don't think it's true. And I question if fandom is the great motivator of our pros. as you assert.

Giving five or more Hugos for each category would dilute the Hugos, as every newsstand of section of pbs would be full of them!

You tend to be a sloppy, imprecise thinker, Paul. Have you found around 5,000 different ways to tie your shoelaces?))



BOB SILVERBERG 5020 Goodridge Av. New York, NY 10071

In regard to Greg Benford's letter about my story "Sundance", in SFR 36. "Sundance" did indeed make the 45

final ballot for this year's Nebula voting. However, so did my story "Passengers"; and when I was told of this, I asked to have "Sundance" removed from the ballot, on the grounds that I didn't want to compete with myself for votes in any one category.

How did I choose which one to drop? Easy. "Passengers" had been distributed to the entire SFWA membership by the publishers of ORBIT. "Sundance" had appeared only in F&SF. SFWA members notoriously do not read the prozines. It made little sense to risk having on the ballot a story that a good chunk of the electorate might not have seen, when I could go with a story that everybody had been sent. There was also the secondary consideration that "Passengers" is a straightforward shocker, while "Sundance" is a complex, fairly inaccessible story done in several tenses and persons. So in a cool calculating way I yanked "Sundance" from the ballot. And won a Nebula for "Passengers". This has been an Inside View of the workings of the Nebula process.

((That sound you hear in the background is Paul Walker, weeping.))



BARRY MALZBERG 164 West 79th St. New York, NY 10024

Read and much enjoyed the latest issue of SFR. Was particularly interested by the long letter from Someone (forget his name and don't feel like scrambling

for the magazine at this instant) defending ANALOG as the custodian of modern science-fiction. Sure appreciate his point. Might like to note, however, and without any comment at all the names of some modern science-fiction writers who have not appeared in this magazine since, say 1960:

Thomas M. Disch, Samuel R. Delany, Roger Zelazny, Philip K. Dick, Brian W. Aldiss, Kate Wilhelm, Michael Moorcock, Joanna Russ, Harlan Ellison, Larry Niven, D.M. Compton, J.G. Ballard, Robert Silverberg, the undersigned. Others. Robert Sheckley, Terry Carr, James Sallis, Kit Reed. Fritz Leiber, Theodore Sturgeon, "Cordwainer Smith", Others?

It would be interesting to do a checklist of contributors to the magazine over the decade: what percentage of them, say, have reputations and influence approximating the writers listed. I specifically exempt Harrison and Meville, one of whom has done all right, the other who hasn't done enough recently. Others?



JOHN BRUNNER 53 Nassington Road London NV/3, ENGLAND

The latest ((#36)) SFR crept through the letterbox this morning. I must say I was pleased to see so much space devoted to the work of David Compton-I

too was enormously impressed by Synthajoy, and I'm looking forward to The Steel Crocodile which is on the shelf to be read as soon as I've killed the current novel. (The trouble I'm having with it isn't due to difficulty in making the words flow, but the exact opposite -- I have enough material for an encyclopedia, and every day I find something in the papers that I

ought to have considered when I plotted it... Well, I guess that's the penalty you pay for selecting a topical subject.)

Among other items in the issue which I read with interest I noted Brian's letter, and thought immediately, "Here's an ideal starting-point for a 'Noise Level' column." But five minutes' reflection caused me to change my mind; the risk of triggering off an argument concerned with personalities—which aren't relevant—seemed too great. It is, in essence, a question of temperament how one reacts to reacts to reviews; I draw a lot of data from them, and try to discipline my reaction and learn from them instead of flying off the handle. (I confess I did blow my top once over a review, but I shall try not to be so foolish a second time.) As it were, I try to couch my response not in terms of "The idiot's missed the point!" as of "How could even an idiot miss the point? What did I do wrong?"

Counsel of perfection, and all that jazz... I mean, I can hardly claim that when, in his review in the OXFORD MAIL, Brian said that Stand On Zanzibar was not all dross (quote and unquote) I didn't twang like an over-tight fiddle-string for at least the rest of the morning after I received the press-cutting. One always hopes that every reviewer will pick this book out of the week's pile when he selects his six or eight out of the twenty or thirty he's been given, and be so bowled over by it that he insists on three-column headlines to mark the event. (This has only happened to me once, but it was in the LONDON DAILY MIRROR, with its circulation of some four million, so it was quite an event!)

And there's no disputing that this is both rewarding—
in the financial sense—and gratifying, because the competition grows stiffer by the day. Where, for me, the real crunch comes is when someone whose judgement you respect (as I respect Chip Delany's, for instance, or Iom Disch's) doesn't just pass off a bit that you're proud of with a shrug, but sits down and demonstrates why it didn't work the way it was meant to. Because inasmuch as a writer has any conception of an audience for his work, surely it must comprehend those people whom he knows to be better at his job than he is, and those same people are at the back of his mind when he heaves the deep breath and leaves the study and says, "loday it came out right."

I have no conception of a "faceless mass" out thereeven though I couldn't memorise the names and faces of a fraction of the people who've bought my work. Hell! A hundred thousand of them, even for an Ace paperback? For me there is always an imaginary audience waiting; if it's something trivial I'm doing, nonetheless it might make the impact of a joke told at a party, and if it's something serious, on a subject I regard as important or involving some deep emotional commitment on my part, it might (hopefully will) have the impact of winning a soberly conducted argument. At the very least it will leave a trace on the mind of the other person: a telling phrase, a vivid episode, a dramatisation of something which previously was nothing but empty words.

After which... well, "them as can, does." Go and do it, you nitwit!

ROY TACKETT 915 Green Valley Rd. NV Albuquerque, N.M. 87107 Re SFR #57: Perhaps the reason we "hard core" types received Logan's Run with a certain coolness is that Nolan and Johnson

were writing "sci-fi" whereas we are more properly interested in science fiction. Personally, I gave up on the book when I reached the passage where one of the characters was described as hunting penguins in the Arctic.



NOW FOR short quotes and compressed comments from those nice peoples who also wrote.

RUTH BERMAN said, "'Beer Mutterings' is very amusing. The only trouble with it is that Poul lets his persona make too good a case—he winds up partly establishing the very point of view that he's trying to satirize."

Her detailed explication will be forwarded.

Ruth also sent her Star Trek fanzine, T-NEGATIVE #6. It is interesting, but one wonders...how much longer can a S-I zine go on after the death of the series. Ihrough the last re-runs in lower Patagonia? Is possible.

AMITA KOVALICK spoke for about five people when she put her hands to her mouth and growled, "Boo! Are you becoming totally immersed with the evils of capitalism? Have you lost all sense of decency? I liked those ((full-page)) covers! You can hardly make out the artwork on those bitty little pictures. And those were nice envelopes. What I did to my copy getting those staples out is obscene!"

I felt terribly guilty about sending SFR out naked and finally couldn't stand it. I ordered 6,000 envelopes two days ago and am having them pintnered up with the 3rd class bulk mailing indicia and like that, so this issue and at least five issues into the future, will be snug and protected and everyone will be happy...except my bank balance. He moans a lot.

"Geis, whoever heard of a bank balance moaning!"

LARRY PROPP was disappointed with the Kirk/Gilbert cartoon duel, defended ANALOG, and also yowled about the lack of envelopes: "Where's my manila mailing envelope? I'd been saving those (for re-use) and using the rest of your zine to wax my car with. Since you are no longer providing me with them, what good are you? (LOCUS gives a better buff, anyway.)"

I'm going back to Fibretint this issue, Larry. Try it again.

MITCHELL J. SWEDO, JR. was all shook up and gosh-wowee because he got a letter into SFR 36. He thinks I should maybe change the name of SFR to SCIENCE FICTION WRITER'S DIGEST.

Hramm....

KEVIN G. MAC DOMMELL who lives in Cape Town, South Africa started a clubzine, tried to work up some controversy but was disappointed. He is grateful that South Africa doesn't have a Harlan Ellison or his little zine would be banned.

Think what would happen to your Ellison!
P.O. BOX 3116 continued on pg.

I interupt the short quotes to print a letter from:

ISAAC ASIMOV 45 Greenough Street West Newton, Mass. 02165 I read the review of Mightfall and Other Stories by Ted Pauls in Sf REVIEW #37 and was exceedingly impressed. I'm a "living,

breathing legend", I'm one of those "whose names meant science fiction" and it is "difficult to conceive of the development of science fiction without Isaac Asimov." Also "The consistency of his competence is positively breathtaking in and of itself. He never, so far as I know, turned in a piece of really poor writing."

I quote all this in case someone else reading the review happened to miss it.

However, Mr. Pauls says "At the same time, however, it is impossible to avoid the conviction that time has passed Asimov by."

Alas, Mr. Pauls, I agree with you. Time has passed me by. Science fiction has moved on to empryean new heights and this old-time square is no longer with it. Honestly, I do agree with you. This is why for a dozen years I have scarcely written any science fiction at all. I have left it to all the brilliant newcomers in the field, and confined myself to a few score books on science, history and so on. (My next important book, oh, readers, will be Asimov's Guide To Shakespeare, to be published this coming fall by Doubleday in two fat volumes. I hope you all buy it because, frankly, Doubleday is taking a chance on it in my opinion.)

Anyway, the review smote me so badly that I called Doubleday and asked them to take the book off the market before their reputation and mine was irretrievably ruined. I was told this was impossible because in the first half-year it sold 9000 copies and was still going strong, that it had sold paperback rights in five figures (seven including the pennies), two foreign sales so far—and that this was pretty good for a collection of old stories.

Then, having gotten no satisfaction from Doubleday, I looked at the page of SF REVIEW just opposite the review of Mightfall and behold, it is a full-page advertisement for paperbacks at 3 for #1.00 and in the whole list of topname authors is not to be found my humble self. It can't be that I have no paperbacks, for I have lots of them. It must be that none of mine are available at 3 for #1.00 because they sell out at the original price.

Oh, Mr. Pauls, time has passed me by, but not the audience. Whatever shall we do, you and I, against the great majority?

(("No, Geis, don't say a word!"
Maybe you're right, Alter.))

W.

PERRY CHARDELAINE Rt.4, Box 137 Franklin, Jenn. 37064 Speedy Andy Offutt's question, SFR 37, "What's an editor's job?" What's editing, and on, seems about as

multi-verbosed potential as answers to my question "What's a good critic?" in "Story At Bay", same issue.

I promised Barry Malzberg I'd lay off fanzines, but Andy's heart-rending plca was the best that hollard help to the world of my heart since Anthony, Piers, almost tear-jerked and stained gimmic-opera pleas — or equally so, at least, with Ted Whitish pater familish. ((Hah?))

Yea Gad! Andy "out of the mind of" Offutt. There are editors and editors; writers and writers; magazines and magazines, and liketh the rainbow and the fishes, they glitter or smelleth according to their kind!

A good editor ought to treat the trainee writer, such as myself, and the Old-line\*Pro differently. In my case, he ought to change everything that needs changing, but he ought to give me the opportunity to correct it first, so that I can learn.

Fred Pohl, I think, was a good editor. But for some of the Old-Line\*Pros, Fred was not. With them, one must first classify the Old-Line\*Pro into two general categories (more if wiser, liketh Job): (1) Equistic, and (2) Human.

In the first case, the good editor should buy the story only if it is actually good enough to print as is; otherwise, to save himself vendettas, ill-will and so on, one should merely reject.

In the second case, with the human Old-Line\*Pros, a good editor will either request permission to make specific changes, or will ask the human writer to make them, himself.

Unfortunately, the Punk Editor will change everything necessary with or without permission, with or without written contract. Moreover, he will treat the Old-Line\*Pro exactly like the Writer Trainee—equally and with disdain.

I've had numerous changes, some bad some good. When If was still reading my manuscripts—or even my letters—the published MS's were often returned at my request. I found them a great value in correcting some of my problems.

Only two changes have riled me to date. One proved excellent, but I couldn't learn its nature until after publication. The last was change of the word experiential, used in a quite technical sense. The substitution, experience, changed not only the sense, but made the sentence nonsense. When the story was reprinted I specified that that word be changed back, and the anthologist agreed.

John Campbell, for ANALOG, pointed out an obvious missed story-point, and I was grateful; but he made me do the changing, and for that I was also grateful. John Campbell is a great editor.

If If the writer thinks he knows more than the editor, he'd worry about giving free license for change; if not, he'd expect to learn from the superior.

It depends upon what you want, who you are, what the publication is and how sensitive or insensitive is the editor to legal or moral relations to the writer, I guess, Andy!

14 1.0. BOX 3116 Continued on page 9

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