









# SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW

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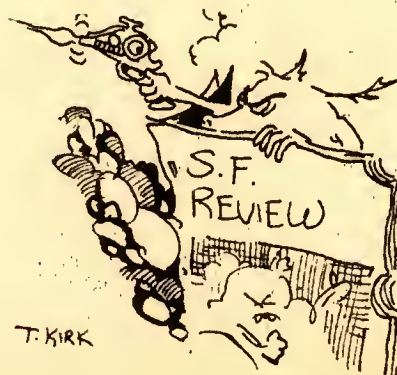
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"Geis, one look into your side of the brain and all I see is emptiness. You haven't a thing to say, do you?"

"Well, Alter, there are a few things—"

"Little pebbles of thoughts rolling around underfoot. I see I shall have to rescue you."

"Like the indians rescued Custer."

"What was that? Think up, Geis. I can't hear you when you mumble like that."

"I said we could discuss next year's Hugo nominations."

"No, no, too early. Besides, we want our book reviewers to send along their thoughts on the matter of best novels, best stories, etc., of 1969. No, Geis, you are obviously bereft of ideas for a good editorial."

"We could insult each other for two pages."

"We do anyway. No, I have decided that we will go through today's mail and comment upon it as we go."

"Hmm. Yeah. This is Saturday, November 14, 1970, and we are about two weeks behind schedule for this issue."

"We're always behind. What is the first item on the pile?"

"Three books from Ballantine. The Voter's Guide to Environmental Politics before, during and after the election, edited by Garrett De Bell. (02059, 95¢)"

"You know, Geis, I have mixed emotions about books like that. Good idea, worthy cause, and yet beyond a mention in SFR I can't see that we should use the space to review them."

"What about The User's Guide to the Protection of the Environment by Paul Swatek? (01993, \$1.25)"

"Same thoughts. And what if someone in Authority a few years from now decides SFR is expendable in order to save paper

and diminish pollution? Hah? What then? We've got to protect our little Establishment here, Geis! Throw the do-gooders in jail! Buncha pinko—"

"Stop it, Alter! Control your paranoid tendencies. As I do."

"Ha. Last time I tried to visit your side of the prefrontal I ran into a string of barbed synapses and colloidal mines. And you sitting in there with a double barrelled conditioned response."

"We are forgetting the mail."

"So what is the third Ballantine book?"

"Deryni Rising by Katherine Kurtz, one of the adult fantasy series. (01981, 95¢)"

"Didn't one of our reviewers want to review this one?"

"Seems to me...yes...but I can't recall who. Was it you, Joe Christopher?"

"Keep a record from now on, Geis. GET ORGANIZED!"

"I am organized; it's just that there are levels of organization...and I'm still in the lower depths."

"You always have been depraved."

"What—?"

"The mail! The mail!"

"We have here a nice, long "Beer Mutterings" column by Poul Anderson. He discusses the value of guilty indolence—"

"A field in which you are an expert, eh, Geis?"

"—then, the futility but perhaps necessity of trying to define sf, and a thought-provoking discussion of the Women's Liberation movement."

"When you going to use it, hah? SFR #42 is swollen to the point of bursting now that you've had to bump John Boardman's article—review "The Warlords of Krishna" to that issue from this."

"Poul's column will be in SFR 43. I have a very nice, new, heading for it designed by Jim Shull."

"Ahhh, I see a Tim Kirk full-pager has been uncovered. Hey...that's funny!"

"It is a suggested cover cartoon. He worked it up beautifully. It will be the SFR 42 cover."

"I see we have a letter of comment here from Alex Robb of Australia."

"Yes, he commented on the fact that I had been inadvertently sending him two copies of each issue."

"ORGANIZED, GEIS, GET ORGANIZED!"

"He very nicely sold the extra copies and sent the money to John Foyster, our agent."

"A Good Man, a Truefan all the way."

"Right. Next on the pile is a \$1. sample subscription."

"I was wondering when we'd get to the loot."

"And payment from Tarleton State College of Texas for their subscription...payment from COLLECTORS BOOK STORE of Hollywood for their 12 copies of #40...payment for the subscription of the Minneapolis Public Library...a quotable letter of comment from Cy Chauvin...a money order from John Foyster for \$22. for subscriptions and \$10. payment for an article I did for his college magazine ANCORA. The article was titled "The Rise and Fall of the Erotic Novel"...a letter from Henry P. Durkin of Walker and Co. about advertising for SFR...a change of address card from Stuart Carriker..."

"Where is he moving to?"



"Stuart is now at 6045 Allott Ave., Van Nuys, Ca. 91401."

"And Jim Ashe wanted you to mention his change of address, didn't he?"

"Yes, Jim is now at PO Box 651, Quincy, Mass. 02169."

"We cheated a bit there, since Jim's letter came in a month ago."

"Well, Alter, there isn't much mail left. Four requests for free sample copies from AMAZING readers."

"You and your ego, Geis! You would write that letter to Ted objecting to John Berry's review of SFR. You knew he'd publish it."

"Well, I certainly hoped so."

"And look—dozens of free copies going out. Our stock of #40 diminishing alarmingly..."

"Only about 45 copies so far."

"And ONLY three weeks gone, I tell you, Geis, if this goes on..."

"Look at it this way: it's an interesting experiment."

"So is going broke!"

"Urggm. Moving right along...we have a returned copy of #40. 'UNDELIVERABLE AS ADDRESSED' the post awful stamp say. So poor Ralph Ashbook didn't get his copy. The address looks okay to me...but I suppose I'll have to send him a first class letter asking questions, and see if he gets that!"

"The desk is now bare; is that all the mail?"

"What do you want, another day like last Monday?"

"Oh, yeah...eight subs from the L.A. County Library for some of its branches..."

"Alter, this hobby of ours...do you get the funny feeling that it has become something more?"

"Now that you mention it..."

"Still blank-minded, aren't you, Geis?"

"Embarrassingly, yes."

"You could review One Million Tomorrows by Bob Shaw, the Ace Special for next month."

"I'm not finished with it. But It's fine, really fine up to page 149."

"You sort of limit your reading to Ace Specials, Ballantine, Doubleday, and Walker, don't you, Geis?"

"No. There's Scribner's, Putnam's, Avon once in a while..."

"But you should read and review books from other publishers, too."

"I read the R.M. Williams book!"

"I am going to challenge you to read the following books in the next month and a half: Lord of Blood by Dave Van Arnem (Lancer 74688, 75¢); Nightmare Baby by Linda DuBreuil (Belmont 875-2058, 75¢); Barrier World by Louis Charbonneau (Lancer 74687, 75¢); Satan's World by Poul Anderson (Lancer 74698, 75¢); and Operating Manual for Spaceship Earth by R. Buckminster Fuller (Pocket Books 78046 \$1.25)."

"That last one isn't sf! It's more of that ecology stuff you say you hate."

"Exactly. I won't read it. Besides, you need discipline! YOU WILL READ IT!"

"Well...okay...if I can read John Brunner's Ace Special

when it arrives."

"Say 'May I?'"

"I won't. It's too humiliating."

"You will, Geis, or I'll tell the world what you do every Sunday night!"

"N-no...you wouldn't!"

"You go to—"

"I will! May I?"

"Of course. I just wanted to show who's boss here, Geis."

Alright, Alter-ego, if you're boss, answer me one question."

"Of course. (Light my ceegar. That's a nice lad.)"

"How you gonna fill the rest of this page?"

"Simple."

"I'm waiting...."

"How's this?"

\*GASP\* "Where

did you get this  
picture of us?"





# FIAWOL

By Norman Spinrad

FIAWOL! Fandom Is A Way Of Life! Perhaps two or three thousand people derive most of their egoboo from fandom. In this there will be an attempt to grok fannishness in fullness, among other things; fans in general, but fen in particular. All aspects of fandom will be touched on: Con fandom, Fanzine fandom (both sercon and faannish)), Subfandoms, BNFs and Neos alike. And perhaps brief asides on Dirty Old Pros, prozines, and even mundanes. Come along on a voyage to the land of faneds, fanzines (and sigh! yes, crudzines), trekkies, slans, fringe-fandoms, First Fandom, GOHs, Hugos, Pongs, Slan Shacks, Head Fandom, Square Fandom; you have nothing to lose but your ~~stiff~~ fuggheadedness. FIAWOL!

For those of you who have the feeling you've just fallen down the old Rabbit Hole, I suppose I'd better make some attempt to translate the above paragraph (which is written in fannish) into English:

FIAWOL is a slogan one sees on buttons pinned to the chests of fen (fannish plural of "fan") at Science Fiction Fan Conventions. It proclaims that the wearer is of the opinion that Fandom is a way of life—in contradiction to fen who wear FIOAGDH buttons and profess the opposite (minority)

belief that Fandom is only a God-damned hobby. Anyone who believes that Fandom is a way of life is considered a Truefan, and a Truefan does indeed derive most of his egoboo (self-esteem, pride, self-image, egotism—there's no exact translation) from his activities within the microcosm of Science Fiction Fandom. And there are at least three thousand Truefen scattered throughout the United States, and several thousand others in the rest of the world.

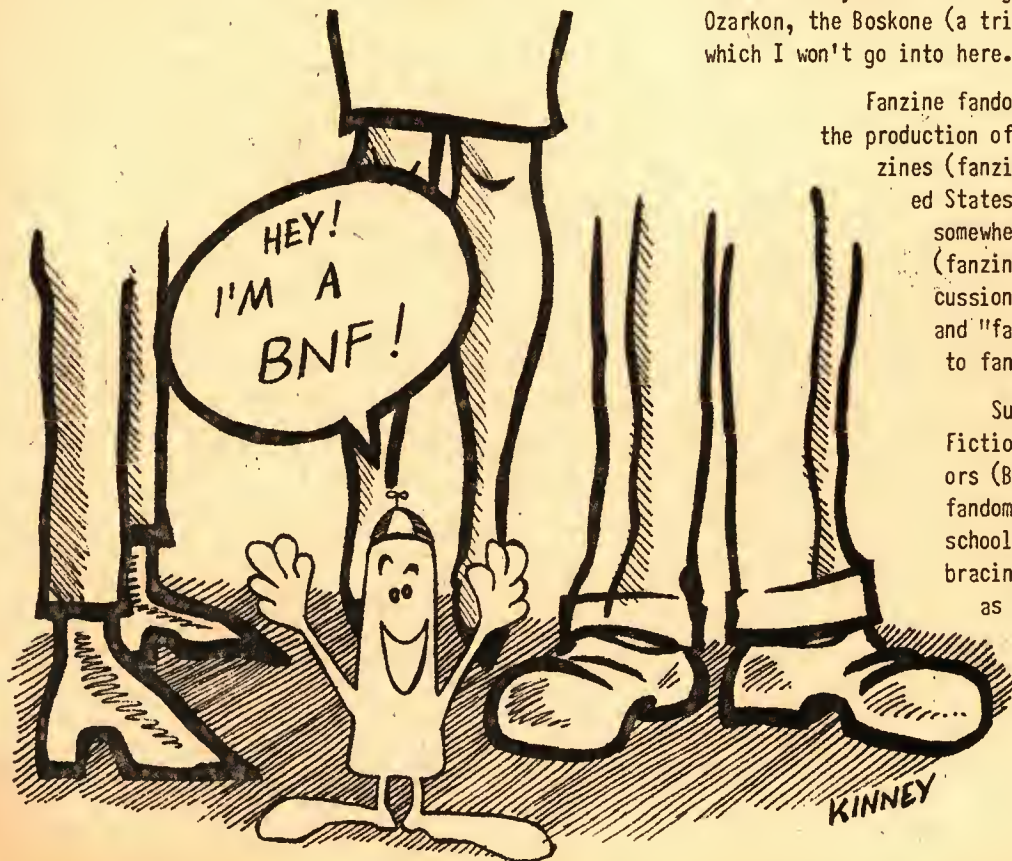
"This" is simply fannish for "this issue," and indeed in this issue of this magazine, there will be an attempt to get you to "grok fannishness in fullness," that is, to pick up on, dig, understand fully, comprehend, the phenomenon of Science Fiction Fandom—though I make no promises that you will derive any of the cosmic powers that accrue to "grokers in fullness" in Robert A. Heinlein's novel Stranger in a Strange Land, from whence the term comes.

"Confandom" is Convention Fandom. Each year Science Fiction Fandom throws a World Convention in a different city, as well as any number of local conventions—the Lunacon (thrown by the New York based Lunarian fan club), the Westercon (West Coast Convention), the Eastercon (East Coast Convention), the MidwestCon (you should be groking a little fannish by now), the Ozarkon, the Boskone (a triple pun for the Boston Convention which I won't go into here.)

Fanzine fandom consists of those fen involved in the production of the hundreds of amateur fan magazines (fanzines) published annually in the United States. Fanzines are generally placed somewhere in the spectrum between "sercon" (fanzines devoted entirely to serious discussion of science fiction as literature) and "faannish" (fanzines devoted entirely to fannish gossip and social doings.).

Subfandoms are clans within Science Fiction fandom devoted to particular authors (Burroughs—Edgar Rice, that is—fandom, Tolkien fandom), or to particular schools of writing within SIF (a term embracing science fiction and fantasy), such as Sword and Sorcery fandom.

BNFs are Big Name Fans—it is possible to become famous within Fandom as a fan. BNFs





are treated at Conventions to veritable banquets of egoboo. Neos, on the other hand, are Neophyte fans, beginners, innocents, the bottom fen on the fannish totem pole.

Dirty Old Pros are professional science fiction writers such as yours truly, with whom fen have a strange love-hate relationship. Prozines are the professional science fiction magazines which publish the work of Dirty Old Pros. Mundanes are everyone else—everyone beyond the pale of fandom or prodom, the poor benighted billions doomed to a twilight existence in the "mundane" world outside Science Fiction Fandom.

Faneds are of course fanzine editors; crudzines are, naturally, bad fanzines filled with crud. Trekkies are members of the largest subfandom—addicts of the TV show STAR TREK. Slans are fans who believe that fen are a Chosen People, ubermenschen, possessed of Secret Powers, like the supermen of A. E. Van Vogt's classic science fiction novel Slan. Fringe-fandoms are fans devoted to art forms (such as comic books and spy novels) which seem to have nothing to do with science fiction, but who somehow are part of the social phenomenon of Fandom.

First Fandom is the inner circle of ancient fans who started the whole thing back in the 1920s and 1930s. GOHs are Guests of Honor at Conventions—usually there is a Fan GOH as well as a Pro GOH. Hugos are rocketship-shaped trophies given out at Worldcons to professional writers as well as fans for writing, artwork and publishing and are named for Hugo Gernsbach (I mean, imagine calling the things Gernsbach!), who brought out the first science fiction magazine in 1926. Pongs were an abortive attempt to distinguish fan awards from pro awards and derived from Hoy Ping Pong, fannish pseudonym of Bob Tucker, a still-active BNF of the Golden Age (circa 1930), who has still to gafiate (leave active fannish circles).

Slan Shacks are fan communes, upwards of a dozen fen sharing the same pad—fans had Slan Shacks before hippies were even a gleam in Timothy Leary's eye. Head Fandom versus Square Fandom (more or less the current situation) denotes a schism

within Fandom on the question of Should Fans Turn On? Drugs are becoming an integral part of the life-style of many True-fen. This makes many other Truefen uptight.

This ~~typ~~ typographical trick is a fannish way of creating a Freudian slip on purpose and leaving it in print as an ironic comment.

And fuggheadedness is the state of mind of any jerk (Fugg-head) who still doesn't understand that Fandom Is A Way of Life after I've gone through all this effort trying to explain it!

A word on the fan phenomenon in general. Fen, after all, are not the only fans; there are baseball fans, football fans, basketball fans and all-around sports fans. Sports fans and science fiction fans share one characteristic in common—they are both devotees of narrow (in the overall world-picture) areas of human esthetic experience, the viewing of sports events in the case of sports fans, the reading of science fiction (and lately the viewing of science fiction movies and television shows) in the case of Science Fiction fen. Both sports fans and fen, moreover, have a secondary hobby as a result of the fervor of their devotion to their respective slices of human experience: the "buff" bit.

The sports buff can casually tell you without recourse to the record book that Babe Ruth hit 714 lifetime home runs, that Sonny Liston twice kayoed Floyd Robinson in the first round, that Stirling Moss was considered by his peers the greatest racing driver extant though he never won the World's Driving Championship. The science fiction buff is intimately acquainted with such facts as: L. Ron Hubbard (yes, that L. Ron Hubbard) wrote Slaves of Sleep; Murray Leinster (still active at this writing) had a story in the first issue of the first science fiction magazine; the magazine was called AMAZING STORIES; it was first published in 1926; "Murray Leinster" is a pseudonym of Will F. Jenkins.

The buff fills his mind with the history, statistics, dates and icons of his hobby. The Science Fiction Fan, like the hard-core sports fan, is also a buff, devoted both to the reading of science fiction and to the accumulation of expertise in the history and small talk of the subject.

However, the sports fan is devoted to the live sports event, an experience which cannot be duplicated, cannot be stored, cannot be experienced over and over again at will; whereas the science fiction fan has ready access to his chosen esthetic experience in the form of books and science fiction magazines. Which can be collected. The science fiction fan is a science fiction reader, a science fiction buff, and a science fiction collector. Already he is inhabiting a plane of fan existence more involving than that of the sports fan.

But Fandom goes beyond that. Rock fans, like science fiction fans, are devoted to an esthetic experience, rock music, that can be stored in the form of records and can be collected in the same way that a science fiction fan collects books. They can share the experience in the form of rock concerts, parties at which rock music is played and danced to, or just a couple cats sitting around listening to records. Science fic-





tion, unlike Rock, cannot be a group experience.

But because science fiction, like Rock, has form and content and because most science fiction readers will have read a lot of the same books and magazines (unlike sports fans, at least prior to television, who could not assume that any other fan they met had seen most of the same sporting events they had), science fiction can be a common, if not a group, experience.

One can correspond with other science fiction fans about one's favorite subject; and someone gets the obvious idea that he could publish a mimeographed magazine filled with this correspondence, along with reviews of books and magazine stories—and the fanzine is born.

One can get together in person with other science fiction fans in the area and shoot the breeze about Science Fiction; these friends brought together by science fiction start to feel clubby—and the Science Fiction Club is born.

Clubs spring up independently in cities around the country, fanzines circulate and now they contain not only news of science fiction and literary comment, but news of the doings of Science Fiction Fan Clubs. Clubs become aware of other Clubs. Clubs publish fanzines about the doings of their members (fannish fanzines evolving out of sercon), and Fannish Personalities, Big Name Fans, arise in the evolving microcosm. And finally someone gets the idea to have a Science Fiction Convention, an annual meeting of the tribes (just like the national meetings of Moose or Elk or the KKK). And all these Science Fiction fans get together in some hotel for a long weekend to swap science fiction talk, fannish talk, books, fanzines, magazines, artwork and wives—and Fandom is born.

Which explains the how of a phenomenon like Fandom. But which comes nowhere near explaining the why.

Why Science Fiction Fandom? There is no parallel Mystery Fandom, Western Fandom, Spy Fandom, Confession Fandom or Serious Literature Fandom. In fact, no other literature in the history of mankind has been the pivotal object of affection for a social phenomenon like Fandom. Why Science Fiction? What is it that makes Science Fiction unique in all literature?

Despite tortured attempts to trace Science Fiction back to Plato (and to the Stone Age if possible) by self-conscious apologists for the genre, the modern science fiction genre originated in 1926 when Hugo Gernsbach published the first issue of AMAZING STORIES, the first magazine devoted entirely to what he then called "scientifiction"—scientific speculation sugar-coated and popularized by a framework of adventure fiction. Gernsbach's original intent was to popularize science through the medium of adventure fiction. But, decades before McLuhan, the medium quickly became the message, and the science in scientifiction became merely the means for retion- alizing a new form of popular adventure fiction: the tale of



high adventure set in a wondrous (and/or fearful) imaginary future, frequently on another planet.

The important point is that virtually all early science fiction was written by commercial writers (pejoratively called hacks) at 1¢ to 3¢ a word for pulp adventure magazines. Many of the writers whose work filled the science fiction magazines were also regular contributors to the mystery, western, and straight-adventure pulps of the day. Science fiction began as just another branch of the pulp literature that catered to adolescents—what parents of the day meant when they referred to "cheap junk," "lurid pulps" and "escape literature."

Though early science fiction was, by and large, written by commercial hacks as escape literature, though the science fiction genre (in those days chiefly the science fiction magazines) was, for the most part, pulp drivel, science fiction as a literary form, happened to be one of the most potent inventions of literary history.

Science fiction as a literary device opens the finite literary spectrum of the was and is into the literally infinite literary realm of the could be. The subject matter of science fiction is anything that could ever be possible—even the grossly improbable. In this respect it is only a branch of mankind's oldest literature, fantasy—the literature of everything that does not exist at the moment of its writing, the impossible, as the possible.

However, what Gernsbach inadvertantly invented was the notion of a new kind of fantasy, in which all fantastic (unreal) elements were rationalized into the realm of the possible by the application of speculative science, by reasoning from scientifically valid premises (or at least premises



that the writer could convince the reader were valid), and producing the esthetic phenomenon that came to be known as "suspension of disbelief."

Suspension of disbelief is a state of mind that you must take to the reading of fantasy: you know damn well that there are no such things as vampires when you read Dracula, but for the duration of the story you "suspend your disbelief" in order to enjoy the impossible fantasy world of the tale. Science Fiction, however, does not demand suspension of disbelief; if well done, it produces suspension of disbelief.

Science fiction, unlike all other literary forms including fantasy, has evolved a whole spectrum of literary devices for the creation of suspension of disbelief, for convincing the reader that the impossible is possible, for transferring his mind from everyday reality into a fantasy world, a possible future, an alternate reality. In this sense, it acts like a psychedelic drug, LSD, for instance, does not require suspension of disbelief in ordinary reality; it transfers the mind by bio-chemical reaction (instead of literary technique) into an alternate reality.

Science fiction, then, has the capacity to transport the reasonably receptive reader into an infinite number of altered realities, exactly as if it were an infinite spectrum of psychedelic drugs. It is a genuine consciousness-expanding experience.

Buddhism, Rock Culture, Hippiedom, Fandom—all ways of life generated by a shared consciousness-altering experience.

The social and psychological underpinnings of Science Fiction fandom, then, are similar to the underpinnings of all the instant non-theological synthetic religions-cum-ways of life that festoon modern America: the Drug Culture, Scientology (invented by science fiction writer L. Ron Hubbard), Synanon, Surfing, all of them.

With, of course, some interesting differences.

Who is a Science Fiction Fan? Who would be drawn to an experience like the reading of science fiction? Probably more people than not, perhaps even most people of at least average intelligence. Contrary to what the term "science fiction" leads most people to believe, the reading of science fiction requires absolutely no scientific education, or even any particular interest in science for its own sake. By the 1930s, science fiction was a popular pulp literature written at word-age rates by commercial writers who were well aware that they were writing for an audience of more or less average adolescents, whose primary reason for reading the stuff was the esthetic pleasure of being transported into new and exciting alternate realities, rather than the scientific rationale which was used to get them there. The science in science fiction, then, and even now, was but a literary technique designed to aid in the suspension of disbelief, and could be readily understood by the average fourteen-year-old.

Moreover, who wouldn't enjoy the experience of being transported for a while into an exciting alternate reality? Anyone who enjoys taking drugs, watching television, looking at

pictures of beautiful women, getting drunk, going to a masquerade, James Bond movies, Westerns, or Grand Opera would probably enjoy reading science fiction.

Why then do so few people read science fiction? Why is science fiction generally regarded by serious literary critics and academicians as puerile drivel? Why have the mass media generally treated science fiction as some kind of grotesque joke?

It is true that the literary quality of early science fiction was abysmal, but modern science fiction is something else again, and now there are writers of science fiction such as Philip K. Dick, Thomas M. Disch, J.G. Ballard, Harlan Ellison and Phillip Jose Farmer, who can more than hold their own in any literary company. Why then is science fiction still considered a kind of literary Dogpatch?

The answer is, in a word, Fandom.

Virtually anyone can enjoy the reading of science fiction. But it takes a very special kind of human being to become deeply involved in something like Science Fiction Fandom.

Let's look at the evolution of a typical science fiction Fan. He starts, of course, by reading science fiction. He finds the experience of being transported into an exciting series of alternate realities more stimulating and absorbing than any other esthetic experience; he has what fans call a "Sense of wonder." Had he happened on heroin first, he might've become a junkie. At any rate, like a junkie, he starts taking larger and larger doses of science fiction, until he is reading the stuff almost exclusively. He finds himself addicted to a form of literature that the world in general considers "trash." Therefore, he must either conclude that he has rotten taste, or that he is in on a Big Secret—there is far more to Science Fiction than the world thinks! Human nature being what it is, the evolving fan convinces himself, quite rightly, that the world is wrong about Science Fiction, while a small center of doubt eats at his soul—can 150 million people really be wrong?

Then he has a letter to the editor published in a science fiction magazine and starts getting fanzines in the mail, or happens to meet a fan, or a Science Fiction Convention is held in his area and he attends it out of curiosity—and he comes in contact with Science Fiction Fandom.

By God, here are people who are just like him! Like him, they are in on The Secret. Like him, they have their secret doubts, fostered by the world's scorn, but they have banded together to create their own alternate reality, an international community of True Believers, a microcosm in which the reading of science fiction is the highest wisdom.

Remember, our potential fan is addicted to experiencing alternate realities for openers; here is Fandom, an alternate reality one can live in, permanently!

He soon discovers that Fandom is indeed A Way Of Life, a complete world unto itself. Fans speak their own dialect. They form, through the medium of fanzines and conventions, a national, even an international, community. And here is a

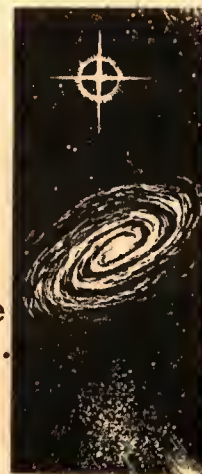


# Astronomical Art Color Slides



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A second catalog, somewhat larger, is planned for sometime in December or January, also 50¢. Morris Dollens, 4372 Coolidge Ave., Los Angeles, Ca. 90066. EX 8-9097.



world in which he may rise to the high status of a BNF; here the reading of science fiction is not a source of secret shame but the key to limitless supplies of egoboo. Good Lord, he can even meet girls who think the way he does!

In fact, his entire life can be contained by Science Fiction Fandom; he need never brave the Hostile World out there. From a speech before a Science Fiction Convention by a successful Big Name Fan and publishing executive:

"For me, there can't be any question that (science fiction has) been a way of life...I met my basic circle of friends. I learned to differentiate character and to contest egos—as well as the fine fannish art of acquiring that mysterious substance known as egoboo. I developed...my world views and my social attitude—through fan activities. Through science fiction fandom, I met the girl who became my wife, and through the same channels I found my life's profession and mastered it. I have risen comfortably into the world of general publishing, it is still science fiction which is the keystone of my career.

"I have even raised a daughter who shows all the signs of being an active fan—and if that doesn't prove that fandom is not only a way of life, but an inheritable one, I don't know what does."

Remember, this man is one of the most important figures in science fiction publishing, and his attitude and method of entry into the publishing world is far from unusual. Fandom is a way of life, and this way of life has an overpowering influence on the writing and particularly the publishing of modern science fiction. To the Science Fiction Fan, science fiction is not merely a literary form, but the expression and key element of his entire way of life. The average Science Fiction Fan wants to "keep science fiction fannish."

Consider the early hack writers of science fiction, men banging out science fiction for a buck. Sooner or later, they discovered Science Fiction Fandom. They discovered that there was a tight-knit national community of several thousand people who took their work quite seriously. They discovered that they were Literary Lions at Science Fiction Conventions. They discovered that there was a whole microcosm, a complete alternate reality, in which they were not lowly hacks, but the Lords of Creation.

In the world at large, they were nobodies; in the world of Fandom they were VIPs. Naturally, most of them, consciously, or unconsciously began writing for Fandom. For, though Fandom formed only a tiny percentage of the science fiction readership, it was the visible part of the iceberg, and most important, had the power to ladle out vast portions of egoboo.







## Astronomical Art Greeting Cards



A line of 10 different designs adapted from my paintings printed in shades of blue, mostly french-fold, some in a triple-fold and suitable for holidays or anytime. Fully illustrated in a brochure-sheet for 10¢ to cover postage. A sample card will be sent for an extra 15¢, which is the price of the cards, with a discount in larger quantities. Some originals were nature photographs, and one card is printed direct from linoleum blocks, but most are lithographed from astronomical paintings. Morris Scott Dollens, 4372 Coolidge Ave., Los Angeles California 90066. Phone (213) EXmont 8-9097.

## Paintings for sale ----

A selection of 12 different original paintings in Casein on 1/8" Masonite are shown on a black and white photo-page, with a description of their colors, for 25¢. Those that look interesting can be seen in full color by ordering color slides for previewing, and these can be returned for credit if desired when ordering paintings. The paintings can be seen in person at the artist's home by appointment by calling the number listed above. Almost 700 of these paintings have been bought by science fiction fans in the past 20 years, mostly at the conventions. The size of the works measures 16 x 20", although some may be available in larger sizes; the prices vary from \$20 to \$40, with occasional paintings available at \$15 and up to \$50.

## Science Fiction Radio Plays

Radio at its science-fictional best, from 1950 to 1960, in the stories dramatized on Dimension - X and X Minus One programs, some of the old classics like UNIVERSE, NIGHTFALL, WITH FOLDED HANDS, etc., along with a couple dozen by Ray Bradbury, and from other times, Orson Welles, Arch Obler's sf and fantasies, Buck Rogers, and many more, available for trade or custom copying; a catalog listing over 200 of these is 50¢. And you don't get any commercials, either!

## ARTS and INFINITY A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE

The long-awaited magazine displaying my own art work in a different format has been delayed for over a year, due to having made almost 200 paintings to sell at conventions, reviving the color slide business, and just getting organized. All of the material for the first issue is ready to print, and much of the next two issues is ready -- there is a possibility the first issue will be out before the New Year, and then quarterly issues will be practical. Planned for a 64 page plus cover 7x10" size, it will sell for \$1.00 a copy, subscriptions 4 issues \$4.00. An actual size brochure, 12 pages, is ready now at 10¢.

MORRIS SCOTT DOLLENS 4372 Coolidge Ave.,  
Los Angeles, California 90066. (213) EXmont 8-9097







And succeeding generations of science fiction writers came largely from the ranks of science fiction Fandom. Because the writers and Fans came into such intimate (frequently literally intimate) contact

at conventions, "fannishness" came to envelope the writers as well as the fans. Though Fans were far from a cross-section of the science fiction readership, they were the readers that the writers came in contact with (and a majority of the writers were "fannish" to begin with by the 1950s) and so science fiction came to be written to please the taste of the hypothetical typical Fan, much as television is produced to please the hypothetical typical Nielsen family.

As this process accelerated, science fiction as a literature became more and more inbred. Since science fiction was being written to please fannish tastes, it became difficult for the non-Fan to comprehend the tastes of what to the superficial observer appeared to be the typical science fiction reader. As a result, Fans became the logical choices to fill the editorships of the science fiction magazines, to oversee the science fiction lines of general book publishers, to found science fiction publishing houses of their own. A similar phenomenon occurred in the popular music industry when Rock became a way of life—the economic powers that be had to turn to the artists and the audience itself to find men capable of understanding the tastes of the customers.

What happens to a literature when the fans—the audience, and not the creative artists—come not to merely pass judgment on the literary product, but to largely control its publication and direction?

The literature acquires an ideology—in the case of science fiction, the Fannish Way of Life. Because the typical Fan reads science fiction in order to live vicariously in alternate realities, it becomes important that those alternate realities, the stories and novels, be ones in which the Fan gets the maximum dose of egoboo.

Thus the lead character, the hero, in a science fiction story, must be just that—a hero. Physically powerful, intellectually gifted, morally pure, emotionally certain. After all, it is by merging with this hero, that the Fan gains access to the alternate reality of the story. Who has never dreamed of being Superman?

And because the Fan merges with the hero for the duration of the tale, the story must end happily, the hero must triumph

totally in the end—who wants to merge with a loser?

And because the hero must triumph totally, the villain must be totally evil, must be devoid of humanity or sympathy—else the reader may feel guilt at his destruction by the hero. Who wants vicarious guilt?

And because the science fiction Fan has become a Fan because he wants to inhabit alternate realities (because he lives in the alternate reality of Fandom), the more unreal and divorced from "mundane" reality the tale, the better he likes it. As the previously quoted BNF and science fiction publishing executive observed in the same speech:

"It's escape literature...It's the road away from the humdrum world of cold reality... Good will triumph, the wondrous vision will be justified... We all know the world is a frightening place. That's why we read escape literature."

This is why the literary critics and academicians consider science fiction drivel. This is why so few people read a literature with such a limitless potential. This is why the mass media treat science fiction as a grotesque joke.

For fannish science fiction is, for the most part, drivel. It is written to satisfy a very good formula for the production of drivel—an all-good, all-powerful hero utterly defeats a totally evil, totally unsympathetic villain, in a setting that is designed to have as little contact with mundane reality as possible.

Thus the tragedy of science fiction as a literary form. Because the potent literary invention of science fiction has been swallowed up by science fiction Fandom, what is potentially the most exciting and meaningful modern literary form whose subject matter should and could be anything that could ever be, has been perverted into becoming merely the means by which a small subculture, Science Fiction Fandom, increases its alienation from the world around it.

But it is a tribute to the vitality of science fiction as a literary form that for every Fan who reads science fiction, there are a hundred science fiction readers who are not Fans. They read science fiction, poor thing that it has become, because it is, despite all, inherently the most exciting literary form extant.

And in the past half-decade, there have been strong signs that science fiction (and Fandom as well), like the times, has been changing.

Currently sweeping through the little world of Science Fiction Fandom is a reaction against a literary phenomenon within science fiction, that has become known as the "New Wave;" a reaction that can only be described as hysterical, perhaps even genuinely paranoid. Science fiction writers who have been labelled "New Wave" are regularly attacked in fanzines, in speeches before Science Fiction Conventions, and even in the pages of professional science fiction magazines as, among other things, degenerates, cynics, suckers at the teats of mainstream egoboo, destroyers of science fiction, decadent, nauseous, perverts, dope-fiends, New Left-



ists, anarchists, bitter, anti-idealists, and polluters of Fandom's vital bodily fluids.

So what is this New Wave that has caused Fandom's "Old Things" (as they have been dubbed by the minority proponents of the New Wave within science fiction) to froth at the mouth like hydrophobic Klansmen?

For a variety of reasons, a whole new generation of young writers has turned to science fiction, not as a genre in which they can make a buck while sucking up the old fannish egoboo, but as a literary form, as the literary form best suited to capturing the spirit and possible direction of a society in rapid change, perhaps on the doorstep of revolution.

To these science fiction writers, science fiction is a literary device to enable them to deal with the subject matter they feel compelled to deal with the maximum freedom possible. That and nothing more.

In short, they have proclaimed, openly or implicitly, that to their art, Fandom is irrelevant.

No wonder the microcosm of Science Fiction Fandom is uptight! It is the very foundation of Science Fiction Fandom, which in the view of the Truefan, is being threatened—FIAWOL itself! To the so-called "New Wave" writers, Fandom is not a way of life, but merely a sometimes-interesting, sometimes-boring, sometimes-perceptive, sometimes-insensitive collection of one segment of the audience reached by their stories and books. That, and nothing more. These new writers consider themselves serious artists and have no intention of tailoring their products to the tastes of Fandom or any other small, vocal minority, or for that matter, to the tastes of any large, vocal minority.

In the world at large, there is nothing "New" about this at all—it is merely the traditional stance of the serious writer. Why then in Fandom does it raise cries of revolution and mutiny?

Perhaps, ironically, Fandom has succeeded in becoming a genuine microcosm in a different sense than was intended: a mirror of the forces at work in the society around it.

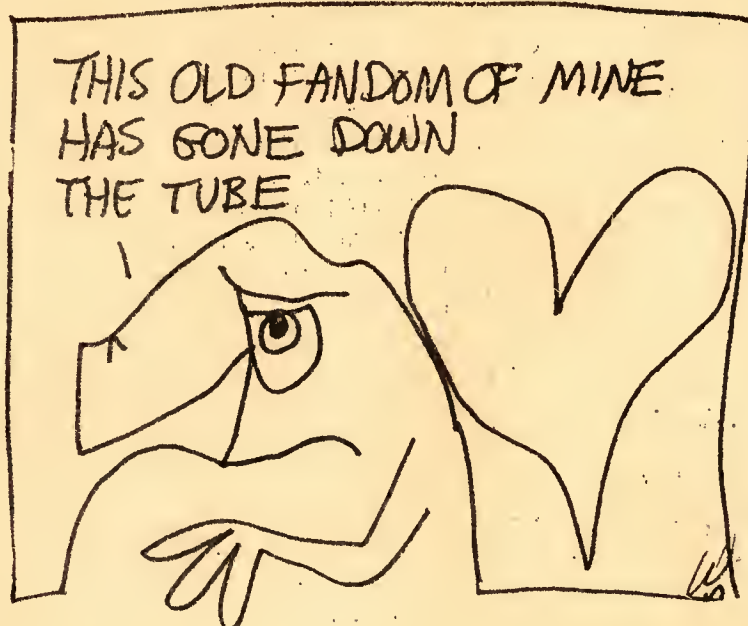
Consider. Here we have the Establishment (the Old Things, Big Name Fans of the Golden Age), largely in control of the Power Structure (the science fiction magazines and publishing houses), and uptight about the Young Turks (the "New Wave") who want to change the order of things. The Science Fiction Establishment reacts hysterically against the Young Writers because it believes that the New Wave seeks to overthrow its established ways, customs, and prerogative, and to replace fannishness with some alien ideology of its own; to, in short, replace the current Establishment with its own Eastablishment. When actually what the so-called "New Wave" writers are rebelling against is the very notion of any Establishment, of any small, vocal, powerful group controlling the media of expression and the contents of literature. Sounds familiar, doesn't it?

The ideology of FIAWOL, like the ideology that has been called White American Way of Life, is under attack because both of them are attempts to maintain artificial "official" realities, to "keep programmed." As the attempts to maintain the old status quo in American Society are in violation of the very principles upon which America was founded—namely the notion that every American should have maximum freedom to choose his own life style—so too the reaction against writers trying to expand the horizons of science fiction is in direct violation of that which makes science fiction science fiction: the premise that science fiction is a literature that deals with any reality that could ever be possible.

And perhaps there is a hopeful lesson for American society to learn from a new thing that has started to happen within Science Fiction and Science Fiction Fandom. In the past few years, a different kind of young fan has become active in Fandom—a young fan who rejects FIAWOL, a young fan to whom science fiction is only a small but important facet of his total world. Young fans who have begun to understand that diversity is the key to a healthy science fiction. Young fans who accept the best of the new without rejecting the best of the old. Further, a countercurrent against the hysteria shows signs of beginning in traditional FIAWOL Fandom, a realization that the old and the new can exist side by side and benefit from each other, provided that neither attempts to impose its will on the other.

Fandom can continue to be a way of life for those who feel comfortable with their roots firmly established in tradition. For others it can be only a god-damned hobby. Science Fiction Fandom shows signs of accepting the fact that a diverse microcosm is a healthier, more interesting microcosm, a more exciting reality in which to live. Science fiction as a literature has had a fair record of predicting the future. Might there not be a lesson for the future of American Society in the history and evolution of Science Fiction Fandom?

We have nothing to lose but our fuggheadedness.





A Column By **Ted White**

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 EDITOR'S NOTE: Ted White has the regrettable habit of occasionally writing long letters of comment and then failing to mail them. His column this issue is made up of parts of two such letters, with his permission.  
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It seems to me I had a comment on Chip's learned thesis last issue. ((*"About Five Thousand Seven Hundred and Fifty Words"* by Samuel R. (Chip) Delany...SFR #33)) As I recall, wasn't he trying to prove the impossibility of separating "style" from "content" or somesuch thing? And did he not also, in the course of his weighty arguments, say something about the havoc he could wreak upon Zelazny's *"Doors of His Face..."* if allowed to substitute synonyms in each sentence? Is this not an alteration of style without the alteration of content? Does it not axe his entire thesis a mite? Well, don't ask me; I only write the stuff.

Bob Toomey's interview with Moorcock ((SFR #34)) has a breathless quality to it, as if Bob just couldn't keep from falling over his own enthusiasm for Moorcock & His Works. Which is all right—ghod knows the man deserves equal time, and makes good sense for himself in the interview proper—but I don't think the ecstatic introductions help much. And I damned well bridled at the statement that *NEW WORLD's* "graphics are superb." I once devoted an article (totally misread by Moorcock) in *ODD* to the subject of *NW's* graphics, and since then they've gotten much worse.

Let's look at it sensibly. Moorcock says he wants to "reach the public" with his magazine of contemporaneous fiction. *NEW WORLDS* has a circulation of 6,000 (or so I am told by Toomey). This is a drop from the

8,000 of a couple years ago, and a greater drop (by 50% or more) from the circulation of the *Carnell NW*. And this in a country where, Toomey tells us, more books are sold than are in all the U.S. (I doubt that statement a little; if it's true, why are British advances so much lower than those from American publishers...hmmm?)

Clearly Moorcock is not reaching his audience—unless his audience consists of 6,000 or so, in a country where an "underground" paper can sell 60,000 copies... There are two possible explanations, which can be taken singly or in combination: 1) *NEW WORLDS* is so packaged that its potentially enthusiastic readership is either unaware of it or put off by it; and/or 2) The actual content of *NEW WORLDS* is off-putting or sub-standard to the expectations of the audience Moorcock seeks.

I favor the 'combination' theory... This weekend I thumbed through copies of both a recent *NEW WORLDS* and something called *GOVERNOR REAGAN*, which struck me as the ultimate apotheosis of *NW*. Both had an amateur, scrubby look—the latter title the more honestly, since its interiors were mimeographed—both exuded pretentiousness and literary snobbishness, and both had the aura of the *Little Magazine*. Glancing through the *NEW WORLDS* I saw no fiction which had anything pretending to narrative; most of the items were short terse paragraphs, written in a repellent exterior style (it is much easier to write, of course) and headed with sub-headlines, in pseudo journalese. The *REAGAN* magazine made it clear to me: there most of the contents was poetry, but of the chunks-of-prose-in-solid-blocks style. The contributors seemed to overlap considerably, the art(?) was similar, and taken on the whole, I thought *REAGAN* was more honest in appearance and more attractive. But what really scored home was the similarity of the "poetry" in the one publication and the "prose" in the other. They were so similar as to be identical (allowing for individual variations, of course).

It was then that I realized that *NEW WORLDS* is not only not a "science fiction" magazine; it is not a "fiction" magazine either. It is an arty (or would-be arty) little magazine of experimental word-assemblages. As such, it has no appeal to me, since I read fiction and write fiction, and have a distressing (to me) tin ear for most poetry. My hostility towards the "stories" in *NEW WORLDS* has been the



product of my mistaken belief that they were indeed attempts at stories. I have standards for the stories I read (as well as those I write), and these word-assemblages don't meet most of my standards.

Perhaps there is a large audience—or, at any rate, an audience of some proportions—for experimental word-assemblages. There probably is. But NEW WORLDS isn't packaged for these people (whose standards in graphics are probably much more sophisticated), and I have no idea what they would think of it if they read it. Oh well.

In the interview proper, Moorcock remarks on the need to let writers (I'm paraphrasing) Do Their Own Thing. I'm sure this ambition was born out of Moorcock's own frustrations as a writer, with which I can empathize, but I think it is high time Mike realized that most of the writers he is "encouraging" do not share his background of years' toil in the pulp vineyards. And just maybe what works for Moorcock is not a Universal Solution for other writers' problems.

I say this after having listened to the fatuous twittings of one such protege of Moorcock's (no names; he has real talent if Moorcock hasn't encouraged him to totally squander it) who assured me that he intended to totally separate "plot from story;" plot, he said, was an irrelevancy. "I intend to make my story resolutions absolutely irrelevant to the plots," he stated, grandiosely. Clearly, this individual hasn't the foggiest notion of what a plot is, nor what writing fiction is actually about. And he has been encouraged to Do His Own Thing, in perfect, blissful ignorance, by Moorcock. To hell with conventions, eh, Mike?

We're witnessing one of the most unpleasant revolutions the world of arts has ever undergone: the triumph of container over content: the emergence of the package. Andy Warhol symbolizes it rather well: he took the package design from the soap pad and sold it as an artwork. Throw out the soap and keep the package—but further, steal someone else's design and sell it as your art! Recently it was revealed that a girl had been doing all his "art" for the last two years—but no one cared. He recently published his first "book"—and it was the unedited transcription of a tape he "made" by carrying a recorder around with him for a day (or some-such). Warhol's final triumph was to send a standin of himself on the university lecture circuit.

Closer to home, Paul Williams is doing the same thing. When he began CRAWDADDY! I think he had in mind a modest rock-journal for the emerging music. But somewhere along the line he must have decided that there was nothing else in the world as important as Paul Williams, and his reviews of records shifted their emphasis from the music on the records to Paul Williams's subjective reactions to the records (which were largely irrelevant to the music). The next step was to declare that reviews, as such, were meaningless, and to concentrate solely upon Paul Williams, which he has done ever since in all his writings. "Paul Williams" becomes a packaged product, which Paul Williams is selling. Because he's glib and intelligent and an excellent liar, he

has sold himself on a number of occasions to a number of people. In most cases he has left them with a sour taste and nothing worthwhile to remember him by. He sold New American Library on the first book on rock, back when he was the first name in rock criticism. He spoke about the book for months, and then years, and Signet waited, but the book never appeared, was never written. In the meantime, other books were written and published. Paul left NAL holding the bag.

But that's in the past, of course. Paul did produce a book—for a lesser publisher—his Outlaw Blues. He produced in the way most non-books are produced: a raw cobbling together of previously published pieces. They include (as the best item, in fact) a long transcription of a taped interview with David Anderle about Brian Wilson. That qualifies as a non-written work as well, you see.

At the St. Louiscon, toward the end of what had been advertised as a debate between Larry Niven and Alexei Panshin (which turned out to be polite almost to the point of dullness), Paul Williams, in the guise of making a question from the floor, mounted the platform and spoke for better than twenty minutes. His topic: How Paul Williams Relates to SF, and How SF Could Better Relate to Paul Williams. His vehicle for this boring monologue was the electrifying news that he was starting up a new sf magazine, and had big money carte-blanche standing behind him. He then went on to detail exactly what sort of sf he'd buy, and the job sf ought to be doing that it wasn't, etc.

It was all bullshit. He has no magazine and no plans for one, as he admitted privately later. Paul Williams was selling Paul Williams again. That he had to tell out-and-outlies to do it was irrelevant. The content of what he had to say was not important. It was the package: Paul Williams.

Every time a no-talent like Yoko Ono records an assemblage of sounds and sells it to us as a record (through the guise of John Lennon's proximity), an Andy Warhol turns a photo into a silk-screen print without his personal proximity, or a Moorcock puts together a collection of self-indulgent experiments by writers without visible talent (or encourages the talented ones to give up their disciplines), we lose something. We lose our standards.

So big deal, and who cares...right? I mean, what's so great about Standards? Who needs 'em?

Just us.

The cry of these New Wavers of the Arts is Do Your Own Thing. If you can dig it, fine. If you can't, fine. It doesn't matter. All is subjective. Standards are bullshit. Let it happen. Etc.

Well, standards are the rules by which we define objective awareness. Objective awareness is that which is shared and understood (to a greater or lesser extent) by two or more people. Standards are the rules by which they agree on an objective fact. Language, by its nature, must have these rules if it is to be effective. Communication depends on our mutually agreeing to the meaning of a word. If we each choose subjective interpretations to the exclusion of agreement, why pibble de sem-



pot ab semptum. Right?

Art is not chance. It is not a Happening. It is not a random collection of random factors. Because art is non-verbal—even in literature—some people have jumped to the assumption that art must be subjective. From there it is an easy move to the notion that art does not require an artist, but only an experiencing audience. The notion is wrong, of course. Because an randomized happening produces random reactions from its audience. A work of art (even a relatively mediocre one) is aimed, by the artist, towards the evocation of a common reaction from the audience. When the audience brings more to a work than the creator put into it, it ceases to be his work of art, and, indeed, to be a work of art. (I'm reminded of the recent note on what happened when a Yoko Ono record was sent to reviewers in England. Because the actual recording was not yet pressed, test-pressings were sent out. These are single-sided, and required two discs instead of one, to present both sides of the intended record. The reviewer for THE MELODY MAKER reviewed all four sides in blissful ignorance, going so far as to find compositional merit in the two blank sides, which he imputed to Yoko Ono. The reviewer was an ass, of course, but obviously deathly afraid to admit that the Emperor's Wife had no clothes on.)

Inasmuch as all this hype and bullshit enters our field, we will suffer for it. To an extent we already have. Harlan Ellison doesn't sell stories and books—he sells Harlan Ellison. As a result, his stories and books don't win awards either—Harlan Ellison does. This is a shame, because if Harlan was a hermit living in the mountains of Mexico, his work might be a great deal more fairly received, both pro and con, and Harlan might be able to derive more genuine pleasure from the awards he's received. Norman Spinrad doesn't sell books any more either. He sells Norman Spinrad. I think he does it because he's learned it works. And now Piers Anthony is going the same route. Piers has undeniable talent, but he also has his faults as a writer. As long as he can turn out eleven-page defenses of his works, he is going to create an aura that will surround him and turn back the honest criticism he needs. We're witnessing the Cult of the Personality, and it is ugly because it so closely identifies a man and his works that criticism of the one is criticism of the other, and both are rejected.

To return to the original topic of this letter, I am prepared to believe, from all available evidence that Mike Moorcock is one of the nicest guys to walk this Earth. And I know personally that Paul Williams is a pretty nice guy on the person-to-person basis. But these people are,

by misdirected idealism, ignorance, or some other non-identifiable motivation, doing terrible things. They are, to use Moorcock's own symbolism, agents of chaos. As such, I oppose them.

Postscript to all that: Moorcock is wholly incorrect in saying that Ross Macdonald (small d, there) is "writing reasonable semi-pastiches of Chandler and Hammett." Hammett wrote Hammett. Chandler wrote Chandler. And Macdonald is writing Macdonald, for better or worse, as anything more than a cursory reading of his recent books would indicate. Moorcock skims.

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Clean mss. Well, there are clean mss. and clean mss., as also there are first-drafts and first drafts. Speaking of the latter, I know of one sf pro whose first drafts are so awful that they require extensive copyediting, and I'm told one editor gave him a lower word-rate as a consequence. But many writers write single-drafts, Bester to the contrary notwithstanding, and among them are some of the best. In my feckless youth, I always thought it was the mark of "a real pro" to produce salable first drafts. I still tend to think so, but I suppose the notion is largely born of the dead pulp-era days and the million-words-a-year men.

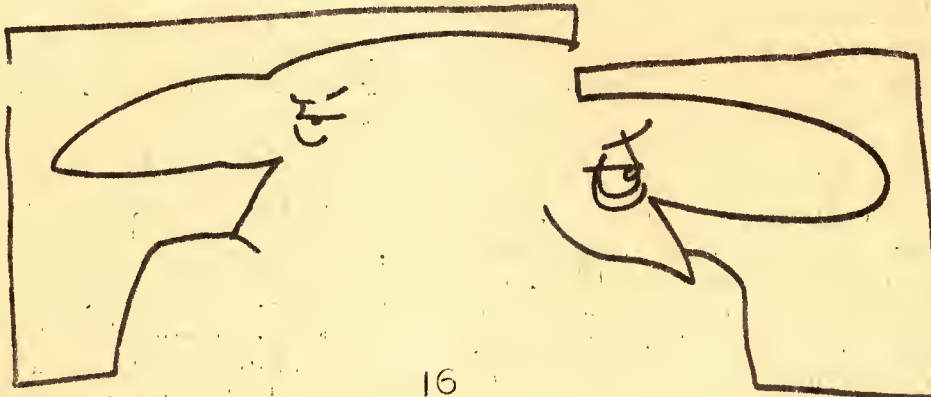
But I've seen, probably, as many manuscripts as Bester has, both from pros and amateurs, and I'd say that by and large, the amateurs submitted cleaner mss. Some of the worst stories I ever read were impeccably typed. (And then there was the lady who double spaced between words like this, because she'd heard all manuscripts should be "double-spaced" ...)

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I note that Jack Gaughan mentions the reappearance of Vaughn Bode in the pages of GALAXY and/or IF. I think perhaps it might be instructive to consider how this came about.

Several months ago Vaughn Bode came to a meeting of the New York Comic Art Group, an informal, Fanoclast-type group of comics pros and the sort (of which I am, somehow, a charter-member) which meets once a month at Roy Thomas's place. I

was at that time trying to scout up better art and artists for AMAZING and FANTASTIC (of which I am, nominally, art director these days, in addition to everything else) (since then the flood gates have opened: both Jeff Jones and





Gray Morrow are doing new covers for us, and there are others in the works as well—and, with the March and April issues, I am, by damn, doing the type and graphics; ah, but I digress...) and I got to talking with Vaughn, whom I'd seen last several years earlier at a Philcon. Vaughn mentioned a huge lot of sample covers for GALAXY & IF which had been rejected, and I expressed interest, and then the subject turned to comic strips.

I told Vaughn that I wanted to run a four- or so page feature in one or both of the magazines, which would have the best features of the so-called Underground Comix, be sfnal in nature, somewhat experimental in graphic art, and generally be exciting for the readers. Our mags are well printed by photo-offset, so I could guarantee good reproduction of the art. Vaughn in turn became excited and told me he wanted to do just such an idea for a sf mag, and would even have it and the magazine plugged in CAVALIER, where he was doing a strip. We agreed on price, general content, everything.

Selling the notion to Sol wasn't going to be easy, but I started in on him with it, and about had it sewed up when I got a call from Vaughn, who was very apologetic, but he'd mentioned to Jack Gaughan that he was doing the strip for me, and Jack had offered him more money, and, so, sorry and all that, but he would be doing the strip for GALAXY or maybe IF.

I feel a little bitter about that. Perhaps I come from an overly-idealistic background, but I was surprised. I'm sure Jack has every justification for what he did—"It's a dog-eat-dog world, Ted"—but it strikes me as a little bit odd, a little bit a part of the Mad-Ave world Jack says he's turned his back on. But not all the way, eh, Jack?

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The fact that an editor has rejected a story or a book of mine influences my attitude towards him, but I have a lot of respect for some of the editors who have bounced me, and none at all for others. I've sold 99% of what I've written, so that's not a big complaint with me. What does annoy me is the kind of editor who rejects a work with a stupid reason—either because he had no better, or didn't feel he could objectively justify his real reasons. Doubleday has been offered most of my books, and has rejected them all. All have subsequently sold elsewhere, to places like Dell, Signet, and Ace Specials. The one that sold to Ace Specials was bounced with a letter which said absolutely nothing at all for two paragraphs. I gather that my agent is correct in his assumption that the book in question offended by the way it crossed categories. It is a novel about frontiersmen, you see, set in the near future. The sf in it exists by implication; there are no gaudy rockets or flashy zapguns. Terry Carr thought it might be the best book I've written.

Equally bad, however, are those editors who buy your work, but then feel they must justify themselves by "creat-

ive editing," or tampering with the work. I had that experience at Crown, and the book that resulted was neither mine nor the editor's, but something midway inbetween. It soured me badly, and curdled my writing abilities for a matter of months. I like the book moderately well, but there was so much I wanted to put into it—and did put into it—which is no longer there. \*Sigh\*

The main thing, though, is that in talking with these people—the non-sf people who lucked into positions in our field—I have discovered how shallow and ill-equipped they are for their jobs. Most know very little even about their own jobs—less than I did, before I did any professional editing, for example. So much filters down into fandom that we forget that the things we take for granted (speaking now about the publishing end, not the history of sf) are unknown to most college graduates. Most editors are amateurs—not professionals. The most professional editors I know are former fans.

This fall I am giving a talk to the Philadelphia SF group, entitled, "Anyone Can Edit a SF Magazine." The implication is, "so why isn't anyone?"



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PHANTASMICOM's duality of editors (Donald G. Keller and Jeffrey D. Smith) balances it between sf and fantasy, new wave and old. PHCOM 4 features an unbroadcast radio interview with Roger Zelazny and some fine 1898 Hindu fantasy by F. W. Bain. Plus the usual book reviews, letters and editorials. PHANTASMICOM is "Recommended" by LOCUS and SON OF THE WSFA JOURNAL; Dick Geis says "Better than 75% of the fanzines I see;" Darrell Schweitzer says we are almost (\*sigh\*) "a really major fanzine." Over 60 pages. 50¢, 2/\$1.00 from Jeffrey D. Smith, 7205 Barlow Court, Baltimore, Md. 21207.

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SCIENTIST AND SHAMAN continued

If our technological monolith of a culture represents the currently accepted thesis, and the visionary shaman an antithesis, we must find a synthesis. I hope sf can, in some small fashion, show the way.

—Greg Benford





# **THE UNDERGROUND LIFESTYLES HANDBOOK**

By Dean & Gerda Koontz

Illustrations by Doug Lovenstein

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# ••BOOK REVIEWS••

I WILL FEAR NO EVIL by Robert A. Heinlein—G.P. Putnam's Sons, \$6.95, 1970.

Reviewed by Alexei Panshin

For fully twenty years, Robert Heinlein was the dominant figure in science fiction. Quite simply, no other writer has produced work to match Heinlein in quality and volume over an equivalent period of time. I'm tempted to say that no other writer of ambition has produced work to match Heinlein in either quality or volume over an equivalent period. No other science fiction writer has Heinlein's awards or Heinlein's audience. This strength, together with the extraordinary if largely accidental popularity of Stranger in a Strange Land, has obscured the fact that Heinlein has not written a first-rate book in twelve years.

It is a sad thing for a writer to see the decline of a man like Heinlein. Oh, worse than that. It's frightening. If it can happen to Heinlein, what is to keep it from happening to Roger Zelazny—or has it already happened? What is to keep it from happening to me? In a very real way, creative failure is worse than death. When you are dead, they stick you in the ground and that is that, but when you write bad books, they get published. It is nothing you can protect yourself against, either, because by the time you have a reputation to ruin, publishers have every incentive to help you ruin it. Publishing is a business.

If you doubt it, here is the first paragraph of Putnam's release sheet on Robert Heinlein's new novel, I Will Fear No Evil, his first new work since The Moon is a Harsh Mistress in 1966:

"In the five years since the publication of Stranger in a Strange Land, Robert A. Heinlein's last novel, it has become a staple on college campuses and has sold over a billion copies in all editions. Now, five years later, Mr. Heinlein has written a new novel, I Will Fear No Evil, a book which the author considers in a direct line of development from Stranger in a Strange Land."

It shows you how their minds are working. Another "billion" copies, and it is no more important that the product be

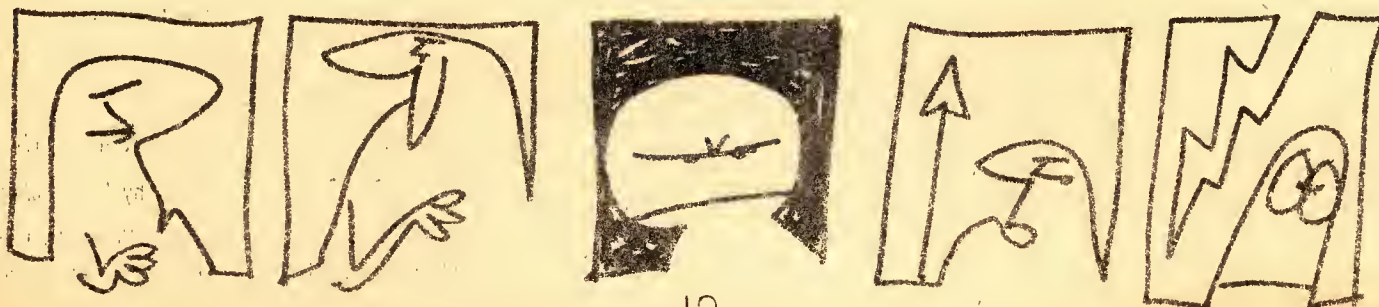
worthy than that their facts should be accurate.

There is no generous way to put it—I Will Fear No Evil is a very bad book. It is clumsy, self-indulgent, shallow and boring. Boring is one thing that Heinlein has never been before, but I Will Fear No Evil is boring. It was rejected by several publishers for cause, and it is safe to say that if Heinlein were not Heinlein, I Will Fear No Evil would not have been published by either GALAXY or Putnam's. It quite likely would not have been published by anyone.

In the early years of the 21st Century, a billionaire named Johann Sebastian Bach Smith, ninety-five years old and failing, but not allowed by his doctors to die, hits on a brain transplant operation as a graceful way of exiting. However, the operation is a success. The donor body is female. Smith spends a year screwing around happily—no, the Heinlein word would be "merrily"—and then in the last two chapters emigrates to the Moon and dies of rejection syndrome—cum—childbirth.

As a plot outline, that's not bad, if a bit static for a book 401 pages long. The themes—sex and death—are splendid in potential. And the background, the embodiment of 1970's worst projections for the end of the century, is neatly and cleverly extrapolated: seven billion people in the world; illiteracy more common than literacy; armed guards necessary everywhere; city centers officially Abandoned Areas where the law no longer applies. Of course, this background is kept strictly in the background, never shown directly but only in conversation or in Stranger-type collage: "Peace Negotiations, both in Paris and in Montevideo, continued as before. Fighting continued on a token basis, and the dead did not complain. Harvard's new president was dismissed by the student government, which then adjourned without appointing a successor. The Secretary of H.E.W. announced a plan to increase the water content of San Francisco Bay to 37%; the Rivers & Harbors Commission denied that H.E.W. had jurisdiction." Etc.

But somehow, though this is a long long book, it adds up to exactly nothing. There is no conflict. Anybody who matters is on Smith's side because in his present body he is pretty and in his previous body he was a fraternity brother. Even





coincidence—which is to say, Heinlein—is on Smith's side: the donor body, blood type AB negative, just like him, is Smith's 28-year-old bright and beautiful secretary who dies a convenient and noble offstage death between Chapter 3 and Chapter 4. No, no plot complications. Author's convenience.

The secretary doesn't go away, however, in spite of the death and the brain transplant. Her mind remains—though subordinate to Johann—and she and he spend the rest of the book talking to each other. That's the boring part. It's all banter and mutual admiration. She presents herself as a Podkayne grown older and more arch: "Om Mani Padme Hum" is constantly referred to as "the Money Hum"; she calls a girl named Winifred "Winsome"; and if you relax your guard for a moment, she will say something on the order of, "We're fertile as a turtle, Myrtle." No conflict, of course. The two minds never grow tired of each other. She doesn't constantly call Johann "Twin" for nothing.

Since Stranger, Heinlein has let the talk in his books run away with him. In I Will Fear No Evil, he eschews all narrative and description beyond the most minimal of stage setting. The interior dialog continues, broken only by exterior dialog, until the close of the book when his lawyer and her—their new 72-year-old husband and virile lover has a sudden stroke and dies, joining the other two in the head. Subordinate to Johann, of course. Then it is a three-way conversation, mostly about sex like all the earlier talk. No explanation. It just happens.

And at the very end, when the baby is born—Johann's, of course, courtesy of a sperm bank—and the body dies, the other two minds are there to say, "Here, Boss! Grab on! There! We've got you," and "'One for all and all for one!'"

Well, that's all comforting stuff for Heinlein to tell himself. Over and over again in his fiction, he has been

saying, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." He quite plainly needs to tell himself that, and to prove it in his fiction. As I say in Heinlein in Dimension, "It does not matter too much how, but the Heinlein Individual always goes on existing." But while this is interesting psychological material, it is not sufficient to justify four hundred pages that are otherwise pointless.

Again in Heinlein in Dimension, I say, "The world may have to be tied into knots to allow the Heinlein Individual to prevail, but that is quite all right since he is the single, solitary real thing in as essentially unreal world. The world exists for him, not he for the world."

Johann-Joanna says to his lawyer-husband that forty years ago, that is, in our time, he ran for office and lost. "They clobbered me, Jake!—and I've never been tempted to save the world since. Maybe someone can save this addled planet, but I don't know how and now I know that I don't know."

All he knows is how to save a billion dollars. All he knows is how to be a top dog. All he knows is how to be part of the problem.

Jake says, "We've reached an impasse; we can't go on the way we're headed—and we can't go back—and we're dying in our own poisons. That's why that little Lunar colony has got to survive. Because we can't. It isn't the threat of war, or crime in the streets, or corruption in high places, or pesticides, or smog, or 'education' that doesn't teach; those things are just symptoms of the underlying cancer. It's too many people... So anyone who can ought to go to the Moon as fast as he can manage it."

That's what he—he-she—they are doing on the Moon at the end bearing their "All You Zombies" baby Heinlein Individual. They may not know how to save the world, but they do know how to survive.

And if Johann has never done anything to justify survival beyond this world, that comes anyway through natural grace. Will surely come.

Comforting it may be. As pure undramatic assertion, it makes for a thin fiction.

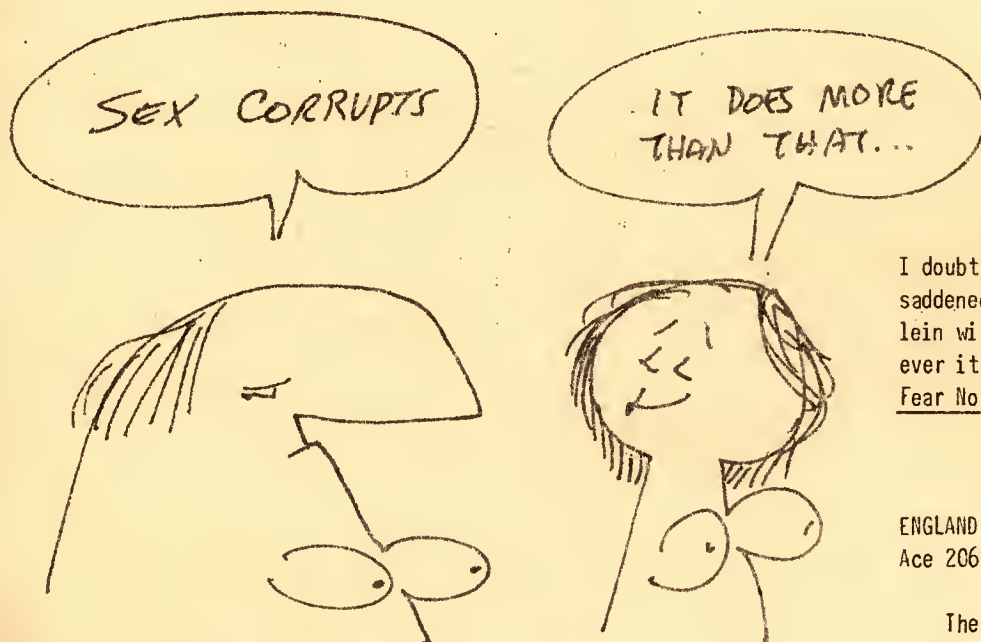
If I had not been obliged to, I would not have finished this book. I doubt that I will ever read it again. I'm saddened to say it because I doubt that Heinlein will ever write another book, and whatever it may say about Heinlein's hopes I Will Fear No Evil makes a poor monument.



ENGLAND SWINGS SF Edited by Judith Merrill—  
Ace 20670, \$1.25

Reviewed by Paul Walker

There is nothing in Judith Merrill's England Swings SF that did not arrive on my door—





step, during the late fifties, as the EVERGREEN REVIEW. Then, I thought it was pretentious. Now, I think it is unreadable.

The prevailing motif of the fifties was the alienation of Holden Caulfield, and nothing could be further from that than the "alienation of Thomas Disch." One was shy and defenseless. The other is defiant and hard. One was sensitive and searching. The other knows who he is and who he hates.

If the hero of the "Squirrel Cage" is behind bars, it is as much to protect the onlooker as to confine him. Disch's hero is no self-pitying lost soul, but a shark with the scent of a truth that will set him at his keeper's throats.

The same may be said of the others, although they are of much less importance. They are razor-edged weapons against the barriers of intolerance and injustice, as intolerant and unjust as the Establishment they oppose. They are testaments to their authors' existences, poses struck, moods realized.

They are not SF—science or speculative. Science is the enemy, except when it can be used to destroy an enemy. And there is really nothing "speculative" about them, either. They are very concrete declarations.

Most of the stories came from NEW WORLDS, but resemble kindergarten crayon cows—artistic disasters no one but a mother could love; and no one but a mother would encourage. I assume these people love one another for their stylistic naughtiness. The more unreadable the better. It is too, too precious.

In short, a waste of time and talent.



THE PNUME by Jack Vance—Ace 66902, 60¢

Reviewed by Ted Pauls

This is the fourth and final novel in Vance's "Ischai, Planet of Adventure" series, and focuses on the Pnume, Ischai's original inhabitants, who live in an immense underground labyrinth and dedicate themselves to the recording and preservation of Ischai's millions of years of history. In it, Adam Reith, stranded Earthman, finally makes good his escape from the planet, acquiring a lover in the process. It is a thoroughly typical Jack Vance novel, in that the Pnume and the other extraordinary races and tribes of Ischai are a lot more interesting than Adam Reith.

On the surface of the planet, offworld invaders—the Wankh, various factions of Chasch, the Dirdir—contend with each other and with the planet's smaller groupings and tribes.

The writing is highly competent; The Pnume has all the technical excellence you would expect from Jack Vance. The most impressive thing about the novel, like the others in the series, is the planet Ischai. Vance is a master world-creator, and The Pnume is worth reading on that basis alone.



THE WARLOCK by Wilson Tucker—Avon V2329, 75¢  
Reviewed by Paul Walker

Tucker's 1967 Doubleday spy novel, The Warlock, is now in paperback, and it affirms my old faith in him.

The story concerns the son of a gypsy witch—a warlock, so they say—who becomes a refugee after World War II, joins the American Army, then is recruited into the CIA. His first mission climaxes with a fourteen month prison term behind the Iron Curtain, which almost dooms his career, but he is given a second chance. His assignment is to investigate a man named Victor Angoff, who seems to think there are men who walk through walls and others who live forever.



There is something of "Mom's apple pie" in Tucker, which is not the best trait for a tale of hate, murder and revenge, but the simplicity of the plot line, its bright clarity and warmth of character are handled so competently they become assets, moving the reader, involving him, rather than alienating.

No one can dislike The Warlock.



ORBIT 7 edited by Damon Knight—Putnam, \$4.95

Reviewed by Richard Delap

The quality of the Orbit series continues to fluctuate. At least two volumes have been top-notch, one was unbelievably bad, and the rest have been grab bags that averaged out well enough to make them worthwhile.

Orbit 7 may be the freakiest of the lot, however, and those who shy away from the "new wave" style of writing are hereby warned that Knight seems to be doing a Merrill-drag this time around, coming up with some items that will knock the balls off the sf mainliners. The thing is, Knight is such a good impersonator that Merrill ends up looking like a second-rate imitation of herself...and that, dear readers, if nothing else, is a feat worthy of notice!

Two of the best stories are by R. A. Lafferty, still one of the best and most underrated sf writers working, whose specialized satire and intricate subtleties will likely forever keep him beyond the reach of simpleminded, space-opera aficionados. In "Continued on Next Rock," the witty master chef mixes his ingredients with what seems to be mindless abandon, yet somehow the result comes out so well that one feels a reluctance to question the frightful-looking ingred-



ients. Ranging from Joycean puns to blatant sexual symbolism to a telling spoof on Fortian interpretations of oddities, this story can only be appreciated by reading, so do.

Half-spoof, half-serious, Lafferty certainly and once-and-for-all demolishes the religious allegory with "Old Foot Forgotten," which tells of a man, a 'Dookh-Doctor,' who refuses to be misled by the practical jokes and impractical base of life, demanding that he as an individual unit of thought and being be preserved intact rather than gobbled up by 'happy obliteration.' To whom does he turn? Certainly not to God...?

Do you think you're trapped in conventional attitudes, molded to live a life that doesn't really suit you? Then let Richard Hill take you away in "To Sport With Amaryllis," as two freako-weirdo lovers move through the dizzying "other side" of life, a world of sexual freedom and liberated lifestyle. And prepare to be both shocked and moved as he exposes convention for what in actuality it is.

It's an ordinary morning for James Sallis' "Jim and Mary G"; they and their little boy move through the morning ritual of dressing, using the toilet, breakfast, a morning walk. An ordinary morning, with one difference—a confrontation with a problem for which we of the present have no answer. Sallis' answer is vague, undefined, and probably ten times as frightening for that. Scary.

Two stories I didn't care for at all, both striking me as needlessly obscure and nearly impossible to assess meaningfully. Thomas M. Disch's "The Pressure of Time" is a glimpse of a world that tolerates, side-by-side, mortals and immortals, the religious and non-religious, a world of far more questions than answers. And I have no idea what to make of Gene Wolfe's "Eyebeem," a monologue by an android trapped with a human in the Arctic snow, waiting patiently for rescue or death, and responding with comparatively more "human" reactions. Maybe this is Wolfe's point?

The other six stories are interesting in one way or another: Kate Wilhelm also comes to grips with the theme of immortality in "April Fool's Day Forever" as a man and wife fall deep into a hidden trap before they discover it is closing about them. Sensitive to character and mood, Wilhelm does well by them both until the premise of her plot begins to undo her efforts at rationalization and the "science" moves out of frame behind false-sounding lectures. And though I personally dislike part of her method and all of her motive, it is well-done and recommended to the more adventurous readers.

"In the Queue" by Keith Laumer, though not as profound as the author might wish, is a nevertheless readable statement about how much easier it is to face the familiar rather than the unknown.

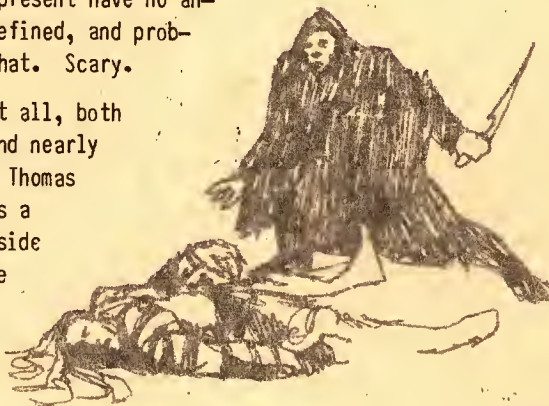
Carol Emshwiller's "Woman Waiting" is ostensibly the tale of a woman waiting to board an airplane, and precisely reveals the fact that the woman is getting gradually smaller, and small-

er...and, God, smaller.

Sonya Dorman's "The Living End" shows a hospital of the future where a woman in labor is forced through an extended routine waiting period as filing, testing and other trivia delay attention to her imminent problem. Dorman goes about her business in such a cool way that her climactic goose is doubly startling.

Lastly, two stories deal with adolescence in contrasting ways. Gardner R. Dozois' "A Dream at Noonday" effectively uses scenes from childhood, memories that surge and churn, the kind common to all men. It's a method long familiar to "mainstream" writers, but I protest the trite fantasy element used here to include it in a volume in which it really has little place. In Gene Wolfe's "The Island of Doctor Death and Other Stories," a lonely young boy, confronted by the harshness of the adult world around him, escapes into the pleasures of reading. The battle between hero and villain in his book becomes as real, more real, than reality, and Wolfe uncovers the sad necessity of this dilemma.

Ten unusual authors, twelve un-ordinary new stories; you can ask for more than this?



GRIMM'S WORLD by Vernor Vinge—Berkley X1750, 60¢

THE PARASAURIANS by Robert Wells—Berkley X1779, 60¢

THE POWER OF X by Arthur Sellings—Berkley X1801, 60¢

Reviewed by Paul Walker

Simply: there is absolutely no reason not to like these books. They are competent and entertaining. But excessively harmless.

Vernor Vinge's Grimm's World leads the pack with an adventure about a she-bitch who conquers the world only to have to save it from aliens. It is wordy. The hero plays a minor role. Aside from that it is pretty good and will disappoint no one.

Robert Wells' The Parasaurians is about a future safari agency which arranges to have the hero hunt mechanical dinosaurs and inadvertently confronts him with a mad scientist. The book is too mild to be memorable, but it is worth the ride should you get aboard.

And Arthur Sellings, in The Power of X, tells a mystery story about a world in which "plying" (duplication by means of the fourth dimension) is used to seize a government. It is wafer-thin suspense but, again, readable.





Tau Zero (original version, "To Outlive Eternity," GALAXY, 1967) is a magnificent piece of science fiction, with slightly more stress on the science than the fiction. Therefore, let us first consider the science.

The basic scientific point of the novel is contained in an equation on page 54, where tau equals the square root of one minus the result of the square of the space ship's velocity divided by the square of the speed of light. As the velocity approaches the speed of light, tau approaches zero. (Despite the title of the book, the ship never quite reaches zero.)

What Anderson is doing, of course, is playing with Einstein's theory of relativity. Hypothesizing a spaceship run on hydrogen atoms (and later on other matter) pulled out of shape, he builds its speed toward the speed of light, thus pushing its internal time toward zero and its mass toward the infinite. Thus the ship is able to reach the center of the Milky Way galaxy in four years internal time and then, gathering fuel faster and faster as its speed increases, cross to the Andromeda galaxy in a matter of weeks.

As a person more knowledgeable in literature than in science, I have not tried to check Anderson's working out of his assumptions, but I find one passage curious: "As [atoms] approached c [the speed of light, of course], they grew heavier—not to themselves, but to everything outside their vessel..." (p. 61). Here the questionable term is heavier: doesn't Anderson mean more massive?

The rest of the scientific background I will not give away except to say that it is based on the concept of the pulsating universe. (Hints will appear later in my rhetorical discussion of zero; readers of the serial version will not need any hints.) The comparisons which come to mind lie in older science fiction pulps which threw around galaxies casually and much more crudely.

But the work is also fiction. It begins with one of those symbolic moments which James Joyce called epiphanies:

"Look—there—rising over the Hand of God. Is it?"  
"Yes, I think so. Our ship."

Literally, the spaceship Leonora Christine is being seen as it rises over a sculpture, the Hand of God upbearing the Genius of Man—a piece of art by Carl Milles (1875-1955), in Millesgården, Stockholm; the time is three centuries after the making of the sculpture, when the Swedes are controlling the world (rather for the same reason Shaw ran his future British Empire in Back to Methuselah by Africans and Chinese). The meaning of the epiphany is not clear until the end of the book.

The plot is a bit too much the usual superman (Übermensch).

The hero, Carl Raymont, solves the problem of the ruined decelerators (p. 87); he suggests the solution to how to find a Sol-type star (p. 133); he takes over piloting the spaceship at a critical moment (p. 200). All of this despite the fact he got his education while in the Lunar Rescue Corps, and he was taken aboard the Leonora Christine as Constable. He also is given actual control of the ship during the flight, carrying "his automatic pistol, the ultimate emblem" (p. 189). Finally, in the last pages of the book, he lays down his leadership voluntarily.

No doubt Anderson intends a moral point about power and its uses in his depiction of the Constable, but I question the decorum—the realism—of making him outperform professionals in other areas. (Pulp conventions die hard.)

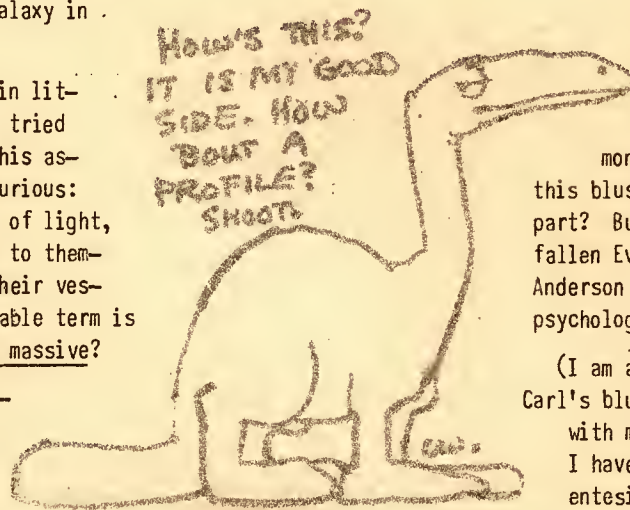
But in other ways the story is far from pulpish. The Swedish (and human) free love practiced by the fifty people on the ship, with its realistic depiction of the hurts which individuals suffer in their relationships is more mature than most such stories. And the heroine's words to Carl early in the

book ring truer than any pulp: "I don't want to harass you. I want you in me again. ... I've fallen in love with you" (p. 29). (A minor quibble: why does she blush on

page 15 when thinking of her two months before entering the ship? Isn't this blush simply conventional on Anderson's part? But critics have also wondered why un-fallen Eve blushes in Paradise Lost. Perhaps Anderson and Milton suffered from failures of psychological extrapolation at these points.

(I am also dubious, although less so, about Carl's blush on p. 117. [The heroine blushes with more reason on p. 177.] As long as I have got myself into this extended parenthesis on minor flaws, let me add that the heroine's comment about her currently limited number of lovers on p. 102, "... a girl's choices are poxy limited," is ruined for me by my knowledge of the seventeenth-century use of pox.)

The depiction of the society is, I think, well done. Certainly Anderson individualized a number of characters, which is difficult to do with many people on a ship. (Think of Heinlein's problem in Methuselah's Children; Anderson has managed better, although the numbers on the ships are not really comparable.) Certainly, he allows them their differences in religious belief, for example. The Captain is a pious Protestant of some sort; Johann Freiwald has usually "a cheerful Nietzscheanism" (p. 143) for a philosophy; the hero doubts publicly that he has a soul (p. 192); etc. Anderson allows them their differences in love: the awkwardness with which Norbert Williams invites Emma Glassgold for a walk (p. 53) contrasts with the directness with which Ingrid Lindgren (the heroine again) invites Carl to be her lover (p. 11). Sometimes I wish the contrast had been more emphatic: Ingrid, while depressed, sings a Danish song which is given in verse form in English (pp. 145-146), but Chi-Yuen Ai-Ling, just as she is to sing





Carl to sleep, is interrupted by an intercom call for him (p. 158)—perhaps Anderson thought the passages too close together for a second poem.

Also the society is well depicted in that Anderson pays attention to human festivities. The Christmas Saturnalia is an obvious choice, but I suspect that the Midsummer Day celebration (pp. 175, 178) is due to the Swedish custom. If so, Anderson doesn't drive the point home, but leaves it as part of the cultural background.

Even the style has its moments of intrinsic interest. Anderson uses as a metaphor for the stress of acceleration: "A troll sat on each chest and choked each throat" (p. 78). A simile later in the book: "Loneliness closed in on the ship like fingers" (p. 95). Most of the allusions are to Nordic or Classical myth, but one appears to Daniel 5:25-28: "The basic Mene, Mene stood unchanged on the panel" (p. 66). Since this alludes to a screen tied to the astronomical computer, the literal translation of "Numbered, numbered" is to the point, but the connotations are from Daniel's interpretation of the original. Third, a neat antanaclasses appears on p. 23: "There was no space to spare in space." (The alliteration and assonance of the sixth word with the repeated words reinforce the emphasis, also.) What one might call an extended antanaclasses is the use of zero throughout the book. I probably missed some, but I noted the following zeroes: the end of countdown, when the ion drive started (p. 22); the approach to the speed of light when the ship's "tau plummeted close to asymptotic zero: and with it, her time rate" (p. 107)—the title phrase, of course; a related optical shrinkage of the universe before and behind the ship "toward a zero thickness" (p. 119); a lack of gravity in the ship—"zero gee" (pp. 161, 178), "zero gravity" (p. 167); "absolute zero" in relation to the end of the universe (p. 186); the zero that the ship's chances aren't (p. 189); "a single zero-point Something" for the universal monoblock (p. 191); "zero absolute speed" in relation to a galaxy—in other words, a matching speed (p. 202); and "zeroing in" on a galaxy (p. 204).

No doubt other stylistic touches could be mentioned (is the spider simile on p. 31 the reason the book is dedicated to Leiber?)—and I have not discussed the structuring of scenes: the ironic juxtaposition of the Christmas carol with

the end of a love affair on p. 60, for example. But no critic can exhaust his subject without writing a book the length of the one he is analyzing: and there should be, anyway, something left for the non-reviewing reader to discover for himself.

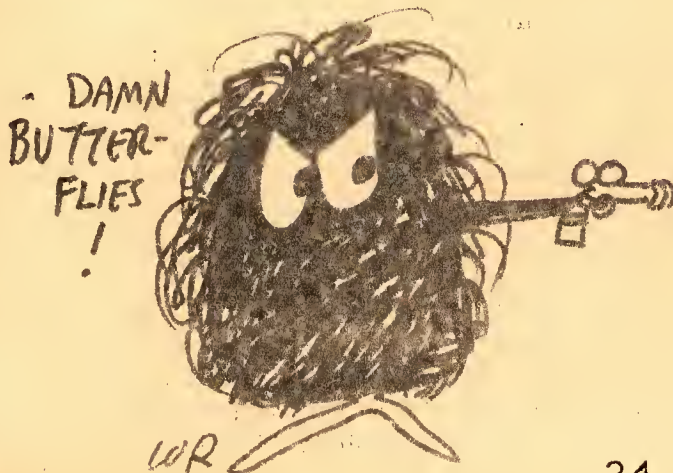
As to the meaning, the most general level is one common to much of Anderson's fiction: man's will to meet challengers and survive. (See Sandra Miesel's essay, "Challenge and Response: Poul Anderson's View of Man," *RIVERSIDE QUARTERLY*, 4:2 [January, 1970], 80-95.) But there are lesser meanings also: the survival of the religious (as well as the irreligious) impulse, for example. There are current applications: the ship's "cost was by no means negligible, had indeed provoked widespread complaint. All this, to send fifty people to one practically next-door star" (p. 14). And: "Slowly, the Russian retreated until he was beside his woman. He drew her to him and said: 'Abortion is murder'" (p. 169). (One wonders if it would still be murder if she did not want the child: is Anderson or his character positing absolute worth to human life? But the basic point is a population increase in an enclosed system.) There are also in-group jokes: Carl Reymont says at one point: "You know I admire classical artists like Rembrandt and Bonestell..." (p. 28). Which are enough meanings for anybody.

Reviewer's postscript: I believe I missed one technical blunder in the story. A basic part of the plot is that the decelerators are damaged in Chapter 9 after the spaceship has passed through a nebula (both the accelerators and the decelerators are outside the ship). Later, in Chapter 13, the ship goes through the center of the galaxy and the crew reinforces the hull from the inside; admittedly, the ship has gained mass by that time, but I doubt the gain in mass would keep the accelerators from possibly being wrecked in the denser gas of the galaxy center. Probably it's a minor quibble, but I don't remember the crew worrying about the accelerators at that point.



A STRANGE AND SEEING TIME by Elizabeth Byrd—Ballantine 01791, 95¢  
Reviewed by Paul Walker

If I had the time, I might believe in ghosts. As I do not have the time, I can't help thinking those who do, and write books about them, are either crackpots or liars. While Mrs.



**ZOTZ!**



Byrd is too charming and entertaining a story teller to be a liar, I can't quite believe she's a crackpot. In fact, her book is so light and amusing, I do not really give a damn.

This is worth reading if you have any interest in psychic phenomena...and it is worth giving to someone who does.



RING OF VIOLENCE by Douglas R. Mason—Robert Hale (Eng.)  
18/- (\$2.16)

Reviewed by Wayne Connelly

'The end of the world' is perhaps one of those subjects requiring that peculiar reserve and touch of understatement—how else do you explain the fact that the most noted writers of 'cataclysm' stories have all been British?

Following the popular success of Wyndham's The Day of the Triffids, a deluge of such stories appeared. Many of them were, in fact, written by Wyndham, who surpassed even his original with The Kraken Wakes and The Chrysalids. However, there were other writers who made use of the fashionable mode, but often in their own special way—foremost probably were...John Christopher who made a specialty of the form with such fine novels as No Blade of Grass and The World in Winter...Ballard with many of his early efforts like The Wind from Nowhere...and Aldiss with what is most likely his best novel, Greybeard.

The flood has since ebbed, however. It was largely a phenomenon of the late fifties and early sixties. Nonetheless, some good novels continue to appear, for the form is intrinsically fertile. One of the books I have in mind is D.G. Compton's second Ace Special, The Silent Multitude, written in the later Ballard-Disch vein with the heroic figure being parodied by a tomcat. However, it is another fairly recent disaster novel and one written in the more traditional Wyndham-Christopher manner which is the subject of this review—Douglas Mason's Ring of Violence.

Mr. Mason's novel was originally published in England in 1968, and so far has been shamefully neglected.

When faced with a protracted danger, your most likely reaction is flippancy; but behind this brave visage there is just as certain to be much covert searching of the soul. The first, of course, makes for a fine adventure yarn; the second, a profound novel.

In such catastrophe tales, then, there is almost always a Robinsonade aspect; for it is here that the tale not only takes on its personal dimension, but is also permitted its 'test tube' study of individuals under the stress of a newly hostile environment which denudes their fellows and unmasks their own real selves.

Although it is never actually specified, the cataclysm in Ring of Violence is somehow connected with vulcanism. The world has become a desert of volcanic ash which covers all but the most massive of city-ruins and is only relieved by infrequent cases. In one of these enclaves the descendants of the original survivors live in an atavistic tribe-family culture.

The boss or headman of the tribe sees his younger brother as a threat to his hegemony, so arranging a spurious charge, he has his brother severely lashed and cast alone into the desert....

Such is the bare beginning of Mr. Mason's story. There are echoes of biblical parable, though essentially it remains a good action-adventure. Melodrama is usually avoided, and the story is consistently absorbing and effectual.

The theme of Ring of Violence is stated by its title. Mr. Mason is exploring the problem of the circularity of violence, element becoming a militarist/police state; or how do you exert social change without demolition, and when does this become simply wanton destruction?

Barthelemy de Ligt's dictum "the more violence, the less revolution" is equally true of justice; for violence can have but one product—more violence.

Ring of Violence has an intriguing and pertinent theme cast in an exciting story. It is a fine contribution to what John Christopher has appropriately termed, "Olde Englishe Science-Fiction."



CHARLES FORT—Prophet of the Unexplained by Damon Knight—  
Doubleday, \$6.95

STRANGE CREATURES FROM TIME AND SPACE by John Keel—Fawcett  
Gold Medal 2219, 75¢

HEX by Arthur H. Lewis—Pocket Books 77156, 95¢

Reviewed by Paul Walker

There are times when I want to go away. Not to Paris or Miami or Timbuctu; but to stay right where I am and go away at the same time. A world with other rules. It is knowing I can't—except in SF, sometimes—that makes where I am a cage.

And I am not saying SF is escapist. It is not. It is a way to see the present as possibility, and possibility as concrete. The same is true with the supernatural or the extra-natural. They are mirrors to see the possibilities of Self and Reality.

These three books are about the super-and-extra-natural. They are good books. Damon Knight's Charles Fort—Prophet of the Unexplained may be the best book I have ever read by him, and it is not "my kind of book," either. It is the story of a man who made war on a "reality" that denied him by showing it a "reality" that denied it. An iconoclast with a sharp sense of humor and a literary perspective and ability, evident from the abundant quotes, that was far ahead of its time. It is the story of Fort's life, his enthusiasm, the controversies it engendered, and the consequences. A sometimes moving, consistently fascinating account that I recommend wholeheartedly.

John Keel's Strange Creatures from Time and Space is an encyclopedic collection of the allegedly super-and-extra-natural supported by innumerable "accepted" phenomena. A cat with wings on the TODAY show? A Hungarian Countess who entertained her guests by stringing up a peasant girl and drinking her



blood? A theory of "windows" into the fourth dimension?

No, not sensationalism. Keel is a friendly, sensible sort, who enjoys his interest and writes well enough to persuade us to join him.

Finally, Hex by Arthur H. Lewis is the true story of a murder more fantastic than anything in either of the two above. In 1928, a man named Nelson Rehmer, a professed witch, was bludgeoned to death by a man who had never met him before, but who was convinced Rehmer had placed a hex on him. That this happened, not in Hollywood or New York, but in quiet, old Pennsy, just across the border had me in hysterics before I got a third through the book. (That's my sick sense of humor, folks. The book is terrifying in its implications.) The story of the murderer and his companions is also the story of Pennsy witchcraft which is practiced to this day—and quite profitably. It is a sad tale. And the trial itself is apocalyptic of the Establishment mentality. But Arthur H. Lewis tells it as an interesting, often witty, story. It really has to be read to be believed—(see, you don't believe me!).

No, I am not an occult fan. I shun the whole scene. Still, I sympathize. I am glad I read these three.



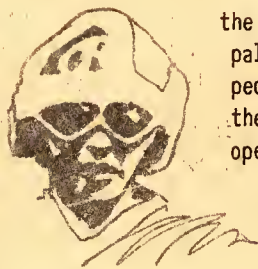
THE REBEL OF RHADA by Robert Cham Gilman—Ace 71065, 60¢  
Reviewed by Ted Pauls

Some of the more enthusiastic opponents of the "New Wave" sometimes harken back to those grand days when men were men and science fiction meant heroic stories of galactic scope which exalted mankind and human ideals.

That the vast majority of those stories—even more than would be accounted for by Sturgeon's Law—were perfectly dreadful pieces of fiction has either been obscured by the merciful fog of nostalgia or is dismissed as irrelevant with a "Yes, but—" Yes, but they were so much fun. Yes, but they excited the Sense of Wonder. And so on. There is some substance to this argument—many of those stories do have a certain undeniable and basically indefinable emotional appeal—but in truth there is no substitute for the variety of features we collectively classify as "good writing," and most of the SF of the period and in the style under consideration is today as hopelessly and as laughably out-of-date as the fashions in pulpzine advertisements.

Given a combination of good writing and Edmond Hamilton-type Sense of Wonder concepts, however, the result can be impressive. Andre Norton achieves it sometimes. Mack Reynolds did so in The Space Barbarians.

And at hand we have The Rebel of Rhada, by the probably pseudonymous Robert Cham Gilman. It offers the classic 1940's-pulp blend of super-technology and swordplay: computerized interstellar vessels, cyborgs and inscrutable telepathic aliens, on



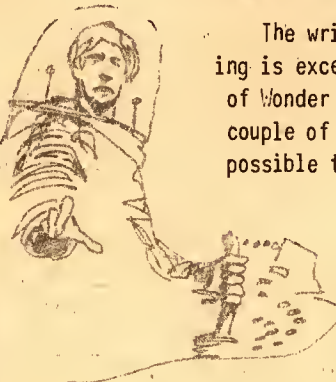
the other hand, and, on the other, armor, warhorses, palace intrigue, court honor and all the other impedimenta of (to use Churchill's memorable phrase) the "clanking, jangling aristocracy" of feudal Europe. It's a blend that generally results in crud, and this book even looks like crud, with a cheap-looking cover layout and a Richard Loehle painting reminiscent of PLANET STORIES.

The appearance is misleading.

In order to explain his mix of cultures, Gilman postulates a new Dark Age which settled over human civilization after an era of galactic expansion. Society effectively reverts to the state which prevailed after the dissolution of the Roman Empire, except that certain elements of technological civilization continue to function. Thus, the interstellar spaceships, constructed to endure for thousands of years, sufficiently computerized to operation with only a minimum human intervention, equipped with a power source that is to all intents and purposes inexhaustible. The minimum human intervention is provided by the Navigators, a priesthood serving the established religion and worshipping the spaceships, who instruct the ship computers in traditional phrases which have long since lost their meaning to men and come to be regarded as mystical incantations. Other bits and pieces of the former scientific glory are preserved by warlocks, delvers into forbidden secrets who are frowned upon and occasionally spitted by the church but protected most of the time by nobles who find their knowledge useful.

The story that is told against this background is a straightforward and unexceptional one of a power struggle between feudal factions during a reign in which Galacton, the King-Emperor, is a child—a story recorded in its basic elements countless times throughout human history. But there is more to the story than this plot. Gilman deals with more than a struggle for an imperial throne; he deals with themes like the obscurantism of an established church and the attempts of a few visionary individuals to continue the search for knowledge even in the face of popular superstition, the dream of a handful of leaders of bringing into being once again a united, prosperous galactic empire, feudal honor and responsibility, and so on. Characterization is better than average, especially the characterization of the hero, Kier of Rhada, and his retinue, Cavour the court warlock, Kalin a Navigator of uncommon skill, and Kier's blood cousin Nevus, his lieutenant-general, and Gret, one of the mysterious alien Vulk.

The writing itself is clear and smooth, and the pacing is excellent. And, most of all, the reader's Sense of Wonder is engaged to such an extent that for a couple of hours while reading The Rebel of Rhada it is possible to believe that a galactic empire might be ruled by men who use torches for light and fight with slashing swords from the saddles of mail-bedecked warhorses.





EARTHTRIM by Nick Kamin  
PHOENIX SHIP by Walt and Leigh Richmond—Ace 66160, 75¢

KALIN by E. C. Tubb  
THE BANE OF KANTHOS by Alex Dain—Ace 42800, 75¢

THE YELLOW FRACTION by Rex Gordon—Ace 94350, 60¢

THE TIME TRAP GAMBIT by Larry Maddock—Ace 01043, 75¢

MEN ON THE MOON edited by Donald A. Wolheim—Ace 52470, 60¢

PERRY RHODAN #4: "Invasion From Space" by Walter Ernsting & Kurt Mahr—Ace 65973, 75¢

Reviewed by Paul Walker

When the definitive history of SF is written, Ace Doubles will deserve a chapter to themselves. For twenty years they have fulfilled a vital, if uninspiring, role in the development of science fiction; fostering new talent, reviving the old, and padding the wallets of needy pros.

Despite the reputed limitations of the Ace Doubles, the quality and style of the books is unpredictable. Two of the books reviewed here are cases in point.

Nick Kamin's Earthrim (assuming Kamin is not the pseudonym of a "Delany") introduces a very promising talent. The novel is a conventional "secret agent against the mysterious Rim," but the competence Kamin shows in plot structure and character development, in backgrounds and action, is superior to many top pros. It is one of the most readable books I've enjoyed in a while, and I recommend it.

Walt and Leigh Richmond's Phoenix Ship on the flip side is more accomplished but less pleasing. It is a strict science-fiction short: "Young S.T.A.R. Dustin escapes a regimented Earth for the frontier life of the Belt, where he is plotted against by forces that wish to take control of the company his uncle left him. S.T.A.R. carries the day and takes men to the stars where they belong." Hurray! If you like this sort of thing at all, then you will like the Richmonds' book. The details are good, the action plentiful.

E.C. Tubb's Kalin is another in his Dumerest series. I'm told they can be better appreciated if you have read a few of them, for Tubb has taken great pains with his fictional universe. Unfortunately, Kalin is my only Dumerest.

He is a spaceman adventurer who rescues a young girl from a homicidal mob during Bloodtime on the planet Logis. The girl falls for him; he, for her. Behind the scenes, plots are being hatched. The ship they are on is captured; they are sent to a slave world. The girl's father, a nobleman (the lone survivor of a family vendetta) is searching for her. But is he her father?—or an assassin?

The plot keeps you interested. In fact, almost everything Tubb has in mind is interesting but inevitably spoiled

by mechanical devices, cliches, and a bland style. I appreciate the financial problems of hack writers, but it seems to me that there are hacks in all fields who still manage to turn out better performances overall than hack fictioneers. Tubb has the ability and imagination to write a much better book than this, and that he has not done it suggests to me that he lacks discipline.

The Bane of Kanthos by Alex Dain is marred by an old-fashioned sense of timing. Robert E. Howard might manage to have his hero pursued by headhunters through the Amazon wilds on page one, find a lost city on page two, and plunge into a mythic world on page three, but today this sort of thing is a bit much. The writing is fine, the action nicely drawn; but not for me.

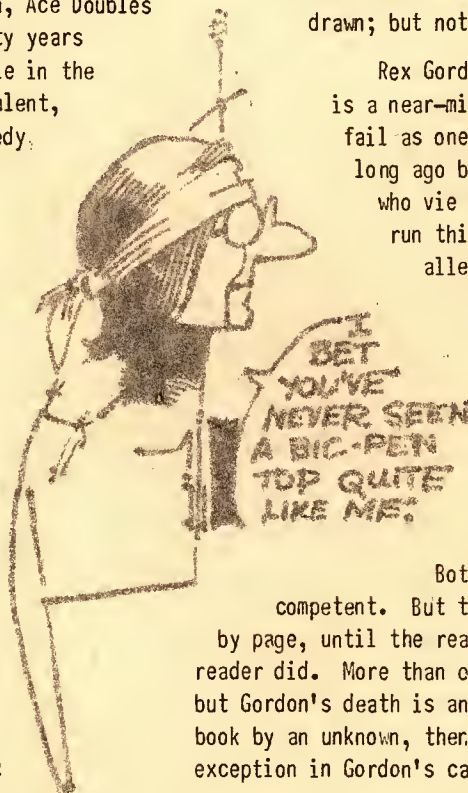
Rex Gordon's The Yellow Fraction (not a Double) is a near-miss. Perhaps it is two successes that fail as one. On the world of Arcon, populated long ago by Earthmen, there are three factions who vie for power. The Blues and the Greens run things, and persecute the Yellows who are allegedly cowards for baulking at settling the planet in the first place. Student rebel Len Thomas does his thing and finds himself enmeshed in the intrigues of Arcon. Parallel with this well-written narrative the behind-the-scenes story of Arcon power is told in memos, transcripts and memoirs.

Both stories are interesting. Both are competent. But together they dilute one another, page by page, until the reader loses all interest. At least this reader did. More than one major writer has died in this trap, but Gordon's death is an honorable one. Rarely do I dislike a book by an unknown, then buy his next one but I will make an exception in Gordon's case. A lot of promise.

I will not buy Larry Maddock's next book. His The Time Trap Gambit is long and dull. Hannibal Fortune, agent of the Temporal Entropy Restructure and Repair Agency, goes back in time to thwart the evil doings of a master evil doer. At least, I think he did. The book rambled on for fifty pages going no place and, when I glanced ahead, was still going no place, so I tossed it aside. Ugh!

Donald A. Wolheim's Men on the Moon, a 1958 anthological stinker, is back with a new introduction that says nothing of value, and an appendix of "immortal words" on the moonlanding by everyone he could get hold of. For some inane reason, he chose to waste their time having them comment on a statement by I.F. Stone (a lefty Drew Pearson) which is typical ego-maniacal garbage. The writers' comments amount to: "Well, I don't exactly agree with Mr. Stone but I would defend to the death his right to say...whatever it was he said," and "Oh, yeah, I thought the moon landing was socko!" And (oh, yeah) the stories are awful.

Finally, we descend to Perry Rhodan, who has made so much goddamn money Ayn Rand reads him. #4 in the series, two short





novels, is Invasion From Space...and it ain't that bad, baby!

I've read a lot worse.

Perry Rhodan is a Terran superhero, whose Third Power boys (from their secret headquarters: somewhere in Mongolia) challenge the evil might of alien invaders. It is old-fashioned, crude, and unreadable to most of us, but I think the kids would like it.

The Gray Morrow cover is nostalgic. Study it closely, then quietly walk away.

The funny thing is I feel no contempt for any of these books. Wollheim's anthology annoys me, but it is understandable. The others are on many levels of almost-good almost-awful, but I think all of them have readers out there somewhere, who will profit from the experience of reading them. Even on the most rudimentary levels, SF is a literature of ideas, and these books, even the bad ones, will generate ideas in those who read them.



THE SWORD SWALLOWER by Ron Goulart—Dell 8442 (1970) 60¢  
Reviewed by Bruce R. Gillespie

Jolson made a faint hunkering motion, his face blurring...Jolson was old, in his eighties, crosshatched with thin wavery wrinkles.... Jolson's body shuddered for an instant and he was himself.

Like some very magic genie, Ben Jolson of the Chameleon Corps can assume any shape he wishes. He always changes shape with the least possible fuss and the greatest number possible of laconic comments. With Jolson's puzzled side-kick we can only complain:

"Do I ever," asked Jennifer, "get to see you as yourself, as Ben Jolson?"

"Afterwards," said Jolson.

We might be forgiven for thinking that Ron Goulart wants us to consider whether there is a "real" Ben Jolson. We might ask at the same time whether the question matters. The hero of The Sword Swallower can escape from any situation, change into the most uncomfortable of shapes, and accomplish any mission asked of him. This is a fairy-tale for adults, where the hero's welfare is assured, and the only possible interest in the novel might rest in the means of the hero's triumph, and the possible justice of his cause.

Goulart's novel is not quite as traditional as that. Goulart spins for Jolson a large number of laconic epigrams, at least one a page. They are to keep the reader "entertained", so the reader must either roar or grimace at:

Jolson tied the groggy Rover, gagged him, and left him wrapped in a white animal skin before the simulated fireplace. Rover was developing a pink rash on his arms and face. Sometimes you got side effects with too many truth drugs injected at once.

"What's the length of my stay at Nepenthe likely to be?"

"We've booked you... in for a week... though we'd like results as soon as you can get them... The place costs ten thousand dollars a week, Jolson. We had to siphon some money out of the political Espionage Office's recreation fund to pay your tab."

"There goes the hot lunch program."

Billed as a debonair, slightly modest super-hero, Jolson makes assorted asides about the position of debonair, slightly modest super-heroes:

Standing, Jolson finished off his mate.

"I'm settling into things more now, Mac. Middle age comes on early in this Barnum climate. I'm almost thirty-one, mellowing."

and

She smiled, a quiet smile. "Ben Jolson. One time on Peregrine you posed as the leader of a band of desert raiders, did it for two months longer than your assignment called for. I think that's a romantic side many Chameleon Corps men don't share."

"Desert air is good for your sinuses," said Jolson.

Unfortunately, that is about all there is to the book. Jolson has been given a very simple assignment—to find the mysterious "Group A" who have kidnapped some diplomats and taken them to the cemetery planet, Esperanza. Jolson never has any particular difficulty in locating nasty criminals when he wants to, so we find it hard to think of a good reason why such a simple assignment should take 156 pages.

For a start, this procedure gives Goulart a chance to tell some more jokes. Worse still, there are satirical jokes, or what Goulart likes to think of as satirical jokes. There is a planet full of tombstones: sounds like a good symbol of something. Let's make it a symbol of USA, or better still, California. Make all the heavies "symbolic" characters as well, to represent the full flower of decadent bourgeois culture. You can't loose, especially if it all sounds like the script for a TV episode of THE AVENGERS.





And, if he hadn't muffed it, Ron Goulart would have had a winner. The formula worked in the original novelette version of the story, for instance. Goulart includes some superb vignettes while barely pausing to pat himself on the back: Son Brewster, the pop singer who protests too much:

Son tugged at one of his white braids, sucked his tongue. Sitting down near Rev. Cockspur, he began to sing. "When I went walkin' into the Free Barn-um Information Library this mornin' they tol' me my book was three days overdue, hey. What kind of sod-kickin' universe is it when things like that can-a happen to a man."

and Rev. Cockspur, who really wants to carry out an effective ministry:

"It brought me much closer to them. To press even nearer I started joining the kids on drug experiences. So, now I've reached a position where I can really communicate with them and I'm an alcoholic, a drug addict, a prescription-drug fiend and I'm living with two albino nymphomaniacs in a third-floor ghetto down the street."

Jolson tasted his brown ale, drank. "A setback," he said.

There's lots of this sort of thing in the book, including long, well-sustained anecdotes: the very odd group of grave-robbers who detain Jolson during the last stages of his journey; the arch-criminal Alberto who is so astonished when Jolson beats him at Monopoly that he lets him escape.

But there's the problem. Scrub away the jokes, and all you have is a very dull piece of huff-and-puff and capture-and-escape, often for chapters on end. The flamboyant figures are not symbols for anything, but merely crooks who fall before Jolson's omnipotence. Goulart forms no pattern in the jokes, so that they might really inform us about the society that he hoped to satirize.

The Sword Swallower is an overlong TV script which reduces glittering characters to cosh men, and an interesting figure to just another TV hero. Ron Goulart will do really well when he starts to write novels. In the meantime you may enjoy parts of this book.



TIME ROGUE by Leo P. Kelly—Lancer 74627, 75¢

Reviewed by Paul Walker

I am told Leo P. Kelly is something-or-other at McGraw-Hill, and I know he has written in a few fanzines, published a few novels, and earned the affection of people for whom I have some affection myself. So it is without hesitation (and with outrageous bias!) that I announce the "must-readability" of his Time Rogue.

If you are curious to know what I regard as "New Wave," this is it! The story of a rebel from the future who invades the "present" to possess six people he intends to use

against his "Establishment." So the book begins with Caleb, the most evil of revolutionaries, utterly ruthless and devoid of compassion for the people he torments. And the characters—Rose, brilliant, aging, haunted by the death of her sister in a concentration camp; Barry, the juvenile chess master, one of the best portraits of an adolescent in SF; and Sa-Mid, the black militant, one of the most credible Negro characters in a long time. The others are as well done. They breathe, and it is their breathing Mr. Kelly is concerned with; not the gadgetry, not the "head-em-off-at-the-pass" clichés—but the way people feel!

Kelly tells a story of many characters, from many different viewpoints, and he does it well. I found it compulsively readable. There is suspense, action, and wonder. And flaws, too. Kelly stumbles into awkwardness here and there, but the hell with it! Leo P. Kelly is a writer worth giving a try more than once. TIME ROGUE—LEO P. KELLY—GET IT.



SPACEPAW by Gordon R. Dickson—Berkley S1715, 75¢

Reviewed by Wayne Connelly

Do publishers ever read? The attractive cover painting of Gordon Dickson's Spacepaw is dominated by a grim-visaged Great Ape, and the blurb informs us that the planet Dilbia has "gorilla-like inhabitants."

This is all very strange, especially considering that Mr. Dickson's Dilbians are ursine—he describes them as "bear-like," and the animal images used refer to Kodiaks and Grizzlies. There is one reference to an ape, however. It occurs on the second page, so presumably the publisher has read that far. But, as one might expect, he has mis-read; for "Ape" is the human protagonist's old school nickname, in deference to his hairy chest.

I suppose the sins of the publisher ought not to be visited upon the hapless author—and, Mr. Dickson has written an excellent comic novel.

Superficially, our anti-hero, Bill or Pick-and-Shovel as he is tagged, is a Swiftian 'gull' in a land of shaggy and diminutive Brobdingnagians. He is an unhappy young Engineer redirected from the glory of a Terraforming operation and assigned to Project Spacepaw (Helping Hand from the Stars) on Dilbia as an instructor in the rudiments of primitive agriculture.

Once among the Dilbians his life becomes a series of misadventures, all seemingly fated to render unavoidable a 'David and Goliath' struggle with a ten foot bandit chieftan, aptly named Bone Breaker. Actually, though, Pick-and-Shovel is a genuine hero in the peculiar Dilbian sense; just as the female interest in the story, a fellow Shorty (human) named Dirty Teeth (why else would she brush them every day?), is an ideal of Dilbian womanhood.

The point behind all this rambling is that there are two plots in Spacepaw. The apparent, almost fairy-tale, surface story is a subterfuge. Beneath this tricky piece of obfus-



cation we have a tortuous spy-plot. Would you believe our Lemuel is an 'unconscious agent'?

Spacepaw isn't a witty novel. The comedy is not satiric or intellectual; there isn't the splash and dash of mind. Its comical mode is that of humor: slow, objective, gentle, and warmly tolerant—even the arch-villain is so in the style of the Big Bad Wolf; and, at that, his end is not in a pot, but a pout.

Spacepaw contains, in its space-age animal fable, a few laughs at human foibles and quirks, and an occasional chuckle; but the one thing Mr. Dickson never does, is snigger.



THE WEAPON SHOPS OF ISHER by A.E. Van Vogt—Ace 87855, 60¢  
Reviewed by Paul Walker

When this book was first published as an Ace Double back in 1951, it was pure science-fiction. Today it is science-fiction no longer. Van Vogt's world is so elaborately whimsical; his science is so mythic; his characters so many and so epic; that what once delighted readers as science-fiction is now pure fantasy. But capable of as much delight as ever.

"New Wavers" may grumble in their beers, but I have fond memories of Van Vogt's Null-A and Slan and re-reading this one brought them all back to me. No one but Van Vogt could dare to write a book like Weapon Shops and get away with it, no one could make his preposterousness so entertaining, no one could make his limitations as a writer appear as strengths.

If you do not know the story (and after re-reading it, I'm not sure I know it!) it would be pointless to describe even some of it. Hero follows hero; incident piles on incident; the plot thickens until you cannot see your hand before your face; and suddenly it is all over! You are not quite sure where you have been or why; but you know you had a ball.



ALWAYS THE BLACK KNIGHT by Lee Hoffman—Avon S417, 60¢  
Reviewed by Darrell Schweitzer

This curious novel begins in a misleading way—the opening scene is a joust (with mechanical horses) and the reader is led to believe he is into a pseudo-medieval adventure...only to be confronted with a sociological SF story (not fantasy as it was blurbed in FANTASTIC).

There are two main themes: the conflict between romantic ideals and harsh reality, and the morality of suppressing normal human tendencies in order to keep people out of trouble.

The novel is set on the planet Elva where the hero Kyning (no first name) finds

himself stranded after losing the fake joust in the opening scene and being seriously injured in the process. Forced to live among the Elvans he finds that they are kept in line by drugs in a popular drink and by subliminal messages over the TV. Everything is run by a computer and the people are passive, uncreative, gullible, etc.

Kyning starts an underground, first by introducing romantic literature (there is no fiction on Elva) and then by taking a small group off the drugs and teaching them swordsmanship and the ideals of chivalry (which he doesn't believe in himself).

Kyning's roommate Chai Riker is the primary subject. Chai is first afraid, then naive and enthusiastic, then power mad and ungrateful. They plan a coup but when Kyning realizes he has created a monster and there will be bloodshed he backs out and informs an official (who when told of the history of Elva, decides to stop the drugging, etc.).

Finally Kyning kills Riker in a duel and dies of the wounds received. The revolutionaries surrender to him, the people are freed, etc.

As the novel reaches its climax and all is revealed, interesting questions are raised:

Is life without the drugs that much better? As soon as Riker is off them he becomes a maniac, a killer, and he would have been a tyrant if not slain. The Elvans previously had known no strife, no violence, none of the things we consider wrong. Are the literature which Kyning admits to be escape and the ideals which he knows to be false that important? Should creativity be sacrificed in order to be rid of aggression?

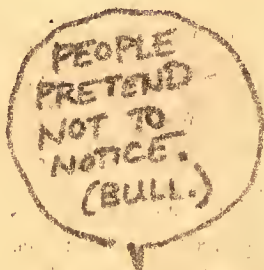
These are important questions. They are material for an important novel, perhaps someone's masterpiece. Unfortunately, Always the Black Knight is not that masterpiece. It is competent, readable, but never very involving (the characters are flat). It will probably not be remembered very long, unless Miss Hoffman, who is new to the SF field (though an experienced writer of westerns) produces something better.



DEFOLIATION by Thomas Whiteside—Ballantine 01870-2, 95¢  
Reviewed by Paul Walker

An absurd price for a non-book of multiple appendices (reports, coupons for your congressmen), but worth every penny for Thomas Whiteside's brilliant journalistic essay on the military use of defoliants in Vietnam.

If you are unfamiliar with the NEW YORKER style, this is a fine introduction. If you are ignorant of herbicides—the kind used in Vietnam may be found on you food—





this is a very readable nightmare.



ZOTHIQUE by Clark Ashton Smith—Ballantine. 95¢ Edited by Lin Carter  
Reviewed by Glen Cook

Lin Carter, in his introduction to Zothique, states that Clark Ashton Smith was one of the three most important and influential writers of the "Golden Age" of WEIRD TALES.

Perhaps. Smith's stories have seen little circulation since while the tales of the other two great names, Howard and Lovecraft, have stayed with us. Why?

Damon Knight in a letter of a year ago noted that Sword & Sorcery stories generally suffer from a lack of plot, or from weakness thereof. Of the sixteen stories in Zothique, not a one struck me as having a sound plot. They remind me uncomfortably of my own earliest stories—golden ideas banged out on the typewriter the moment they occurred, with little concern for creating a whole and solid structure.

These stories by Smith are dark paintings mostly concerned with death: with the raising of the dead for wicked purposes, with the corruption of corpses (Smith invariably lingers long over the decay of bodies, to the point where one wishes the man would get on with his tale), with the anger of disturbed spirits.

Don't look for characterization in this book. Characters have names, and sometimes one discovers the colors of their hair, but that's it.

Style. The book carries a Bradbury and a Howard blurb lauding the style. I suspect Bradbury made his comment when he was sixteen. If ever an award is given for purple prose and prolixity, Smith is awarded my vote. Open the book to any page (I do so) and pick a paragraph: Page 187, last para: "Remembering the scarce credible thing that Uldor had told him, Zobal wasted no arrows upon the monks. His bow ready, he waited for full sight of Ujuk beyond the seething rout that wrangled malignantly back and forth above the fallen pike-bearer. In the eddying of the pack, he aimed swiftly at the looming incubus, who seemed wholly intent on that fiendish struggle, as if directing it in some wise without spoken word or ponderable gesture. Straight and true the arrow sped with an exultant singing; and good was the sorcery of Amdok, who had wrought it: for Ujuk reeled and went down, his horrid fingers tearing vainly at the shaft which was driven nigh to its fledging of eagle quills in his body."

That's mild, picked at random. There's much worse. Is it any wonder WEIRD TALES died? I could tear at this book for a week, but I'll let it Rest In Peace in some shadowed, profounder, innominate wasteland whence goes the maggoty purple corpses of pulp era fiction. Sorry, Lin, but I think the editor blew it with this selection.



SWORDS AND DEVILTRY by Fritz Leiber—Ace 79170, 75¢ (1970)  
Reviewed by Fred Patten

This is chronologically the first volume in the adventures of the Gray Mouser and Fafhrd, telling of what the two were like in their youth and how they came to meet and become companions in Lankmar.

The book consists of three novelettes, one for each of the characters and one for their

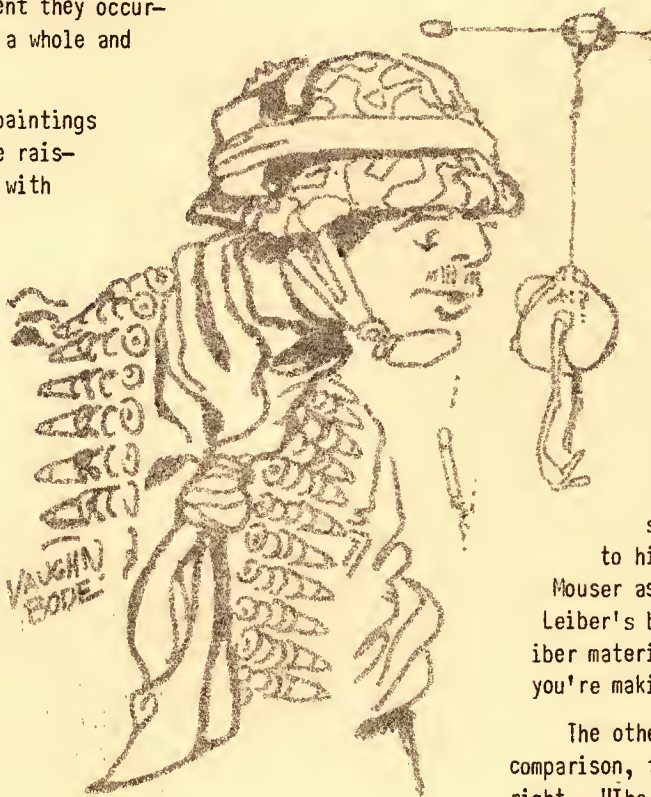
meeting. The best is the first, "The Snow Women", less for what it says about Fafhrd that for its eerily convincing picture of a strange, numbing, deadly, matriarchal society in the northern Cold Wastes.

Leiber builds it up slowly, detail by detail, until Fafhrd's final breaking with it at the climax seems more dramatic (and dangerous) than a physical battle with most stock s&s monsters would've been. Fafhrd appears here as strangely intellectual, set next to his tribespeople rather than to the Mouser as usual. This is not only one of Leiber's better stories, it's "Hugo" caliber material—consider it next year when you're making your nominations.

The other two stories are letdowns by comparison, though good enough in their own right. "The Unholy Grail", telling of the Mouser's teenage apprenticeship to a wizard and why he switched to thievery instead, is too shallow and quickly paced to really come alive. The characters seem more to be puppets being manipulated by the author to make the story exciting in the right places than to be independent entities acting of their own intelligence and free will.

"Ill Met in Lankmar" also fails to be convincing, for all its action and color. The meeting of Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser seems too casual and passing to hold two such lone wolves together long enough for a deeper relationship to develop, and both still seem too young to successfully take on the omnipotent Thieves Guild plus a mighty wizard, and come out ahead.

Viewed as a whole, it's rather too bad that the best story





is at the beginning of the book instead of at the end, but that one story is worth the 75¢ all by itself—and if you wait a day or two before reading the others, they won't seem so poorly by comparison.

**SWORDS AGAINST DEATH** by Fritz Leiber—Ace 79150, 75¢ (1970)  
Reviewed by Fred Patten

This is reportedly the last of the planned volumes of the adventures of the Gray Mouser and Fafhrd, though more may be added of new stories to fit between the events chronicled in the existing five volumes, from time to time in the future. It's the second in the chronological order of the series, and consists mostly of the earliest stories written, taken from the first Mouser-Fafhrd collection, Gnome Press' Two Sought Adventure, with a couple of new stories added and some revisions made to bring the whole into line with the current overall plot frame.

These older stories are, on the whole, the best part of the whole series. They seem more well-rounded than the newer ones, and have more of an air of the eldritch than the pixie. (That's not to say that the newer ones don't have their good points; "Bazaar of the Bizarre" has one of the best character-portraits of the Mouser of any of them.)

But I can't help feeling that if these stories had all been written 20 or 30 years ago, they'd've been perceptibly better. Leiber may be a more professional, smooth writer these days, but the stories lost something when he took out the little touches of fey detail that added so much while saying so little. Consider these two descriptions of Ningauble of the Seven Eyes, this one written most recently:

"After a bit it seemed to each of them that he could see seven small, faint green glows swimming in the dark there and lazily changing position, like seven fireflies hovering, but with their light steadier and far more diffuse, as if each firefly wore a cloak made of several layers of gauze."

and this one written over 30 years ago:

"Fafhrd stirred himself and moved forward, sustaining the scrutiny of the majority of the eyes, all six of which the Northman considered artfully manipulated puppet-eyes. The seventh no man had seen, or boasted of having seen, save the Mouser, who claimed it was Odin's other eye, stolen from sagacious Mimer—this not because he believed it, but to irk his Northern comrade."

The mystery of Ningauble's most important eye could've made a good adventure in itself, probably; now it's simply easier to describe a character having Seven Eyes as having seven eyes.

stories, when it looked as though the death of UNKNOWN WORLDS meant the death of the Mouser-Fafhrd saga as well, Leiber wrote: "They ventured from periods outside recorded history into the times of the first Caesars and the Macedonian Empires." ... "and the saga of how the Gray Mouser and Fafhrd of the Blue Eyes came to the innermost vaults of the City of the Forbidden God and there met death in the moment of victory in no common fashion, was begun."

Today all stories are set in the Age of Nehwon, which is simpler than explaining why and how Ningauble &/or the Elder Gods should send them adventuring to different ages; and as to the series having a definite, sad conclusion—why, that just hasn't been brought up again in the last 25 years. (In comparison, John Jakes, in his introduction to Brak the Barbarian versus the Mark of the Demons [an all-time loser of a title], says, "In fact the final Brak tale, which will appear soon or late, depending, is already outlined and somewhat melodramatically sealed up and locked safely away, in case the author should be prematurely dispatched by a rabid dragon or some similar menace." An uncommercial bit of sentiment, probably, but it is nice to find that an author cares that much about his character and his fantasy world to make sure that a satisfactory climax to the saga won't go lacking, even if it's not to be published in time for him to profit from the sale!)

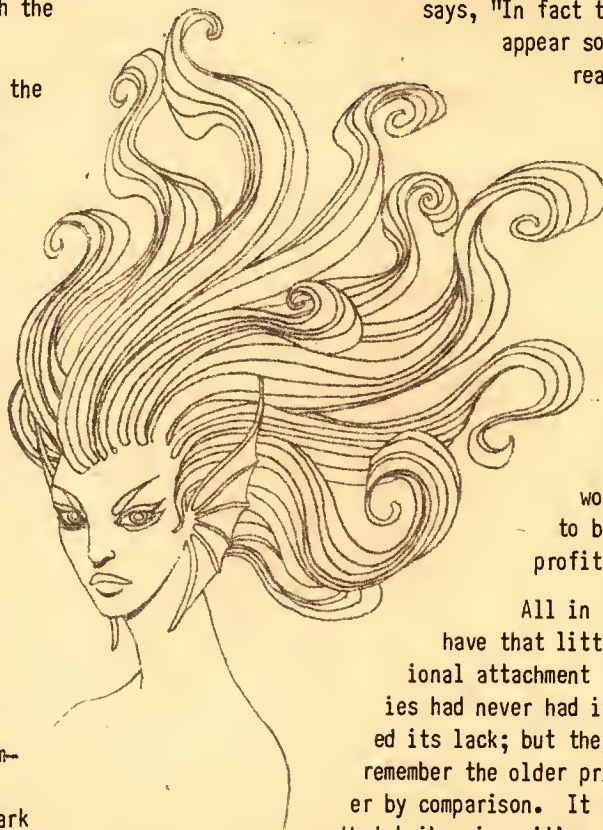
All in all, Leiber's stories no longer have that little bit more that shows his emotional attachment to his characters. If the stories had never had it, we probably wouldn't've noticed its lack; but they did, once, and those of us who remember the older printings find the newer ones paler by comparison. It all comes down to the feeling that Leiber is writing under his ability, and that the newer stories are a bit less good than they should be and could be with just a little more care.

Editor's NOTE: the third Ace book in this series is Swords in the Mist (H-90, 60¢) containing "The Cloud of Hate" (1963); "Lean Times in Lankhmar" (1959); "Their Mistress, the Sea" new, written for this book (1968); "When the Sea King's Away" (1960); "The Wrong Branch" new, written for this book (1968); "Adept's Gambit" (1947, 1964).

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In 1946, in the introduction to his first collection of





THE BEST FROM FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION—15th Series, edited by Edward L. Ferman—Ace 05454, 75¢

Reviewed by Paul Walker

In his brief introduction, Ed Ferman remarks: "For fifteen years, the magazine has been edited not for teenagers or urban males, or homemakers, but instead for those in each and every group who still find a bit of magic in the printed word."

The most accurate thing I can say of Mr. Ferman's anthology of "Best" stories is coincidentally the highest praise I can bestow: it is not the "Best," but only typical of the quality of the magazine itself.

Recommended: Robert J. Tilley's "Something Else," and Hal R. Moore's "Sea Bright."

Especially Recommended: Fritz Leiber's "Four Ghosts in Hamlet," and Zenna Henderson's "No Different Flesh."



AFTER DOOMSDAY by Poul Anderson—Ballantine 01888-5, 75¢  
GUARDIANS OF TIME by Poul Anderson—Ballantine 01890-7, 75¢

Reviewed by Paul Walker

In After Doomsday a crew of Earthmen return to find Earth destroyed, and they set out to find the culprits. It is a short novel, but it gives Anderson time to do everything he does so badly. Of course, this is its second printing, so you can see what my opinion's worth.

Guardians of Time is a collection of four F&SF novelets, from 1955 to 1960, recounting the adventures of Manse Everard of the Time Patrol. Everything Anderson does badly in the novel, he does well in the novelets. His psychology is simple-minded, but his history and adventure is very interesting. My favorite was "Brave to be a King," with "The Only Game in Town" a close second. Compare these to Silverberg's Up the Line with an open mind.

(Amusing cover on the novel by Paul Lehr that perceives the essence of Andersonian romance.)



MATRIX by Douglas R. Mason—Ballantine 01816, 75¢

Reviewed by Ted Pauls

If this novel were a little worse, I could derive some pleasure from writing a two-page dissection of it. As it is, it is simply too mediocre and dull to deserve more than a couple paragraphs.

Matrix is a revolt-against-the-computer-that-has-enslaved-mankind novel. It takes place several centuries in the future, in an over-populated, rigidly stratified society of self-contained cities in which power is effectively in the hands of the central computer of each city.

The vast majority of the population of each of these countless cities consists of "spanners," people who live a normal span of life, lead a highly regimented existence and are reflexively passive and obedient. A small upper class of

"biomech", specially selected individuals whose bodies have been rebuilt to guarantee them at least triple normal life span, leads a more leisured and privileged (i.e., somewhat less controlled) existence. At the top of the pyramid sits Matrix, the central computer, and its android and robot henchmen.

The Matrix of the city in which most of this novel's action takes place is engaged in the project of linking up with all the other cities' central computers, to create a super-intellect beyond imagining. Mankind, both spanners and biomechs, being then obsolete and irrelevant, will be exterminated. Already the initial phase of this extermination has been put into operation. Joe Dill, an administrative official of unusual ability and rebellious nature, discovers this program and, uniting the communities of humans outside the computerized cities, leads a successful revolution.

There is some effective writing, particularly a few of the action scenes, but in general this novel is a failure. Characterization is uniformly inspired and uninspiring; there is no point during which any of the participants come alive as human beings. There is little originality either in the background or the plot, and no depth, either philosophical or emotional. The writing shows little more than simple competence. In short, as I said at the outset, basically mediocre and dull.



AT THE EDGE OF THE WORLD by Lord Dunsany, edited by Lin Carter—Ballantine 01879, 95¢

Reviewed by Paul Walker

This is not a book that you read. It is a book that you have lived with all your life and remember at odd moments, not as a book, but as an experience as rich and exquisitely exotic as the stories themselves. It is not a book; it is a state of mind. It is not about ideas; it is an idea. It is not about emotions; it is a singular emotion. And even after you have read all the stories it is a single instant in which they all flashed in and out of your mind, leaving behind a residue of beauty.

These are prose poems. Parables, epiphanies, tales. Heretical, pagan, sensual, ironic. Lord Dunsany loved his people and their lands. They are not superhumans, either virtuously or villainously. They are distilled essences of foolishness and vanity; of conceit and stupidity and, also, of courage and endurance, or love and beauty. These are poems of longing for the best and the most beautiful dreams a man is capable of dreaming.

Read them slowly; speak the words; flow with them. Then realize that you have not read them at all, and carry the book around for the rest of your life.





# And Then I Read....

by.....the.....editor

There is an astounding amount of superior science fiction being published. We may be in a new Golden Era, this time characterized by the fine novels published by the softcover and hardcover houses.

David G. Compton's latest Ace Special, Chronocules, inevitably brings to mind a comparison with Robert A. Heinlein's latest book, I Will Fear No Evil.

Both stories involve very old men who are afraid of dying, who are determined, if possible, to cheat death by means of chancey scientific experiments.

In Heinlein's book there is a brain transplant. In Compton's time travel is the hope.

But where Heinlein has written an appalling travesty of science fiction, a misshapen, maladroitness failure, Compton has wrought a near-masterpiece which (with his other recent books, Synthajoy, The Steel Crocodile, and The Silent Multitude) establishes him now, surely, as one of the best science fiction writers in the world.

A flaw in the book, a somewhat confusing device, is the curious Prologue in which the author details how a mysterious, indestructible book came to him by way of its explosive appearance in the kitchen of a local 18-year-old hermit-like moron named Roses Varco.

The author asserts he has read the book and essentially translated it into novel form.

The novel that follows is the story of a privately financed time travel research project, its staff and above all—of a 38-year-old Roses Varco, the man who found the book in the first place.

As often is the case with time travel plots, the difficult paradoxes involved cause some puzzlement for the reader, especially in this case at the end.

Compton claims one cannot travel backward in time to a point previous to the time-jump forward. It is 'philosophically impossible' he says...and it solves an inconvenient plot problem to have that problem disintegrate explosively while the mysterious book survives.

This involuted story beginning-ending is an awkward, almost too-clever situation, a kind of Klein bottle of a plot

that is in a way an encumbrance to the main body of the novel, which is the meat and bone and marrow of the human relationships of the research project's people.

Compton writes with beautiful unhurried sureness; his small touches of action always deepen character or background, his dialogue is true, and one willingly gives his plausible 1980ish future slang and culture instant credibility.

Almost every page provides an illustration of Compton's skill:

Manny Littlejohn examined Roses and his home with his usual analytical eye.

"Is he dangerous?" he asked.

"On the contrary," said the coordinating architect, "he seems to be exceedingly gentle."

"Inquiries have been made?"

"The police in St. Kinnow give him a very favorable report."

"So." Manny Littlejohn ran his finger along the edge of the table and examined the result without nausea. "You waste my time. We build a village so we need a village idiot. Put him on the payroll."

And—

A rosy village bobby appeared almost at once. A man in friendly braces with ruthless, handcuff-gray eyes. He stood to attention.

"Sir! Lovely morning. Sir!"

And—

David Silberstein came down the steps from the laboratory. She knew it was him without turning her head: his tread was measured, that of a man who found the movement of one buttock against the other faintly indecent and did what he could to prevent it.

And—

"Would you like us to sex, David?"

In this context the forename was permissible. And the question was quite open-ended, committing neither of them. But he writhed minutely, like a child pretending it wasn't ticklish.

"Sex? How you do jump about, Liza. I don't really think..." And he looked at his watch. My God, he actually looked at his watch. So devious,



so incapable of simply saying no thank you. As if it mattered.

David Silberstein is the overall administrator of the project, its village, its staff. Liza is a too-intelligent, subtly emotionally disturbed research assistant who incredibly (to her, to others) falls in love with Roses, seduces him and is traumatized by his mindless, brutal, sexual assault. She seeks and finds revenge.

Manny Littlejohn, 'The Founder', is pushing the time-travel experiments ruthlessly; his time is running out. So, too, is time running out for the world as ecological disaster and an epidemic of mutated enteric fever combine to bring added pressure on the research center; the public and consequently the politicians in panic turn against all secret research projects.

The action, the interweavings of personality and character, all subtly interact around Roses Varco, and inevitably, so beautifully inevitably, he is used as the final human guinea pig and is blindly sent 57 years into the future.

Where someone is waiting for him.

Where there is murder and psychosis waiting to happen in an unexpected way, in an unexpected era...so that Roses, with the indestructable book in his arms, can be shunted backward in time.... (Ace 10480, 75¢)

+++

Larry Niven has been building a solid base of good, integrated science fiction for the last few years...fleshing out his future of mankind and our alien neighbors in a planned series of short stories and novelets.

Now, in Ringworld (Ballantine 02046, 95¢) he has written a full-length novel of impressive scope and disciplined imagination that will surely be nominated for the Nebula and Hugo awards.

Larry's central character is Louis Wu, a 200-year-old man whose body is still young, thanks to boosterspace. Every forty or so years Louis cannot take the crowding and artificiality of civilization; he must Get Away From It All on what he calls a "sabbatical," an adventure in or outside of known space (that bubble of explored, colonized sun systems uninhabited by mankind or known alien races).

He is approached by a puppeteer, a member of an alien race who rarely personally contact men. The puppeteers are convinced there is no

life after death, thus they are total cowards whose actions are dictated by their desire to avoid harm at all costs.

Two hundred years before the "now" of Ringworld, the puppeteers had sent a reckless human to the core of the galaxy in a special faster-than-light ship. He had returned with the information that the core suns were all going nova, sending a deadly flare of radiation outward that would reach "known space" thousands of years in the future.

The puppeteers immediately began a mass migration toward a neighboring galaxy.

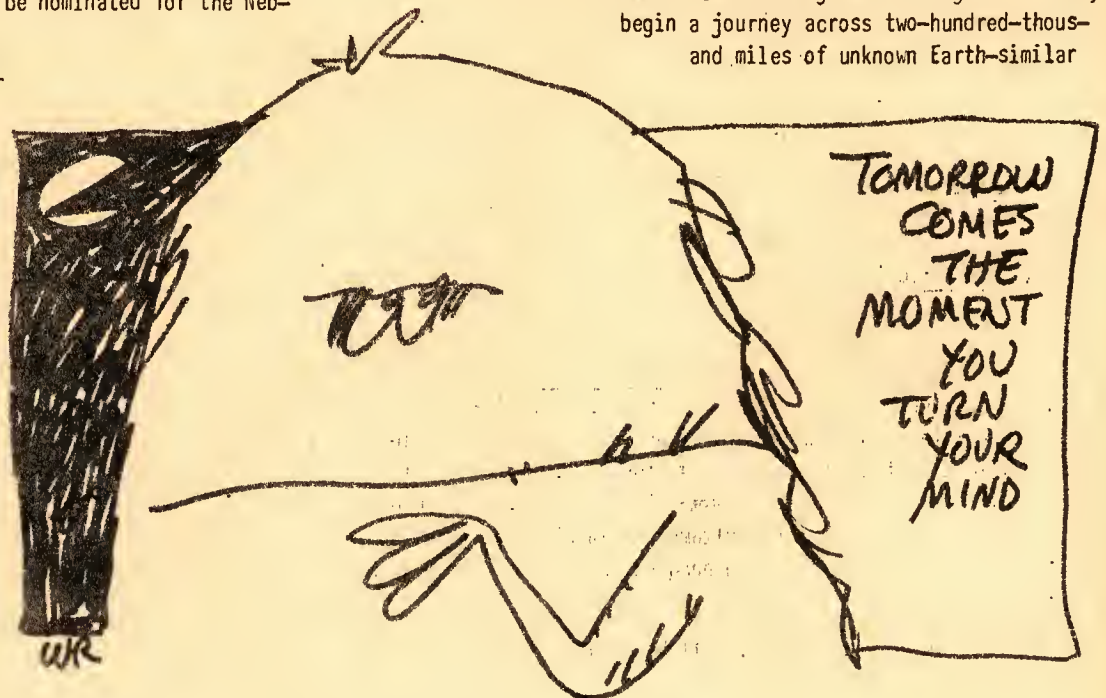
But now they need another probably dangerous job done and choose one of their race whom they consider insane (no one but a crazy puppeteer would be willing to get close to the dangerous mankind or the kzinti, a race of ferocious eight-foot-tall cat-like creatures) to assemble a crew and investigate a mysterious "artifact" that they have discovered on their migration out of their home galaxy.

The crew is with difficulty assembled: Louis Wu; an orange-furred kzinti named Speaker-to-Animals; a 20-year-old Earth girl named Teela Brown; and the "insane" puppeteer.

The "artifact" is the Ringworld...and here Larry Niven has created and made credible, somehow, a structure so HUGE that it requires constant detailing and reinforcing of the image to make the reader accept it—to stretch the mind enough, gradually, to encompass it.

The Ringworld is something new to science fiction. It took a marvelous leap of imagination to conceive it, and a lot of guts to use it. But Larry brought it off, and obviously plans to use it again. The last lines of the book promise that.

The story develops its major impact and interest with the crew's crash-landing on the Ringworld. They begin a journey across two-hundred-thousand miles of unknown Earth-similar





territory toward one of the thousand-mile-high rims of the endless ribbon-like metal-bottomed land that stretches around its sun!

They encounter human-like people who have sunk into near-barbarism amid the ruins of a once-magnificent civilization.

Speaking through one of the characters, Larry makes the point that the reason the Ringworld civilization could not be rebuilt was because there were no metals to be mined in the ground which was only 40 feet deep and bottomed by the incredibly tough Ringworld "pan." The space-side underside of the ribbon-like world is contoured, like a relief-map in reverse, showing the bottom of rivers, oceans, and indented for hills, ridges, mountains....

(But the critical point of resources-poor land is interesting in light of the rate which present-day man is using up the resources of our planet. [When it costs \$1,000 to mine and smelt a few pounds of low-grade iron from the last, marginal vein, how many cars will be built?] Is there really an advanced, highly industrialized, space-conquering future in store for us? Or has Larry Niven, and with him most other sf authors, failed to face the bleak probabilities of our real future—vicious wars for control of diminishing oil, iron, bauxite, zinc, tungsten, etc., gradual or swift lowering of the current American-European standard of living, and eventual, permanent civilization at a level only slightly higher than the stone age. Is the sword&sorcery novel the true view of the future? How is that for extrapolation?)

It is slowly realized that Teela Brown, who had been deliberately bred for luck and had been brought along by the manipulative, foresighted puppeteers, is lucky in a way that is dangerously, powerfully, unconsciously selfish.

Basically, Louis Wu, Speaker-to-Animals, Teela and Nessus the puppeteer are spear carriers; they are the eyes and ears and bodies of the reader. The central, overriding interest is the Ringworld, its mysteries, its origins, its ecology.

Yet the crew are individuals, distinct, whole, with some surprising depths. The story takes many surprising human and non-human twists and turns.

Ringworld is simply fine science fiction, an experience in reading you must have. If you have wondered what that old phrase "Sense of Wonder" means—read this book and you'll know. Ringworld inspires it.

+++

I have read Robert Silverberg's Tower of Glass (Scribners, \$5.95) and liked it but felt cheated by it, too. The theme of man-android conflict, the philosophical questions of what-makes-for-humanity, of religion, of godhood...all these and more cried for a book three or four times as long. The picture of the underground Gamma culture was fascinating, a rich bite of what should have been a banquet, but was only a taste. Curse you, Bob Silverberg!

George Zebrowski, of SFWA, will be doing a longer review of the book in a future issue.

+++

It is a sad thing to look at a book one has read a few weeks before and go blank, unable to recall what it was about. That just happened to me with Ron Goulart's The Fire-eater (Ace 28860. 75¢). And I had put it aside originally to read because I had liked his After Things Fell Apart very much.

But, as I type this, as I look at the cover, memory of the story seeps back and I can say it is a routine adventure by an agent named Raker for Soldiers of Fortune, Inc. on a 'controlled development planet' named Esmeralda.

It is a kind of hip sword&sorcery novel. Readable. Moderately enjoyable, now that I remember.

And I find I dog-eared a page to mark a section of narrative I liked. Goulart slips in some heavy stuff even in his pot-boilers:

Raker and his companion have passed a shop being torn up by three young men. Raker and companion enter to stop the destruction.

The big blonde young man sighed through his wide flat nose. "You're like them all. You won't make any effort to communicate with me. I'm a real person, you see. Though I'm a decade younger than either of you and this is a problem, you see?"

"You're the real person who clouted us with pottery," said Raker. "Out now."

"Later," said the blond, "you'll sit around and wonder why you've been put out of your misery. Why you and your old friend there no longer fit in. And the way of it, you see, will be a result of encounters such as this one here today. Why, you see, is because you have made no effort to talk to me. You don't listen, you see. One day, one day soon, we're going to burn all you up. I'm afraid it has to be so. Someday."

"That's right," put in one of the dark young men. He grabbed a vase from a shelf and smashed it at Raker's feet. "You're always pushing in where you don't belong and trying to order us around. You think you can tell us not to experiment with sorcery and not to study the ancient black arts. We're angry. We're on to something pretty special." His thin neck stretched for a moment and his head nodded several quick nods. "We're going to put everyone who doesn't cooperate, everyone who doesn't like us, out of the way."

Willimer nodded back at the three recruits. "Anything else you'd like to say to us?"

"What would be the use?" asked the blond. "Like all older people you refuse to hear. You're like somebody's old mother, you see. The three of us, dear friends, the three of us, and we're only a small segment of a great wave, we're through being patient. We've stored up, you see, a great deal of rage and anger. You're going to get it."

"We're not ready right at this moment," said the dark boy. "We haven't learned the secrets yet. We're barely novices, but we're here and in a year, or perhaps sooner, we'll destroy people like you. People who don't understand what it is to have fun will simply burn away." He kicked out and a stack of earthenware mugs crashed over and made a broken heap.



I have the feeling Goulart was making a point in the above section relevant to the here and now. Of course how you react to that scene depends on whether you are fifteen, thirty-five, or a shopkeeper.

+++

Ballantine has reprinted James White's All Judgement Fled, a good, human, absorbing, suspenseful 'first contact' story. The gradual solving of the puzzle presented by the monster alien spaceship and its deadly alien life-forms by the small band of exploring men is well-done. White was in command all the way. (Ballantine 02016, 95¢)

+++

Spaceship Medic by Harry Harrison is a very good juvenile.

A "milk run" passenger spaceship to Mars is hulled by a meteorite which kills almost all the officers. A young medic is forced to take command, save the ship from a no-return orbit out of the Solar system, find a cure for a fatal disease which was carried by the rock which is embedded in a storage compartment, cope with a mutiny by the passengers...

It moves fast and a ten-year-old should eat it up.

(Doubleday, \$3.95)

+++

I had never read This Immortal by Roger Zelazny before, so when I got hold of a copy of the Ace edition (80691, 60¢) I read it.

I enjoy Zelazny. A lot of reviewers and critics look for deep things in his books, but I'm about convinced that he is primarily an entertainer. He has style and a fine story-teller's sense. This story of a kind of future Gilgamesh, an immortal, skillfully, if dangerously maneuvering to free Earth from domination by an alien hegemony after a disastrous atomic war that raddled its surface with weird mutants and a grotesque culture, is compelling reading.

But I'm a sucker for immortal heroes.

+++

S is for Space is a collection of Ray Brabury short stories originally published by Doubleday in 1966, now reprinted in paperback by Bantam (S5621, 75¢).

The stories: "Chrysalis," "Pillar of Fire," "Zero Hour," "The Man," "Time in Thy Flight," "The Pedestrian," "Hail and Farewell," "Invisible Boy," "Come into My Cellar," "The Million-Year Picnic," "The Screaming Woman," "The Smile," "Dark They Were, and Golden-Eyed," "The Trolley," "The Flying Machine," "Icarus Montgolfier Wright."

+++

Bantam continues to issue Doc Savage books, reprints from the 1930s. The Mental Wizard is #53 (H5556, 60¢); He Could Stop the World is #54 (H5617, 60¢); and The Golden Peril is #55 (H5652, 60¢).

Bantam has also recently issued The Shadow reprints. #6 is Hidden Death (H4884, 60¢); and #7 is Gangdom's Doom (H5413, 60¢).

+++

For God's sake! I almost forgot to stencil my review of Greg Benford's Deeper Than Darkness (Ace 14215, 60¢). It (the review) was hidden under some fanzines I keep promising myself I will loc... I should reserve a half hour per day for fanzine commentary. I should manage to read more. I should manage to write more. I should...

Leaving that whirlpool, let me say a few words about the packaging of Deeper Than Darkness. Ace did not do well by Greg with the cover they gave his novel. It is a Freas painting, but it could have been done by almost any competent artist—simply a saucer-like spaceship zooming around a murky red planet, with two other planets in the colorful "space" background.

The book is packaged to appear to be a formula space opera, which it is not. It is more. It is so much more that I suspect it was considered for the Ace Specials.

The novel is in two sections: it opens with the Hugo-nominated novelette from which the book is titled that was first published in F&SF in 1969.

The novelette is a long flashback which shows the hero, Ling Sanjen, first encountering the results of a Quarn raid on a colony planet of the Mongol-Hindu cultured Earth empire. This society developed after the Riot Wars which destroyed American and European dominance of the world.

The Quarn are 'hermit' aliens who are apparently determined to destroy mankind. Their unpredictable raids result in the colonists going into complete psychotic withdrawal, to become cringing, mindless animals who seek womb-like isolation in tiny, enclosed spaces. This is the Plague spread by the Quarn, which is rotting the strong "togetherness" culture of the Mongol-dominated empire.

Benford details this culture and the Plague extremely well, to the point of making it a frightening reality. He obviously thought out his background thoroughly. He adds human touches; Ling Sanjen is white and is called ofkaipan by the asians, the term corresponding to nigger today. It is this ofkaipanness which saves Ling from the emotionally disruptive plague.

The main section of the novel tells of events which follow a dozen years after Ling's first encounter with the Plague. He had been discredited for warning that the Plague was an emotional disease and advocating quarantine for the convoy of Plague-infected ships he commanded. He had been sent to the Therapy Warrens to live with his family. But his family had all succumbed to the sickness and been sent to the Slots, mere cubbyholes of concrete, thousands per building, to deteriorate and eventually die.

Desperate for officers, Fleet Command picked Ling to be Director of Vedan, a relatively-safe-from-attack planet whose double suns' rare gravity combinations act as a 'flinger' in aiding spaceship acceleration.

But it is on Vedan that the Quarn are operating to key the final dissolution of the Earth empire, and it is Ling whom they have chosen to act as their main lever.

The final pages of the novel are traditional action, sus-



pense, hero-defeats-the-aliens. But with a twist: he defeats the empire, too.

I felt Greg spent a little too much time explaining the scientific aspects of Vedan's suns, the 'Flinger', and the structure of a large starship; for short periods he became a lecturer.

But for a first novel, even as a carpentered novel, it is far better than average, and shows professional writing skills that require only a small amount of polishing. Greg is not sloppy or careless, as Dean Koontz often is, and he has a disciplined, fertile imagination that will produce more and better novels in the future.

Greg Benford is a young writer worthy of respect and attention. I'm looking forward to his next book.

+++

Here I am into a fifth page and I didn't want to be. Well, onward into the Books Received and Noted Dept.

Lancer has published Report on Probability A by Brian Aldiss. If you are curious about the book from discussion in SFR, this is an inexpensive way of getting a copy. (Lancer 74677, 75¢)

The Unknown is a fine collection of stories from UNKNOWN, a legendary pulp magazine edited by John Campbell during 1939-1943. This collection was edited by Donald R. Benson and has a foreword by Isaac Asimov.

The stories are: "The Misguided Halo," by Henry Kuttner; "Prescience," by Nelson S. Bond; "Yesterday Was Monday," by Theodore Sturgeon; "The Gnarly Man," by L. Sprague de Camp; "The Bleak Shore," by Fritz Leiber; "Trouble With Water," by H. L. Gold; "Double and Redoubled," by Malcolm Jameson; "When It Was Moonlight," by Manly Wade Wellman; "Mr. Jinx," by Robert Arthur; "Snulbug," by Anthony Boucher; and "Armageddon," by Fredric Brown. (Pyramid T2326, 75¢)

A fine buy.

Are You Superstitious? by Lore Cowan is a veritable encyclopedia of superstitions. Did you know it is lucky if a martin builds its nest in the eaves or chimney of your house? Did you know that Red, White, Blue, Green, Rose, Violet, and Lilac are good colours, but that Black, Yellow, Purple and Orange are bad colours? Did you know that the Ash tree is regarded with awe, a relic of the legend that the first man was made from ash? Oh, yes. (Pocket Books 75622, 75¢)

In Defense of Ghosts by Herbert B. Greenhouse is a collection of 'documented, authentic stories' which shows that ghosts are often kind, good-natured, even helpful. Oh, yes.

(Essandess Special Editions, a division of Simon & Shuster, Inc. 10399, \$1.00)

The Maracot Deep by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle has been reprinted by Belmont (B75-2056, 75¢) with an introduction by John Dickson Carr. 'Professor Maracot and his crew, marooned at the bottom of the ocean, explore a sunken city of the lost Atlantis...'

Arthur C. Clarke's Against the Fall of Night, what would today be considered a Juvenile, though in the upper age-range of that category, has been re-issued by Pyramid (T2281, 75¢).

Analog 7, a collection of ANALOG stories from the 1966-67 issues of the magazine (with one exception—Keith Laumer's "Last Command"), edited by John W. Campbell, has been published by Belmont (B95-2032, 95¢). It was originally published by Doubleday in hardcover.

The stories: "Aim for the Heel," by John T. Phillifent; "Fiesta Brava," by Mack Reynolds; "Free Vacation," by W. Macfarlane; "The Featherbedders," by Frank Herbert; "Weyr Search," by Anne McCaffrey; "Lost Calling," by Verge Foray; "The Last Command," by Keith Laumer; "Dead End," by Mike Hodous; "There is a Crooked Man," by Jack Wodhams; "Elementary Mistake," by Poul Anderson; "Burden of Proof," by Bob Shaw.

This goes up on my to-read-someday shelf. I trust Campbell to be able to pick the best from his own magazine.

The Devil's Shadow by Clifford Lindsay Alderman is subtitled The Story of Witchcraft in Massachusetts. It has an index and bibliography. It appears to be of value as a reference work. It is short (176 pages) and easy to read.

(Washington Square Press, a division of Simon & Shuster, Inc. 29299, 60¢)

The Moon People by Stanton A. Coblentz is one of the books of the Outlanders series originally published by Thomas Bourgey and Co. and now issued in paperback by Belmont (B75-2024, 75¢)

I commented unfavorably on this series in SFR 40. It is aimed at the Young Juvenile but <sup>not</sup> labeled as such on the cover.

#### MAIL ORDER INFORMATION

ACE BOOKS, 1120 Av. of the Americas, New York, NY 10036. 10¢ per book handling fee.

SIGNET, POB 2310, Grand Central Sta., New York, NY 10017. 10¢

BERKLEY, 200 Madison Av., New York, NY 10016. 10¢ fee.

PAPERBACK LIBRARY, 315 Park Av. South, New York, NY 10010. 10¢

BELMONT BOOKS, 185 Madison Av., New York, NY 10016. 10¢ fee.

MIDWOOD BOOKS, 185 Madison Av., New York, NY 10016. 10¢ fee.

LANCER BOOKS, 1560 Broadway, New York, NY 10036. 10¢ fee.

BALLANTINE BOOKS, 101 fifth Av., New York, NY 10003. 5¢ fee.

AVON BOOKS, 959 Eighth Av., New York, NY 10019. 10¢ fee.

FAWCETT BOOKS, 67 West 44th St., New York, NY 10036. 10¢ fee.

DELL, 750 Third Av., New York, NY 10017. 10¢ fee.

BANTAM, 666 Fifth Av., New York, NY 10019. 10¢ fee.

PYRAMID BOOKS, 9 Garden St., Moonachie, NJ 07074. 10¢ fee.

POCKET BOOKS, 1 West 39th St., New York, NY 10018. 15¢ fee.

MODERN LITERARY EDITIONS (Curtis Books) 641 Lexington Av., New York, NY 10022. 10¢ fee.

WASHINGTON SQUARE PRESS, 1 West 39th St., New York, NY 10018. 15¢ fee.

SIMON & SHUSTER, 630 Fifth Av., New York, NY 10020. No fee.

CHARLES SCRIBNERS SONS, 597 Fifth Av., New York, NY 10017. "

G.P. PUTNAM'S SONS, 200 Madison Av., New York, NY 10016. No fee

WALKER & CO., 720 Fifth Av., New York, NY 10019. No fee.

DOUBLEDAY & CO., 277 Park Av., New York, NY 10017. No fee.

ESSEX HOUSE, BRANDON HOUSE, 7315 Fulton Av., N. Hollywood, Ca. 91605.



# SCIENTIST and Shaman

By

**Greg Benford**

Compiled from two speeches made in 1968 and 1969 and re-  
vised for publication in SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW

I am speaking as a science fiction fan, a physicist and a man who has always been fascinated by the future. It happens that I have lately become a smalltime sf pro, but my feelings toward sf are still those of a fan and are likely to remain so.

I don't really think there is much difference between the two, anyway. I write stories for fun and I write fan stuff for fun and the process seems pretty much the same in both cases.

But no matter what the motivation, I think any writer who takes himself and his work seriously writes from a set of internal assumptions that are usually more visible to others than to himself. Some writers aren't even aware that they exist, and don't much care. Instead they spin out their tales, trying to get at their own private visions. (As a vast generalization, it seems to me authors who work mostly from the conscious make good critics and teachers—example: James Blish, but people who use their subconscious tend to be better writers—example: Roger Zelazny.)

SF is particularly knotty this way. It is the most encompassing form of literature—westerns are limited by setting, mysteries by conventions, and most "mainstream" fiction by the currently popular thesis that character is the proper focus of literature. The fact that sf is so sweeping means that whatever a writer puts onto paper comes from root premises. Nothing is given. Authors aren't allowed the comforting circumstances of a common present or near past, as in most novels and short stories, so they must depend on what they can generalize out of this world, and then follow it into the future. It is an exhausting process. Most sf writers retreat from it and proffer incremental changes along easily-understandable

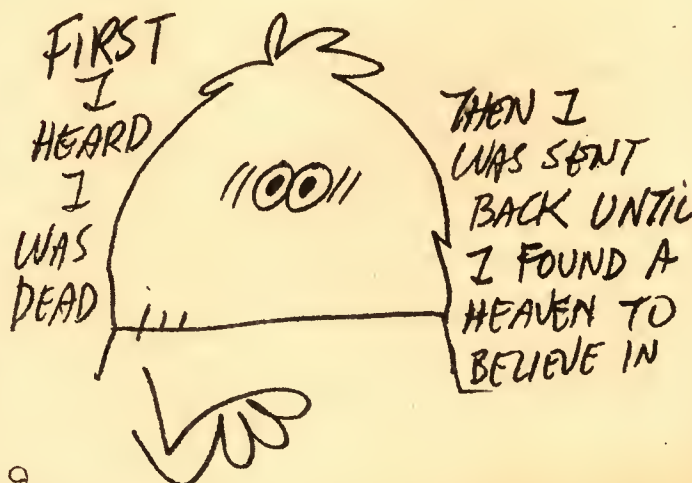
lines. There is some imagination in their work, but not much.

As I said, I'm a relatively new sf writer, though I've been a fan for fifteen years. So I've evolved a set of assumptions of my own, not all of them subject to convenient verbalizations. The easiest for me to identify has to do with the technological aspect of sf. It has always seemed to me that a concern with facts and change is the sine qua non of sf. Cutting corners on either of these two inevitably waters down the product. The resultant fiction may well be more profitable and fashionable, but I don't think it will endure.

The traditional concerns of fiction have been character and society, the interplay of man and man. I hold no brief against this, really—but I do believe most fiction is simply ignorant when it treats modern cultures. Things are changing too quickly; past knowledge does not apply, whether it be emotional or intellectual. (For a truly character-centered writer sf is a waste of time—he will earn more praise and more money writing for the mainstream. And unless he is particularly brilliant he will probably end up writing sensitive, polished and essentially pointless and boring books, such as Updike's Couples.) Science fiction uses a larger canvas and that is why I think, despite the awful things written in its name, it will produce works that endure. As James Blish once said, it is about something. It can be larger than its times. And I think it can be greater than perhaps you and I quite recognize.

Perhaps the prime assumption of sf is that science and technology are important. Tools reflect the men who made them and in turn shape what men can become. It is this interplay of science and society that most modern fiction utterly fails to understand, and that's why a great deal of it is headed into blind alleys. An understanding of science and technology on even a fairly elementary level lets you get at the grain of the major change in modern societies—the alteration of man's environment, culture and even his own body, by his own hand.

This is vastly important, but not because of the Gernsbackian notion that sf should educate. It doesn't. You don't learn very much about particle scattering theory or thermodynamics by reading the magazines these days, and you shouldn't expect to. Sf shouldn't be thought of as a way to predict the future, either. As Poul Anderson once said, there is always





somebody ready to whip out a 1935 THRILLING WONDER STORIES and hold up the cover as proof that sf had predicted the Bikini bathing suit. Guessing the future is mostly luck, though, and sf hasn't done better than any intelligent committee could have.

Science is important—to everybody, not just science fiction writers—because it is about the only sane, healthy human activity left. This century is confused and tragic, sick and troubled, but I think we will not be remembered for the turmoil and death, but rather for our dreams and creations. And the prime center for creativity in this century is in science. Our descendants will stand in awe of men who discovered the quantum nature of reality, traced the first history of the universe, charted the genes, took the first steps toward immortality and leapt into space. If one has any feeling for man's search for objective truth, and for his tools and what they mean, then he can write from a pretty rare point of view: he will see that in the future, as in the present, to understand the people one must know something of the science that will change their surroundings and their world view.

Imagine an sf writer of the 1400s or 1500s, when the scientific tradition of mankind was finding new life. If he wanted to write a story about the coming Copernican revolution, he would of necessity have to do some homework. The author who didn't know anything about science, but persisted in visualizing future changes in terms of the then-present religion-centered society, would fall flat on his face. He couldn't write a meaningful book, because "hard" sf is more than a set of tricks and gadgets. It's an attitude. It has limitations, to be sure, but it also lays claim to a certain clarity and a terribly demanding honesty of thought that is much needed. Just as science is a discipline, thinking about the relation of science and culture has its own forms of homework lessons, its own methods of thought.

I think 2001, A SPACE ODYSSEY, made a great point of this. To me this film was a visual realization of the same textures that bring the best sf alive. The piling on of well-thought-out detail has a purpose, and in fact it comes close to being the theme of the movie. There is a feeling of the development of man here, and the emphasis is on what his tools have done to him.

Lately there has been a lot of talk about "speculative fiction"—ironically enough, a term coined by that notorious hard sf advocate, Robert A. Heinlein—and breaking loose from the old ways of thinking, etc. I did some of the talking myself, a few years back. But such categorization is useful at the beginning of a new era mostly because it's handy, having once seen, say, a qzxxx, to be able to say "Hey, there's another qzxxx." when you see one again. The danger is that once everybody knows a qzxxx pretty well they will start to think in "qzxxx" or "non-qzxxx" labels and never bother to really learn much about what the qzxxx was in the first place. That may be what is happening to "new wave."

One of the best things about this new Golden Age of sf we're going through is that, perhaps for the first time, sf is feeling its way toward a different view of the way man can fit

into his universe. I think Norman Spinrad is basically right: the really important difference between "new wave" and the older modes of sf is simply one of consciousness. There is more than one way to look at the world, God knows, and the ways we discover through religion or drugs or simple artistic sensitivity or whatever have their own logic, their own unique rightness.

Theodore Roszak, who lives a bit down the road from my home, recently wrote a book called The Making of a Counter Culture. It's a look at the hippies and the ways they've begun to try and find a way out of what, to them, seems a fatally mechanistic and naive view of life. Roszak indulges in the usual jargon-coining writers seem to feel they must use to describe something new, and in his case he creates a dichotomy between "objective consciousness" (the Establishment, technology, militarism) and "visionary imagination" (the subjective, the symbiotic nature of our world, we-are-all-one). As terms, these aren't bad. They do reflect some of the cross-currents buffeting Western society. But if we are to solve the great Problem these terms represent, something more is needed. I think sf would do well to try and reconcile these two natures of mankind.

This is a problem of sensibilities, and art will probably be the first to deal with it. "Objective consciousness" has made our cities ugly, wasteful and dangerous. But a refusal to deal with technological problems at all will not correct this; it will simply leave the field to the naive cost-accounting "projection thinkers" popularly (and somewhat incorrectly, I think) epitomized by Herman Kahn. What is needed, maybe, is a new Renaissance man, but not the sort usually meant by that term.

It is useless to suppose technology will vanish. Science—the study of the natural world—is one of the great adventures of the human spirit, but it will never be separated, now, from technology. (At the moment it is being tarred and feathered along with technology for the excesses of the latter, and in the minds of most they will probably always be associated.) Neither will vanish because of the rise of "visionary imagination", because people simply will not tolerate the loss of their technological comforts. Given the choice between their shaman and refrigerated beer, primitive tribes have always chosen the beer.

If the collision now taking place between western and eastern ways of thought continues—and it certainly looks as though it will—the future may well yield a new type of personality in our cultures. A lot of talented people are beginning to explore this problem. Some of the mythological writers, such as Zelazny, seem to be approaching it obliquely. Somehow, a mature understanding of the arational nature of man will—must—be adopted organically by western society. How will it happen? Can it happen at all? I have tried to deal with this problem myself and found it damnably hard. Imagine a man with the sensibilities and emotional complex of a tribesman, who can discipline himself to solve integral equations and design sophisticated circuitry. He would truly be a new figure on the world stage. I think such a man is emotionally realizable, for our race. If he is not, it may be that our long-range problems are insoluble. We may be doomed to despoil our planet and ourselves, if such a psychological state is beyond us.



TED WHITE  
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Falls Church, Va.  
22046

it printed. (It looked a lot better in the color-comps.) The Nov. AMAZING is to an extent my fault, but much more the fault of the engraver, who did not follow the mechanical (for positioning) nor truly reproduce the colors. Mike Hinge's cover left very little room for the type the publisher insists upon, but in my mechanical the hand was higher, the plane was not cut so badly, and Mike's signature was visible. Unfortunately, there was no way to use the painting to full effect and still use all the type that was required; the cover as I conceived it was a compromise, but I believe a workable one. Mike and I have compared the published version with the mechanical (which was explicitly detailed) and Mike agrees that if the engraver had followed instructions it would have been a better cover by half. Well, that cover (and the Dec. FANTASTIC, shot at the same time) were the last that engraver did for us; the following pair of covers came out far better. (On the Dec. FANTASTIC the engraver also ignored instructions, and really botched things up so badly I felt impelled to apologize personally to Mike Kaluta. Oddly, these were both "first" covers—for Mike Hinge and Mike Kaluta—and it's a shame they were both hurt by inept engraving.)

the Hinge cover is outstanding visually—really startling and far ahead of its time. Mike painted it years ago, and it was rejected several years ago by F&SF. I think Mike is the next important major sf artist, but his style is so individual it scares off most art directors. Look, by the way, for an upcoming Lancer book with a Hinge cover—it's a beauty.

I've often wondered what it is about Charles Platt—but I find I have no answers. It would seem I am a red flag before his eyes, and he cannot find anything nice to say about anything I've ever done. Since this places me in a large group of people I really admire—like Walt Willis—I can't really complain, I guess, but his ceaseless sniping is a bit wearying, if only because he repeats himself so much.

His article about publishing NEW WORLDS as a fanzine was amusing, of course, and reminded me of the Towner Hall days when we all did such things from sunup to sundown and well beyond. And even of the more recent days when Alex Panshin, Chip Delany and I all spent so many fruitless hours typing and retyping STELLAR—all for naught. I hope he doesn't think that his description was in any respect typical of what pro-zine editors do, however.

I appreciated the way you followed his current letter with the one from Roger Bryant, Jr.; it really cut the ground from under Charles. That and the letter from Michael Moore (who will also have a letter in the Feb. FANTASTIC, by thebye) kind of underscore Platt's essential naivete about the American publishing business. I mean, who but Platt would dream that any American distributor would even concern himself with



"sales appeal"? And while he can make the chicken/egg statement that "the magazine has good distribution because it sells," if Charles had ever done much casing of newsstands across the breadth of this country, he would also realize that about half the newsstands which bother to carry sf carry only ANALOG—usually next to READERS DIGEST, which has (or had; I think it still has) the same distributor. Is this only because ANALOG "sell"? Or is it the converse?

Bryant's letter was reassuring to me, because although I believed the statements I'd made in that commentary on subscription to be true, I was willing to believe from Campbell's letter that I was wrong. Certainly, when I was in high school, in the early fifties, ANALOG (ASTOUNDING) was the only sf magazine on the Curtis Plan—and I sold myself a subscription to it at that time. I was willing to accept Campbell's statement that such subscription plans were no longer being used, but I'm rallied by the information that to some degree at least I was indeed right. Since my information was based on industry gossip to an extent, I had a sort of sinking feeling when I read Campbell's letter: that feeling of, "White, you've Done It Again..." Another factor in ANALOG's subs, however, that must be taken into account is the inclusion of bound-in business-reply envelopes and order forms the removal of which will not deface the magazines, the incentive offer of Campbell's collected editorials, etc. But mainly, ANALOG is the only sf magazine with a really healthy, big-money publisher behind it. This adds up to lots of little extras in the long run.

Dean Koontz has what I consider Herve to complain that I "senseless"ly cut his "The Crimson Witch." What I cut was the most embarrassing pseudo-hippie drug connection I've ever read. I did it out of kindness for Dean, and left in references to it so that it could stand by implication. Actually, the entire novel takes place after the most interesting parts of the story (which are there by implication) and this is Dean's doing, not mine. But since he chose to flashback to before the story started, and never did tell the good parts (what happened to the protagonist when he initially found himself in this other world), I felt that it was better to omit the flashback too. (For the record: the hero, see, is the son of a Munitions Maker, a real Right-Wing Slob, who gets blown up in his own napalm or somesuch in a flash of Poetic Justice. Hero then sets up company to disburse funds altruistically—but still in the munitions business, cause 'If I don't make them, someone else will'—and becomes a Drop-Out. He then scores for some fantastic psychedelic drug in a coffee-house, going through a long set of recognition signals which I bet Dean thought were clever, but which no dealer would even briefly consider, and then in the company of his friends—stereotyped beatnik/hippies—he takes twenty tabs of the stuff 'because no one else has ever done it before', yes, and a corner of the room turns into a gateway into the other world where most of our story takes place. Well, Dean, if I had had the time, I'd have cut out our hero's return to our world as well, but that would have required rewriting the entire ending, and I didn't feel my indebtedness to Public Service extended that far.)

You may well ask why I published the story in the first place. Well, it wasn't my idea, and I'm not proud of it. I regard it as the absolute nadir of FANTASTIC since I assumed editorship. I tried, in a nice indirect way, to share my feelings on this subject with Dean a few months ago. Tactfully, even. For my pains I received a lecture on what a superior writer Dean Koontz was. \*Sigh\*

Dean also says of my November AMAZING editorial, it "started with the Midwescon, talking about some people I don't know, even though I've rambled around fandom a few years." Who are those people Dean doesn't know? Obscure fans? The three names I mentioned are these: Bob Tucker ("Wilson Tucker to the readers of his many mystery and sf novels"), Bea Mahaffey and Ray Palmer ("she edited OTHER WORLDS for AMAZING's former editor, Ray Palmer"). Better do some more rambling, Dean; your provincialism is showing.

Do you know of an "antifreas movement" in fandom? I don't. But his work in recent years seems a crude burlesque of his work in the fifties, which I prize (I have a PLANET STORIES original which I won as a letter hack, but I think his best was in IF). As for John Schoenherr, he did win a Hugo, but if he hasn't won another, it isn't because "he didn't pal around and make friends at the conventions"—it's because, as John Campbell eventually notes, he isn't doing much sf any more. Most of the Hugo winning pro artists haven't done much palling around at conventions—has Frazetta?—and those who have, like Jack Gaughan and Ed Emsh are the exceptions, not the rule. But this year the award was far more deserved by the Dillons, who don't pal around either...

You think there's a clear difference between adult and juvenile sf? Read my Trouble on Project Ceres when it's published next spring. The only difference I can find is the age of the protagonist.

((Of course there is the matter of the age-group the story is written for, which determines the style and subtlety and structure.))



G.H. SCITHERS  
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Philadelphia, Pa.  
19101

Redd Boggs' argument, that ANALOG loses money on a 100,000 circulation while AMAZING and FANTASTIC barely make it on circulations of 30,000 odd shows that Redd can't multiply and divide. 70,000 times 60¢ is more than enough to cover ANALOG's editorial budget, incremental printing costs, and dealer's cut.

Blish errs in writing that Pittcon gave Asimov a Hugo; it was the DisConI, in 1963, who did so. And congratulations, O Geis, on your second, well-deserved one!





BILLY H. PETTIT  
18B Greville Pl.  
London NW6, U.K.

Regarding Ted White's "Comment" in  
SFR 38— First he criticized Campbell  
for getting his way and succeeding be-  
cause he had his choice of authors, ar-  
tists, etc. He even implied that the profit motive wasn't  
what kept ANALOG in existence, and further implied that it  
wouldn't long outlast Campbell. Then in the next breath he  
says that he (White) now had been printing the artists he  
wanted, the writers he wanted and the format he wanted. And  
he didn't give much hope for a lasting success. You don't  
suppose he was trying to say Campbell was a better editor do  
you? Or maybe saying it without realizing it. But to me it  
looks like he is saying he has everything he wants but can't  
make a magazine sell. Campbell can. It could be that Ted,  
like so many other deeply involved sf people, still doesn't  
realize what the public will buy. I like Ted's magazines be-  
cause they are aimed at me. But I like Campbell's more be-  
cause I can read it and be thrilled by it. The stories are  
far more enjoyable because they are aimed at a much more  
larger and more intelligent audience. Ted's mags are very  
fannish and have all the features, but they just don't cap-  
ture the reader. I feel that despite all his experience and  
self-proclaimed knowledge of the market, Ted White does not  
know how to sell magazines, because he does not know what the  
buying public wants. For that matter, I don't think any ed-  
itor has ever come close to truly understanding how to sell  
science fiction to the public besides Campbell. (Except of  
course Ted Carnell who had a distribution problem that makes  
White look like a crybaby. Carnell was one of the best ed-  
itors in the field, probably second only to Campbell.)

((Ted, with the January, 1971 issue of AMAZING has turned  
to a larger typeface for the text, but it is still smaller  
than that used by the other sf magazines. He hates to cut  
the wordage, feeling he is cheating the readers. But if  
half the buyers of a given issue are once-in-a-while readers  
and impulse buyers, then they will decide on such surface  
factors as large, easy-to-read type and an attractive, in-  
triguing cover or interior illustrations. A Big-Name on  
the cover may also be a "trigger" if the magazine package is  
appealing.

So look at the Jan. '71 AMAZING cover...a sort of white-  
tan blob and three blue balls linked by a thin line, all on a  
black background. Really thrilling. Most people wouldn't  
take the time to figure it out. A dud. A nothing cover. By  
Jeff Jones.

Did Ted actually pick this cover?

The contents page is a plonk—no style or class. The  
department headings are best described the same way. There  
is not one illustration in the magazine that has any move-  
ment and real involvement in it—except the reprinted illo  
for the Coblenz "Classic." And even that is bad.

To my eye the new AMAZING logo is subtly crude and amat-  
eurish in appearance. The M slants. Was this logo done by  
hand?

Put this AMAZING next to any of the other sf zines; which  
would you choose on impulse?

Sorry, Ted...but there it is.))



JOHN W. CAMPBELL  
Editor, ANALOG  
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New York, NY 10017

One of the beauties of working in  
a big publishing house is that there  
are experts to take care of all the de-  
tails that would annoy the heck out of  
me. Details like taxes and post of-  
fice regulations and checking on distribution and accounting  
that I hate, and other people seem to find satisfaction in.

One of the consequences of that, however, is that no one  
individual knows everything that's being done in all the oth-  
er departments. I didn't know that our type was being set  
by computer until a reader who's with the company that makes  
the computer told me. Printing problems aren't in my depart-  
ment; we've got experts that handle that.

The expert who handles subscription problems told me,  
when I asked after reading Ted White's commentary, that "AN-  
ALOG has no cut-rate subscription offers"; that was the in-  
formation I passed on to you.

I passed Roger Bryant's letter (the photocopy you sent)  
on to him.

Now he tells me that we have no significant number of cut-  
rate subscriptions.

The library subscriptions are the standard "trade dis-  
count" set-ups that all publications in the country allow.  
(We also have some exchange subscriptions; we send the X Pub-  
lishing Co. a subscription copy of ANALOG in return for sub-  
scription copies of their magazines.)

Now notice: The trade-rate subscriptions to schools, lib-  
raries and students—and GI's in Viet Nam—is \$4, and they're  
one-year subscriptions. The special Christmas offer is  
also one year and is \$5 a year. But the standard three-year  
subscription rate is \$13, or \$4.33 a year. I think it's fair-  
ly obvious we're not losing on even the \$4 rate.

But the total of all the "trade rate" subscriptions is 8%  
of our subscriptions. The Christmas rate—higher than our  
three-year rate—represents 10% of subscriptions.

With respect to the economics of ANALOG, I'm forced to  
admit that the guy who told me there were "no" cut-rate sub-  
scriptions was correct in the sense of "no significant" cut-  
rate subscriptions.

((My arithmetic adds that up to 18% of your subscriptions  
at trade-rate and one-year cut-rate deals...significant enough  
in my mind. Comparing them with your three-year rate is not  
fair, else why have a three-year rate at all? In any event  
this is 90% a tempest in a teapot, but interesting for all of  
that.))

But the man who gave me the original statement of "no  
bargain-rate subscriptions" and I had some heated words on  
the subject of giving me straight answers when I asked for  
them. He was convinced I was being unreasonable in being up-  
set about a minor detail—I had difficulty getting over to  
him that he'd caused me to stick my neck out on the basis of  
his inexact statement.

So far as the question of the economics of ANALOG is con-



cerned, there are no significant number of trade-rate subscriptions; he's correct on that.

But if you publish my letter, please amend it to take into account the fact I was misled by a flat statement from my subscription department expert.

Henceforth I shall bore more deeply into statements of fact I get from other departments!



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I am interested, for professional reasons, in locating one or more groups of original letters by Howard Phillips Lovecraft. I have reason

to think that these letters have passed through several hands since originally sent and received and that they are now in possession of one or more collectors, probably in the Western USA. I am especially eager to track down Lovecraft's letters to Robert Ervin Howard (1930-36) and to Fritz Leiber (1936-37). None of these is in the Lovecraft Collection at the Brown University Library or in the custody of my esteemed colleagues Derleth, Leiber, or Lord. Any information that would enable me to locate these letters would be a valued service not only to me but also to the scholarship of imaginative fiction.



C.S. YOUNG  
Vaux Douit  
Le Foulon  
Guernsey C.I.  
GREAT BRITAIN

It is very kind of you to go on sending me SFR and I do apologize for not acknowledging previous issues. In this one, though, I find myself mentioned ((SFR #38)) in John Brunner's column and feel I must make a special effort. The reference makes me look a

much more portentous writer than I am. And anyone who knows me and reads into it an implication that I spend my days slaving at a typewriter when my real desire is to rush out with a spade and get digging might well do themselves an injury as they roll about the floor in hysterical mirth. My views on any form of physical labour have been well summed up by Cyril Ray who said that he once nearly mowed the lawn. Half way through he decided it would be easier to wash the car. He didn't finish that, either. Like the toothbrush rack I spent eighteenth months not making in infant school woodwork lessons.

What I was talking about to John (a bit fuzzily no doubt because I had a bug at the time) was my economical way of utilizing the guilts which affect me and most writers I know. (I'll grant John special status as a scriptorial clear). I am by nature extremely idle, but I also feel guilty about it. Providing I go on sitting in my study (or lying full length on the day bed in hope of inspiration) I know from past experience that guilt, building up, will eventually overcome idleness. At that stage I work. And fairly fast—I aim for ten pages a day of what ought to be final copy. I was contrasting this with other writers I know who compensate for the guilt by outside activities. When Dave McIlwain (Charles Eric Maine) moved into a new house some years back he did no writing for a

couple of years. At the end of that time he had some very good fitted cupboards and stuff. The only thing was that he could have earned enough to do them several times over by writing instead of doing it himself. He had got rid of his guilt but not in an economical way.

I would not dream of arguing with John's impressive line about interfaces and surface tension and auctorial layers of the mind, but I would point out that he seems very confused between performers and creators. Jazz musicians are primarily the former and I'm sure they can go all night playing (and partially improvising). In creative people of all kinds there is very commonly a love-hate attitude towards work. John shoots down his own argument about writers being special by contrasting Constable, a slow worker, with Picasso, a fast one. He might also think, if music is the field he wants to consider, of Rossini who wrote 38 operas by the age of 37 and then, having enough money not to write any more, didn't. He died at 76, after a long and I am sure happy retirement. I've had about forty books published myself and would be glad to follow suit. But I am still only keeping abreast of the family's expenses.

A lot of what creativity is about is concentration and this seems by its nature to work best in short spurts and to need great application. Old Will Shakespeare probably thought of himself first as an actor—the Larry Olivier of his day—but also turned out stuff for the company. If Hotson is right in thinking he wrote "Twelfth Night" in ten days then he probably had to stick hard at it, too. Writing can be therapy but is not in that case, pace John, generally distinguished.

As to his IBM, well it's a nice toy, and I'm happy for him, but it's not quite the same as a dentist needing the latest drill, or a guitarist needing a Martin or Gibson (whatever they may be). Pencil and paper are the only essentials. John Harris had an IBM the last four or five years. All he wrote on it was Chocky.

And I've now wasted more time that I should have been working in. That's another reason, Mr. Geis, why you don't get more letters from me. It's a hell of a lot more seductive than gardening.

((Obviously, I succumbed years ago to amateur publishing and am now thoroughly hooked...to the point where my guilt can be assuaged by a mere hour or two a day at the professional typewriter, with the rest of the day given to the sensuous joys of SFR.))



BARRY N. MALZBERG  
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Aside from a few small details like Paul Walker calling a book "unreadable" and "must be read" within a single breath I am quite wonderful calm and put this down to my increasing professionalism in the exciting role of top sci-fi writer.

Comments: I think that Phil Farmer, who is a decent guy, should either come out and say what is so obviously on his



mind or shut the hell up; the tone of his remarks alternating between heavy-breathing inference and coy withdrawal comes too close to the technique of, say, a 1959 Midwood-Tower publication and there can be a pornography of rhetoric far more serious than any so-called pornography of sex. (Pornography of rhetoric is the only pornography there is.) The same job that Farmer does on Ted White could be done on him or on me or on you or on almost anyone in or out of the field; most of the time it isn't (there are laws and courtesies you know) but if you're going to do it do it. I think Farmer is as afraid of the cops as he says White is.

And Damon Knight's remarks (we're just all good friends, that's all, working together to help the field) bear an astonishing similarity-of-tone to the general run of Campbellian rhetoric, I note. I wonder if anyone besides me notices this. Damon buys a yarn to please himself, sometimes he's a little, uh, nervous about running these ambitious yarns but the field is moving so fast that you can't ever be dull, what he, Damon knight wants to be, mostly, is helpful to his writers and don't you knock ORBIT because it does sell and is professional and has lots and lots of imitations. James Blish would find a more elegant metaphor; I can only say that sometimes I feel that there are two or three men in this field and a hell of a lot of masks & greasepaint but the show is getting pretty stale folks and the theater might blow up any day now.

((That's a tantalizing figure of speech; I think you, who are a decent guy, should come out and say what is so obviously on your mind. Who are the men, and who the mask-wearers? What are the specific characteristics of the stale show? How would you change it?))



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Paul Walker irritates me again. By making blanket condemnations of (or completely ignoring) whole schools of modern fiction, he renders his reviews useless when considering works of SF which draw on these influences. Last time it was all

"absurd" theater from Sartre through Genet; this time it is, from the small information he provides, the more recent French movement typified by Alain Robbe-Grillet. Walker quotes the first page of Aldiss' Report on Probability A to start his review of it. Having no other knowledge of the book, I become intrigued as I reach the end of the quotation, thinking, "Aldiss is adapting Robbe-Grillet's camera-eye technique to SF—that could be anywhere from awful to brilliant...what does Walker think of the result and how does Aldiss apply the basic technique to SF concepts?" Of course there is no answer, so all the information I get is that Aldiss has written a book with the first page, anyway, in Robbe-Grillet's manner. Seems like your reviews could be a bit more worthwhile than that.

Hope you can keep Phil Farmer riled up—the issues wherein he shows evidence of the state benefit enormously from the fact. And his review of the Feinberg book was the

only really worthwhile part of that section this time (although I generally enjoy the reviews and would not be one to advise cutting them).

There is not much to say about the Perry Rhodan article, but has it ever occurred to you that you might define the term SF for yourself and then pursue your desires to "serve SF," within those limits? You do not, I notice, include reviews of every mindless movie that tv critics would call "sci-fi," nor STRANGE ADVENTURES comics (which in many cases would surpass P.R.), and so forth. It seems to me that the majority of people seriously interested in SF (without defining it myself) are interested in the general array of techniques and structures because of their worth as artistic tools. I for one would rather read an examination of the SF of Paul Kantner's songs than some series of juvenile space opera, yet that isn't really SF, is it... The point I'm making is that we often seem to accept the categorization and stereotyping of the "mundane" world in dealing with SF as a whole—the very categorization that we rail against otherwise.

((I have a very loose definition for SF in SFR...SF being Speculative Fiction for review purposes, including fantasy and psi and ESP and the fringe area of the supernatural. But the main emphasis is on science fiction...and I suppose only I know exactly what that means to me...and even I don't like to peer at it too closely—gives me a headache.))

Piers' letters usually sound like expressions of egotism, but I wish more authors would respond in such a way to reviews—favorable or unfavorable. The Knight speech was quite worthwhile—that's the type of "service" that makes sense.



RICHARD DELAP  
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I'd like to publicly apologize to all the generous and uncomplaining fan editors who have sent me dozens of fanzines, few of which have been answered these past months. I love you all and read you all with interest; but, please!, if you expect an answer don't send me any more until January of next year. Please? The only way you'll get a response until then is to call me an ungrateful grump (at which you may get a postcard signifying agreement).

I am in need of a complete list of the Hugo nominees and winners of all past World SF Conventions (especially those nominees) — this for a long-delayed article which has already consumed too many hours of my time and will likely consume more if only I can get the needed info. Help???

#39, Geis, seems to be one of your better issues of late. I am especially impressed with Damon Knight's revelatory article on the 'Milford Mafia.' Am I just imagining things, however, or is Knight mellowing with age? Or is he purposely striving for a contrast to the bellowing condemnations he's so very tired of listening to? Anyone familiar with Knight-in-print should know that he can destroy the SFWA and Mafia opposition with a few off-handed but deadly remarks, the kind which have many times in the past reduced more worthy foe than fanzine cynics to "pre-



tentious intellectuals and /figuratively/sniveling faggots." I ask, no, demand, Geis, that you get Knight to write more for SFR. (I'd do it myself, but Christ!, I couldn't, he scares me shitless.)

((Damon has an article coming up in SFR 43 entitled "I Remember Clarion."))

Your regular features ("Beer Mutterings," "Monolog," etc.) remain good reading, but I beg to differ with you regarding the Zelazny novel I reviewed. You say: "I found myself forgiving Zelazny things I would not forgive in other writers." Somehow I feel that Zelazny couldn't be much pleased by that remark, as biasedly unfair as it is to "other" authors. Why does this man get special preference? There may be such a thing as a bad good book (i.e., the bad undermines the imbedded good) but I simply can't believe there's such a thing as a "helluva fine bad book." Good doesn't uplift the imbedded bad; it can only detract from it. Bad's bad.

((Zelazny took a cliché plot and peopled it with cliché characters, with an incredible environment; all pulpy and impossible and drafty with plausibility-holes...and somehow by sheer style made it (for me, at least) a compulsive reading experience. On most levels of writing skills it was bad. But down in the trenches where the reading is done it was a gripping, highly entertaining book. A helluva fine bad book.

Roger, would you care to tell us something about the making of Damnation Alley??)

I must admit that I'm disappointed in the writers' response to my reviews—namely, Piers Anthony on Macroscopic and Philip Jose Farmer on his sf-sex novels.

Anthony gives me credit for bringing about the sale of his novel Hasan—a credit less "direct" than Piers gives due since I only spoke of the virtues the book already possessed. Piers created those virtues and the credit is his alone. I doubt the editor would have bought the story sight unseen on my word alone.

I had supposed I made the weaknesses of Macroscopic clear in my review, but Piers seems to be entirely deaf to what I say and sensitive to what he thinks I've implied. He believes my interjections are "over-cute," not review but defensiveness. The fact is, he thinks, I don't really understand his novel, I am "repelled by real content." That's crap, Piers, crap, crap, crap. I know it, you know it, and anyone with half a brain can see where the "defensiveness" lies in this instance. (That final verb, by the way, means 'rests' not 'telling untruths.' — I mean simply that I don't want to be misunderstood again.) ((So why not simply use 'rests' in the first place?))

Piers has a lot of quibbling over his opening "cry of warning" philosophy which supposedly forms the base for the following action. Perhaps he thinks that dragging in a mythical hunk of rock is "averting the extinction," but I call it an aversion of reality, something even the best sf shouldn't do unless that aversion is the theme. Man can sit on his dead ass for a thousand years and never discover such salvation, and although technological advance may ease many of the

world's pressing problems, it doesn't solve them, not even fictionally, with a rabbit out of a hat. So his wish-fulfillment macroscopic is an author's device, a worthless hunk of 'scientific' religion when accepted in the terms Piers seems to wish.

He also seems very upset that I called his concluding symbolism contrived and clumsy, yet he proceeds to prove it in the next breath. "Not one symbol was generated from my imagination, or selected for novelistic convenience....I had legitimate horoscopes made on all the major characters," as if a legitimate horoscope (an ambiguous term, like a legitimate fuck) proved that his characters were legitimate. A dry compendium of personality traits and characteristics is stereotyped, no matter how many oddball embellishments are mixed into it; and this is how the climax of the book reduces down: a list of characteristics, lifeless, shallow, silly, contrived and clumsy. Piers asserts that the novel's theme is a "more nearly cultural" than biological story of man's progress toward maturity. That this was Piers' intention, I can't deny. But man isn't as predictable or as cleanly motivated as are these characters; and I don't think the kind of discoveries (about both man and his universe) revealed in this novel can follow such a regulatory, melodramatic profession as Piers extrapolates. It would make for a very boring and uneventful future if it did.

Next, Farmer seems disturbed that I wasn't convinced that his hero, Childe, could hear a man's cry through (or, as he says it, over) a roomful of water as the man opens the door and yells before the water rushes out. After carefully clarifying that there is a channel of air between Childe inside the room, through the top of the opening door and to the man outside, he equally carefully ignores the likely reaction of a man opening a door to a roomful of water. With all that pressure, you don't simply open that door—once you loose the catch, that damned thing is going to open itself. How long does it take a roomful of water to cascade through an open doorway—long enough for a man to look at it, realize what it is and scream? My room isn't waterproofed so I can't test the situation; but I don't have to be convinced by it because Farmer wrote it, and I most certainly am not.

Farmer agrees with Anthony that perhaps I "lack the ability to appreciate certain types of fiction and should disqualify from reviewing such." Perhaps Anthony thinks I should only review sf-sex novels; perhaps Farmer thinks I should concern myself only with symbolological novels? What type are they talking about? Their type? Piers mentions that I didn't like the Hugo-winning Lord of Light and Stand on Zanzibar (not of course mentioning that I disliked them for vastly different reasons), so perhaps it's just that I shouldn't review books that are possible Hugo nominees or winners, which is the only thing these two books have in common. I can't shake the feeling that these men wish to imply that any book I like cannot be of any real merit—Piers himself has little love for his own Sos the Rope, which I find one of his better novels—with the implication that anything I blast must have some if not considerable depth. If so, this immediately reduces such books as The Left Hand of Darkness, Dune, Flowers for Algernon, The Dream Master (not to forget Chthon and the earlier but relevant The Lovers) to trifles hardly worth bothering with. Yeah, boys, keep 'em



simple so's I kin understand 'em, 'cause when they really get hard to read (as in Farmer's sf-sex) I go into a "mindless frenzy." Har, har.

((Personally, I'm getting pretty tired of that damned wall of water.))



TED PAULS

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You know, reviewing books provides a marvelous perspective on the range of intelligent opinion possible among us nekkid apes. By and large, my book reviews are agreed with by a sizable per-

centage of their readers, but there are some extreme exceptions, like Asimov's Nightfall & Other Stories, for instance, and, on the other side of the spectrum, Bob Shaw's The Palace of Eternity which I was promoting for a Hugo and practically every other reviewer considered a failure.

Then there's Richard Delap, with whom I seem to be in disagreement a large portion of the time. Recall the time you ran our reviews of Brunner's The Jagged Orbit side by side for contrast. You could have subsequently done that with many other books. Boy, that Delap has some weird opinions. (Or, as Richard would say, "Boy, that Pauls has some weird opinions!") His review of Orbit 6 in the current SFR stunned me. He speaks of a sharp drop in quality with Orbit 5 and the sixth volume's return to the series' previous level of quality; the first sentence in my review (which will appear elsewhere) is: "This volume marks the return of the Orbit series to a general level of mediocrity following an exceptional fifth collection." I'm certain we both read the same book, because we both comment on stories having identical titles. I found two outstanding stories in Orbit 6. One was Kate Wilhelm's "The Chosen," the other Gardner's "Where No Sun Shines," which Delap thinks the "only really awful story in the collection." I suppose I must reconcile myself to being in a small minority in regard to "Where No Sun Shines." I discussed the story with Gardner a couple of months ago, and he tells me that it didn't receive a very good reception. I think it deserves Nebula consideration. Oh, well.



BERNARD A. ZUBER

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It was interesting to read Bill Rotsler's complaint ((in SFR 40)) about the lack of comment on fan art from your readers, especially

after having observed, in person, Bill's own lack of reaction. I don't doubt that he means well by writing that letter and that he really is concerned about the apathy in fandom concerning good fan art but it doesn't quite fit what I saw. Bill was sitting across from me in a coffee shop after a LASFS meeting when he picked up a copy of MYTHLORE that I had given to Alicia Austin. I'm associate editor and art editor of MYTHLORE (the Mythopoeic Society fanzine) and I had done the cover for that particular issue (#6) so naturally I was curious to see what Bill's reaction would be.

There was none. He just glanced casually at the pages and handed it back to Alicia without a word to me or anyone else about it.

In that issue there was art by Tim Kirk, Barbi Johnson, Bonnie Bergstrom, Diana Studebaker, Kathy Cribbs, and other artists not as well known in fandom. MYTHLORE is printed offset and the reproduction of the art is quite good. So how come Bill didn't have anything to say about it? Perhaps he reserves his comments for when he writes to fanzines but it would have been nice to get an in-person reaction. That same evening, during a fan artist's panel at LASFS, Bill had said that comments from fellow artists mean more than those from fans whose knowledge of art may be somewhat more limited. That's why I would've appreciated his comments.

Perhaps Bill would have been critical and decided instead not to say anything. Well, criticism does hurt a bit sometimes, and there have been criticisms I never did quite understand, but it's better than being ignored. When an artist doesn't get any response to his work he doesn't know in what way his art has failed to communicate and it can be very frustrating. Constructive criticism could lead to improvement but lack of response can only lead to discouragement and confusion.

Some fan artists (Bill is not the only one) are evidently as apathetic as the rest of fandom. But actually things aren't really quite as bad as Bill makes them out to be. It seems to me that he hasn't kept up with what's going on in current fanzines, in clubs or at conventions. If the constant bidding up on good art in the con art shows isn't a sign of appreciation I don't know what is! Fan art is also snatched up at auctions and fans even go so far as to commission art from their favorite artists. I know of one young fan at LASFS who appreciates good art, criticizes the bad and isn't afraid to express himself in writing about it. And he's not the only one.

And getting...to the question of reproduction...what's happening to SFR? The uneven repro in this last issue ranged from extremely black on page 12 to practically invisible art on page 22. In #39 some George Barr art literally disappeared. That Alicia Austin cover for #39 was indeed one of the very best you've ever had, Geis, but you've got to watch that inside repro!

((I had sent some pages of art and article headings to a firm in the midwest who advertised electrostenciling at \$2.50 per page. But they had a defective machine or an incompetent operator and the "burns" were uneven—some too deep and some too light. It was impossible to tell ahead of time...and in any event, during a run, I give priority to the quality of the text, if necessary. ))



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AUSTRIA

Eddy C. Bertin's article on Perry Rhodan is astonishingly well-informed; he only missed some of the latest developments: Ren Dhark is indeed dead



now, and Moewig have started Atlan, another series located in the Perry Rhodan Universe, its hero being one of Perry Rhodan's companions, I understand.

I, of course, have never mentioned Perry Rhodan in 8 yrs and 24 issues of my own fanzine; but some Americans seem to be hypnotized by the sales figures of P.R.

Poul Anderson's remark about the popularity of his Guardians of Time in the USSR and eastern Europe reminded of a critical opinion by the Rumanian critic Marina Spacu that Mr. Anderson perhaps might like to know: she declared that the book "had all the qualities that insure its being included in books of literary history." The fact is, of course, that the socialist countries aren't as secluded from the rest of the world as the more naive people in the West like to believe. The USSR, for instance, have published collections of American, Polish, Hungarian, Italian, French, and Bulgarian sf stories. Japanese Writers like Kobo Abe (whose Fourth Ice Age has just now appeared in the U.S.A.) are well-known in countries like the USSR or Hungary. The Norwegian sf fan and writer, Jon Bing, has been translated in the USSR and in Rumania, and in the only sf magazine existing in the Communist world, in Rumania's POVESTIRI STINTIFICO FANTASTICE, you can encounter (besides leading English and American authors, as well as the classics from the European countries) sf from such unlikely places as the Iran.

Story policies are often very open-minded, writers that really show no social concern are frequently eagerly accepted. For example, Harry Harrison's The Technicolor Time Machine appeared in the USSR recently, with an enthusiastic forward, and a collection of his stories is to follow.

Editions are often much larger than in the U.S.A. When Asimov some issues ago bragged in SFR that his Nightfall and Other Stories sold 9000 copies in six months, this only serves to point out that hard cover sf doesn't sell very well, and that Americans do not read much. And since Asimov is one of the most popular sf authors, and will also be read by many people who like his non-fiction, we must assume that other hardback sf sells even more badly. But when his End of Eternity appeared in the USSR in the now defunct hardback series "Library of Contemporary Fantasy," it had a circulation of 215,000 copies, and you can bet that it sold out within a few days, if not hours. Asimov is very popular in the USSR, and some other authors, especially Fred Hoyle, must be better known there than in their home countries.

The sales figures of sf in other Communist countries are equally impressive. Lem's Selected Works for instance, all being reprints have editions ranging from 15,000 - 35,000 copies, and averaging 20,000. And Poland has only 32 million inhabitants. Even his forthcoming book on sf in the West, which is a heavily theoretic and difficult treatise on an exotic topic (for Poland, a country which has hardly seen any sf from the West), and which will cost the small fortune of 100 Zloty, will have an edition of 5000 copies.



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Thanks for your comments on Love is Forever—We are for Tonight. I have the impression you thought you were being rough on me but I felt you were being considerate to the point of kindness. You should hear what the GOOD PEOPLE are calling me!

I do not know if a book and the world are each mirrors in which a person finds his own face, but the question arises as to who is going to get me first, the GOOD PEOPLE, to crucify me, or the wild bunch, to love me to death. Well, both are ways to go. I have also noticed that the favorable raves in the main are rising outside of the organized fans. Hmmm? If I had time, this would give me to think. What I would think would be that the organized fans have been and still are being so continually brain-washed by those interested in promoting the far left that they have lost recognition not only of the far right but also of what some wise man once called the middle way.

In commenting on your comments, I want to make one point in advance: I am no missionary to tell anyone what to do, say, or want. If I have to accept the shaggy locks of those who wander in on me out here in my beloved hills, they in turn have to accept my bald pate. I don't care what anyone says or does as long as it is his own thing, but if he has borrowed his saying, thinking, or acting from someone else, then he is in trouble, not from me, but because he has failed to make the most of his chance to become an individual. Tough work, becoming an individual. Very, very tough.

((Yes. Knowing thyself is a lifetime job. Stripping off the masks, internal and external, is hard work. Most people have little stomach for it.))

Re-reading your letter (I really admired all of those lovely words you used and wished I had your skill with them) you say I have never faced Mother. Ahhh. At the risk of being pedantic, I would like to ask which Mother you mean, the good mother, the bad mother, the mother who channelled me into this world this time, mother as sister, mother as teen-age sweetheart, mother as wife, mother as daughter, or MOTHER as I am now facing her as old age begins to creep in on me, mother as the White Goddess in her destroying aspect, mother as death? Which of these are you talking about, Dick?

((The mother who used quinine in an attempt to induce a miscarriage....of you. That mother rejected you in the most basic, horrible way. And you, the foetus, knew it. You were born with a built-in love-hate trauma that affected your relationships with women—wife and daughter—and perhaps still is warping your life.

Isn't depth analysis in absentia fun?))

It is my opinion that I have faced Mother and that I am still facing her and that I have solved all the problems that ever have arisen from this source or can ever arise from it. Did you really read page 31, Dick? I gave you the solution there but you seem strangely blind to it. LOVE HER! If there is any other solution, please do not give it to me! In that love it may be possible that perfect freedom may be found and I want the record to show that now as she is coming to me as



the White Goddess in her death aspect, that I am saying again, "I love her!"

On this subject, I have more to say. (Maybe too much) I am a Welsh Celt. Up above me on the wall is a photograph of a plaque on the wall of the old First Church of Roxbury, Mass. It is a memorial to the grandfather 11 generations behind me, the husband of the Elizabeth mentioned in the book. (History, not fantasy) Above it all is the motto of my family: Y FYNO DUW Y FYDD; words so ancient that modern scholars cannot agree on their meaning, one claiming that the meaning is What God Wills Will Be, another trying to find errors possibly made by some long-dead engraver, and still a third pointing out that the God mentioned here is not only plural but is also feminine. My hunch is that this motto says: WHAT SHE WILLS WILL BE, and that it has come down across many centuries from the days when the Welsh lived as a matriarchal group.

Here, in my mind, is the GREAT MOTHER, coming down to me in my own family motto across vast stretches of time. Love her? Of course I do! It is also my opinion longer than Jung or Neumann dreamed possible, for thousands of years! that I have loved her!

Fantasy? Of course! But I have to account for this higher love that to me is meaningful. The materialist without such experiences has far less that requires him to stretch his mind. However, I do not believe that anyone, scientist, materialist, commie, or whatever, can avoid such experiences. I tried. I did my very best to avoid them. Y FYNO DUW Y FYDD came my way when the script called for it.

I liked your feeling that what I called LOVE was the force of life itself as it struggles to continue, to keep going in the face of inevitable death and nothingness. Brave words! Death as I think you mean the word is now nonsense to me. As to nothingness, at no level that I have ever reached has this word had meaning.

As to your statement that CO2 was a "high"-producing mixture of gasses, no. NO! Did you ever hear of bad trips? CO2 produced them too. As to your statement that my experiences were hallucinatory, to you they must be that. When you have had a few "hallucinatory" experiences yourself, your viewpoint may change. As to this book being a religious tract, the GOOD PEOPLE who want most to crucify me are the religious ones, the rigid souls on the far right. As to it being a masked ego-trip, I didn't know I had masked it. On page 12, I said just the opposite. As to it being a plea for help, I am one of the most stubborn "help myself" old bastards you have ever seen. Of course I am slightly mad! Perhaps more than slightly. Traditionally the Welsh have been a fey people. Wasn't it John J. Pierce who shuddered and asked you if you were going sane? If what I see in this world is sanity, then I am going to get nuttier than I am now!

There is much more I could say, including commenting on your repeated statement that I am oriented at the anal level. About this, I only want to mention that this orientation is really an effort to communicate with a certain happy group of brown-nosing assholes in a way that they may understand. Sure, I know how they scream back at me, how some editors slander me

in letters to other writers, how they yell "hack" in the fan magazines and elsewhere. I'm just tough enough and mean enough and individual enough to stand up in public against this group and to call them by their right names, and if they don't like what I say, they know what they can do about it. This also is the group in which "paranoia" describes those who don't brown-nose with you. It is the group that I think should read School of Darkness by Bella Dodd. No? But remember that unchecked liberalism becomes the far left and then turns around and becomes the far right. (A law I just made up!) Either extreme is a hell of a place to be.

The waters here are deeper than you may think and the battle more vicious. The waters are also pretty deep in Love Is Forever—We Are For Tonight. All I can say is that the only solution known to me is the higher love.

In conclusion I would like to quote just one paragraph from a fan letter written by a man who has just been graduated with a degree in philosophy. He is (naturally) not one of the "organized" fans. He probably has never even heard of SFR (Sorry, Dick) or BAB (Sorry, Frank) ((his loss)) but he has heard of other things and he has an excellent grasp of the depths of the waters in this book. He says:

"Finally, there was once a very great man who talked about the Good. After years of study, I found it was Love. He said we get occasionally a glimpse of this Good/Love; it lasts for just a second and when it is gone, we are very sad. He also pointed a way for helping us Remember this Good as being something that we had before. Thus, I find you have said very similar things and approach this great man. There is no greater compliment I can give a man than compare him with Plato."

Have you read Plato, Dick? ((Yes.)) I haven't. For that matter, did you ever read Love Is Forever—We Are For Tonight?

Thus rests the case I never had.

In the great mirror called the world, find your own face.

((Perry Chapdelaine sent along a seven page letter, the first page of which was a rabid defense of you and your book, but I lack room to publish it. He insists the book is a novel and praises your psychology as science and your writing style.)

The other six pages of his letter are open-letter comments to Walter Breen, Don Thompson and Virginia Kidd, some of which is interesting and quotable, but lack of room at this late date, and other letters I want to publish, makes Perry's a casualty.))



GREG BENFORD  
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The speeches by Damon Knight and Kate Wilhelm Knight in the two latest SFRs are interesting, if a trifle low-cal. It is rather disturbing to see people fearlessly defending the middle of the road, since I wasn't aware that it was under attack, but—stopping to reflect—perhaps all this is a matter of geography.



The east coast has a pack of old guard writers and editors, and to the Knights they must have a higher profile than we disgruntled knaves here in the west. Much of the surprising rancor seems to stem from real economic issues—writers think they see their markets being subverted by a brand of fiction they despise and don't want to write. What to me is a literary discussion may be bread and butter to, say, Lester del Rey. Thus the Knights take to pulpit-pounding and (in Kate's speech) constructing straw men such as the Perfect Optimist Hero, which nobody in the Old Wave or anywhere else has ever believed in.

This obscuring smoke is a pity, too, because a criticism of Damon's approach often voiced within my earshot gets trampled in the rush. Simply put, the Orbit series is tepid. It lacks spark. A cocktail party idea—what if kangaroos were aliens?—passes as a brilliant sense-of-wonderish concept. There is little dash in the prose, some lukewarm emotion, a great deal of directionless and embarrassingly obvious "sensitivity," and not much real thought or even real science fiction. Clinging to the middle ground has leached most of the content out of the series, for me. Loosen up, Damon! Let's see some of that old fire!

((Perhaps the total hero, being edged out of the mainstream of sf, is finding a pulpy home in sword&sorcery?))



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UNITED KINGDOM

As I have been receiving many pleasant letters from the U.S.A. and subscriptions for VISION OF TOMORROW—largely as a result of the advert you ran for us—

I wonder if I might take some space in your letter column to inform American fans of the position of the magazine.

The magazine began in August, 1969, and has now officially folded with Number 12 (September, 1970).

The magazine was originally conceived by me to be printed in a paperback format, as I believed that the regular magazine format was not viable. The magazine was set up in print with a paperback printing firm, and was to carry no illustrations, with very few exceptions. Unfortunately, just before we launched the magazine my publisher and myself came into con-

tact with Transworld distributors, a division of Corgi Books (Bantam U.S.A.). They offered to distribute the magazine and do a tremendous job with it provided we scrapped the paperback format and instead became a large glossy with illustrations. We decided to do this, which posed a certain difficulty.

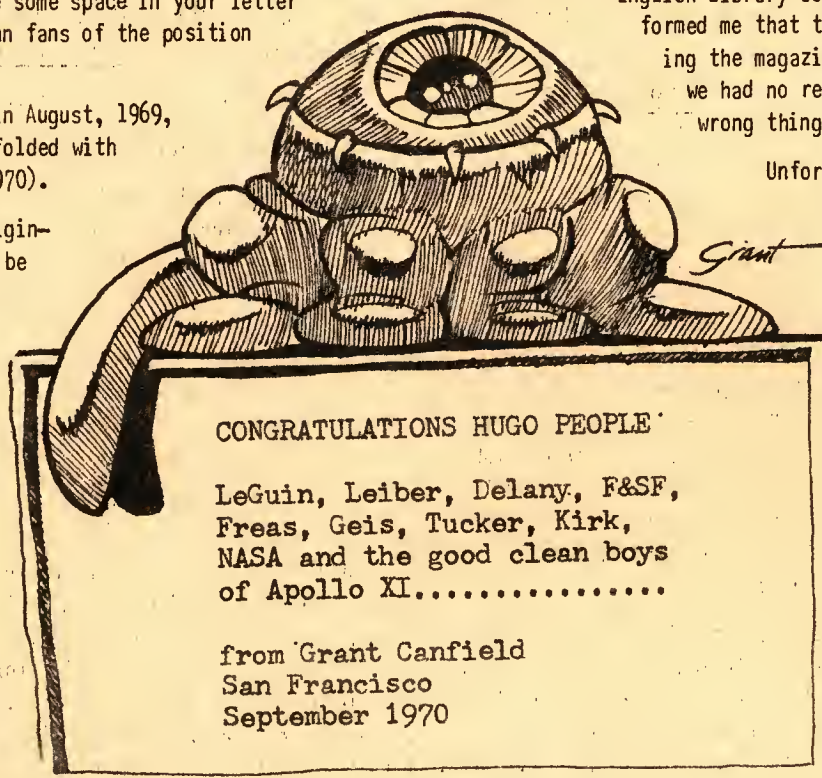
The first issues of the magazine were of necessity made up of the paperback type which had been set, and the illustrations had to be gathered in at very short notice indeed. We used the best we could get whilst on the look out for something better. This is why the early issues of VISION look a little rough and ready and the art is not top class. The wonder is that they were as good as they were; and of course, the stories were unaffected.

Unfortunately, just after the magazine was launched I learned that Transworld distributors were going out of business. There is reason for believing that this withdrawal from distribution was well known to them at the time when they took us on, and a cynic might point to Transworld's move as a deliberate one to head us off from competing with their NEW WRITINGS on which I was frankly modeling the magazine. John Carnell tells me that this theory was nonsense; we will probably never know.

I then had the unenviable task of finding a new distributor in mid-stream. Paper had been bought for future issues of the magazine and for one reason and another we were obliged to keep to the same format. I was negotiating with Conde Nast when New English Library Limited offered to take on the distribution of the magazine as part of a package deal of several Transworld magazines which they were taking over. As Conde Nast had not replied, we accepted the New English Library offer. Resolution of the picture was all the more urgent as I was about to get married at that time, and would of necessity be absent for a couple of weeks. The ink was hardly dry on the New English Library contract when Conde Nast informed me that they were interested in handling the magazine. But it was too late, and we had no reason to think we had done the wrong thing.

Unfortunately for us, the New English Library magazine division had been newly created and had only launched itself by virtue of taking over the magazines of Transworld. Their complete lack of real organization and distribution know-how became all too apparent over the succeeding months.

Despite every effort the publisher and I made in improving the contents of the magazine—many stories were specially commissioned from noted writers—and improving the artwork out of all





recognition, largely thanks to Eddie Jones, the better we made the magazine the less able New English Library seemed able to distribute the magazine effectively. Two companion magazines were planned very early on, but these were both still-born because of our obvious reluctance to entrust them to the same distributor. Latterly, great efforts were made to improve the distribution, even to finding a new distributor, but I am afraid that the distribution position in this country is one big awful mess, as bad, if not worse than in America.

In case I be accused of bias, I can only point to the fact that the British editions of GALAXY and IF, which had been running in one form or another in this country for years, were also taken over by New English Library. These magazines were also badly distributed, and I am reliably informed that they have been forced to fold.

Currently we are refunding subscriptions. However, I would like to draw the attention of American fans to the fact that back issues are still available from us. A complete set of 12 issues cost \$8. Odd issues pro rata. Cheques or dollar bills are acceptable. Obviously, I am emotionally involved with the magazine, but I do honestly feel that many of our issues were of a good standard. And the continuing series of articles on the history of British science fiction by Walter Gillings, fully illustrated, are required reading for anyone genuinely interested in the developments of science fiction, British or otherwise. I hope to be instrumental in having this series, together with an additional 30,000 words of unused material, published as a book. Frank Dietz is considering this at the moment and if anyone is interested, I would be grateful if they could write to him pledging support of such an edition.

((Obviously, new publishers should thoroughly investigate the distribution firm they are thinking of using. The choice of distributor may be the critical decision in the success or failure of a magazine.))



URSULA K. LE GUIN  
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I hate to contradict a compliment, but Ursula K. Le Guin does not write like a woman. She writes like a woman. She also

runs like a woman, and throws rocks like a woman, and mends socks like a woman, and in fact whatever she does she does like a woman—she can't really help it. Some of these things she does well, others poorly. But that's a different matter.

There is indeed a kind of bad writing peculiar to women, and your word "soapy" describes it well. There are also several kinds of bad writing only men can do; for example, the Gutsy-Buttsy style. But to say that a woman doesn't write like a woman because she doesn't write soapy, is precisely like saying that a man doesn't write like a man because he doesn't write gutsy-buttsily. Therefore War and Peace was written by Mrs. Tolstoy?

Dear Alter, tell Dick to watch his double standard. Eternal vigilance is the price of bisexuality.

((("Hey Geis—"

"Alter! Did you see that? My precious double standard just crumbled to dust!"

"Poor workmanship. Shoddy materials. Where did you buy it?"

"From YOU!!")



RICHARD SPEER  
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The combined total of crap which you, Paul Walker, and Charlotte Boynton put out on women writers is enuf to surpass even

(fill in your own unfavorite editor). I suspect that part of the

continuing hassle over female viewpoints and writers in merely one more aspect of the constant battle between the "purists" and the "new boys" (sic). For starters: none of you seems overly sure of the distinction between female authorship and a female viewpoint. I refuse to review sophomore literature for those who didn't listen the first time. (You ain't got the space anyway.) Equating gender with viewpoint is too simple. When claiming that "good" authoresses write like men (which you and Miz Boynton seem to accept), what do you do with gender males (James, Tolstoy, etc.) who write novels that are "feminine" in sympathy, attention to detail, "soapy style." Viewpoint, technique, and gender deserve better distinction. Sure, there are female writers in both mainline and SF traditions who simulate the "male" style. But it isn't merely the style they imitate, it's the whole literary traditions of the markets. SF is particularly a male-oriented format. While the hairy-chested-adventurer tradition may be a pulp import (as Knight suggests), it is a firmly established feature of the genre, and it doesn't give way with any good grace. Naturally, this pattern is not restricted to SF. We're gonna see a lot of feminine viewpoint SF before we see much feminine viewpoint detective or outdoor-adventure stuff. But it is hard to imagine the hard-boiled-adventurer school of SF with women underfoot. After all, the only women in most stories were (and often still are) either bit players or dykes who could out-fly the most dauntless space-cowboy. I have a nagging suspicion that the rise of more "female" characteristics is only a measure of the changing (broadening?) nature of SF.

((I'm waiting for the first feminine viewpoint sword& sorcery novel. Something like, Thurla and the Nasty Snake-Priests. Please, don't anyone tell me it's been done.))



HARRY WARNER, JR.  
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I feel seared after reading Bill Rotsler's complaint about lack of comment on fan art. Even when I do manage to get my daily loc created, I'm guilty of adding a few lines about the artwork when there's some space left at the bottom of the second page. This lack of sufficient recognition for fanzine artists comes up for discus-



sion somewhere every six months or so, and I've already written elsewhere some of the reasons why I behave like most other loc writers. I feel reluctant to say harsh things about a type of creativity for which I have absolutely no ability of my own, the best comments on a picture come in the form of other pictures that utilize its merits in ways of their own, and every time I try to force myself to write extensively about pictures, I find myself threatened with the same kind of meaningless jargon that emerges from people who write the little appreciations you find published in catalogs of gallery exhibitions.

But there are a couple of other points that people overlook. One is that fanzine artists do receive a different kind of egoboo, a sort of criticism that never comes to people who write stories and articles and columns for fanzines. Nobody puts the manuscripts of prose and poetry up on the walls of a room at a con where almost everyone in attendance spends lots of time looking at them and talking about them and maybe spending substantial sums for them. This seems to me to be partial compensation for the neglect that fanzine art receives in letter columns. Then there's the fact that the artists could contrive to promote more comment on their work in fanzines by making their pictures candidates for controversy. Almost all fanzine art work is now independent, related to nothing but concepts in the artists' mind. No matter how highly I may admire Atom critters and Bjo girls, it's almost impossible to think of new things to say about the 51st or 351st basically similar Atom sketch or Bjo drawing. But what if fanzine art were more frequently illustrative of recent novels, portraits of celebrated pros, sketches from convention scenes? I think that this would produce much more comment mixed with praise or blame for the artist, because the loc writer could compare the way the artist views the fictional or real world with his own concepts and take off from there. Tolkien fanzines frequently give a bit more egoboo to artists than general fanzines, because the artwork is so frequently derived from the Ring books.

I agree with the general message of Kate Wilhelm while doubting some details that she advances to clarify it. "Can you imagine writing or reading stories today about War Aces today...?" she asks as evidence that the early kind of science fiction is dead. But within the past two weeks I've seen three movies which were great successes despite possessing themes that were once science fiction but no more because of the march of events: FIVE WEEKS IN A BALLOON, THOSE MAGNIFICENT MEN IN THEIR FLYING MACHINES and THE GREAT RACE. While we're all agreeing that no two people agree on a definition of science fiction, we should also try to figure out a new name for such fictional stuff, plots which we know didn't happen in the past but still somehow delight us. Another example: THE AMERICANIZATION OF EMILY, which is based on a publicity gimmick for the World War Two D-Day which never happened.

I don't think that John Brunner is right in defining his recent misfortunes as a soap opera. Oscar Levant gave the correct formula for the soap opera: the heroine commits adultery time after time, and in the climactic scene forgives her husband. John instead sounds like the central character in a very realistic drama which successfully proves that there are still humane, good people left in the world. I spent three or

four weeks in an old folks' home several years ago, after an accident, and I know from experience the horrors that John has shielded his mother-in-law from.

Despite the origin of the contents of The Science Fiction Hall of Fame, I think that the Gold GALAXY will eventually gain a lot more respect than it has today as a source of good science fiction and as an important influence for good on the entire science fiction field. I'd rate its early years as the biggest source-influence combination in the history of science fiction, topped only by the ASTOUNDING of the late 30's and early 40's, always reserving the right to change my mind if the NEW WORLDS experiments turn out to have been a real revolution instead of a limited insurrection.

And here I am, back in the old rut, saying in the final lines that I like to bust a gut snickering over the Tim Kirk back cover and the two Rotsler full-pagers. You're going to turn me into one of those hermits whom passersby sometimes see laughing without anyone being on hand to cause his merriment.

((Why should you be different from me, Harry?))



ROBERT E. MARGROFF      Articles by John Brunner have a way  
Elgin, Iowa 52141      of being fascinating. In SFR 38 he depressed the hell out of me by revealing how easy "this funny job" is for one of his considerable talents. Now in #40 he undepresses me by showing that though he writes with enviable ease when things go right, things don't always go right. Is it morbidity on my part that I find the trials and tribulations of my literary betters so much more inspiring than the ease with which they achieve? It's impossible to rejoice at a recital of such troubles, but it's reassuring to read.

The article on Lovecraft's works by Arthur Jean Cox seems well-researched and fun. It seems to me to make a slightly better case than those attempts to see all S.F. in terms of Freudian symbolism. Yet though it succeeds in amusing I don't think that such interpretations should ever be taken seriously. Does anyone take them seriously, I wonder?

((Not fundamentally, I should think.))

Article by J. Anthony Pierce exposes something I've been noticing for the last year or two. All jokes aside, there's more of those getting involved in S.F. For the better, let us hope.

((The article, "Inside Conspiracy" in SFR 40, prompted several correspondents to wonder who the writer, J. Anthony Pierce, 'really is'. The name is a pseudonym, and of course I am sworn to secrecy. I can say that the author is not Piers Anthony or J.J. Pierce.))

The Kate Wilhelm article had its fascination. Much beautiful sense in there, including that perfect "...what usually happens is that we fight now and later." Those accompanying Rotslers—usually I don't even notice illustrations, but these I liked.



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A funny thing happened to me on the way back from L.A. I'd left my Star Trek disc gun at Pelz's so I threw it into my briefcase. At the airport they asked me to open my bags (this made me angry, because I had to sit on them to close them...) so there was the gun. They took it away from me and it took me 2 hours to get it back. I know the airlines are frightened, but a Star Trek disc gun? And then we sat on the taxiway for an hour and a half, and then we took off!!

((You'd prefer to take off and then sit on the taxiway?))



AND THAT is the end of the regular letter section. I am carrying over till next issue a letter from Andy Offutt and a letter from Fred Patten. Fred's letter has to do with the Hugo awards and a new set of awards he is proposing. But I just counted stencils and unless I stop now this issue will run to 60 pages.

I am also carrying over John Boardman's article on L. Sprague de Camp's Krishna series. I happily have received an article from Robert Bloch titled "Lefty Feep and I", and that will be in SFR 44 or 45. Also received John Brunner's latest column (#5 of "Noise Level"), and a review by Norman Spinrad of Harlan Ellison's Partners In Wonder, which will lead off the book review section next issue.

I could go on 'nd on. Suddenly I am awash with fine material. John Brunner's column will be in #43, by the way.

WHILE I'M AT IT I may as well give the line-up for next issue. #42 will contain: the above mentioned John Boardman piece, Piers Anthony's column "Off The Deep End", an "Open Letter" to the science fiction world by Robert A. W. Lowndes, and "Science Fiction in an Age of Revolution" by Robert Silverberg, his Heicon Guest of Honor speech. Oh, yes, a humorous item tentatively titled "The Writer" by Greg Benford.

It'll be another big issue.

In the #43 folder is an interview with Keith Laumer by Richard Hill, the John Brunner column, a satirical article by Greg Benford titled "Neo-Classical Eschological Bifurcation in Doc Savage: Some Aspects," and that will burn a few peoples. Also in that issue will be "I remember Clarion" by Damon Knight.

HAVING GONE THIS FAR... In the #44 folder is the Robert Bloch article mentioned above, and "How to Starve...and Write 20 Science Fiction Novels" by Greg Benford.

AND WHEN Poul Anderson sends along the next installment of his column, "Beer Mutterings", I'll squeeze it into a near issue. Same for you, Dean Grønnell. In the first installment of his column for SFR, Dean worried about the staying power of fanzines that handle his columns—they die off. (The fanzines, not his columns.) Until now. I'm sure Dean confidently expected SFR to fold soon after issue #35 when his "The Square Needle" appeared. Now he is faced with a magazine that will test his mettle. Come on, Dean, send along that double-whammy column again.

JEFFREY SMITH has a problem. He writes: "Final word on

Essex House books. My parents got very uptight over the fact that there were five copies each of these horrible filthy trashy thingums in the house, and ordered complete banishment. Anyone needing a copy of Farmer's The Image of the Beast, Blown, A Feast Unknown and Love Song; Stine's Season of the Witch; Geis's Raw Meat; Meltzer's The Agency and Glue Factory can get them from me for \$2.00 apiece at the following address:

Box 1540, Towson State College, Baltimore, Md. 21204.

JOSEPH GREEN discusses Farmer's sf-sex books in a letter. He was disappointed. "Image of the Beast was the most entertaining, but marred by much poor writing. A Feast Unknown bothered me because it paralleled the Tarzan and Doc Savage books more than it satirized them, including the continual pulp-level action that was fully as bad as that in the originals. Blown, like the follow-through to Silverberg's "Nightwings," proves that explaining a basically interesting situation can remove the magic, turn high interest into mediocrity. Image stands much better alone. With all their weaknesses these books are still more entertaining than most sf on the market..."

Joe goes on to discuss his problem of getting his own controversial novel published in America, after having it published in England. Sounds interesting. But he failed to mention the title.

IRV JACOBS also comments on the above discussed Farmer books: "I never regarded A Feast Unknown as a seriously plotted story, and can't imagine why anyone would regard it as other than a fun book. To those of us who grew up with the original DOC SAVAGE pulps from Street & Smith, and in those days we certainly never expected any sex in these books, P. J. Farmer's Caliban is really priceless. I particularly liked the part where Doc's two buddies (I forget their aliases, but they are obviously "Monk" and "Ham") are grumbling over the fact that they have grown old, and cannot understand why that old sonofabitch Doc manages to stay young. This is very funny, Mr. Geis, unless I have somewhere mislaid my sense of humor."

Joe Green has it in his coat pocket.

NIKE GILBERT agrees with Bill Rotsler about fan artists getting short-changed in egoboo comments. "If anyone wants to comment on art, why don't they talk about the impact that artwork made on them?" Mike also agreed with me regarding the bad recent covers on AMAZING and FANTASTIC.

JOHN ROSTON says in part: "If sf magazines are beset by so many problems, maybe they aren't as important as we think. Hard-core fans seem to like the sense of continuity and personality that goes with a regular format, features, etc.; but I suspect the casual and irregular readers—the majority of sf's public—doesn't care that much."

John also has a complaint: "Once in a while your reviewers fail to list the contents of a short-story collection, for example, the Vance book reviewed a few issues ago. A complete list of contents would be much more useful than the reviewer's general comments in deciding whether to order the book."

Reviewers take note, please.

DARRELL SCHWEITZER suggests there be a minimum circulation of 15,000 copies sold requirement for Hugo nominated stories and books, to prevent a story like Delany's "Time/Helix"



from being disqualified and unfairly penalized by its appearance in a very small circulation prozine like NEW WORLDS.

Darrell says in relation to Rotsler's complaint, that art in fanzines is mostly a decoration and that with the exception of the cover SPECULATION does well without art, and that SFR could still win Hugos without artwork.

True, a lot can be done with space, typography and line-work, but I'd prefer not to try.

MIKE GLICKSOHN also commented on the Hugo eligibility problem, this time in connection with Avram Davidson's The Phoenix and the Mirror which was "lost" in a small circulation initial hardcover edition in 1969 and is not eligible this year in its Ace Special appearance.

This is a serious problem. Perhaps the author should be allowed to choose which edition of his work he wishes to be used for Hugo and/or Nebula competition and nomination.

Mike echoes a couple other correspondents in voicing some puzzlement over the Steve Fabian cover. "We agree on the four-armed aliens but is that some sort of perambulating tree, or a cephalopod of some kind? I plug for the latter since the general indistinctness of the scene suggests it is meant to be underwater."

Hmm. I should mention now that Grant Canfield's cover this issue is meant to be a satire of the old Bergey pulp covers.

Mike says of Tim Kirk's bacover on #40: "The back cover is so funny that I'm willing to overlook the fact that Tim's faces aren't particularly accurate. Without the names, I probably wouldn't have been able to identify the people involved but that may have been at least partially caused by the tears of laughter that were blurring my vision at the time."

SUSAN GLICKSOHN (Mike's wife) also wrote and discussed at length the problem of art comment. We are a word-oriented culture, she concludes and it is difficult for us to even think in terms of art comment, while article/story/novel criticism comes easy because of school training.

Susan also says: "When Alicia (Austin) lived among us, she had this same no-comment problem. She'd bounce in with her sketchbook to show us something, chortling 'Lookee, look, isn't this beautiful!' (Alicia's honest pride in her work is marvelous and rather adorable.) We would all say 'Yes, it is' or 'Alicia, sweetie, it's pretty, but, like, maybe you should get off the Beardsley kick?' and that was all. She just couldn't get any real artistic comment—and while 'Yes, it's beautiful' may be good for the ego, I suspect it would be like trying to live on chocolate milk shakes. I suppose \*sigh\* it's a Good Thing she's with all those other great California artists; she's got neighbors who speak her language."

DICK ELLINGTON wrote, among other things, "I found the Perry Rhodan thing quite interesting incidentally and your rationale a bit on the defensive side. I mean, you don't have to defend inclusion of such material, do you? Or do you?"

No. But it was a measure of my editorial insecurity then that I did alibi it.

MITCHELL SWEDO, JR makes the valid point that fantasy,

within its self-contained other-reality, is essentially timeless and "true" indefinitely, while scientifically extrapolated science fiction can be quickly out-dated by new theories and developments.

The "harder" the science fiction the more vulnerable it is.

HAL DAVIS thinks Paul Walker is an excellent reviewer but goofed in his review of Aldiss' Report on Probability A.

F. BAILEY spied two thrown away issues of SFR in a friend's wastebasket and curiously sampled them. He became a convert. Enraged at his friend's heresy and blasphemy, he tried to get his friend arrested for an act Disrespectful of Geis and/or SFR. The District Attorney was not cooperative, so he, Bailey, had to be content with subscribing...and inflicting upon his friend summary, personal punishment—a split upper lip and a black eye. Or so F. Bailey says. And I believe him.

LEE OFFRET mentioned, "Happy to learn that a Kobo Abe book (Inter Ice Age 4(?)) has been selected by SF BOOK CLUB. I haven't seen it yet, but if it is as good as THE FACE OF ANOTHER, or THE WOMAN IN THE DUNES, it's a must for my reading list. (When I do read it, I'll review it for you if you'd like, Geis.)

Okay, fine. I'd like to read it, myself, too, if someone will lend me a copy...

M. GLYER fumed: "Your analysis and review of Robert Moore Williams's Love is Forever is very narrow and worthless. It is a smug, but blind, casting about for criticism by a self-proclaimed psychoanalyst. It's tone is not rational. Its progression is not one of logic. Its attitude is intolerance and mainly misunderstanding. It makes no difference that I disbelieve Williams' book as much as you do. I formed that opinion but did not condemn him because I did not understand him to the degree necessary for justification of my opinion if printed. I think you would have been better off if you had done the same." Uhh...

THOMAS JEFFERSON SOYER confessed: "I voted for Delany's 'Time Considered...' and I must admit to not knowing—thinking about its qualifications, and probably a lot of voters didn't. Perhaps if you'd mentioned it an issue or two back, the results might have been quite different."

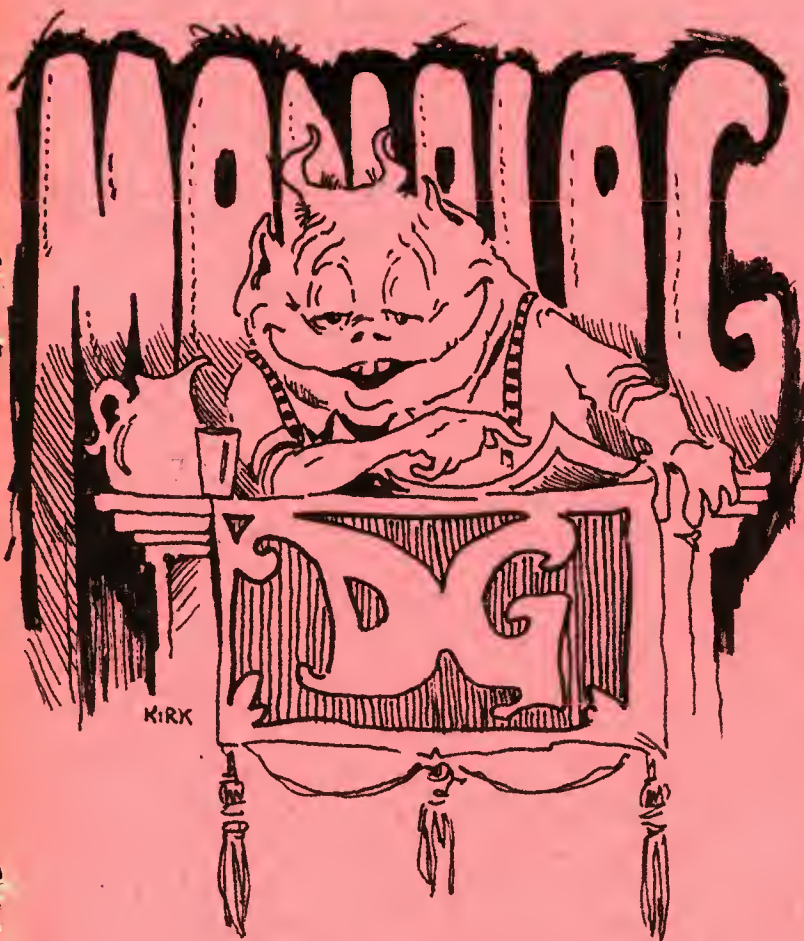
I simply hadn't had time to read that issue of NEW WORLDS. It was only when Charles Platt mentioned it while visiting here that I subsequently took the time to check the texts word for word. Perhaps there should be a permanent Hugo Committee set up to check such things. Overworked convention committees do not have the time.

KENNETH W. FAIG, JR said: "I'd like to compliment you on the fine book reviews in #38 and #39. With the flood of material today, one appreciates such guides. Could you occasionally review fanzines, too?"

I would like to, but I lack the room. I have to keep narrowing the scope of the magazine, it seems, to keep it within the limits of my time and energy. I simply have to let other publishers do the fanzine reviewing.

AND THIS IS THE END of the trail again. Sorry I couldn't quote from you all. Keep writing. HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON ALL!!





+ A thoroughly depressing investigation of photo-offset printing costs convinced me that it was not practical to turn to that direction with SFR for a while yet.

Oh, if I'd wanted to limit myself to 48 half-size pages—approximately one-third less text—I could have made the switch, but my conscience wouldn't let me.

And then, as if guided by the Hand of Bloch, there appeared in the mail a Gestetner circular describing their new collating machine, electric, which has 8 bays.

Yes.

+ A word about Norman Spinrad's "Fiawol" which leads off this issue. With the exceptions of underlining book titles, putting quotation marks around story and novelette titles, and capitalizing magazine, movie and tv show titles...and running paragraphs together near the end to finish the article on that 8th page...the article is exactly as it appeared in KNIGHT, Vol. 7, Issue #4. Text-wise, anyway. I contemplated correcting Norman's spelling of Gernsback, but grinned and decided no.

+ Contents page watchers will note that SFR has a new agent. Ulf Westblom is now gathering subscribers in Sweden, so current Swedish readers please renew through him when the time comes. Welcome to the family, Ulf. \$\$\$\$ \$\$\$\$.

+ Terry Carr noted: "I've been skipping the publication of SF Specials for several months because I had nothing on hand worth the series designation, I felt. Now I do have a bunch

of good new ones; Compton starts it off in November, followed by Shaw's One Million Tomorrows (with the ending rewritten and rather improved from the magazine version) in December, and Brunner's The Traveler in Black (the four novelettes all reworked to make a continually developing narrative) in January."

+ SCIENCE FICTION BOOK CLUB March 1971 selections are: Red Moon and Black Mountain by Joy Chant (S&S) \$1.49; and Dimension X compiled by Damon Knight, five novellas by Heinlein, Kornbluth, McKenna, Aldiss and Asimov—\$1.69.

+ "VISION OF TOMORROW has engendered two new magazines in Europe which are coming out next January and drawing their inspiration from translations of back issues of the magazine."  
—Phil Harbottle

+ Darrell Schweitzer newsnotes: "Something went wrong with my info about Roger Zelazny's forthcoming material. He has a novel coming up in F&SF. Maybe he didn't mention this when he answered my letter, or he arranged a deal to have Jack of Shadows serialized or he wrote another novel since then (which is possible. He's amazingly prolific sometimes, you know). I could write and ask him, but by the time you could print the info it would be obsolete.

"Thus endeth my spectacular career as a faanish reporter.

"Well, not quite: Leland Sapiro says RIVERSIDE QUARTERLY will not fold with the current issue."

Now you know how Cronkite feels, Darrell. Shape up or I send your name to Spiro!

+ Walter Gillings, 115 Wanstead Park Road, Cranbrook, Ilford, Essex, England, has an elaborate SF tape collection and service available: radio plays, tv plays, lectures, etc. For full particulars contact him.

+ L. Sprague de Camp's collection of short stories and novelettes called The Continent Makers (and Other Tales of the Vagans) is to be reprinted in pb presently by New American Library.

SCIENCE FICTION BOOK CLUB April 1971 selections are: The House in November, a novel by Keith Laumer—\$1.49  
Fun With Your New Head, a collection of Thomas M. Disch stories—\$1.49.

+ Jack Chalker reports on the Mirage Press schedule for 1970-71: Is the Devil a Gentleman? by Seabury Quinn, \$5.95  
A Guide to Middle-Earth by Robert Foster, d/w Kirk in color, the concordance and dictionary (Jan.), cloth \$5.95, paper \$3.75.

The Conan Grimoire, edited by L. Sprague de Camp and George Scithers; illustrated articles on sword and sorcery (April), \$5.95

H.G. Wells: Critic of Progress by Jack Williamson; (July) \$4.95

And at least one of the following: The Harlan Ellis—on Hornbook; An Atlas of Fantasy by J. B. Post (a literal atlas of fantasy worlds, many never before published and obtained from authors); The Index to the Science-Fantasy Publishers III; In Memoriam: Clark Ashton Smith, and/or The Infinite Worlds of Murray Leinster.



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