$1.

THE ALIEN CRITIC

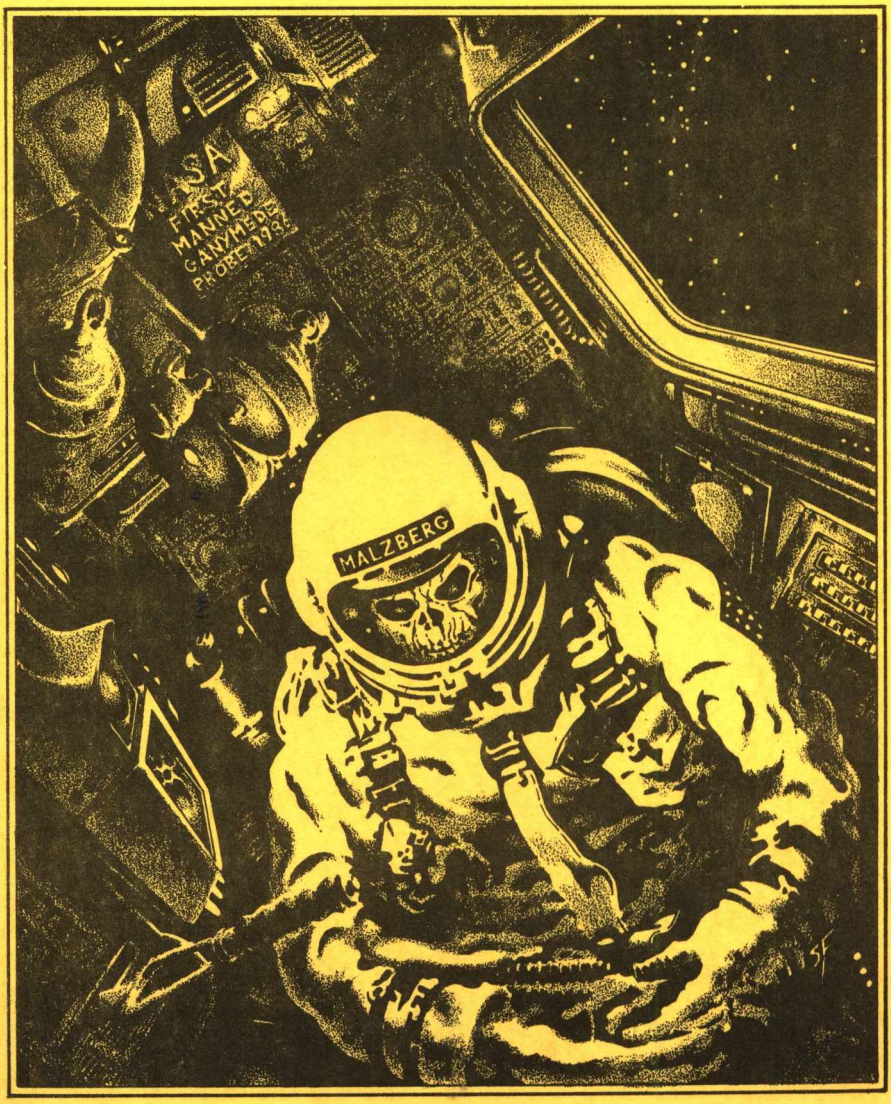
an informal science fiction & fantasy journal

THE SHAPE OF SCIENCE FICTION TO COME
BY FREDERIK POHL

NOISE LEVEL
BY JOHN BRUNNER

UP AGAINST THE WALL, ROGER ZELAZNY
AN INTERVIEW

Number Seven



THE ALIEN CRITIC

ADVERTISING

Full page print area: 5-3/8" x 8-3/4"
ONE PAGE—$20. BACK COVER—$25.
Also, any ad of approximate page size or shape can be used. For instance, an 8½" x 11" is acceptable.

Less than full page: Any size or shape ad less than 5-3/8" x 8-3/4" is acceptable. Cost may be judged as percentage-of-page used @ $20. per page rate.

Unclassified ads—5¢ per word.
$1. minimum.

PRINT RUN FOR NEXT ISSUE
At Least 3000 Copies

JANUARY 1, 1974

THE ALIEN CRITIC is published quarterly for science fiction & fantasy professionals and aficionados.

Published—February, May, August, November.

Printed in the United States of America by Perri Press, Portland, Oregon

THE ALIEN CRITIC

BOX 11408 PORTLAND, OR 97211

Richard E. Geis
Editor & Publisher

NOVEMBER, 1973—Whole Number Seven—Vol.2. No.4

COVER BY STEPHEN FABIAN

ALIEN THOUGHTS.....4

THE SHAPE OF SCIENCE FICTION TO COME
A Speech by Frederik Pohl.....7

NOISE LEVEL
A Column by John Brunner.....17

UP AGAINST THE WALL, ROGER ZELAZNY
An Interview by Phantasmicom and Geis....35

AUTHOR'S CHOICE
By Roger Zelazny.....40

HOW THEODORE STURGEON LEARNED TO LOVE RELEVANCE AND RUINED HIS SCIENCE FICTION
An Article by Cy Chauvin.....53

THE ALIEN'S ARCHIVES.....63

MAGAZINE NOTES (COMIC).....61

UNCLASSIFIED ADS.....62

Books Reviewed
ON WHEELS.....16
TRANSIT TO SCORPIO
THE SUNS OF SCORPIO.....20
THE GOLD OF THE GODS.....24
FRIENDS COME IN BOXES.....26
MEROVIT'S WORLD.....28
TODAY WE CHOOSE FACES.....43
MYTHMASTER.....45
THE INVINCIBLE.....49
MEMOIRS FOUND IN A BATHTUB.....49
HARD TO BE A GOD.....50
THE TEMPLE OF THE PAST.....51
VIEW FROM ANOTHER SHORE.....52

Letters
MALCOLM EDWARDS.....15
DON PFEIL.....15
JOHN BRUNNER.....20
HARLAN ELLISON.....22
JAMES TIPTREE, JR.....25
ROSS ROCKLYNNE.....27
ROBERT BLOCH.....29
POUL ANDERSON.....29
JERRY POURNELLE.....32
JERRY POURNELLE.....32
BOB TOOMEY.....33
ROGER ZELAZNY.....43
AVRAM DAVIDSON.....44
STAN BURNS.....44
ALEXEI PANSHIN.....46
VONDA N. McINTYRE.....47
MARJORIE AAB.....47
ROBERT MOORE WILLIAMS.....48
MIRIAM ALLEN DEFORD.....52
DAMON KNIGHT.....52
MICHAEL K. SMITH.....57
ALBERT DYTCH.....58
LON JONES.....60
DAVID HARRIS.....61
ARTHUR D. HLAVATY.....62

INTERIOR ART
Tim Kirk: 2, 3, 4, 17, 63
Mike Gilbert: 5, 7, 33, 53
Bill Rotsler: 6, 35
Richard Flinchbaugh: 40
Doug Lovenstein: 47
Jim McLeod: 74

All uncredited writing in this issue can be blamed on the editor. The publisher accepts no responsibility.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

In the United States:
$4. One Year
$7. Two Years

From Canada:
US$4.50 One Year
US$8.00 Two Years

From Australia:
A$3.15 One Year
A$5.60 Two Years
To Agent—John Foyster
6 Clowes St.,
South Yarra,
Victoria,
AUSTRALIA 3141

From the United Kingdom:
£1.98 One Year
£3.43 Two Years
To Agent—
Wm. Dawson & Sons, Ltd.
Cannon House,
Folkstone, Kent,
UNITED KINGDOM

All other Foreign:
US$4.50 One Year
US$8.00 Two Years

All Foreign subscriptions must be paid in U.S. dollar cheques or money orders, except to agents.

BACK ISSUES

Numbers 1, 2, 3 were a personal journal titled RICHARD E. GEIS. Mimeographed.
#1 is SOLD OUT.
#2 and #3 are in short supply.
THE ALIEN CRITIC #4 was a transition issue. It is SOLD OUT.

THE ALIEN CRITIC #5 & 6
Adequate Supply.

ALIEN THOUGHTS

Several loyal, sadistic readers have gratuitously pointed out to me how, when I folded SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW several years ago, I made some big talk about having books in me fighting to get out, how I wanted to switch from porno to s-f, and how a large circulation fan magazine was too much work....

Now (these torturers go on) here I am back in the big-time fanzine business even after recently swearing up and down in RICHARD E. GEIS, my short-lived Personal Journal, that I was content with a diary-zine and could stick with it the rest of my natural life while writing immortal s-f novels, too. Howcum, they ask.

That's too good a question. (Hang them!)

The answer is that I'm twisting slowly, slowly in the wind from my hyper-active subconscious, which does all the serious deciding in my life. The surface me simply sits and watches, amazed on occasion, at what transpires.

I could say that I know how to make a big-time zine work this time around (true, true), and that what important messages I have to impart to the world (heavy Truth & Deep Insights) are as easily said in the body of a review or in a comment on a letter than in a novel.

I could say that after approximately 85 published books and 100 odd stories (and believe me, some of them were pretty odd!), I am simply sick of writing fiction. I could say... But I'd probably be jiving.

I seem to have Something in me that insists on editing and publishing. It has existed in me ever since my kiddie days. And writing, too. But, apparently, now, editing and publishing more than fiction writing. So I obey. Go fight inner city hall.

It's a conspiracy against me, of course: the international bankers in league with the Mafia and the Nixon administration and the deros in the caves have joined forces

with the Devil to make me do it. (Of course I'm that important!)

I am increasingly sympathetic to people who say they are compelled to write or paint or crochet or whatnot. This being a puppet on a string has inspired in me a great interest in psychology and related subjects. I understand a lot about other people, but I'm too close to me, so I don't see clearly what it is that twangs my strings in this orchestra of life. (Ghod!) I mean, is it talent that's demanding expression, or a strange Script given me by my parents? Both?

So, here I am (and there you are), bemused, enjoying myself, working my ass off. It could be worse.

+++

Speaking of my writing novels... My last sale was to Brandon, as you early subscribers will remember. I titled it DEMON'S WIFE. I have just received complimentary copies which show a retitling. It is now A GIRL POSSESSED (Brandon Book #6326). It is by 'Peggy Swenson', my most prolific and best-selling pseudonym. The book has a fine, non-porno cover, too. My compliments to editor Larry Shaw. I hope I get royalties from this one.

The book is porno, but it has a story and it has some content and it has a tough ending. If you'd like to read it it'll cost you $1.95 from Regent House (Book Div.), Box 9506, North Hollywood, CA 91605.

+++

Last issue was late because the printer (Don Day, the ancient one who published the legendary fanzine THE FANSCIENT in the...was it the early 50's?) was eyebrow deep in a huge order of menus for a pizza chain when his assistant came down with a nine day bout of flu and his girl helper quit to take a better job. The result of all this was a three week delay in printing TAC#6. Remaining was collating, stapling, folding, trimmig. In the end, rather than wait a further unknown period (I was beginning to receive cards and letters from TACless subscribers), I *groan* did that donkey work myself...and may do it again, since I found it represents several hundred dollars savings—the difference between breaking even and losing lotsa money.

So, if this issue is late...blame it on the Christmas mail glut; a bulk-rate third-class mailing will get precious little attention and low priority. I nevertheless hope to make up several weeks and get #8 mailed in early February.

I also hope to live to be 104. I think I can make it...I think I can make it...I... think...I...can...make...it.....

+++

I intended to get a lot of reading done in the magazines for this issue, but... See, my dad went into the hospital with a collapsed lung and emphysema and chronic bronchitis. That's what comes from two packs of cigs a day for forty years, so be warned.

What else? Oh, yes, we fixed up the hothouse behind the garage, I caulked the crevices in the driveway next to the house against this winter's ice and snow and rain...and mowed the lawn, and mowed the lawn, and mowed the lawn....

Apartment living has its merits.

+++

I have no shame at all in reprinting fine articles and interviews from other fanmagazines (those with 100-500 circulations). I can give this material a much wider distribution.

Of course I also get out and hustle for new material. I am conducting a mail interview with Avram Davidson now, with a promise from James Tiptree, Jr. that he will be next. And I have a coup of sorts in acquiring both the Bob Bloch Banquet speech and his Guest of Honor speech at the Torcon.

The major piece by the Panshins on Heinlein upcoming in #9 will be followed in due course by major treatments of other well-known sf and fantasy writers.

And someday, someday the Ellison article will arrive.... And I'm propositioning other writers constantly. By damn, THE ALIEN CRITIC will be the best fan magazine ever published.

THE SHAPE OF SCIENCE FICTION TO COME

a speech by Frederik Pohl

First published in SPECULATION #31

The title of my talk is "The Shape of Science Fiction to Come", and I would like to talk about what I think science fiction can be and should be. In doing so I will have to spend some time in telling you what I think science fiction is – and indeed, what I think a story is. I seldom speak in such analytical terms but I propose to do so this afternoon, and I think I should tell you why.

A couple of years ago a local college asked me to teach a course in short-story writing, and I rejected this as an indecent proposal because I don't believe that writing can or should be taught. I made that clear and made it stick – for all of a day I made it stick. Then they called me up and said that if I wouldn't teach the course they'd give it to someone else who would teach it, and I couldn't permit that!

I agreed to do it. That required me to think in terms of the analysis of a story, terms I don't usually like to think in. It seems to me that the more writers get conscious of the process of what they're doing, the less likely they are to do anything worthwhile. But in order to teach the course I had to think in these terms, and so I evolved my own pedantic vocabulary.

It seems to me that most kinds of writing, including science fiction, comes apart into four main parts. First of all there is what I call the 'Letter to the Editor' – that is, the theme, the thesis, whatever it is you want to accomplish, what it is you want to convey. The second part is the cast of characters, the people in the story – and in SF not necessarily human people, and not necessarily even organic. The third part is the setting, the background, the milieu, what I call the 'Travelogue'.

Finally there is that shape of word-use, coinage, idiosyncratic inflexion, or whatever else decorates the surface of the work and that concerns so many writers so much – the style, what I call the 'Package'. This is a Madison Avenue advertising term but it is one that I think appropriate.

Now it would be possible to re-label all these elements with more high-flown terms, but it seems to me that the danger here is that the attempt to make the work of the analyst more respectable – by giving criticism the status of a profession with its own mumbo-jumbo – is successful only at the cost of minimising the respectability and in fact degrading the worth of the writing itself. So let me use these coarse and colloquial terms to separate out the parts of science fiction stories, and let us look at each of them to see where SF can go from here.

Let's take them one at a time and in re-

verse order. There is a reason for this, and the reason is that it appears to me that the SF story at present is being approached in this reverse order by many of its writers. The last, and I think least important element I mentioned was the 'package', and I think the dominant aspect of the last 'New Wave' was that most of what creative abilities its practitioners had went into the style, the format – the emphasis was on surface features. There has been more attention paid to the 'package' than to the content of the story.

Now, what I told my students – and of what I do not think I have yet succeeded in convincing any practicing professional writer – is that style is the last thing any serious writer should worry about. I borrow a maxim from architecture and from biology to say "Form follows function". Or to quote an authority whose name I unfortunately do not remember, "style is the problem solved". Once you have decided what you want to say and who it concerns and where it is all happening and when, then that style which most economically and completely conveys all these things is the right style for your story.

I think that in science fiction the great stories that have made SF worth reading in the first place were pretty nearly styleless. We have a tendency to think that because SF has become more fashionable and reputable and more popular, at the same time that it has become more literary, there must be some cause-and-effect relationship there.

I don't think this is so. I think that the importance of science fiction rests largely on the stories of people like Doc Smith, Stanley Weinbaum, Edgar Rice Burroughs and Robert A. Heinlein, all of whom are essentially style-free. It is what they say that is important, and not in all the way in which they say it. So that it seems to me that for a writer to think first in terms of style is to cramp his story in a way which will strangle it.

Please understand that I am not saying writers should not develop styles of their own. I am only saying that the style is the least part of the story. Science fiction enjoys the sort of literary and social acceptance now that we only dreamed about, twenty or thirty years ago, but in fact the stories that have won esteem for SF are the ones that were written twenty and thirty and even forty years ago, by and large. They still sell as well as or better than the newest work. 'Doc' Smith and Heinlein are taught in the schools side by side with Chip Delany and Jim Ballard. They are equally enshrined in bibliography and entombed in monographs. And yet no one would pretend that there was any appreciable literary style in those stories of the 1930s and 1940s that made SF worth taking seriously in the first place.

I do think that science fiction will see the development of new packages – new styles, new modalities – and I think they will be deeply involved with the new techniques for communication that are available; TV, tape cassettes, design, illustration, and so on. But what will be important about them, I think, is not that they will exist but that new kinds of story will make them necessary.

The second part of the science fiction story is the 'cast of characters', and here SF faces a particularly difficult and almost insoluble problem. When Tolstoy and de Maupassant, Hemingway or Dickens developed their casts of characters, they had a good many in-built advantages. If Dickens wanted to write about the boyhood of David Copperfield, all he really had to do was look inside his own head, remember what he could of his own boyhood, modify it with whatever other boyhoods he had observed and what other settings he had seen, and set it down on paper. There he had created a teal young man who impressed us with his reality.

But Brian and Harry and Bob Shaw and all of us have a more complicated task, since the people we write about often enough have not had a childhood like ours, or even a childhood at all. They may look like sea snakes or bats. They may be like Asimov's positronic robots, or Ross Rocklynne's intelligent stars. To say something meaningful about people like these is a near-impossibility, and can only be done by compromise and inference.

And because it's hard, a good many of us don't trouble to do it. We limit ourselves to human beings, and if possible human beings as much like ourselves as we can. It seems to me that while this is an easy way to write a story it is not necessarily a good way, and further, that it is a way which fails to exploit the potential of SF for making real to us creatures that we have never encountered. Both critical and financial success has come to writers who have taken this easy way out, but it remains an evasion and worse, a failure to exploit the characteristics of SF that make it worthwhile; that 'view from a distant star' which lets us see our own world from outside.

Those distant stars of course are part of the third aspect of SF writing, which I call the 'travelogue'. It seems to me, sadly, that more and more science fiction stories have a tendency to consist of two or three or more people sitting in a living room or parlour, very much like all the other living rooms and parlours in New York and London and everywhere else, discussing sex, and world ecology, and sociology, and behavior, and sex, and other matters of great importance to them but in a static and rather dull environment.

I had occasion to chide A. J. Budrys once, when he turned in a smart, what he considered to be a marvelous half of a novel, in which nothing happened for two hundred pages except that people talked to each other. I said, "A.J., I don't mind your having people settle all the great problems of humanity in your stories, but couldn't they do it while they're dodging fire-lizards on Venus?" And I think this is one thing SF can do – not only settle metaphysical and abstract problems, but it can do these things in environments which are themselves intrinsically interesting.

The final part of science fiction is the 'letter to the editor', the subject matter, the content, the thing that a story is all about. There's always been a great temptation to use science fiction for propaganda purposes, because it's very good for that sort of thing. Jonathan Swift, for example, used SF techniques to express his hatred of the English nobility and aristocracy in the 18th Century. I used it, should I say before someone else says it for me, to bite the hand that was feeding me when I was working for advertising agencies, by writing THE SPACE MERCHANTS with Cyril Kornbluth, denouncing them for practices that were in fact paying my salary!

I do not think this is a wrong thing to go – obviously. But I do not think either that it is the fullest exploration of what SF can do. Propaganda implies a sort of contempt for and manipulation of the reader; you take as a starting point that he is hoodwinked by the world's cant and false standards, and you spend your best efforts instead to hoodwink him with your own.

Science fiction can do far more than that. It can show not only what we are like, or what we will be at some future date, but what we may be if we choose it so. It can show us what effect follows from what causal agents we see around us now, and thus give us a chance to decide what we want to happen, of all the countless possibilities.

The best part of a science fiction story is not what you read, but what happens in one's own mind when you have finished reading. It is in this direction – in providing inputs of new kinds of possible worlds, new considerations to affect today's actions, new exercises in what Herman Kahn calls 'conceiving the inconceivable' – that I think the shape of science fiction stories to come will achieve their greatest value... to us as readers and perhaps even to the world. +++

A transcript of the discussion which followed Frederik Pohl's speech.

HARRY HARRISON: "Are you going to stand by your statement that Swift used science fiction techniques in GULLIVER'S TRAVELS?"

POHL: "It is an SF technique to invent a

planet (or island) called Liliput, in which people do the things that you dislike in your present society. But in the story they go so far that clearly the things they are doing are maniacal and obsessed, whereas in real society things only seem that they might be going that way. This is one of the techniques of SF. I don't claim that SF invented it, but I do claim that it is special to SF, and when Swift was using it he was writing an SF story."

BRIAN ALDISS: "What Harry was trying to say, I think, was that perhaps there is a certain inaccuracy in referring to that SF technique, in that science fiction hadn't been invented at the time. In other words, that the techniques Swift used were later appropriated by SF when it came along."

POHL: "I'm willing to concede that maybe SF didn't exist at the time, in any organised form. But this reductio ad absurdum, this literary satire, is basically an SF technique, it has been used by many, yourself included. And if it prefigured the existence of SF itself, well the Caesarian delivery also preceded modern obstetrical practice, but is nonetheless part of modern obstetrical practice. It simply came a little ahead of its time."

PETER NICHOLLS: "I can quite accept that SF maybe has invented ideas, but not really any technique of its own. Surely all that SF writers have done is to take techniques from literature – and thus took Swift's techniques."

POHL: "I would accept your argument. As far as I know the SF techniques of the sixties have been copied wholehandedly from William Burroughs, John dos Passos and everyone else who was writing in the '20s and '30s. I know of no SF technique which wasn't lifted bodily."

JAMES BLISH: "Fred, I grant your point that a lot of the new stylists are essentially catching up with what was called the 'mainstream' novel, but nevertheless I think there have been a few inventions, and it seems to me that the kind of thing J.G. Ballard is doing is wholly new; I can think of no antecedent for it whatsoever. My question is, can you?"

POHL: "Jim, we have argued this in private and I'm willing to argue it with you in public. I don't see anything of the sort you describe in Ballard's work. (BLISH: "I'm talking about the short stories, not the novels."). I must say this though perhaps I'm explaining my own ignorance. You have described to me, Jim, subtleties in the works of JGB, so that I have gone back to look for them, and I have not found them.

What I don't know is whether they exist in the works themselves or in the head of Jim Blish. If Ballard were here I'd like to find out from him if this were so. Perhaps this is really not relevant, because it's true that some of the best things that happen from reading an SF story do not come while reading it but take place afterwards in your own head. It may be that Ballard has caused you to invent something that was intrinsic to the story but which I just missed. I don't know. But I can't really quarrel on an objective basis because we differ in perception."

UNKNOWN: "Is it fair to talk about people like Heinlein and Weinbaum and Edgar Rice Burroughs and call them styleless? I'd have thought that their plainness of style was a very positive attribute."

POHL: "I should have said that they don't have a mannered style. It's really a quite clear, lucid, plain sort of style – so was Hemingway's for that matter. What I find almost universal to the great SF writers is that they do not have very many literary mannerisms, with a few exceptions like Stapledon. My reason for prefering the lucid style is that it does not obscure what the writer is trying to tell me about, whereas a mannered style does.

"Is John Brunner here? I don't want to slander him behind his back! I must say, John, that while I respect your work in particular as one example of this sort of thing, I am much more likely to go back and reread your earlier adventure stories than I am to go back and reread STAND ON ZANZIBAR, impressive though the work is."

JOHN BRUNNER: "Since you've taken my name in vain, may I compliment you on the ingenuity with which you've managed to turn back the entire discussion put by Harry! But talking about derivative approaches to writing of any kind is really futile. Why worry about who got what from where; surely what matters is who has put it to good use!"

WESTON: "How would you classify new writers like Delany?"

POHL: "Delany is very hard to classify. He may be the only authentic genius amongst us. He is writing at such an advanced level that everything he says, in its best parts, trembles on the very verge of being totally incomprehensible. (Laughter) This is a very narrow tightrope to walk, but he's walked it very well until now.

GEORGE HAY: "I think that one of the functions of SF is to get across new and exciting concepts. Do you think that SF authors since 1960 (or so) to date are putting over such concepts better, or worse than before?"

POHL: "My whole thesis is that the stress of most SF being written today is not in the direction of propounding concepts. It's in the direction of experimenting with style, and this I deplore. I do think that there are many new and interesting concepts which have been developed in modern SF, but there has been so much attention given to other things that I don't think there are nearly enough."

CHRIS PRIEST: "I can't see the difference between that form of writing which has a form imposed on it, of beginning, middle and end, and that of somebody who doesn't structure his work in that way."

POHL: "I see this difference, Chris. Let me take the example of someone who is not present (and really I shouldn't since he's not here to defend himself); let's talk about Bob Silverberg. He was a very lucid and transparent writer, almost a styleless writer, for a long time an unmannered writer. But he began shifting around in the direction of more and more mannerisms, so it became harder and harder to see what he would be saying if he could only get the marbles out of his mouth and say it. I don't know what's happening in most of Silverberg's stories of late; I can't quite follow whatever he means me to perceive as being reality – if indeed he is talking about any sort of reality at all."

PRIEST: "Could it be that he doesn't want you to know?"

POHL: "If so why the heck is he wasting my time writing stories?"

DAVE KYLE: "We must bear in mind that the SF of a few decades ago was primarily designed for the magazine market. It needed the straightforward approach. Nowadays the accent is on stories being published in a book, and therefore I think authors have tended to take advantage of the fact that they were speaking alone within one cover."

POHL: "That's an interesting theoretical point which is not borne out by the facts. What has happened is that writers have been writing increasingly for the mystification of each other and less and less for the edification of their audiences."

JOHN BRUNNER: "When one gets into the question of lucidity of narrative, one is surely overlooking the fact that we live in the television age. I had, for example, a TV commercials producer arguing with me on the subject of 'what happens to narrative flow in the cinema?', and he said that because television commercials have come along, people have become accustomed to flicking instantly from one scene to another, even

though there may be centuries between them. Exposed to this sort of environment, surely it is hardly surprising that an author will want to try and montage communication? In the hands of somebody who really understands what he's doing, it does make possible effects which would otherwise not be feasible without incredible depths of layering of explanation."

POHL: "I'm not prepared to denounce that theory at the present time, but I do think it rests on pretty thin basis – I think Elizabethan drama was quite as capable of jumping from point to point and time to time as TV is today, and if indeed television has had that effect on prose writers today, then drama should have done 300 years ago."

BRIAN ALDISS: "I don't want to ask any questions, but I'm just terrified that this convention is seeming to get very reactionary, and we're bogged down on this thing of the old versus the new.

"I don't think you can draw a waterline – a Plimsoll Line – in any way, or that you can regard science fiction as some horrible mad thing of which we all have ownership. It is something written by a number or writers, each of whom have their own approach, and they shouldn't be blackmailed by the prevailing atmosphere in this hall, or in any other hall. In many cases writers have been prevailed upon very heavily, by editors, to do the particular thing the editor wanted for his magazine. This has slackened off recently so that authors have more freedom, and maybe you will think some of those authors have done very peculiar things. But it's the freedom we must rejoice in.

"I find it very sad to hear statements to the contrary, however beautifully expressed. I feel there's a slight bite in the air and I don't like it, I'm afraid."

LARRY NIVEN: "I can quite see Mr. Brunner's point. He said that our audience has been educated by television to think in certain ways, to shift scenes very rapidly. The problem is that the ideas that a TV commercial is trying to put across are very simple, whereas the ideas I'm trying to put across take an awful lot of effort. Anything that gets in the way of the reader's comprehension is an added hindrance. I had a terrible time explaining the Ringworld, for instance, without any pictures!"

POHL: "Just the point; if you're talking about something complex you need to tell it simply. If your imagination is so deficient that you can only talk about simple things, you're entitled to discuss them complexly." (Laughter)

HARRISON: "God, up there in a dirty moustache!"*

POHL: (In reply to an unclear question) "If I have failed to make it clear, I am in favor of diversity. I am only saying that there is less diversity than I would like to see in SF of late, because it has become quite modish to write in a mannered style. I see a great many mss – have seen for years – coming in from writers who have had no encounter with fans or writers' groups or with the world of publishing at all, and they take their cue from what they see in print. More and more their work is like the latest from Bob Silverberg, or Delany, or Brian Aldiss' more recent work. It seems to me that the diversity I look for is therefore diminishing, not increasing."

BRIAN ALDISS: "Can I say that there might be reasons of society why this is so, that the old belief in technology, turning the world into a giant spaceship, no longer has universal appeal? There's now room for – whatever you call it – the softer approach. The ecological approach, that if I had my time on the platform I would propound.** I really think you will have to develop a tolerance for the fact that we now have a wider audience, and one of the reasons for

*In-group science fiction joke.

**Brian's excellent 'Environment' speech will be published in the British Science Fiction Association's VECTOR.

this is that there are people not just carving bloody great spaceships out of asteroids, but people doing something that brings focus to our own lives.

"They are not content with the all-powerful hero who rides to the stars, but they can depict the poor little shag trying to make do in an overcrowded slum. Without saying that one is good and the other bad, which I think you are mistaking for literary terms, the arena has been widened, and this is part of the diversity of the science fiction field."

JAMES BLISH: "I think this problem, this question, is much older than anyone has so far imagined. I have been all my life, for the most part, a conventional writer of narratives. I spent some time imitating E.E. Smith – as a matter of fact, some 250,000 words of it – and in general I have been a writer with a good deal of consciousness of the kind of thing you are speaking for. And yet I have found, and found years ago with pieces like 'Testament of Andros', that with few exceptions the stuff I have done over the last thirty years has gone down the drain. It is the few experiments that have survived and have been anthologised over and over again. For instance, every BLACK EASTER it rains money!

"It seems to me that we vastly underestimate the capacity of the present audience for assimilating this kind of thing. We may have underestimated the capacity of past audiences, too, although they didn't get this material, primarily through magazine editorial reasons."

POHL: "I think you are citing BLACK EASTER as an argument in favour of your predilection for experimentation. To me BLACK EASTER seems to be a classic science fiction story, written with utmost lucidity but quite baroque and strange in content. I have not ever suggested one should not experiment with content; but there was nothing overly 'stylistic' in my sense about the novel. And while you may not have written it for a science fiction magazine, in case you've forgotten I published it in one." (Laughter & applause)

End of session.

Some Comments By Peter Weston: Odd that Jim Blish should fail to consider such stories as "Surface Tension", which must have survived better than most despite being written along conventional lines. (In fact, J. B. confessed, or so I seem to remember, that he didn't think much of the story at the time.) Odd, too, that Blish should cite the fact (in his letter, further in this issue ((SPECULATION #31))) that all of his books are still in print, every single one he has ever written. I think this tends to weaken JB's assertion above, and to expose his own modesty; few SF writers can have 'survived', in any sense, better than James Blish.

There are some odd things in Fred Pohl's comments, too. Fred cites Bob Silverberg as a bad example, to my utter astonishment. Bob Silverberg? "...don't know what's happening in his stories of late"? I don't claim to have read all of S's recent fiction (who can?) but with the exception of SON OF MAN there is little I can regard as overly stylistic. I wish I had thought to ask at the time to ask Fred Pohl to be specific; which Silverberg stories, pray? (Brian Stableford takes his own look at S's fiction in an article later in this issue ((SPECULATION #31))).

Finally, while Fred Pohl mildly criticises Silverberg and John Brunner's STAND ON ZANZIBAR, it's surely odd that he did not wish to make the same sort of objections to Samuel Delany's current output. Most odd was to see Fred explaining Delany's plan to issue a multi-media novel (with gramophone record), and to admit Delany trembles on the edge of the incomprehensible. It all goes to prove that even editors are human and have their own likes and dislikes which tend to get in the way of any reasoned argument. Incidentally, the tape-recording of the session was so unclear in one place that I had to omit all reference to the Delany LP/book package.

★

Geis To Pohl: While typing this material for THE ALIEN CRITIC, I noticed what seemed to be a misunderstanding on Peter Weston's (and mayhap others) part in what you meant by 'style'.

Peter seemed to think you were referring to word style, while I see you as meaning structure/theme style. Care to comment?

POHL: As to your specific question, it's hard for me to answer lacking the text here in any specific way, but I will do what I can.

What I mean by "style" relates to both structure and word-use; it is the way in which an author tells me something. What I mean by "content" includes theme; it is what the author is telling me. To some extent style and content overlap and interpenetrate each other, as McLuhan says; but to a much larger extent they don't. Style can be elucidating——that is, it can make more clear what the author is saying——or it can be intrusive and distracting, in which case it may obscure what the author is saying or may conceal the fact that the author, in truth, has nothing to say. When it is intrusive and distracting I usually dislike it.

But there are times——eg James Joyce and a few others——when a complex style is the only way to say what the author wants to say. That's lovely. There are far more times when an author is captivated by stylistic tricks and so exhausts himself in the tricks that he has nothing left to put into content: a gift-wrapped turd. That's awful, but that's what is wrong with most of the late New Wave.

****

OLD-FASHIONED HIEROICS

In the reviewing game you tend to prejudge; 'This will be a clinker, that's probably a simple-minded Juvenile...." Like that.

Yet you pick them up and start them all with hopes, because you're always looking for The Delightful Reading Experience, and you are never sure when it'll come (and you dread being bored and forced into duty-reading).

So I picked up Sterling E. Lanier's HIERO'S JOURNEY (Chilton, $6.95) and didn't expect much (that's our way of protecting ourselves) and from the first words I knew I had a winner.

Oh, sure, the plot is familiar, and the Next Move is obvious almost all the way through (especially the ending), but Lanier has the skill, the care and concern of a story-teller who respects himself and his characters...and thus so do we, the readers care.

Lanier takes his time and his detail paints his characters, his wonders, his events with fine clarity——everything is seen and experienced.

HIERO'S JOURNEY is the story of Hiero Desteen, a telepathic priest of the remnants of the old Catholic Church which is trying to build a humanist civilization in the areas of ancient Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Alberta 5,000 years after The Death (atomic war) devastated the North American continent.

The Kanda (Canada) area is now a warm, temperate zone, with the old United States area semi-tropical to tropical.

Hiero is also a trained killer and has a tremendous psi potential. (Psi ability is prevalent to one degree or another in the North, including some mutant, intelligent animals who are not considered Evil.)

Hiero's journey is a quest. He is sent to the south and east into unknown territory and vast danger to seek an ancient computer, a weapon to help the Universal Church and the Metz Republic better fight a losing war against a force of gray clad 'Unclean' men who are in a vast conspiracy to use Evil sciences from the Old Days. This group are Ungodly, anti-life, ruthless, merciless, and dedicated to the destruction of the new order and the new morality.

The Uclean use warped, human-hating mutant creatures who are melds of men and animals, lizards.... The Death created dozens of viable mutants.

The Unclean men are telepathic, too, and use devices to augment their mental powers.

In this new world the Great Lakes have merged and spread to become an inland fresh-water sea. The ocean to the east, the Lantick, is a nearly impenetrable barrier, with very rare boats from overseas daring the vast distances.

Hiero has a loyal companion, a giant telepathic deer, whom he rides, and who has a moron's intelligence with flashes of keen psi perceptions.

Hiero meets a young, telepathic, highly intelligent bear——a heretofore unknown new species of mutant——who wishes to learn of the world and to travel with Hiero. The bear, Gorm, is brave and true and more than once saves their lives with his quickness, strength and unique mental powers.

Hiero saves a young black girl from death. She is an enslaved princess from a southern land called D'alwah (Delaware), and they fall in love. (Hiero himself is brown/copper-skinned; white skin is a rare sight, and blue eyes, red and blonde hair are surprising.)

They meet and cope with terrible, strange and wondrous dangers, and under stress Hiero's psi powers expand and develop tremendously.

He and his companions meet, in a time of extreme danger from the Unclean, an Elevener, a member of the Brotherhood of the "Eleventh Commandment" ("Thou shalt not destroy the Earth nor the life thereon.") and are saved by him and his different mental powers.

Listen——this is a damn fine novel. It is adult on all levels: Lanier doesn't avoid sex or violence. These aspects of life are accepted and chronicled. They are present as they are required by the story. It is a balanced book, a real book.

And I take note, happily, that one of the prime Unclean, a sworn to-the-death enemy of Hiero, is not dead at the end of the book, and that suggests a sequel.

HIERO'S JOURNEY is a long novel, around 150,000 words, I estimate. It is well worth the price.

****

BURN THIS MAGAZINE! DON'T LET ANY OF THOSE SCHEMING PARANOIACS READ ITS SECRETS.

****

LETTER FROM MALCOLM EDWARDS

"I was about to talk about "Tomb It May Concern" (better late than never) which, actually, I enjoyed rather more than I had expected from the glances I had cast in its direction while reading the rest of RICHARD E. GEIS #3.

"I'm not very fond of violent fiction, but there was nothing to object to here. I agree completely with your comment in #4: if you are going to put violent action into a story you must, if you are to be responsible and honest, make the reader aware that it isn't easy or clean. When I encounter that in a book I genuinely am offended, and there's still too much of it in sf, even though H. Beam Piper is no longer with us.

"As a recent example, have you read Richard C. Meredith's AT THE NARROW PASSAGE? There's a lot of casual slaughtering of innocent bystanders in that book. The hero gets through a lot of mayhem in the course of it, and occasionally as he shoots someone in the face he pauses to toss in a quick description of the features disappearing into bloody pulp. But never, at any moment, is there any inkling of awareness that what he is talking about is people, dying."

****

LETTER FROM DON PFEIL, Editor, VERTEX

Flushed with justified triumph, I suspect, eyes a-glittering, Don sent me the following note and a copy of the fourth issue of VERTEX.

"Fortunately for science fiction, fandom, and especially fan critics, have little to do with the failures or success of science fiction magazines. Please note that we have not folded 'after two or three issues.' Quite the contrary. VERTEX is enjoying outstanding sales, and it appears that our upcoming ABC audit will show it to be outselling any other SF magazine on the market.

"Wishing you the same, though I'm not sure why....."

I replied:

Dear Don;

I am always happy to have my judgement corrected. It makes for more accurate estimates next time. I don't believe in holding opinions contrary to facts.

I'm happy to hear you say that VERTEX is doing well; it shows the strength of sf and helps the genre. VERTEX is a fine advertisement for the field and that helps everyone.

Actually, you know, I preflavor my words ——just in case I have to eat them. *munch-munch*

P.S.: TAC#6 will be out in a week, and of course you'll get a copy. VERTEX (contents from #1) is listed in the Archives.

And thank you for the copy of #4. I especially like the interviews you're doing. And, from your editorial in #4, I note that we are of similar views in re entertainment being the first priority of fiction.

****

HELL ON WHEELS---a review of ON WHEELS

I've been on vacation. I haven't but dipped my nose into science fiction or fantasy for weeks. I've been wrestling with mailing out TAC #6. I've been snoozing. I've been watching with fascinated horror as the review books stack up and beg wordily for attention ("Eyetracks," cried the unread book piteously, "for the love of God, a few eyetracks....").

Undt zo...(reach-grab). Ve come to a zocial fantasy called ON WHEELS by John Jakes.

Pardon while I shift gears out of dialect.

ON WHEELS is that joy to read and feel easy contempt for——a good bad book. It is founded firmly on the unbelievable premise that in a vastly over-populated United States maybe two or three decades from now, the government will have the resources and will to support an incredible 10% of the population in a never-stopping gypsy life-style in huge vans and trailers on the vast, extended, crowded interstate highway/freeway system.

By enforced govt. unwritten law, these tribes of wheeled nomads cannot leave the freeways and a planted Law of their subculture is that as long as they live They Shall Not Go Slower Than 40 M.P.H.

(They have apartment vans, garage vans, recreation vans...and are kept going by means of government fuel tankers who match speeds presumably. No mention is made of major breakdowns——only that the vans have fantastic self-repair capacity and back-up systems.)

Hero Billy is a member of the Spoiler clan. He has an arch enemy, Lee, in the Ramp clan. There is a convincing macho bit as hot-blooded young men in their hot cars race and dare and duel on the deserted lanes late at night.

Billy wins from Lee the love of the most sought after beauty of the clans, Rose Ann Holiday, and marries her after wiping out Lee in a death-duel with their cars.

But Rose Ann is a spoiled, immature bitch and is unhappy with his lack of money. Then Lee returns, horribly scarred and crippled, with a Champion to challenge Billy and to exact revenge for the Ramps.

Frankly, Scarlett, Billy doesn't give a damn, since his marriage is shot through with soured romance, drunkenness, adultery, bitter arguments....

To make it worse, the Ramp challenger is the legendary driver, Big Daddy, who is close to clocking one million miles on his speedo and who has the hottest car of them all.

To make matters worse, Rose Ann is preg and Billy accidentally backs over her as he leaves the van in his twister on the night of the duel with Big Daddy.

Rose Ann is hurt bad and needs a road doc, but the weather is God-awful and none is near enough and the damned Highway Patrol won't let Billy off the freeway to get a local doc for her and Big Daddy is waiting....

Billy get word on his intercom that Rose Ann has died in the van. He revs up his illegal internal combustion hot car and goes after Daddy with blood in his eye. He takes Big Daddy into a suicidal death crash and Daddy explodes, burns and meets the Firebird of death. And Billy, too, in a slow, uncontrolled turn (his steering was sabotaged with Rose Ann's help—so she got her just deserts after all) at 100 M.P.H., crashes through the guardrail and soars down to his death, too, and sees the Firebird, the last thing tribe drivers see before extinction.

Yeah, man. It's formula, deliberate and with some satiric malice aforethought I suspect, with the strengths and weaknesses of formula.

Yet——I dug it. It grabs and holds and it's worth reading for Jakes' inventiveness and his skill in using cliched plot elements to their effective limit and his realistic (on a nuts-and-bolts level) picture of the motorized tribes, those flying dutchmen of the highways. (Warner 75-123, 95¢)

****

"KILGORE TROUT——after my college graduation I cornered guest speaker Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. and asked him if Kilgore Trout was Theodore Sturgeon.

"'Oh, kind of,' he instantly answered in a very neutral tone."

——Robert Werner (letter)

****

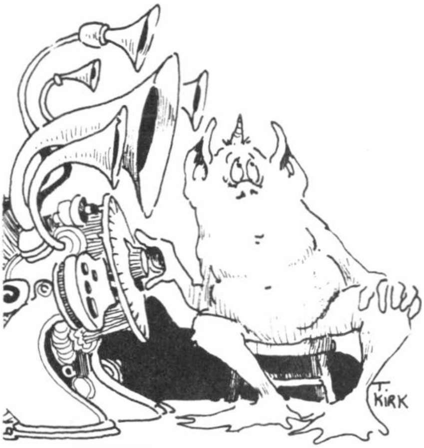
Marshal McLuhan's definition of a specialist is both provocative and pertinent: 'One who never makes small mistakes while moving towards the grand fallacy.'

****

"If a great change is to be made in human affairs, the minds of men will have to be fitted to it; the general opinions and feelings will draw that way....and then, they who persist in opposing this mighty current in human affairs will appear rather to resist the decrees of Providence itself, than the mere designs of men."

——Edmund Burke

****



NOISE LEVEL
a column by John Brunner

"Where There's Brass There's Brass"

Once upon a time a reporter from a British local newspaper got wind of the fact that there was a science fiction convention being held in his town (Great Yarmouth, as I recall), and the first person he cornered when he rushed around was Harry Harrison.

"What," he inquired, "do you SF writers talk about when you get together?"

Harry shrugged and said, "Oh - same as any other writers: money first, and then women."

I've recounted that story fairly often, because it's not just amusing, it's bloody true. Writers do talk about money a great deal. Some non-writers feel this is beneath the dignity of their idols; truck with filthy lucre is for trades-unions, or bankers, not for - save the mark - Creative Artists ...

But I am prompted to talk about this subject, not for the first time, by a report recently published in RED HERRINGS, the bulletin of the British Crime Writers' Association (the corresponding organization over here to Mystery Writers of America). One of the members went to talk to a congress of about 200 librarians, and in the course of his lecture he touched on the fact

that there is no Public Lending Right in Britain – i.e. no matter how often a book is loaned from a library the author gets nothing bar the royalty on the sale of a single copy, which may be as low as 7½% of the cover price and seldom rises much above 10%. (In the palmy days of the twenties and thirties 25% was common – did you know? But the bookseller gets a third...!)

PLR has operated for a long while in other countries of Europe: longest, I believe, in Sweden. And it's being introduced elsewhere. In Britain, we've been struggling for 20 years and not yet got there. One is talking in terms of about a penny a loan (say 2¢): not, one would think, exorbitant.

Much shaken, the guy from the CWA announced that he was shouted down and booed by these librarians, and told in so many words by a speaker from the floor, who was applauded, that writers had no business asking a fee for the loan of their books and if they couldn't make a living by writing they could damn well quit and find some other sort of job. (I summarise; you have here the gist of a long tirade.)

It is notorious that publishers expect authors to eat the chameleon's dish and live o' the air. Both in this country and in the USA there are publishers offering beginning writers the same advances I got in 1959, regardless of the immense increase in the cost of living, and many still withhold all, or at any rate half, the advance until they see fit to find a slot in their catalogue and publish the book, which may be a year, eighteen months, two years later. It isn't quite so bad for an established writer like myself, who receives occasional royalties on early work and not infrequently is pleasantly surprised at being paid for a foreign translation of something no longer paying its way in English.

For a novice writer, though, things are indisputably much worse than they were when I started off... and that was tough enough, in all conscience!

But to find that librarians hate writers too – ! Ouch!

Some writers are smart, and/or businesslike, and/or industrious by nature. These are the lucky ones, even if they possess only one of those three key attributes. Myself, I don't feel I'm particularly smart, I'm damned sure I'm not businesslike, and were it not for the fact that I am, happily, industrious, I'd be in dead trouble. (Matter of fact I am in dead trouble right now. Contrary to popular American belief, the tax authorities over here are a great deal more lenient than is the Internal Revenue Service, but even so I recently got landed with a bagful of tax problems. The highly-reputed firm of accountants whom I hired precisely because I know I'm not businesslike amalgamated with another company, and somewhere we got lost in the shuffle. I don't imagine we were the only ones.

Result: a little matter of tax that should have been paid in 1969 and wasn't because we weren't told, plus more that seems to have escaped notice in 1970, and more in 1971, and more yet now due for 1972... I was only able to pay half of it; the rest has to be spread over the next twelve months. At least they don't charge six percent interest the way your tax-authorities do!)

Curing this financial malaise, however, is involving me in the writing of about three novels I don't want to write; I don't mean they're bad books – on the contrary, Doubleday fell on the first of the three with cries of joy – but I do mean they're superfluous. They're not in any sense an advance on what I've done before, just competent stories competently told, forced on me to make ends meet at a juncture when I have a couple of really ambitious books in mind, now obligatorily postponed until next year, or the year after.

It must give the public the impression that writers are greedy people, hearing us talk so much about money. Let me just lay that particular bogey. I have no desire to own a villa on the Riviera, or a yacht, or a Lear Jet. All I want is to earn, in the course of an average year, something approximating what I might have made if I'd stayed in publishing, or gone into industry or commerce, and applied my best efforts on

someone else's behalf instead of in the way I opted for. That pot of gold remains at the end of the rainbow.

The London weekly paper, TRIBUNE, whose literary editor is a long-time SF fan and occasional anthologist (Douglas Hill, whom you may know from such collections as WINDOW ON THE FUTURE), recently decided to run a three-part series on the author's predicament, and I was requested to contribute the first article. In order to compile it I had to work out some comparative financial details. What emerged, to my dismay, went like this.

I launched out as a freelance in November 1958, so the year 1958-59 is my baseline. In those days my wife Marjorie was still going out to work. (Now, she's the business side of Brunner Fact & Fiction Ltd., my co-director in the company and responsible for such matters as accounts, filing and analysis of contracts, and the general impedimenta of any small business operation. The company exists to administer my copyrights, and it's now a very complex undertaking, what with about 70 books and more shorter pieces than I care to waste time counting.)

So our combined earnings in those days were about £2400. By 1973 standards, the value of the pound having dropped by more than half, that equates to around £5000.

When the Society of Authors wanted a set of accounts to illustrate their pamphlet on the newly-introduced Value-Added Tax - that one is a real headache, believe you me! - they borrowed mine for 1971-72, showing a turnover of £6000 of which I derived from all British sources, including BBC interviews, book reviews, lecture fees, the lot, a grand total of thirteen hundred quid. (I did somewhat better the year following, I later found: I made £1600, percentage-wise a significant improvement.)

Were it not for my foreign sales, obviously, I couldn't survive.

Now divide that real increase, from (baseline 1973) £5000 to (baseline 1973) £6000, by the number of years elapsed since I started out. It comes to slightly less than 1½% per year actual increase in purchasing-power.

I'm not saying I have nothing to show for the increase. I certainly do! In 1958 we were renting half a house. In 1973 we have a whole one, in a nicer district, and in 19 years we shall have paid off the mortgage on it. I used to work in half the bedroom; now the operation of Brunner Fact & Fiction Ltd. occupies three rooms.

But the only means I've found to escape from falling behind the explosive rise in the cost of living is one which candidly I don't at all enjoy. I have to shamelessly exploit what's sometimes termed "gall", but in the North of England - where my father was born - is frequently called "brass". That also, incidentally, means "money".

Were it not for the fact that I push myself, hard, into blowing my own trumpet, at the risk of boring people by saying over and over who and what I am, then no matter how excellent my writing I couldn't keep afloat as a freelance. I know this to be true because so many of my colleagues who, in the objective sense, are more talented than I have to depend on external support.

Let me cite one example. Peter Vansittart, whom I regard as our best historical novelist (go lay hands on THE FRIENDS OF GOD and, above all, THE STORY TELLER), had a stroke of amazing luck. He'd come into some money, and he met a man in a pub who said, "Want to buy a house in Hampstead?" (That's the area where we live, popular with artists and writers owing to its long-time association with Keats, Constable, Tagore, D.H. Lawrence and umpty others.)

"Probably," said Peter, "but why are you selling it?"

The guy said, "Well, I'm due to appear in court on Monday and I'll be sent to jail for about four years, and I want to provide for the wife and kids..."

Since when Peter has been able to rent out the upper floors and support himself with tolerable comfort. (Matter of fact he made a very funny contemporary novel out of it, called simply LANDLORD.)

If it hadn't been for that minor miracle, though...

Oh, well. Time to get back to work that I can expect to be paid for. But possibly I should add two final comments.

The title of this piece refers to a classic Northern English proverb, a slogan of the pre-pollution-conscious era: "Where there's moock" (muck) "there's brass" (money).

And, pace Joanna Russ, the quote from Harry is as the story was retailed to me, so please don't any Women's Lib supporters blame me for the way he phrased his remark!

****

LETTER FROM JOHN BRUNNER

"Re your comment on my income: the authors who have made it from our field seem to have done so on the strength of one crucial breakthrough, as Silverberg when he got an advance of $25,000 for one book, Harry when the movie rights of MAKE ROOM were sold (before him Bob Bloch with PSYCHO), Brian Aldiss when HAND-REARED BOY hit the UK best-seller list, etc. I never had a major coup like that. Until the present govt forced us into EEC, though, it was possible to live, eat, dress well here, and travel widely, on an income low by US standards. Alas, not any more!

****

"I wouldn't mind the number of paranoids around today, if they weren't all out to get me."

—Malcolm Edwards

****

A PUPPET ON A 400 LIGHT YEAR STRING
A review of the Scorpio series of Alan Burt Akers

Preconceptions and prejudices are dangerous things I always say, as I lovingly stroke and pet my private brood. Every critic has some hidden away from public view.

In science fiction and fantasy fandom there is a clannish favoritism. There is the in-group of authors and editors whom the fans pay attention to—and then there are the others, the outsiders, the newer unknown writers, the intruders into "our" genre who did not come up through the ranks, whom we didn't invite "in" and who therefore do not count.

So it goes in the subculture, the microcosm—and in the mainculture, the macrocosm.

But I'm a perverse soul, and occasionally I resist the group pressure. (Being a Secret Master of Fandom gives me certain privileges.)

Thus it was that I decided to give at least one of these intruders a look-see, a few minutes of my precious time, a scathing, sneering review, a lip-service once-over-lightly...so I could then with a clear conscience turn to Damon Knight's ORBIT 12.

Alan Burt Akers is his name and Edgar Rice Burroughs is his game. But Dray Prescott, the 18th century Earth sailor and world knockabout, is more than a pale, faceless imitation of John Carter, and the planet Kregen of the binary Antares, with its multi-moons and its seven island continents and richly varied human and partly-human inhabitants and variety of gods and cultures and animals and plants is far more real and detailed than Burroughs' Mars.

TRANSIT TO SCORPIO is the first volume of this series, and in it we learn via prologue that Akers is merely editing and transcribing from cassettes sent to him by a friend in deepest Africa. The friend had been doing relief work in a famine area. A naked, massively broad-shouldered white man had staggered out of the jungle, been given food and water, had called himself Dray Prescott and had recorded his story on the cassettes.

This narrative device is corny, old-fashioned and incredible, but presumably a lover of swashbuckling, romantic, bloody, action-filled, colorful, vivid adventures on exotic alien planets could care less...and familiarity of form breeds not contempt but mental security and comfort.

Dray's adventures began when he was mysteriously transferred to the Antares planet

Kregen by a strange blue radiance as he was escaping African savages after having been shipwrecked and scheduled for vile, unspeakably agonizing tortures.

On Kregan (as on Earth) he was haunted by the sign, symbol and insect—scorpion. A scorpion killed his father, a scorpion was a fellow passenger on the leaf boat when he regained consciousness on Kregen, a scorpion appears with or on him each time he is summoned to Kregen.

Poor Dray. He is a puppet, a man on a string, doing chores for the Star Lords who control his destiny, and for the advanced humans of Kregen who call themselves the Savanti and who have altruistic plans for the planet.

Whenever Dray accomplishes a task or crosses the beings who have power over him he is sent back to Earth for a few decades and then is again summoned and dumped naked (with scorpion) into another fine kettle of fish on still another island continent of Kregen and in another marvelously wrought culture.

In TRANSIT TO SCORPIO, dray is given 1000 years of life and a flawless body by immersion in a strange, alien pool of blue liquid in a guarded cave. The Savanti have further tests for him, but he looks like a good man to help them civilize the planet.

But he is a stubborn, noble individualist and takes pity on a crippled girl of stunning beauty named Princess Delia of the Blue Mountains whom the Savanti inexplicably refuse to cure. Dray fakes out the Savanti and takes her to the pool to cure her. She emerges more lovely than ever, uncrippled, and perfect of form. He loves her!

The Savanti and the Star Lords are angered! Sadistically, they separate Dray and Delia——whisk Dray back to Earth for years, then whisk him back to Kregen and dangle Delia before him like a carrot on a stick, luring him to conquer a nomad warrior tribe, the similar surrounding tribes, a ruling family in the continent's ruling city...

And just when he has claimed Delia and cleared up some stupid misunderstandings—— zzzt!——back to earth.

It's enough to give a Hero heartburn. Dray vows that he will return to Kregen!

#

THE SUNS OF SCORPIO resumes the story. The intoduction is reprised. In this volume Dray spends the whole book clearing up a war between rival nations on an inland sea called The Eye of the World.

He is at various times: a galley slave, a captain of a galley, an initiate of a special class of philosopher-warriors, a revolutionary...all while basically marking time doing what he conceives to be the Star Lords bidding and all the while yearning to get to the island of Vallia and Delia who is sending searchers to all the continents looking for him.

And (O so predictably!) just as he has successfully and excitingly engineered a revolt of slaves and workers against the ruling class of Magdag——zzzt!——the Star Lords send the blue radiance which usually means a one-way ticket to Earth. But this time he resists. He screams, "I will stay on Kregen!" End book two.

Book three is WARRIOR OF SCORPIO, but I haven't yet received a review copy.

Inote with pleasure that these DAW editions of the Prescott of Antares saga are illustrated by Tim Kirk——three or four full page drawings inside, and a fine Kirk cover on each.

I see I've been a bit flip in recounting (loosely) the plotlines. On one level the stories and the characters are ridiculous, but yet——they do come alive, they do generate power, they do have that old debbil suspense—in spots.

Akers is a fine writer, make no mistake. He's good at what he does. The faults and failings of these books are more in the strictures of the formula than in his talent and skill. He has taken the Burroughs matrix and almost overcome it. He has injected much story, much entertainment and much genuine sense of wonder. He only lacks the underlying intellectual injection of content

that is necessary for really fine, fully satisfying fiction. The mandatory obsessive, unrealistic Hero precludes much intellectual activity.

Oh, Dray Prescott does have a few good moments of insight and worldliness, but he is primarily a warrior of immense skills and a noble resister of seduction by various lush women of every station in life. However, in book II he has matured somewhat and is not quite so headstrong. He increasingly resents being a hardworking pawn. I'll be interested in seeing how he makes out.

Again—Alan Burt Akers' Kregen is a richly conceived planet in every sense, and it stands as a fascinating reality on its own.

(TRANSIT TO SCORPIO, DAW UQ1033, 95¢
THE SUNS OF SCORPIO, DAW UQ1049, 95¢
WARRIOR OF SCORPIO, DAW UQ1065, 95¢)

••

"My latest book, DARKOVER LANDFALL, is supposed to be my attack on a world which equates civilization with energy consumption. (With a few scathing snarls at Women's Lib.)"

—Marion Zimmer Bradley
GARDEN LIBRARY #4

••

LETTER FROM HARLAN ELLISON

"Dear Richard
and Everyone Else in the Civilized World:

"I feel like 140 pounds of unreconstituted yak shit for having missed the deadline (once again) on my long essay. The workload, and personal travail, have been unbelievable, even as The Noble Editor said. Nonetheless, I would gladly give whole parts of my body to expunge these awful guilt feelings, and I promise that as soon as I finish the first of THE DARK FORCES paperback novels for Pinnacle, write the script for Brillo for an ABC Movie-of-the-Week, complete the last stories for APPROACHING OBLIVION, proof the galleys for DEATHBIRD STORIES, get back from seeing my Mother—who is dying in Florida—and send off THE LAST DANGEROUS VISIONS to Harper & Row... I'll finish the rewrite on the article.

"In the meantime, and just to show I haven't been dogging it, here is a current (as of 13 September, 1973) table of contents for TLDV, with word-lengths appended. The manuscript for the anthology is now in a file box, ready to go to New York, with the manuscripts standing on end. The box is three feet long, and it is jammed. Please bear in mind, as you read this Table of Contents, that this is not the order the stories will appear in the book, that the book is closed AND I DAMMIT TO HELL DON'T WANT TO SEE SUBMISSIONS FROM ANYONE EVER AGAIN IN THIS LIFE! and that I'm waiting on rewrites from Charles L. Harness, Wyman Guin, and Gardner Dozois, but that beyond those three, the book is complete. Save for the 60,000 words of introductions I have yet to write, or the 50,000 words of Afterwords that are written but haven't been included in the total wordage indicated on the list. The total also doesn't include the over 75 full-page illustrations done by Tim Kirk. Illustrations that are fucking unbelievable!

"I think you'll all like this book. And thank God this bloody ten-year-millstone has been removed from my aching neck!

"Humbly, with embarrassment and leaking charisma,

Harlan Ellison."

Contents of THE LAST DANGEROUS VISIONS
listed at random—not as they will appear finally in the anthology.

Graham Hall—"Golgotha"—3200 words.
Doris Pitkin Buck—"Cacophony in Pink and Ochre"—5500 words.
Chan Davis—"The Names of Ymils"—9000.
Mack Reynolds—"Ponce De Leon's Pants"—1800 words.
Hank Davis—"Copping Out"—1000 words.
Avram Davidson—"The Stone Which the Builders Rejected"—2000 words.
Stan Dryer—"Halfway There"—3000 words.
Ron Goulart—"The Return of Agent Black"—3800 words.
Fred Saberhagen—"The Senior Prom"—4800.
Charles Platt—"The Red Dream"—9800 words.
Franklin Fisher—"Adversaries"—4700 words.
Anne McCaffrey—"The Bones Do Lie"—7000.
Graham Charnock—"The Burning Zone"—6000.

John Jakes——"Uncle Tom's Time Machine"——3000 words.

Richard Wilson——AT THE SIGN OF THE BOAR'S HEAD NEBULA——47000 words.

Grant Carrington——"Doug, Where Are We? "I Don't Know. A Spaceship, Maybe."——3800 words.

James E. Gunn——"Among the Beautiful Bright Children"——9100 words.

Lisa Tuttle——"Child of Mind"——6800 words.

Frank Herbert——"The Accidental Ferosslk"——3500 words.

Thomas N. Scortia——"The Isle of Sinbad"——10000 words.

Gordon R. Dickson——"Love Song"——6000 words.

John Christopher——"A Journey South"——21500 words.

Vonda N. McIntyre——"XYY"——1600 words.

John Morressy——"Rundown"——1200 words.

Robert Thurston——"The Ugly Duckling Gets the Treatment and Becomes Cinderella Except Her Foot's Too Big for the Prince's Slipper and is Webbed Besides"——3500.

Arthur Byron Cover——"Various Kinds of Conceits"——2000 words.

Octavia Estelle Butler——"Childfinder"——3250 words.

Geo. Alec Effinger——"False Premises: 1. The Capitals Are Wrong; 2. Stage Fright; 3. Rocky Colavito Batted .268 in 1955"——5500 words.

Russell Bates——"Search Cycle: Beginning and Ending 1. The Last Quest; 2. Fifth and Last Horseman"——5000 words.

Steve Herbst——"Leveled Best"——1300 words.

Jack M. Dann——"The Carbon Dreamer"——9500.

Howard Fast——"All Creatures Great and Small"——1200 words.

Joseph F. Pumilia——"A Night at Madame Mephisto's"——1200 words.

Janet Way——"Las Animas"——6800 words.

A Bertram Chandler——"The True Believers"——7000 words.

Robert Lilly——"Return to Elf Hill"——900.

Leslie A. Fiedler——"What Used to be Called Dead"——2800 words.

David Wise——"A Rousing Explanation of the Events Surrounding My Sister's Death"——1800 words.

Laurence Yep——"The Seadragon"——17000 words.

Daniel Walther——"The 100 Million Horses of Planet Dada (English version)——4200 words. (French version)——4200 words.

* 1st translation, 25.00
2nd translation, 50.00"

Ward Moore——"Falling From Grace"——4000.

S. Kye Boult——"Cargo Run"——18800 words.

Susan C. Lette——"Grandma, What's the Sky Made Of?"——1500 words.

Robert Sheckley——"Primordial Follies"——4000 words.

Joseph Green——"Play Sweetly, In Harmony"——6300 words.

A. E. van Vogt——"Skin"——7000 words.

Michael Bishop——"Dogs' Lives"——6000 words.

Edgar Pangborn——"The Life and the Clay"——6500 words.

Delbert Casada——"The Bing Bang Blues"——2000 words.

Joe W. Haldeman——"Fantasy for Six Electrodes and One Adrenaline Drip (A Play in the Form of a Feelie Script)"——10000.

Gerard Conway——"Blackstop"——5500 words.

Doris Piserchia——"The Residents of Kingston"——5000 words.

Leonard Isaacs——"$\sqrt{-1}$ Think, Therefore $\sqrt{-1}$ Am"——1000 words.

Frank Bryning——"The Accidents of Blood"——5500 words.

Robert Thom——"Son of Wild in the Streets"——15800 words.

Alfred Bester——"Emerging Nation"——2000.

Jacques Goudchaux——"A Day in the Life of A-420"——2600 words.

Michael Moorcock——"The Swastika Setup"——10000 words.

Mildred Downey Broxon——"The Danaan Children Laugh"——5300 words.

The Firesign Theatre——"The Giant Rat of Sumatra, or By the Light of the Silvery"——5000 words.

Jerry Pournelle——"Free Enterprise"——11000.

Gordon Ecklund——"The Children of Bull Weed"——17000 words.

Anthony Boucher——"Precis of the Rappacini Report"——850 words.

Edmond Hamilton and Leigh Brackett——"Stark and the Star Kings"——10000 words.

James Sutherland——"The Amazonas Link"——5500 words.

Edward Bryant——"War Stories"——9500 words.

Clifford D. Simak——"I Had No Head and My Eyes Were Floating Way Up In the Air"——6600 words.

Robert Wissner——"A Night At the Opera"——3000 words.

Waiting for rewrites from: Wyman Guin, Charles L. Harness, Gardner Dozois.

Total wordage as of 13 Sept. '73
445,250

Plus 60,000 words of Ellison Introductions to come.

Plus 50,000 words of Afterwords.

((PLUS one last solicited story from a writer who had a challenging letter in TAC #6.))

((This book boggles the mind, Harlan. It has taken you years to assemble it...and it may take me a year to read and review it. Why do you do things like this??))

****

WHOM THE GODS WOULD REWARD THEY FIRST MAKE 'CRAZY'
a review of THE GOLD OF THE GODS

This October, 1973 book is the third by Erich von Däniken outlining his speculations and theories about how mankind began, if there have been visitors from outer space in the remote past, and the scenario that brought them here. The first two were CHARIOTS OF THE GODS and RETURN TO THE STARS. His fourth will be published in 1974 by Putnam, titled IN SEARCH OF THE GODS: My World In Pictures.

Däniken begins with a blockbuster: there is a great network of artificial tunnels and vaults under the remote jungles of Ecuador. They contain (Däniken asserts) astounding amounts of gold, an array of golden sculptures of animals, and ancient golden-leaved "books" of strange, unknown writing or figures.

The man who discovered these passages and archeological treasures (which have been known to the local indians for thousands of years, of course) would not let Däniken photograph these marvels for fear of unknown consequences (would the flashgun flare set off ancient hidden defenses?) but wasn't disturbed by flashlights and lanterns (and Däniken doesn't address himself to the logical technique of time exposures using low-level light sources and/or superfast film. For some reason the discoverer, Juan Moricz, wished no photos of these astonishing items taken under any circumstances...but why did he take Däniken into that difficult jungle and down into that network of caves in the first place, if,as Däniken speculates, he feared a 'gold rush'?).

Of course these caves are holy places for the indians and they guard them, we are assured, ferociously (except for Moricz, who is their friend).

Däniken is long on speculation: the caves and passages have glazed walls and are roughly rectangular...and therefore were made by an alien race of humanoid who arrived on Earth after having been defeated in an interstellar war. These aliens constructed these tunnels in various places in the planet to hide from their pursuing enemies. Later, playing God, these aliens mutated a type of simian to become mankind, and lorded over man (in a nice way, mostly) for thousands of years, eventually dying off in recent pre-historic times.

Däniken cites numerous pre-historic ruins, drawing and carvings to prove his ideas, and some of them seem to be consistent with his theory; one drawing of a woman with what appears to be a flying apparatus on her back is convincing, but most of the others could be interpreted in non space-alien-visitors terms as easily. Often Däniken seems to be reaching and straining in his arguments and interpretations. He poo-poos "conventional" explanations of serpent, dragon, sun, pyramid and haloed figures

He is not interested in the hard work of digging, sifting, detailing. He is content to go around the world looking for inexplicable and strange ruins and artifacts that seem to support his theories and cry, "AHA—what about THIS?!" He is content to let others follow with pick and shovel and patience where he has pointed.

Däniken is, I strongly suspect, on far weaker ground than is Velikovsky, and uses some of the same legends and myths to buttress his speculations.

As for me——I am inclined to think something strange happened in our pre-history which is not in our present scientific es-

tablishment's philosophies...and I'm inclined to think that Velikovsky (and mayhap Däniken) have got ahold of pieces (or even large chunks) of the truth.

Unfortunately, Däniken gives the impression of a con artist or a fanatic with a Mission and the Truth who is moving too fast to be caught. (Putnam, $6.95)

LETTER FROM JAMES TIPTREE, JR.

"You took me to task for endless woe& gloom stories; purely publishers' whims. I'm one of those total pessimists who go around giggling hysterically, usually write several near-comic ones between the doomwails. But they come out years later in strange order...Of course it could be that my idea of a comedy is dying of a relatively painless disease."

'Tony Curtis, on the set of SOME LIKE IT HOT, was asked whether he enjoyed kissing Marilyn Monroe. The question, presumably meant to be cute, was either stupid or ingenuous, since she was causing a lot of trouble at the time. She was hours late almost every day, Billy Wilder was crippled with psychosomatic backache as long as the shooting lasted, Curtis and Jack Lemmon had to stand around in drag and high heels while she fluffed some forty-six takes of a simple line. We can expect some irritation in the answer. Nothing prepares us, though, for the violence or for the wit of Curtis' reply: "It's like kissing Hitler."'

——Michael Wood, THE NEW YORK REVIEW OF BOOKS 9/20/73

'It may be sobering for prehistorians to reflect on the cognate (but somewhat more mature) field of geology where the spoofery and science fiction of, say, a Velikovsky can sell a hundred times more than seminal and penetrating products of genuine research. In the field of human prehistory "aquatic man" and more recently "submarine woman" may well win a large popular audience, while a truly shattering discovery like that which has just shown that man is two and a half times as old as we previously thought, with all that that implies for the concept of human evolution, may be barely noticed except by a dedicated few. But perhaps in the end such nonsense as the recent theories about our watery ancestors does less harm in debasing the coinage than does the derivative journalism of writers like Robert Ardrey or Jaquetta Hawkes who ladle out half-understood results in which they have had no hand, with a pontifical air of "I know all the secrets"- an attitude which in fact is the very antithesis of genuine scientific discussion.'

——Charles B. M. McBurney, NEW YORK REVIEW OF BOOKS 9/20/73

DEATH NOTICE——WALTER F. MOUDY's complimentary copy of THE ALIEN CRITIC #6 was returned marked 'Deceased'. He was a member of SFWA.

CRITICS SHOULD COME IN COFFINS
a review of FRIENDS COME IN BOXES

Not this time, Michael. I'm willing to strain my suspension of disbelief a bit—sometimes quite a bit—in the grip of a powerful story, but your latest novel, FRIENDS COME IN BOXES, is based on two or three tissue-paper premises...and they tear easily.

I will, for the sake of enjoyment and a faith in medical technology, accept that in the next fifty years it will be possible to take the brain from a body, put it into a six-months-old baby's skull, successfully, or even put it into a box, tie it with a ribbon and keep it alive indefinitely.

(I accept without a murmur the population explosion you premise, the famine, and the panic-need to reduce population "humanely".) ...But by putting billions of safe, conformist people over fifty (and later those over forty) years of age into brain-boxes until their turn comes for a new six-months-old body?

Can't quite swallow that.

Nor can I even briefly contemplate swallowing your 'nutrient fluid' in which the brain is immersed in the box and which is supposed to keep it alive and conscious. You scamped that problem outrageously.

No way I'm going to let you get away with it.

A brain needs blood; circulating, oxygenated, constantly cleaned, well-fed. That would involve a hell of a lot of plumbing and maintenance...and a fantastic drain on resources.

Also, why (except for your sacred plot requirements) was it necessary to keep such brains conscious?—with only a hearing sense and voice box as contact with the "outside" world. Elementary psychology tells us that such sense-deprivation (to say nothing of the psycho-physical trauma of such a radical change) would send a mind into psychosis in weeks.

You also ask me (and the other readers for whom I am a representative (albeit self-appointed, heh, heh)) to gulp down the line that when human women stopped having enough new babies to provide a supply of host bodies for the waiting boxed brains, an android race was created to have kids and to make up the shortage...and that those people trapped in their boxes in those vaults by the millions would then mostly pass up the android baby bodies out of a kind of racial prejudice.

Umm...you did intend this to be taken seriously, didn't you? Tell me yes, Mike; I hate to be gulled.

But, cheer up, my last grinch of disbelief is that you expect me to believe that a world government, even a shaky one, after having passed laws putting people to 'Total Death' (no transfer to another young body) for minor misdemeanors and such (in order to thin out the demand for Transfers to a diminishing supply of babies) and which enforced a Transfer-into-a-box at a relatively early age, this government I say, after having managed all that—would allow women to choose not to have babies if the boxed brains needed host bodies? You do mention that the boxed brains are still voters. Seems to me that every able-wombed young woman would be drafted to give birth (from artificial insemination) to at least two babies (and there's a good sf novel in that premise).

But you sluffed-off on these logical problems in your future and the whole novel tears to logical tatters and leaves you with scrambled plausibility on your face.

Even so—as usual you wrote well of human problems within that leaky plot pot, and I was carried along (with grinding teeth).

If you tell me this novel wasn't intended to be taken literally and is an ironic, allegoric commentary on Mankind and his foibles, I will wrench that wretched cop-out from your hands and bonk you over the head with it.

(FRIENDS COME IN BOXES by Michael G. Coney, DAW UQ1056, 95¢)

□

LETTER FROM ROSS ROCKLYNNE

"I picked up the free copy of THE ALIEN CRITIC to reread the review of 'Ching Witch'! Hey! There's no significance to the story. No symbolism No deep meaning. Read the last part of the Afterword, where I confess just that. I myself was surprised to discover no moral or theme. I always claimed any piece of fiction will reveal if studied some premise the story is hung on. None in 'Ching Witch'! Perhaps this reflects my feeling nothing has much significance, if any. (My God, could that be the theme?!)

"Nice review of A, DV, though.

"'The Problem of Pain' ((Ross is commenting on my comment on the Poul Anderson novelette in the Feb. '73 F&SF)). Part of the answer lies in our misapprehension of what pain is for. None of the researchers ever discovered that. Let's put it in terms of 'God did it because:' All right. God put us on Earth, gave us mobility, and knew all the while we were going to bump into our environment. What else? We were built to have 'collisions with environment,' and this would inevitably cause damage to our selves. How are you going to conquer the world without having these 'collisions'?

"All right again. Collisions, damage to the organism, pain. Is the pain something nasty God invented to make you feel bad? Think again. The pain is there as a curative measure. The pain is what is felt in 'awareness' when a collision with environment' stops the normal flow of nervous energy. But the part of us that uses pain does not feel it as pain but only as an energy which is useful to the organism.

"The organism is not in accord with that higher part of us. It does what it can to stop the flow of nervous energy even more, by increased muscle tension, by taking aspirins, etc.

"Pain, then, is what we feel as nervous energy (I call it pain-energy also) tries to flow normally. Where pain-energy flows normally there is no pain. If we can believe this line of logic our next step is to learn to use pain on purpose, just like that higher part of us does anyway. We then refuse to bow to the dictates of our misinformed organisms, but imitate that higher part of us, which special function, I am fairly sure, is located in man's old brain (paleoencephalon), and probably in that part called the hippocampus. This old brain is inherited from our most distant ancestors, and evolved in us long before the cerebral cortex. Life has been using pain, kiddies, for a long, long time. Incidentally, I've had a thirty-year bout with tic douloureux (or a first cousin of it) and this has been a hell of a thing. Incidentally, also, I mentioned my preoccupation with the real meaning of pain in the foreword to 'Ching Witch!'

"As for the tragic, painful deaths, I don't think God likes it, but he did give us mobility and separateness from our environment; he would have to take that away to keep us from smashing into things. And reflect on this: some of those deaths would not occur if the people involved had been able to go to the trouble of discovering that pain can be used...even the 'worst' pain...a tall order, I admit; but they could have kept themselves alive, and God would have been pleased by their feat, since it vindicated him in at least one misunderstood department."

((I don't know about pain being 'curative', but I can see using pain--that is, emotional pain--as a learning experience. It takes courage and a high degree of rationality and perhaps curiosity and basic emotional security.

((It must be nice to understand God so well.))

"I note you mention having received a review copy of THE MEN AND THE MIRROR. 'Collection of five stories'. Actually, it's a collection of six stories - they not only left the title of the sixth story off the contents page, but ran the fifth and sixth story together in the body of the book, leaving out the title there also, plus the introductory matter to the sixth story. George Zebrowski of SFWA was kind enough to write Ace Books about this, and Miss Connie Johnston wrote SFWA FORUM #29 acknowledging the error. Naturally I wish this hadn't happen-

ed, but to those readers who showed interest I have been giving or sending page-sized xeroxes of the missing page."

((The missing material in THE MEN AND THE MIRROR by Ross Rocklynne (Ace 52460, 95¢) follows.))

(Insert, page 168, after double space)

"And Then There Was One"—ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION, Feb. 1940.

'Sir Isaac Newton provided the idea. He already had worked out the problem of the hollow planet before I approached it in "At the Center of Gravity." My answer was wrong. A decision was made to set the record straight, even though no complaining remarks about my ancient error had come through. The ten little indians implied in the title became six big businessmen having a bit of a go at each other under rather strange and, in a matter of speaking, revolutionary conditions. Again, a planet was tailored to fit the problem.'

****

THE GESTALT PRAYER

"I do my thing, and you do your thing.
I am not in this world to live up to
your expectations.
And you are not in this world to live
up to mine.
You are you and I am I,
And if by chance we find each other,
it's beautiful.
If not, it can't be helped."

—page 91, INSIDE PSYCHOTHERAPY (Signet Y5558, $1.25)

****

THE ALIENS AMONG US
a review of HEROVIT'S WORLD

I have no business reviewing this book by Barry Malzberg—I'm too much in it to give an unbiased opinion—because it's a satiric-tragic novel about a hack science fiction writer who is coming apart at the seams, sinking, lurching, staggering into progressively deeper schizophrenia.

He is Jonathan Herovit and he cannot cope with his disintegrating marriage or his blocked professional writing. He has written 92 s-f novels, almost all about Mack Miller and the ruthless intergalactic survey team Miller heads.

He is Jonathan Herovit and he finds himself hallucinating his pen name "Kirk Poland" as a real person who is willing and eager to take over Herovit's life and make it tick.

But, alas, even confident Kirk, having taken over Jonathan's body/mind, cannot cope with the mess, and after Janice takes the baby and leaves, and after a series of abrasive contacts with his agent and with a failed s-f author turned college professor who is a friend/enemy, Kirk gives up and swiftly turns over the problems to an hallucinated space-suited Mack Miller, who in turn, with survey team action and sadistic, paranoid efficiency, seeing all humans as hostile aliens, rushes into the street and attacks everyone in sight. He ends....

I refuse to give away the ending.

Malzberg has a low, low opinion of science fiction as a field, and a low opinion of sf writers, and a low opinion of sf fans and readers. He has adroitly disguised some known sf editors and writers as characters. (Surely the League for Science Fiction Professionals is the Science Fiction Writers of America...and surely John Steele is a veiled John Campbell, Jr....and surely TREMENDOUS STORIES is ASTOUNDING/ANALOG...and the disbanded science fiction guild Herovit was kicked out of—is it the Futurians?

(And who is Wilk Mitchell, the bearded phoney who is coasting in academia? Who is the crusty old dean of sf, V.V. Vivaldi, who has become deeply involved in something called Process Religion (Scientology?), and who is the agent, Mack McKenzie?)

Most of these are constructs or melds, of course, but some have identity in real life, I suspect. Read the book and do your own guessing. This Malzberg is clever.

Malzberg himself, as a writer, may have a chunk of identification with poor loser Herovit; Malzberg's serious stories seem loaded with alienated losers who get in too

deep and escape into madness, and they all seem to have a bitch/frigid wife.

But to return to the first line of this review: I'm into sf and writing too deeply to be objective about this bitterly funny "inside" novel about the world of science fiction and writing. I enjoyed it hugely. (Random House, $4.95)

****

"It is incredible to think, at first, that man's fate, all his nobility and all his degradation, is decided by a child no more than six years old, and usually three, but that is what script theory claims. It is a little easier to believe after talking to a child of six, or maybe three. And it is very easy to believe after looking around at what is happening in the world today, and what happened yesterday, and seeing what will probably happen tomorrow. The history of human scripts can be found on ancient monuments, in courtrooms and morgues, in gambling houses and letters to the editor, and in political debates, where whole nations are talked down the righteous road by somebody trying to prove that what his parents told him in the nursery will work for the whole world. But unfortunately, some people have good scripts, and some even succeed in freeing themselves to do things their own way."

——Eric Berne, M.D. WHAT DO YOU SAY AFTER YOU SAY HELLO?
(Bantam Y7711, $1.95)

****

POSTCARD FROM BOB BLOCH

"I found the new TAC especially memorable for MZB's article, the thoughtful and informative Lowndes letter, and your own review——with his quotes——of the Lowndes' THREE FACES OF SCIENCE FICTION. All of these items turned me on."

"...Ackerman just told me Ace isn't publishing any more 'Best' annual collections ..."

"Sorry you didn't get to Toronto to share our sufferings in the heat and humidity, or watch Ted White and Harry Harrison exchange pleasantries at the SFWA meeting."

****

LETTER FROM POUL ANDERSON

"Thanks for TAC 6 — lots of good stuff in it. But I'd like to comment on one piece of rather ungood stuff, Ted White's bitch at SFWA. Now that my term as president has expired, praises be, I can state matters more plainly than might otherwise have been the case.

"Praises be indeed, because it was a rough year. With the time and energy consumed, I could have written at least one book; as things were, for the first time in a fairly long career I began missing deadlines. This is said in no spirit of self-pity, since not only have most past presidents had a similar experience, but so have other officers, committee members, and everyone else who's given the outfit any service at all commensurable with what they promised when they volunteered. So much for the 'power and prestige' Ted thinks we want. It's power to work your ass off; and as for prestige, you don't gain any good will, but rather you expend considerable of what you may have accumulated in the past, since anything you so is bound to offend somebody.

"The safe thing therefore is to do nothing, like Ted. It's true, he wrote to me suggesting SFWA go into publishing on its own. I was doubtful of the feasibility, for various reasons beginning with the question of where the capital would come from. But I replied that I was entirely willing to be persuaded, so if Ted wanted to investigate the nuts and bolts of it and report back, we could give the matter serious consideration. That's the last I ever heard. Meanwhile quiet people like Lloyd Biggle were spending God knows how many hard, thankless hours per week on the nuts and bolts of undertakings they had assumed responsibility for. My file of his correspondence, with me and with numerous others, grew to be something like a couple of inches thick, tightly packed. And it wasn't memo-pushing. Every item was business — queries, replies, reminders, necessary behind-the-scenes infighting. Nor was he unique. To name just one example, by now enough different people have money coming to them from the Nebula anthologies that the

trustees have a major job on their hands, an unpaid job like everything done for SFWA except the editorship of the books.

"That editorship, by the way, is no cushy sinecure. I've been there and I know. It's work, harder and more complicated than for any ordinary anthology. One respected professional came within an ace of resigning when he saw the magnitude of the job. I don't feel that I made wages myself, and don't think anybody else did either.

"It's true that a fearful lot of time and energy have been wasted in SFWA. Partly this is inevitable in any organization. Partly it's due to the childishness of a noisy few individuals such as— oh, never mind. And partly it is, or was, due to the fact that in both size and ambitiousness, SFWA outgrew an originally adequate organizational structure, until nobody could be sure who was supposed to be doing what. That quite commonly happens to voluntary groups and has been the death of many of them. My predecessors in office were doing their best, which was very good indeed; but I think probably my term happened to be the one in which the growing chaos crossed a threshold beyond which the only choices were to overhaul everything or let it sink.

"With the combined efforts of a number of people, we did at least least make a start on the overhaul. Already the effects are visible, and should become more and more so, especially after the permanent paid secretariat which was authorized has been established and broken in.

"It is, as said, thankless work, except in 'the judgement of your peers.' For example, Ted complains about George Scithers' having 'castrated' the FORUM. The facts are as follows. A publication appeared which never should have, an utter disaster whose consequences would have been irreparable except or a lot of behind-the-scenes work and, I'll add, good will on the part of people who might justifiably shown none. The publication was not the fault of any individual but of the administrative entropy described above, where there simply was no chain of command. In fact, it was what drove home to me how bad the situation had gotten. As a stopgap, I issued a ukase that nothing was official from SFWA unless approved beforehand by the president — an action which drew a few screams of 'dictatorship' and rather more commendations. (This was a stopgap only, to keep us going till reorganization was accomplished.)

"In particular, it was obvious certain loudmouths could not be allowed to create more unnecessary bad feeling. Don't blame George for any 'censorship,' blame me; he was only executing a policy I handed him. When A accused B of some wrongdoing, stupidity, or whatever, an attempt was to be made to arbitrate the matter quietly, out of the public eye. At the very least, B was to see the accusation beforehand and have a chance to reply in the same issue. Is that really so dreadful? FORUM did get somewhat bland, but the truth of the matter is that this was almost entirely due to those who wrote in. Very little controversy was going on. This was not the intent of George or myself; controversy is fine among those capable of conducting it with elementary courtesy and respect for truth. But for most of that year, it didn't seem as if most members cared to make public statements about whatever was bothering them.

"I expect that, under Ted Cogswell, FORUM will get lively again. But I feel that, if nothing else, a cooling-off period was essential, after all the venom which some persons had been spraying around.

"Okay, so it's a lot of work keeping SFWA going. Is it worth it? I think so, or I wouldn't have stood for office and wouldn't now be indoors writing this on a lovely afternoon.

"A few of the worthwhile things are: (1) The Nebula program. Quite aside from the merits of the awards (no awards are non-controversial, from the Nobel on down), it's good publicity for the field as a whole, and it puts money in the pockets of writers. (2) The model contracts — more than one member has told me of finding them useful — and much other advisory material and exchange of information. (3) The monitoring of paperback publications, which are often reissued with no notice to the authors, who

might thus have no way of knowing money was due them. (4) Free paperback books to members. (5) A circulating library of hardcover books for those who wish to participate. (6) Though technically autonomous, the Speakers' Bureau, which annually arranges for quite a few members to give lectures for pay. (7) Library displays and other forms of publicity for science fiction — and by the way, the new administration is acquiring the means to do some really high-powered PR. (8) At conventions, liaison with the committees and a suite for members to relax in — benefits not only directly for convention goers, but indirectly for all through the good will promoted. (9) Arbitration and redress of grievances

"The last of these is important but, in the nature of the case, seldom visible. During my own term, which was far from unique in this regard, SFWA got amicably settled a number of potentially serious disputes not only between individuals but between writers and editors or publishers. It also got, for some members, a total of a good many hundreds of dollars due them, that they or their agents had failed to get. But I'm not about to name names.

"Except the name of one person against whom my desk accumulated a large stack of complaints: Ted White. Besides his publisher's wretched policies with respect to payment, there's the repeatedly documented fact that he can't be bothered to report on submissions for months, often more than a year, nor can he be bothered to answer queries. He most certainly never responded to several polite letters from me, relaying complaints and requesting his side of the story in order that we might work together quietly toward improvement. Having too much else on my hands, I didn't follow up, except to instruct my agent to make no further submissions there. But I expect that, reorganization having given it some muscle, the new administration will pursue the matter. And that is still another thing that SFWA is for!"

((Yes, it is easier to carp and yowp than do Good Works. I appreciate all the work and good offices that you, Poul, and all the other officers of SFWA have done for the organization. It is mostly behind the scenes and thus unknown and unappreciated by the membership at large.

((That dutiful bit out of the way, let me get to a yowp, which is much more fun.

((You mention an utter disaster of a SFWA publication which should not have been issued and which very nearly wrecked the organization. I puzzled for a few moments over that statement. I dug out my haphazard file of SFWA mags. I came upon The Proceedings of the Day Program and Nebula Awards Banquet: 1970, edited by Gregory Benford, which was issued in...1972? Was that the criminal publication? It's the only one I can conceive having caused any waves, because in it, after your Keynote Speech, there is a panel discussion titled "Agents and Bedfellows" in which Benford, Randall Garrett, Michael Kurland, Norman Spinrad and Larry Shaw (with Harlan Ellison joining in later) get down to specific brass tacks and name some names and some unhappy personal experiences.

((It THAT what caused all the trouble? Because I think it was the single most valuable, honest, open publication SFWA has ever distributed to its members.

((Again, if that was the offending publication, the official panic and succeeding censorship is puzzling and prompts some hard questions.

((Like, howcum what is said to a few SFWA members assembled at an official SFWA Banquet cannot be said to the membership as a whole via an official SFWA publication? Are only those members who are able to get to SFWA Banquets privileged to first class benefits?

((Or did you, in your official capacity, object to Harry Harrison's graphic, specific, invaluable speech concerning contracts?

((Your fear of offending has left me confused, Poul, and I suspect that the SFWA members who subscribe to TAC are also confused...and isn't it a shame the members (those not "in" and privileged) have to learn some of the vital information of what goes on in their organization in a muck-raking magazine

like this? Seems the bigger the official bureaucracy of the Science Fiction Writers of America gets, the more money is involved, & the more cautious and bland and 'For Our Eyes Only' it gets.

((Well, onward to a letter sent by the present President of SFWA.))

LETTER FROM PRESIDENT POURNELLE

"I haven't time for a long reply to Mr. White's letter concerning SFWA, and I can't think that the fans who read your magazine really care about the internal workings of SFWA. Most SFWA business never gets noised abroad even within the organization, since one of its most important services is mediation of disputes; and that, by its nature, is quiet when successful.

"Mr. White seems most unhappy because SFWA will not adopt his scheme for SFWA to become a publisher. I regret to say it, but a writers' organization cannot be a publisher; or so I feel, and it will not do so while I am President. The conflicts of what to publish would be too severe and generate too many conflicts. We may undertake a book every now and then, but we won't become publishers.

"It may interest you to know that Mr. White recently proposed to SFWA that the organization buy the two magazines he edits."

((Yes it does interest me, as a member of SFWA and as a fan. I don't think much of the idea, but I'm glad to know. Will this information be in an SFWA publication?))

"It may also interest you to know that we do have policies; one, recently unanimously adopted at the TORCON annual meeting, concerns Mr. White rather directly, I am sad to relate. (We did not request that he be fired or replaced.)

(('Unanimously adopted'...by how many SFWA members present, compared to the total voting membership of 350-400? Howcum a smax small minority of convention-going SFWA members make policy decisions for the majority of those not present? I am reminded of that old sarcastic comment about some people being more equal than others.))

"We have recently changed the by-laws to insure that the active members of SFWA will have professional interests. We have obtained an agreement from Mr. Elwood--mentioned so prominently in Mr. White's letter --regarding Mr. Elwood's misunderstandings about commissioned stories, and so far as I know all outstanding grievances by SFWA members against Mr. Elwood have been settled to the members' satisfaction. Mr. Elwood has been most cooperative. We have been quietly working to correct other outstanding abuses in the publishing trade, and I rather think we've done well by the writer-members; at least, the grievance file seems to be getting smaller all the time. SFWA can't do anything about complaints it doesn't receive.

"We regularly inform the members about some basics of the publishing industry; it is, of course, the new members who need this information most, and we are now compiling a HANDBOOK discussing contracts, agents, anthologies, and a number of other specifics of importance to professional writers. I think SFWA has a rather good record of accomplishments, given that it has always been run by professional writers who had a living to make and who could hardly devote anything like full time to its activities.

"Instead of resigning in protest, perhaps Mr. White should have run for President of SFWA last year; had he won, he could have restructured it, or at least put his suggestions to a membership vote. Instead, he has chosen to write his column.

"Finally, regarding the 'POSTSCRIPT', Mr. Damon Knight is in fact compiling a very important section of the forthcoming HANDBOOK and is a valued advisor and past President of SFWA."

((Yes, the HANDBOOK sounds like an excellent idea. Applause. Credit.

((And now Jerry Pournelle changes hats and becomes....))

LETTER FROM JERRY POURNELLE, THE WRITER

"I'm sorry you don't like my stories. Apparently there are a few people out there who buy this stuff who do like them, and I guess I'll just have to live with that.

"I do wonder something: why do you read magazines you know you won't like? Why do you insist that every magazine and every story conform to whatever it is that you demand? ANALOG is the only financially successful SF magazine around. It must be doing something right. People put out money that might be used for other things, such as beer, to buy ANALOG; they often vote my stories the best in the issue; and I don't see precisely what it is that makes you so very superior to them.

"I confess to being no more than a teller of tales; the modern counter-part to the chap who used to sit about the camp-fire and say, Gee, fellows, that stew you're cooking smells good; fill my cup and I'll tell you a story about a Virgin and a Bull that you just wouldn't believe....'

"After all, it beats hell out of working for a living. Do we have to change the world, too? Some people may LIKE 'translations' as you put it. Why shouldn't they? Why are you entitled to be contemptuous of those who do?

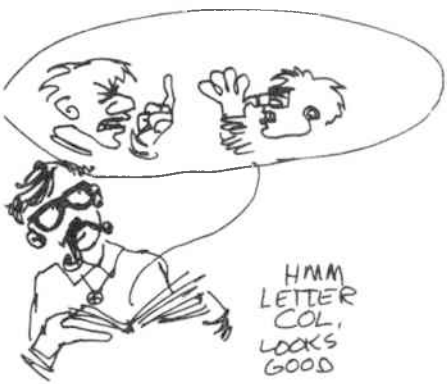
"Strangely, the people who shout loudest 'different strokes for different folks' seem to be most offended when something they don't care for is published. As for me, I simply don't read stories I don't like. I can be provoked into saying that such and such is drek, but I realize when I do that I'm giving no more than my opinion: or else, I try to come up with some reason why I don't like it: that the story is dishonest, for example; that the writer has set up a straw man and knocked it down in order to convey a Great message; or that he knows better; hasn't done his homework; anything of that sort.

"If you don't like my stories, don't spend your beer-money on them; and if enough beer drinkers feel the same way, I'll either change my style or get out of the business. Meanwhile, if somebody'll buy me a drink, I know a dilly about a Virgin and a bull...."

((Okaaay. From the top: I haven't liked your stories so far (and I've read only a few) because they were so <u>obviously</u> serving the ANALOG-WASP prejudices and because they weren't really science fiction (more like Diplomacy/War/Strategy-fiction decked out in sf clothes) and because, mostly, I don't think they were well-written <u>as fiction</u> in the first place. Competent, but... To the extent that you play to the social-cultural likes of your audience (push their buttons), the audience will love your work. Nothing wrong with slanting. I do it; we all do it, consciously or unconsciously. I even share your basic philosophy and world view more than I oppose it.

((I don't KNOW I'm going to dislike a given issue of a magazine in advance. I've read fine issues of ANALOG, and lousy issues; same for GALAXY and IF and F&SF and AMAZING, FANTASTIC... My job (as self-appointed Critical High Priest and Guardian of the Spirit of Pure Science Fiction and Fantasy) is to keep an open mind and hope for the best...while reporting to my readers what I think of what I read.

((I do owe you an apology: I do get carried away and use overkill words sometimes. I shouldna used 'drek' to characterize your serial. I'm not really contemptuous of people who like stories I don't like. I pity them, of course, but....))



LETTER FROM BOB TOOMEY

"I like you too, you prick.

"And because I like you——and even respect you on occasion——it bothers me that you wrote my book off after only 33 pages. I mean, gee, Dick That's not <u>fair</u>. You

know? Really it's not. I honestly think you ought to have read at least 50 pages before giving up in disgust. I mean, for friendship's sake, if nothing else."

((It was friendship which got me through that opening dialog between the hero and the teen-age spaceship pilot.))

"Actually I wish the review had come from one of my many chartered enemies—— they all know who they are——since that would have given me a chance to totally disregard the notice. Instead I suppose I have to take it seriously, and point out to you the error of your ways. All right. Seriously now. Like an author. Ready? Okay, here I come.

"You may be right that I got overly cute in places. That's the leprechaun in me, and I can't always subdue it. I did like the 'Toomey It May Concern,' title of the review——that's giving it back to me in spades."

((That's the way it is—one man's 'clever' is another man's 'cute'.))

"Naturally the quotes you took out of context were taken out of context, and reading them like that makes even me shudder a bit. Still, the comment about the hero having read the author's outline was sort of dumb, Dick, really, since it's a first person narration, and the hero has already survived past the end of the story. It's my theory that you can't hope, these days, to fool the reader into thinking that a first-person narrator is in immediate danger on page 17 of a 207 page book. Pretending otherwise is silly."

((Here we cut to the heart of the matter, Bob, because I think the reader wants to believe the hero is in immediate danger and is emotionally forgetting the rational logic of the first-person story-telling. Why has the reader paid money for that book? Rationally, reading the blurbs and the last two pages would be enough at the newsstand for a purely intellectual knowledge of the story and its ending.

((But the reader wants the emotional-intellectual involvement with characters and a STORY. Woe to the author who cheats him or makes fun of him.

((Your book, A WORLD OF TROUBLE, was not presented in blurb or cover as a parody of sf adventures, and I fault the editor and publisher for not playing fair with the sf audience. But editors and publishers know that parody and satire and japes and spoofs don't usually sell well, so they often package it as 'straight' fiction.

((Why don't readers much like tongue-in-cheek fiction? Because, again, it cheats them of their emotional involvement and their interest in a 'sense of wonder' background, AND it mocks them for liking what is being made fun of.

((Also...I suspect readers sense that the author of a parody is saying to them: 'I'm superior and patronizing. I'm above taking this stuff seriously, like you do.'

((A satire has to be very, very good to overcome its inherent disadvantages.

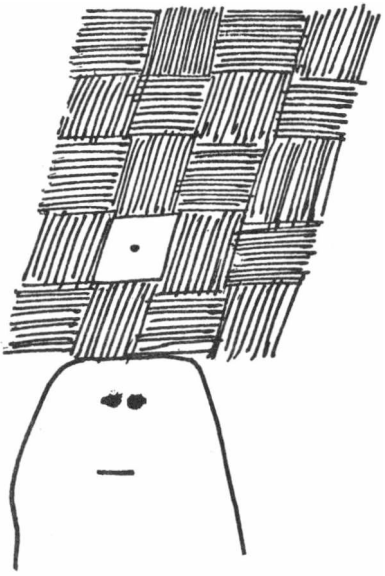
((I find I've made my end-of-the-letter comments in the middle. Your letter continues...))

"The only mention of 'galactic control CROWN' is on the bacover blurb. CROWN is not controlling any galaxies. It might want to control a few, but as yet it hasn't managed the trick. I would think that you, of all people, would realize there's a hell of a difference between a blurb and a book. Oh well. You also call my multipedes 'rendals,' which is right off the cover too. They're really called 'clarows.' The cover makes a mistake there. Maybe you read 33 pages of blurb. The clarows aren't the least bit rhino-like, either. That's the artist's conception. A very clear and detailed description is given on page 12. Oh well.

"By the way, the book is a parody of old-fashioned adventures-on-other-worlds sf. It's meant to be funny, in the plot and incidents as well as the style. And yeah, I tried to play it straight within the spoof, and virtually every comment I've received on the book has mentioned the unexpectedly real quality of the characters. The background was thrown together from a lot of old sf, plus a six-month stay I had in the Texas desert back in 1964.

"Your problem is that you want serious stuff. Well, I say, fuck you. Wait till my next book. Boy is it serious. It's so serious you won't be able to stand it——but cute, it's very cute. You won't get past page 10. You might not even make it past the blurb. But for gosh sake, if you do decide to review the blurb again, please say it's the blurb you're reviewing——then send a copy of the review to Ballantine's blurb-writer. I'm sure whoever it is will be happy to know he's appreciated."

((Of course, when you stop reading at page 33, you have to depend on the blurbs for basic info to provide an idea of what the unread novel is about. Blurbs are often very faithful to their books.))



UP AGAINST THE WALL, ROGER ZELAZNY
an interview

(This interview first appeared in the Nov. 1972 issue of PHANTASMICOM)

(There were some additional, follow-up questions that I felt should have been asked... so I wrote Roger and presented them to him. He graciously answered. I have spliced them into the interview.

—Richard E. Geis.)

PHANTASMICOM: When you began writing, you wrote stories the best you could and hoped they would sell. Now, everything you write is already under contract, with an almost-guaranteed acceptance.

How does this fact affect you?

Do you think that perhaps it allows you to sleep a little, to relax and not worry about rewriting that slightly off chapter, to submit a novel that is just "good enough"?

Do you then have a sense of cheating your readers, by publishing a lesser work under your quality name? Or does JACK OF SHADOWS have the same amount of work in it that THIS IMMORTAL did?

ZELAZNY: The main effect of having contracts in advance of writing something is that I have perforce shifted almost exclusively to the writing of novels in recent years. This is something I both desired and required, in order to reach a point of freedom necessary for many things I wished to do. Short stories were, and still are, my first love in sf. I will eventually get back to them. In the meantime, however, there are quite a few things I want to learn about writing which I can only learn from the novel.

In every book that I have written to date, I have attempted something different ——a structural effect, a particular characterization, a narrative or stylistic method——which I have not used previously. It always involves what I consider my weak points as a writer, rather than my strong points.

These efforts are for purposes of improving my skills and abilities.

Let x represent a book I am writing, and y the elements with which I am experimenting. Then x-y is what I know I can do well. I count on my x-y for sufficiency in carrying

the entire book, regardless of how y is received. I could not attempt such experiments in a short story. Too tight a format.

The sum of all my y's since I began writing is the quantity which interests me most, for it is out of this that I hope to enlarge my x-y ability.

In any given experiment, the balance of these factors is a difficult thing to predetermine. For example, increasing the value of y to the extent I did in, say, CREATURES OF LIGHT AND DARKNESS, cut the force of x-y down near the break-even point. I probably learned more from writing this book than I have from any other, though.

What I am trying to say is that I operate under a continuing need to experiment, and the nature of the experimenting requires that at least part of the time I write from weakness. It would be easy to write a (I think) very good book by not purposely introducing the y-element, by consciously avoiding it, by writing around and slicking over my dificiencies.

If I were to do this though, and do it repeatedly, I would have strong books for a while---and then someone would notice that they were sounding more and more alike. I might as well be stamping them out with a cookie-cutter. I would start to shrivel up as a writer.

The nature of my book contracts has very little, if anything, to do with the substance of the books themselves. To date, I have found myself possessed of as much freedom as I ever had with respect to what I say or do not say. And what I say, or do not say, is governed by my continuing consideration of y.

The work involved in JACK OF SHADOWS, for example, as compared with that in THIS IMMORTAL, was work of a very different sort because of the value I had assigned to y---but sweat-wise they were about equal.

If a lesser work should appear under my name, it will not be because I did not try, but rather that y proved too potent a value or x-y insufficient for its assigned function. Such is the number of the beast.

GEIS: What specifically do you consider your strengths as a writer? Which weaknesses do you feel you have strengthened, which remain?

What are your favorite themes or plots? Do you have to resist the temptation to use them too much?

ZELAZNY: As I see them, my strengths as a writer tend to lie in and about the creation of one solid character per tale, in descriptions of settings and occasionally in dialogue. Basic things I have recently trying to improve, with — I think — some success, are stronger characterizations for secondary characters and a general tightening of plot. Right now, I am much concerned with the structure of the novel itself — pacing, accent, temporal sequence.

I don't really have any favorite themes or plots. Consciously, that is. If the same thing crops up over and over until I finally become aware of its too frequent appearance my most recent reaction has been to suppress it rather than exploit it again.

Not that I would not do another book involving mythological themes and the experiences of, say, an immortal or long-lived individual. I would find it easier than lots of other things because I have had some practice at that sort of business. I could even do a number of quick books of that ilk if all that I wanted to do was a number of quick books.

However, I do not want to get into a rut. My feelings now are that I will use such devices again only if I come up with a variation that makes it seem worth doing — in terms of my own interest in the themes and the opportunities there for experimentation — with what looks like a possibility for producing a good book bobbing ahead on the end of the stick. To answer the other part more directly: Do I or have I resisted the temptation to use these and other familiars too much? —Yes, I have resisted, several times, recently even.

PHANTASMICOM: What is the difference between a struggling young writer and a multiple-award-winning author ad-

mired as one of the best in the field?

ZELAZNY: The struggling is shifted from break-into-the-field-and-consolidate-your-position level to a situation where you are competing with the person you were when you broke into the field and consolidated your position.

GEIS: Do you worry about competition from other established writers?

ZELAZNY: No. There is room in the world for a helluva lot of books and their authors. So long as I can make a living at it, I cannot consider it competitive in the only objective sense that matters.

Subjectively, if someone else writes a really fine book, the whole area is actually enriched by it, since it spreads its mana over more of sf than itself. My best wishes to the next guy doing it.

GEIS: Do you consider your success mostly due to your talent——or skill?

ZELAZNY: You left out genius, but that's okay. Also, luck. Some days I feel talented, other times skillful. Occasionally, stupid and lucky. Then again, brilliant but tired. The worst days are the ones when I feel tired and stupid both. I really don't know how it all averages out. Somewhere in the middle, I guess. How all this hooks up with success is a deep metaphysical problem which I am content to leave with my elders until I can pass it along to my juniors.

PHANTASMICOM: What kinds of satisfaction do you get out of your writing——in the actual process of writing? C.S. Lewis said (somewhat simplified) that before you can approach the criticism of literature you have to realize that people read for different reasons——and with different consciousnesses, in a sense——and that perhaps the more qualitative ways you can read a book, the better it is. It could be the same with writing: the more satisfactions one seeks to effect in his writing, the richer his writing will be.

ZELAZNY: Kinds of satisfaction? Many. I would have to get quite autobiographical in order to answer this question in more than a general way.

——Emotional satisfaction, for one. My own, plus analogues of the characters' feelings. My own mainly being release, relief and a kind of high followed by a pleasant fatigue, in that order.

——Intellectual, for another. From the pleasure of contemplating an intentional or unintentional symmetry, balance, contrast——pattern——as if emerges and works through to some sort of completion. Something akin to listening to a piece of music I enjoy. I give everything I am at the moment to what I write and I enjoy it in the same capacity. It is a funny feedback sensation that I do not fully understand, but then I do not wish to understand it fully.

PHANTASMICOM: In keeping with the fact that much of your writing is subconscious, if you come up with any last doubts about what you've written and some apparently reasonable alternatives for certain sections arise, do you tend to (perhaps superstitiously) regard your initial intuitions as more correct and truer?

ZELAZNY: Always.

GEIS: If your writing is intuitive to a large degree, how does this square with your conscious striving to strengthen your weaknesses? Do you feel a risk in "tampering" with your subconscious?

ZELAZNY: Since my subconscious has survived all of my conscious intentions for this long and still comes across when I need it, I tend to trust its viability, malleability and low animal cunning.

It does seem to operate on an inertia principle, though. That is, it is not self critical and it does not seem to go looking for new problems just for the fun of solving them.

However, it also seems to behave in an acceptable Kraft-Ebbings fashion, in that once I lay some restrictions on it and kick it into performing under new rules we achieve a kind of sadist-masochist relationship, with me holding the whip during waking hours. With this understanding, once things start

clicking properly joy prevails all over the place.

I can write the other way, too: plot everything meticulously and then just sit down and hit keys. But I like to leave dark areas, just to see what will come to fill them. That is one of the chief pleasures I get out of writing. The other way, hitting keys gets boring and I start feeling like an extension of the machine, rather than vice-versa. LORD OF LIGHT was full of dark areas when I began work on it. JACK OF SHADOWS, on the other hand, was only about 20% shaded. Thus does it shift, vary and waver.

GEIS: Who do you consider the finest sf and/or fantasy writers alive and working today? Why?

ZELAZNY: Hard to say. My tastes vary and so does any writer's output. This in mind, the best? In no particular order, then: Clarke, LeGuin, Dick, Tolkien, Heinlein, Niven, to name the first half-dozen fine ones who come to mind.

Why? De gustibus, is all.

GEIS: Who are the worst? Why?

ZELAZNY: The worst? A low opinion is a delicate and exotic thing. If I have one too often their potency may decline. Then, when there is someone I really dislike, disapprove of and snap my fingers at, I will be lacking in the wherewithal to smite him properly. Excalibur will have been dulled. I will have been too free with my kisses of death and no one will respect me any more. Ergo, I have no answer for this question at this time.

GEIS: That's the prettiest 'no comment' I've read in years.

PHANTASMICOM: What major works did you use for research in your major mythological works LORD OF LIGHT and CREATURES OF LIGHT AND DARKNESS? Did THIS IMMORTAL involve any similar research?

ZELAZNY: I already knew something of the subject area before I began work on LORD OF LIGHT, but I read the following:

THE WONDER THAT WAS INDIA by A. L. Basham;
THE UPANISHADS by Nikhilinada;
INDIAN PHILOSOPHY: A CRITICAL SURVEY by Chandradhar Sharma;
THE RAMAYANA;
TRADITIONAL INDIA, ed. by O.L. Chavarria-Aguilar;
GONE AWAY by Dom Moraes;
LIGHT OF ASIA by Edwin Arnold;
PHILOSOPHY OF THE BUDDHA by A.J. Bahm;
SHILAPPADIKARAM by Prince Ilango Adigal;
BUDDHISTS TEXTS THROUGH THE AGES (I forget the editor's name);
GODS, DEMONS AND OTHERS by R.K. Narayan.

And around three dozen others——skimwise——which now elude me.

For CREATURES OF LIGHT AND DARKNESS: Nothing.

For THIS IMMORTAL: A roadmap of Athens.

PHANTASMICOM: In F&SF when the first portion of LORD OF LIGHT was published, the author's note said you were working on NINE PRINCES IN AMBER then, and were 40,000 words into it. Does this equate to the first half of the novel as published? Do the two halves of the novel strike you as being stylistically or thematically different?

ZELAZNY: I do not honestly remember the point at which this was said. The book was written very rapidly, so it is all of a close piece, time-wise. I do remember though, that I did not think of it in first-half, second-half terms, but rather as part of a much longer story.

Now the second book——THE GUNS OF AVALON——has a stylistic shift (I'll leave it to you to determine where) because of a long time lapse between the writing of one part and the rest. This was unintentional, however, and simply the effect of my writing style changing during the interval. I don't see the book as suffering for it, though——or if I did, I wouldn't admit it.

PHANTASMICOM: Is there any chance of your writing "purer" fantasy than JACK OF SHADOWS and the AMBER trilogy——i.e., world-creation a la Tolkien? Have we seen the last of the Dilvish series, or do you

have further plans for it?

ZELAZNY: Yes, there is. In all likelihood, I will——eventually. I can't say when, though. Not in the immediate future. I do intend, also, to get back to Dilvish, but not before I get back to shorter pieces. I think I would like to put him in a novel one day, but I see him in a number of short pieces first.

PHANTASMICOM: Which of your works——long or short, whichever it may be——do you consider to be the most ambitious, and to have been the most difficult to execute? Is this one your favorite? Which piece of fiction do you get the most satisfaction from, and which do you find to be the most miserable failure?

ZELAZNY: LORD OF LIGHT was the most ambitious and the most difficult. It is a tossup between this and THIS IMMORTAL as my favorite and most satisfying longer work.

I favor "For a Breath I Tarry" and "This Moment of the Storm" among my novelettes, and "Love Is an Imaginary Number" among the shorts.

My worst? "Song of the Blue Baboon." I wrote it to go behind a cover for IF or GALAXY. I had twisted, stretched, bent, folded, spindled and mutilated things to fit in the cover scene. I sort of looked upon the cover as the scaffolding that was holding up the building. Due to a complex mixup, the story did not get paired with the cover. Unfortunate. All the king's horses, and all the king's guys in armor... etcetera.

PHANTASMICOM: What sort of typewriter do you generally use? Can you work with an electric on a first draft?

ZELAZNY: First of all, I do not like to sit at a desk. I have never been able to do much in the classic underwood observa position. I write in a semi-reclined position with my feet elevated and the typewriter on my lap.

My favorite typewriter for this purpose is my Remington portable. If something should be wrong with it, my Smith-Corona Galaxie portable with a special snap-apart case is my backup machine.

Then I have a very light, very small Smith-Corona which I take with me when traveling but do not use at any other time. Too light for prolonged use, and I am not overly fond of the close grouping of the keys.

My electric is an Olivetti Underwood Praxis 48, on which I can compose——but of course this involves sitting at a desk. I save it for letters, pretty stuff, and very very fast stuff.

I also keep an old upright Royal around for sentimental purposes. It was my first typewriter. My father got it for me some 24 years ago, used, and it cost all of $5 then. It is still in great shape, but I seldom use it these days——both because it is not lap-able and because it has an Elite typeface.

The most satisfying typewriter I ever had was a Sears & Roebuck Tower portable, purchased in 1955. Unfortunately, it fell apart some years ago and I never could find another like it. The present Remington——which I've had a little over four years——is the closest thing to it that I have since come across.

PHANTASMICOM: How much time, relatively speaking, do you spend on——how conscious are you of——the prose, the sentences with which you phrase your answers to the sort of questions being asked here? (You've got to expect this sort of thing when you're a legitimate Lord of Sci-Fi.)

ZELAZNY: I don't really know. I pay very little attention to time when I am not writing and even less when I am writing.

But non-fiction does seem to come faster because I am not working with a plot. I am just translating my thoughts into words, and it works pretty much like a reflex. I am not constrained to juggle my words within the plot-sub-plot-situation nest of boxes and, flowing from the sessions of sweet silent thought, I can bash them and toss them ——this way, that——with a pitiless irresponsibility, safe in the knowledge that the med-

ism, like a padded cell, is stout enough to contain the sense.

PHANTASMICOM: Do you like the term Sci-Fi? Science Fiction? Speculative Fiction?

ZELAZNY: I prefer "science fiction" because it is the term I learned first. I never even heard "sci-fi" until the mid-sixties. "Speculative fiction" sounds a bit pretentious, and I learned it later, also. Maybe it wouldn't sound funny if I'd heard it first. Dunno. I'll stick with my habit, though...probably.

PHANTASMICOM: Do you find cat hairs a hazard, psychologically and/or physically?

ZELAZNY: Only when they are attached to a vicious and sadistic cat.

PHANTASMICOM: Have you anything to say in your own defense?

ZELAZNY: I am innocent, pure, noble and sweet, by reason of artistic license.

****

AUTHOR'S CHOICE
by Roger Zelazny

Editor's Note: with Roger's permission I am reprinting this self-assessment of his novels from VECTOR #65. He has kindly added comments on his latest published book, TODAY WE CHOOSE FACES.

****

I like all of them for different reasons, because I wrote them all for different reasons.

Dislike is equally unanimous, for all the things they did not achieve.

I never, save in the most general, conversational terms, say what I was attempting to do in a particular piece, because I have really said all that I was able or cared to say about it in the piece itself. If it requires explanation then it is not effective, and for this reason not worth wasting time over. If it is effective then the act of explanation becomes an exercise in redundancy.

So much for the ideas and intended effects.

This leaves then the purely subjective impulses themselves which stirred my thinking and feeling equipment into motion along the lines that led to the books. I am not at all desirous of sharing more than a few of the outer circles of my spirit with my readers, and with this proviso in mind I will tell you some of the things that helped to poke various book-shaped holes in my consciousness in times gone by. I will mention three items per book:

THIS IMMORTAL/...AND CALL ME CONRAD

1. My first book. At the time of its inception, anything over 25,000 words in length seemed next to infinite. Question: What could I do to be assured an ample supply of material? Answer: Have lots of characters representing different attitudes, so that the narrator would always have someone to talk to or talk about. Question: Who does this very well? Answer: Aldous Huxley. Decision: Bear him in mind when constructing the cast of characters, including the monomaniac scientist as a note of thanks for the assist, but take nothing else. Do not lean too heavily on anyone.

2. The particular Mediterranean afflatus I wanted came very close to my feelings as aroused by Lawrence Durrell's Prospero's Cell and Reflections on a Marine Venus. I felt this in the opening sequence and tried to avoid it in the later ones, as I was aware of my susceptibility at that time.

3. I reread Cavafy and Seferis as I wrote, to balance the influence and to keep things in Greece while I was about it.

DREAM MASTER/HE WHO SHAPES

1. I wanted a triangle situation, two women and one man, as I had never written one before.

2. I wanted a character loosely based on a figure in a classical tragedy——exceptional, and bearing a flaw that would smash him.

3. I have never been overfond of German shepherds, as there were two which used to harass my dog when I was a boy. ——I prefer the shorter version of this story, by the way, over the novelization.

LORD OF LIGHT

1. I initially intended to destroy Yama partway through the book, but was subsequently taken by a feeling that he and Sam were two aspects of one personality. In my own mind, and I suppose there only, Sam and Yama stand in a relationship similar to that of Goethe's Faust and Mephistopheles.

2. I wanted a triangle situation of sorts here also, only this time involving two men and one woman. Sam, Yama and Kali served.

3. It was in writing this book that I came to realize the value of a strong female figure or presence in a novel, to balance and add another level of tension, apart——or rather, abstracted——from the purely sexual.

ISLE OF THE DEAD

1. The situation of the main character in my novelette "This Moment of the Storm" served as the point of departure here, with the pervasive sense of loss involved in living past or outliving what could have been monumentally significant, along with the uncertainty as to the present moment's worth.

2. A beginning consideration of the fact that the psychological effects of actions performed are often more significant than the motives for those actions.

3. A desire to relax after the narrative line in LORD OF LIGHT.

CREATURES OF LIGHT AND DARKNESS

1. A further desire to relax. This book was not really written for publication so much as my own amusement. It achieved this end.

2. The Steel General came first, as a character in a vacuum, born of an early morning viewing of the film TO DIE IN MADRID.

3. I wanted to write a piece in which my feelings for my characters were as close to zero as I could manage.

DAMNATION ALLEY

1. I wanted to do a straight, style-be-damned action story with the pieces fall

wherever. Movement and menace. Splash and color is all.

2. A continuing, small thought as to how important it really is whether a good man does something for noble reasons or a man less ethically endowed does a good thing for the wrong reasons.

3. Had the No play buried near the end of the book-length version been written first I would probably not have written the book.

NINE PRINCES IN AMBER

I will refrain from saying anything about this one, as the entire story is not yet finished.

JACK OF SHADOWS

1. Macbeth and the morality plays were on my mind here, as were

2. 17th century metaphysical poetry, in the soul & body dialogues and

3. Jack Vance.

TODAY WE CHOOSE FACES

1. BLACK LAMB AND GREY FALCON, by Rebecca West. No simple, direct one-for-one connection anywhere, but I kept reading this book, almost compulsively, the entire time I was writing FACES. I cannot think of one without thinking of the other. I took nothing intentionally and I do not see any unintended parallels, but I ha ve a feeling there was some sort of influence, on some abstract level. This was the first time in years that I had felt this way.

2. Part I originally was to occur as a flashback between Parts II and III, but this was later changed. The assault on Styler's citadel was the first thing that came to me about this book; i.e., it preceded theme, plot, setting, secondary characters.

3. The "feel" of the House was a thing I had had with me for years, while working in one of three largest government buildings in the world. Also, those damned telephones.

I am still fairly close to this one, so it is difficult to be objective. I can only say that I am pleased with the tightness of the plot, and if I had the whole thing to so over again I would catch the typo in the second line on the last page.

★

There you have three impulse-items per book, with no assignment of rank intended. Three seemed as good a figure as any.

I like ...AND CALL ME CONRAD because I was satisfied with my central character. I dislike it because of the contrived nature of several of the conflict scenes, which I juggled about so that there would be high points of action in each portion whether it was serialized in two parts or three.

I like HE WHO SHAPES for the background rather than the foreground. I thought it an effective setting for the Rougemont-Wagner death-wish business. I dislike it because Render turned out to be too stuffy for the figure I was trying to portray and Jill was far too flat a character.

I like LORD OF LIGHT for the color and smoke and folk tale effects I wanted to achieve. I dislike it because I unintentionally let my style shift. The first chapter and the final chapter, which succeeds it temporally, are farther apart in terms of tone than now strikes me as appropriate. Everything that came between caused me to drift from an initial formalism. If I had to do it again, I would rewrite the first chapter though, rather than the rest of the book.

I like ISLE OF THE DEAD because I like Sandow, I like his world and I was pleased with the course of the action in it. I dislike it because I was so pleased with the way it was moving that I fear I slicked it overmuch in maintaining the pace and trying to make everything fit neatly.

I like CREATURES OF LIGHT AND DARKNESS for the sense of power and verfremdungseffekt granted me in dealing with everything and everybody in the piece. I dislike it because I employed it only for that purpose.

I like DAMNATION ALLEY for the overall subjection of everything in it to a Stanislavsky-Boleslavsky action verb key, "to get to Boston". I dislike it for the same reason.

I like JACK OF SHADOWS for Jack, Rosalie, Morningstar and the world in which they act. I dislike it because I now think I should have telescoped the action somewhat in the first third of the book and expanded it more in the final third, producing a stronger overall effect.

Basically, coldly, I cannot single out one of these books as preferred above the others now. I like and dislike all of them, for very different reasons. These reasons have tended to alter as the world grows older and doubtless will continue to do so. I wish to learn how to write. Therefore, the dislikes are more important to me than the likes, while the impulses involved are either totally frivolous or an angle-shot of the way my mind works, or both.

****

LETTER FROM ROGER ZELAZNY

"Busy summer. If anyone you know ever has the problem, there is a booklet titled EMERGENCY PROCEDURES FOR SALVAGING FLOOD OR WATER-DAMAGED LIBRARY MATERIALS, available from the Office of the Assistant Director for Preservation, Administrative Department, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., which details the latest techniques for preserving soaked books. Freeze them first if it happens, and write for the booklet.

"The freezing technique was developed after the Florence flood of 1966. I've had experience wity it recently and it does seem effective. Just thought I'd pass that along for whatever it may be worth.

"Just back from Ohio, where the flooding occurred, and into the third Amber book. I finished one this summer that I rather like ——DOORWAYS IN THE SAND. Well.... Still hoping to make it up to Toronto."

****

THE CASE OF THE BLOWN CLONE
a review of TODAY WE CHOOSE FACES

I must admit that a new Zelazny novel almost always seduces me. I'm instantly on my back, reading compulsively, my mind busy with the pure enjoyment of well-wrought fiction.

Granted Roger has weak spots. Granted he is self-indulgent now and then. Granted he would do well to try a novel sometime that isn't about an immortal man/men/elite with super powers.

But the Zelazny narrative magic casts its spell upon me and while I'm reading him I rarely boggle. I am swept along until the last page, usually in one day.

So now I tend to mistrust my judgement, as far as Zelazny goes. I often can't see, or pass over as unimportant, the flaws in his books other critics see.

Yet...I can't see a damned thing wrong with his latest, TODAY WE CHOOSE FACES. I may be blinded by my emotional in-tuneness with him and this book, but I'm wowed and dazzled and full of admiration.

Such a book presents all kinds of problems for me as a reviewer, though; I don't want to give away the twists and turns, the surprises, the wonders. It's a novel structured for revelation as it is read, and to give too precise an idea of its storyline would cheat the reader who had not yet enjoyed it.

Would it be enough to say that in my estimation TODAY WE CHOOSE FACES is the finest novel Roger Zelazny has written in years? That it will probably win a Nebula and/or Hugo Award, that it has the best elements of A.E. Van Vogt and Alfred Bester...a combination of THE DEMOLISHED MAN and THE WORLD OF Ā...with a pure Zelaznyan angle of plot and style, a dazzling concept of the future of mankind, a clone of supermen/selves/self, a series of vendetta murder mysteries and suspenseful chases, incisive and thought-provoking examinations of Freedom vs. Control of Mankind, of basic questions: does the end justify the means; can man's nature be changed; should man be changed?

There are levels of entertainment——the perfect combination of sense of wonder, action-suspense, and food-for-thought. Altogether a beautiful meld: a superior work of science fiction. (Signet 451-Q5435, 95¢)

****

"Linotypers, by the way, are curiously satisfied with their lot. I never heard of one wishing to be an author. They are the ones who 'set' from the author's manuscript. Their contempt for authors is mountainous, because they know that authors cannot spell, usually know nothing about grammar and care less, and abandon punctuation to the limbo of forgotten high school acrobatics.

"To my own positive stupefacation I note, from some recent material, that even George Bernard Shaw, when he wrote letters, misspelled, punctuated vilely, and let syntax go hang. It is a characteristic of successful authors that the more successful they are the less they know about writing.

"I have also noted through the years with grave misgivings concerning the copybook maxims and truisms I was early taught that the less work men do the more money they make, and the harder they work the less they seem to get anywhere. There are a great many exceptions to the latter, but fewer exceptions to the former thesis. Why this should be I have no idea since surely it would be pure Communism to question copybook homiletics, or to have an idea."

—Jack Woodford, WRITER'S CRAMP (1953)

****

LETTER FROM AVRAM DAVIDSON

"In your issue #5 (which I do not have to hand), there is a complaint by David B. Williams that Lin Carter, in the latter's book, THE QUEST OF KADJI, makes a booboo. The b. in question consists, according to Williams, in having a village made of logs located in a treeless steppe. Admittedly the logs did not get there courtesy of Sears Roebuck or a mfger of Swedish frepabs, argal, Carter goofed.

"But did he?

"I quote from a book entitled THE FAR-DISTANT OXUS (Abridged Edition), by Katherine Hull and Pamela Whitlock ("With an Afterword by Arthur Ransome") and published by MacMillan, I quote:

> an unlopp'd trunk it was, and huge, Still rough: like those which men in treeless plains....fish from the flooded rivers.

This extract (ellipses not mine; the verse appears as an epigraph to Chapter 4, on p. 32), like the title itself, comes from that vast suet pudding of an epic poem, SOHRAB AND RUSTUM, nebbich, by Mathew Arnold. Regardless of the poem's merits, or lack of them, it certainly cost Mr. Arnold a deal of research; and if he assures us that huge trunks of trees turn up in the rivers of the treeless plains of Transoxonia, I, for one, am not prepared to deny it.

"And if in those treeless plains (or, if you will, steppes), why not in others? tra la"

((I leave it to David Williams, or Lin Carter, or others, to tell us if was mentioned in the book that there was a river flowing by that log cabin village depicted.

((You got some odd books in your collection.))

****

A LETTER FROM STAN BURNS

"I'm of two minds about how VERTEX is doing. I picked up a copy of #3, to find one of my photo's from David's TREK books inside (of James Doohan). I have no idea of how it got there, but they lacked permission to publish it (not to mention the fact that I didn't get a credit line, much less payment). I sent an angry 'rip-off' letter to the editor, but haven't received a reply (it's been a month and a half). I haven't yet figured out what I should do about it; the only winners in a lawsuit are the lawyers...."

FOLLOW-UP LETTER FROM STAN BURNS

"Got an update on the VERTEX affair today. Jerry Pournelle called me and said he had talked to Don Pfeil at Torcon. Seems some action is in the works, the only question is when. Apparently they are going to give me a credit line in some future issue for the photo of mine they used in #4, and some small reimbursement. But it's been over two months now since the issue appeared and I wrote them a letter. Gnarl.

"Have you ever been ripped-off? It has

given me some insight into a previously unsuspected aspect of my personality. I've always thought of myself as a reasonable, soft-spoken individual. Now I find I'm so pissed off by the whole thing that I could do physical damage to another human being. So much for my nonviolent nature. I suppose I should be grateful for the insight this has given me into myself, but it hurts. When I was in college (long, long ago... ghee, has it really been over three years?) .... I was deep into the peace movement. I used to care what this country was doing in Nam. The use of napalm and all that shit over there made me ashamed of my country. Now I've been out in the 'real world' (as my father calls it) and the struggle to make it as a photographer dulls my empathy and sense of outrage. I can't even find myself outraged at Watergate, all I feel is some kind of intransient pityfor the poor slobs that got caught. I used to be such an idealist. I hope that the kids in school today aren't being fed the same 'truth, justice and the American way' garbage I believed when I was their age. Maybe Heinlein is right, maybe survival is the only important value. To hell with justice and empathy and law and compassion and charity....long live ME!!!"

((No, ME! To hell with you!))

****

SHIT---MYTHED AGAIN!
a review of MYTHMASTER

A long time ago, when I was publishing PSYCHOTIC and then SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW and the world was young, I read Leo P. Kelley's first novel. I've forgotten its title. It wasn't bad. Pretty good, in fact.

But then he published a bad novel which I overkilled as 'shit' (accurate in the vernacular, but, well, not a politic thing to say) and Leo refused to have any more contact with me; in fact, he let his subscription lapse.*

Since then I've read two more of his books---recently TIME:110100 which I thought a pretentious mistake and said so in a review, and now his Dell book, MYTHMASTER.

It's better, but he still likes to write poetically and probably doesn't realize it comes across as affected. As when Reba, a very expensive whore in the Seventh Heaven pleasure space station, having inhaled a special psychedelic gas released by Shannon, the space pirate hero in order to get away from the Patrol, speaks this to Shannon:

> "Do you come from my country? I seem to remember you with your legs like pillars and your heart a locked citadel. Shannon you call yourself, but I remember the bitter fruit into which I bit, and the juices still stain my soul."

And earlier in the book, this: 'Sleep came like a virgin to Shannon, wary and shot through with fears.' That's not too bad, actually.

But all through the book Starson, a homosexual astrogator, Reba, and Shannon, make graceful, improbable speeches at each other, analyzing states of mind and soul. (Even so---solid psychological insights are provided and are of value.)

The novel is about love---lack of, fighting for, fighting against, coming to terms with. Shannon and Reba end up marooned on an alien planet in a little-known galaxy and Shannon has finally succumbed to his suppressed idealism and need for love and has decided to accept the vulnerability accepting and giving love brings.

The book is also a space adventure, detailing Shannon's use of psychedelic gas pellets to incapacitate a section of a city while he and his men steal recently fertilized ovum from women to sell to a population hungry outlaw planet...and his theft of cells (for cloning purposes) from naturally fat people for sale to aliens who like succulent human flesh for dinner.

The science in this novel is ridiculous wish/fantasy, but Kelley doesn't care since it is subservient to his love conflicts and character change.

Kelley did do a good job of painting a future legalized criminal subculture (in actual 'undercities' built beneath the "square" uppercities of legal, law-abiding citizens) on Earth, and in the creation of

a super-rich extra-legal evil villain who (horribly burned) floats on a bed of air above a maneuverable disc and who communicates via a telepathic alien.

In the end Shannon, the cold, calculating mercenary loses his wealth, his ship, his crew, his fiercely defended freedom—and regains his soul and succumbs to a lovely woman's love.

Mythology triumphs: love still conquers all. (Dell 6216, 95¢)

---

*So what does he do? Today, 10-9-73, he subscribed to TAC and wished me good luck with the magazine! I swear I'll become a Changed Man if Harry Harrison ever subscribes. (Never mind what I'll change into.)

****

'Dashiell Hammett, who never wanted much to live in New York, had rented the house of a rich professor who was a Napoleon expert. Its over-formal Directoire furniture was filled each night with students who liked Hammett, but liked even better the free alcohol and the odd corners where they could sleep and bring their friends. That makes it sound like now, when students are often inte esting, but it wasn't: they were a dull generation, but Dash never much examined the people to whom he was talking if he was drunk enough to talk at all.'

...

'I was on the eighth version of the play ((THE LITTLE FOXES)) before Hammett gave a nod of approval and said he thought maybe everything would be okay if only I'd cut out the "blackamoor chit-chat." I knew that the toughness of his criticism, the coldness of his praise, gave him a certain pleasure. But even then I, who am not a good-natured woman, admired his refusal with me, or with anybody else, to decorate or apologize or placate. It came from the most carefully guarded honesty I have ever known, as if one lie would muck up his world. If the honesty was mixed with harshness, I didn't much care, it didn't seem to me my business. The desire to take an occasional swipe is there in most of us, but most of us have no reason for it, it is as aimless as the pleasure in a piece of candy. When it is controlled by sense and balance, it is still not pretty, but it is not dan erous and often it is useful. It was useful to me and I knew it.'

—Lillian Hellman, PENTIMENTO: A BOOK OF PORTRAITS

****

LETTER FROM ALEXEI PANSHIN

"Since I don't see Ted White as often as I did when we both lived in Brooklyn, I was very interested to learn his reasons for quitting the Science Fiction Writers of America. However, in an anecdote about me, Roger Elwood and George Scithers, Ted's memory has mis-served him.

"First, I did not quit SFWA in disgust, or even out of high moral principle. I quit because I don't feel comfortable belonging to clubs and I couldn't see any practical reason to stay in this one after the initial glow had faded.

"Second, some time later, I discovered that Roger Elwood was making a practice of commissioning stories and then not accepting them and it seemed to me that my fellow writers should know of this, so I wrote a letter to the SFWA FORUM. Since my purposes were purely informational, I withdrew my letter when Roger wrote a letter of his own spelling out his buying policies clearly. More than this, in his letter Roger agreed to pay for all assigned stories in the future, whether or not he accepted them. This seemed generous and fair to me.

"Third, George Scithers' letter to me was much much stranger than Ted remembers. It was written to me addressing me in the third person, discussing me as though I were a half-wit. It is one of three letters I've received in my life that I'm saving specially to frame someday. One of the other two is from Sol Cohen explaining why he hadn't gotten around to paying me yet. The third? Well, come to my house someday and sneak a peek on my wall.

"P.S. I don't mind being one of R. A. Lafferty's favorite sf writers one little bit, even if it's only in spots."

****

LETTER FROM VONDA N. McINTYRE

"Thank you for the copy of THE ALIEN CRITIC. Much of it is very interesting, but I think I will pass on subscribing to it. It is steeped in a tone that makes me feel very uncomfortable, as reader and potential contributor. I have to deal with enough sexism already without paying to read more of it.

"You and your contributors are entitled to your opinions. But it depresses me tremendously to see many people in sf pulling into their shells and creating a misogynistic society that is out of date even in the real world, much less in the supposedly forward-looking realm of science fiction. Soft-core porno with paper-doll women characters receives rave reviews; a man who claims not to be a crank dismisses the anger and hostility of women—my anger, my hostility—as penis envy (penis envy! In 1973 he talks about penis envy); of 45 people listed for next issue or published in #6, one is a woman.

"As I said, you are entitled to your opinions, and to the self-righteous antifeminist ambiance (conscious or unconscious) of your magazine. But I would rather not contribute to it."

((Granted sf is male-oriented because most of the sf readership is male...and sexist. Most sf writers are male and are more comfortable writing about males...and most male editors share that comfort and edit for the overwhelmingly male sf audience. Society changes slowly on certain levels, quickly on other levels.

((You seem into a self-fulfilling prophesy, Vonda—by avoiding participation and educational contributions. And do you think I printed Michael G. Coney's letter in #6 because I agreed with him or because it was good copy?

((As long as men can beat up on women on a one-to-one physical level, women will be sex objects, cultural 'victims' and to a greater or lesser degree—property.))

****

LETTER FROM MARJORIE AAB

"Re: Michael Coney's inane remarks about Joanna Russ' 'When It Changed.' When writers criticize other writers they usually

betray a bias that lurks unknown and unnoted under the surface. In Mr. Coney's case he has revealed himself doubly:

"In the first place I suspect he has been looking for a way and a place to vent his West Indian experience, and he found it in Ms. Russ' story. He could be hostile without admitting the focus of his hostility. Anything that is even suspected of being associated with the women's liberation movement is damned automatically in some minds (both male and female).

"Secondly, I doubt very much if Joanna Russ is suffering from penis envy. What she is talking about are tough-minded, practical women surviving in the face of a very real disaster. This is not to say that men are not tough-minded and practical. The story happened to be about women.

"Personally I've always thought a penis must be unhandy and uncomfortable a lot of the time. Is it possible that Mr. Coney is suffering from vagina envy? Perhaps he lingered too long over Heinlein's description of Eunice/Johann getting screwed for the first time and decided he was missing something.

"If Mr. Coney writes Mr. Ellison to complain, and if Mr. Ellison's introduction to the Russ story is any indication Mr. Coney may be handed his head.

"At this point I am quite pleased that the only Coney book I own was purchased at a flea market for ten cents so he has none of my money. Next time we have a coven meeting we may toss it in the fire and dance around the fire widdershins.

"Your journal, Dick, is shaking down nicely. I still m ss REG a little; there were some loose ends you couldn't (or wouldn't) tie up.

"Phillip K. Dick's letter scared the living hell out of me. Up to now I'd just had the hell scared out of me. I've never been outspoken about being anti-war or anti-Nixon or anti-anything (except maybe blind prejudice), but I've associated with some of the outspoken. My Gawd, I wonder if I'm on someone's shit list just because.

LETTER FROM ROBT. MOORE WILLIAMS

"Once, long ago and far away, when confronted with such statements as appeared in the Scott Meredith letter you printed in your last issue, I would jump on my white typewriter and dash madly off in all directions, correcting error. Now, however, that age and wisdom have come upon me, and I have retired, I am no longer so hot and bothered about correcting error. Why the hell should I be? The world is full of lies, distortions, and other kinds of smoggy horseshit. Why should I wade back into the New York literary cesspool? I've been there, I know how much it stinks, and I want no part of it.

"So, dear readers - and those of you who are little bastards too - you can believe the SM letter or you can believe me. If you want further data, Norman Hochberg is printing the whole correspondense in his fan magazine.

((Hochberg, 89-07 209th St., Queens Village, NY 11427.))

"I was surprised at the SM letter, which indicated a great lack of understanding of SF fans. Didn't the agency understand that the fans would pursue every conflicting statement right down to the last comma and would whoop and holler through the fan magazines with their findings? Or did the agency think it could snow you and me and the SF fans? The agency is naive.

"In point of fact, the SM letter created only amusement in me. Not one back hair even lifted from its resting place.

"This is growth. Once it was otherwise, as those of you who remember me may recall. Since retirement, I am devoting the rest of my life to what I call 'the processes of spiritual growth.'

"Fine words but what do they mean? I could tell you but why should I? I am no missionary to give you the word. It is enough to say that I lived in pain and gastrointestinal distress for 23 years, this during the days when I kept hot my white typewriter. As a result of intensive practice of part of what I call 'the process of spiritual growth,' all of these painful hor-

rors are gone with yesterday.

"But, as I amble off into the sunset to await the arrival of the star ship that will take me back to Taliessin's land 'in the region of the summer stars,' I do have for you a few words of wisdom distilled from the experiences of 37 years as a free-lance writer. These are the words. Turn your own crank, my brothers, turn your own crank."

****

"Here's something I thought you could use as one of those strategically placed fillers in THE ALIEN CRITIC. It's a comment I heard in a Portland theatre after a showing of LAST TANGO IN PARIS. It was voiced by a middle-aged upper middle-class dressed lady. She said, 'Imagine! After playing a man like the Godfather, playing something like that...'

"I guess it's quite a comedown from a sweet, gentle, grandfatherly Mafioso Don to playing a sweet, savage, fatherly stud."

—Mark Proskey

****

AN ALIEN VIEWPOINT-----Five SF Books From Another Culture

OUT ON A DANGEROUS LEM
a review of THE INVINCIBLE

Firstly, it's a solid, engrossing, well-constructed, keenly detailed sf adventure: the story of the Invincible, an Earth Federation space cruiser investigating the disappearance of a sister ship, the Condor, on a strange, Earth-like planet in the Regis system.

The Puzzle Plot is always irresistible, especially when the author has hooked you properly and knows his business. Unquestionably, Stenislaw Lem is a highly skilled writer on every level—the entertainment, the intellectual, the wonderous.

Well—at least in this book. Nobody is superb every time.

In THE INVINCIBLE Lem leads the reader down blind alleys, into deceptive corners, through baffling questions while leaving bits and pieces of accumulating information along the trail. (What are the massive, honeycomb-like ruins discovered in the desert?) (How did the crew of the Condor die, and why/how did they almost all instantly become mental vacuums?) (What are the 'flies' mention in the last log entry of the Condor?) (How does the archeological evidence of past robotic civilizations and abruptly terminated evolutions of life-on-land tie in with the bizarre, 'instinctive' metal life-form now in existence?)

Lem respects his readers and doesn't treat them as idiots by using idiot characters who perform idiot acts (in order to follow an idiot plotline).

One of Lem's apparent favorite themes is used in this book—the inexplicable alien life-form that survives, undefeated, enigmatic, in the face of man's determination to conquer it and fully understand it. He is saying to us there are some things it is better to leave alone, some things it is best not to view through our usual friend/enemy instinctual lens. It is man vs. one aspect of the universe, and the universe could care less. We proceed at our own risk.

In a way, Lem has written SOLARIS again, but in a more traditional form and with a less ambiguous ending.

The writing is a bit Strange—the dialogue and some person-to-person contacts seem taken from the English sub-titles of foreign movies, full of out-of-date slang and syntax, the way some foreign-born translators are fixated in their knowledge of the American patois.

This is Lem twice-removed—from the original Polish to German to American. Wendayne Ackerman did the German-to-American translation and it is adequate. If you've read any of the Ace PERRY RHODAN novels you know her style. (A Seabury Press Continuum Book, $6.95)

#

OOPS, THERE GOES THE BABY WITH THE BATH WATER....
a review of MEMOIRS FOUND IN A BATHTUB

There is a limit to the distance cleverness, absurdity (which wears out and runs on

its rims very quickly), and non-plot characterless, Kafkaesque satire can be carried before it becomes repetitive, pointless and boring. Lem makes his points, scores with ridicule, satirizes the usual targets... again and again and again.

I tired of his repetition halfway through the book.

The Introduction is ironic and perceptive and amusing——as it tells of how, from a perspective 1200 years in the future, our present civilization went down the flusher when a sub-atomic catalyst named the Hartian Agent (inadvertently brought back by a space probe to one of Uranus' moons) spread like lightning around the world——turning all paper into a gray ash.

Think about it. ALL paper.

Anyway, the historians of the future necessarily have a warped and incomplete picture of our era. They only have one surviving paper manuscript, and that was found in a bathtub in a vast, secret, under-mountain city (labeled the Third Pentagon) which had suddenly filled with lava from a volcanic rupture.

The mss. is the story of a nameless man with no past, no family, no initial status, no character, no name, who becomes involved ever more inextricably in the macabre security machinations of the super-secret defense city which is called the Building.

Candidly, the entire Building population are mad as Hatters, ludicrously delusioned and paranoid.

The poor protagonist cannot make head or tail of anything, he follows false leads, false logic, false instructions up one corridor, down another, into one insane office and twisted government function after another...never gets a straight answer, never resolves anything, never fully understands what is or is not going on...and finally, in a fit of frustration and despair, commits suicide. (I skimmed the last half of the book, almost as frustrated and despairing as the nameless tool/protagonist.)

This treadmill absurdist satire on bureaucracy, the military, the reducto-ad absurdum of security paranoia, government... is pointed, funny, tragic and beyond a certain point, a drag.

The translators' (Michael Kandel and Christine Rose) style is smooth, seems accurate and true to the spirit of the novel and to Lem. I cannot fault their work.

I can fault Stanislaw Lem, who didn't know when to stop whipping a horse he had ridden to death. (A Seabury Press Continuum Book, $6.95)

#

A GOOD GOD IS HARD TO FIND... YOU ALWAYS GET THE OTHER KIND
a review of HARD TO BE A GOD

The arrogance of Truth and The Word is well illustrated in this novel...this socially redeeming novel...this surprising Russian display of credo and criticism.

And this is one of the few science fiction novels I've read that is deeply involved in the intense personal and philosophical life of the protagonist while at the same time well-integrated with a suspenseful, exciting adventure. There is no real resolution to the adventure, but it doesn't seem to matter——the reader has been well-served both intellectually and emotionally.

All this in spite of an imperfect translation. Wendayne Ackerman isn't the best translator around, but she did manage to transmit the core and some of the grace of this exceptional Russian s-f novel by the brothers (Arkadi and Boris) Strugatski, even if she did screw up the paragraphing and confuse some of the dialog (it's difficult in places to identify who is saying what to whom, and interior monologues are hard to separate from dialog).

I liked very much the realistic aspects of the protagonist's double life as a feudal nobleman and Earth agent (having to maintain the reputation of a dandy and lover-about-town-without-really-doing-it; finding and keeping halfway intelligent, loyal house servants; seriously misjudging the opposition; being a fabulous swordsman and still avoiding killing anyone).

He is a Russian socialist on a planet in a far solar system in the future (after socialism has triumphed, apparently, on Earth) trying to salvage some shreds of rudimentary science, arts and letters from the erratic, suicidally stupid anti-intellectualism of a feudal, medieval human society and culture.

That's a setup, of course——this light-years distant Earthlike planet with fully human natives. It's a stage for this utopian novel. The brothers Strugatski use it to point out (breathtakingly, boldly, transparently, yet indirectly) the flaws and faults of present-day Russia, especially its anti-intellectualism and persecution of wrong-thinking scientists, poets and others.

This novel was originally published in Moscow in 1964...and were the Strugatskis then writing thinly disguised criticisms of Stalin & Co. when it was permitted then to attack the former Leader?

Science fiction forms have their uses. I wonder if the present anti-intellectual, all-conformist prosecutors are entirely happy with this book. The Commissars of Culture may kill s-f in Socialist countries if it is used to seriously criticize them.

Anyway, our protagonist is posing as a nobleman in a small nation-state on the "alien" planet. He and his Russian cohorts ——about twenty of them——are trying to guide these brutal, crude societies toward a more civilized, more perfect way of life. They (the agents, and Russia today) are steeped in the belief in the perfectibility of man.

To that extent, this novel rings false. (At least to me, since I gave up on improving mankind three years ago on a rainy Tuesday in December, as I recall. Tsk. But dead ideals take a lot of burying, sometimes.)

But our protagonist's cover name is Don Rumata, and as the novel progresses he becomes increasingly despairing of making progress; his idealism is cracking, and at the end, after his native woman whom he loved very much (a crossbow bolt in the throat and one in the chest) is killed, and his plans are knocked into a cocked hat by a complicated palace coup involving double-cross and a horde of invading black-clad monks and a new Holy Order, Rumata is rescued by his friends and sinks into a blue funk.

A savage, bloody, fascinating novel. Because I am behind in my reading, I tried to skim this book, but it kept dragging me into it, slowing me down, involving me... the sure sign of a good book. (A Seabury Press Continuum Book, $6.95)

#

THE TEMPLE OF THE PAST IS HAUNTED
a review of THE TEMPLE OF THE PAST

Judging from this short, short novel by Stefan Wul, French science-fantasy is thirty years behind American sf...and that's maybe a good thing. There is in this book a willingness to indulge in sense-of-wonder writing and to splurge into incredible biology and 'classic', 'outworn' sf ideas that seem to me to be worthy of re-use.

For instance, no sf editor in America today (except the one at Continuum Books) would touch a short novel that used the plot-line of THE TEMPLE OF THE PAST: a disabled starship crashed in a chlorine sea on an uninhabitable (for humans) planet is swallowed whole by a huge huge sea monster (but is chomped once on the way in). Only three of the crew survive.

Wul throws in everything but the kitchen sink as he uses the surviving Captain, Massir, to dramatize a heroic determination to survive and repair the ship while it is lodged in the monster's gullet and somehow get home to Earth.

The three men mutate their gigantic host into an amphibian, kill it when it reaches a good dry spot on land, set about cutting the ship apart and re-arranging for a jury-rigged take-off, discover their dead host's eggs have hatched a viable,little, intelligent dragon-race that developes incredibly fast, both socially and culturally (walls to keep out predators, worship of their human

'gods', use of the wheel, a city, telepathy ...).

On the way to the surprising, satisfying, 'old hat' twist ending, accidents kill off all but Massir. Yet even with the ship totally lost, with only hours to live in his space suit, with the chlorine atmosphere waiting to claim him...he manages to triumph.

The following, outrageous ending (it may be the second oldest sf idea) filled me with helpless admiration. I whistled, stamped, clapped and cheered...while I plucked gray whiskers from my beard and searched my dim memory of the dear pulp days for a similar story.

Ellen Fox translated the novel and did not try to Americanize it too much. It retains its European dialog style, which reads in spots like a grade D 1930s movie.

THE TEMPLE OF THE PAST is a curiously satisfying two hours of reading. But overpriced. (A Seabury Continuum Book, $6.95)

#

I started to read the fifth Seabury book, VIEW FROM ANOTHER SHORE, edited by our old friend and jolly Heinlein-hater, Franz Rottensteiner, but ran fresh out of time.

So I'll list the contents page and vow a mighty vow to Do Better Next Issue. But I really don't see how I can be expected to watch four hours of tv a day, read a paper, daydream extensively, and also read books, take care of TAC paper work, type these reviews and other things. I'm working myself to a frazzle as it is. Heaven help me if some publisher and/or editor wants me to do another book. I'll die, I just know it.

Here, then, is what's in VIEW FROM ANOTHER SHORE:

Introduction by Franz Rottensteiner.
"In Hot Pursuit of Happiness" by Stanislaw Lem. (Poland).
"The Valley of Echoes" by Gerard Klein. (France).
"Observation of Quadragnes" by J.P. Andrevon. (France).
"The Good Ring" by Svend Age Madsen. (Denmark).
"Slum" by Herbert W. Franke. (West Germany).
"Captain Nemo's Last Adventure" by Josef Nesvadba. (Czechoslovakia).
"The Altar of the Random Gods" by Adrian Rogoz. (Rumania).
"Good Night, Sophie" by Lino Aldani. (Italy).
"The Proving Ground" by Sever Gansovski. (U.S.S.R.).
"Sisyphus, the Son of Aeolus" by Vsevolod Ivanov. (U.S.S.R.).
"A Modest Genius" by Vadim Shefner. (U.S.S.R.).
Notes on the Authors.

I knew rationally, intellectually, that Europeam sf wasn't all Perry Rhodan and translations of American sf, but it took these very good novels to drive the stake into my provincial heart. Lo——those Other People got brains and talent, too. And they think with different points of view, which makes for minor mental quakes and temblors. Good for the brain.

Pardon me, now...gotta watch the CAROL BURNETT SHOW.

Oh, VIEW FROM ANOTHER SHORE is a Seabury Continuum Book, $6.95.

****

LETTER FROM MIRIAM ALLEN DEFORD

"My story in NEW DIMENSIONS II may have been puzzling——but why 'dishonest'? I've never been deliberately dishonest as a writer in my life.

"It was the final lethal drug that reactivated the victim. A physician assured me that this was physically possible."

((Granted a deadly drug could rouse a man who had been comatose for months, but would that man, suddenly revived, croak in terror, "I died once! Let me live!"? Or would he be confused and inarticulate?))

****

POSTCARD FROM DAMON KNIGHT

"Right now I'm working on a major limerick which you will see on men's-room walls next spring. Hope the ((Hugo)) voters notice it, but of course that's not up to me."

****

HOW THEODORE STURGEON LEARNED TO LOVE RELEVANCE AND RUINED HIS SCIENCE FICTION

an article by Cy Chauvin

Nearly everyone must be aware of Theodore Sturgeon's love of humanity. Damon Knight pointed out in IN SEARCH OF WONDER that Sturgeon:

> "...has been earnestly taking love apart to see what makes it tick. Not what the word means on the cover of a pulp magazine, but love, all the different kinds there are or could be, working from the inside. 'It is fashionable to overlook the fact that the old shoe lover loves loving old shoes.'"

Well, that was undoubtedly true, but people began to wonder why Sturgeon loved love so damned much; it seemed he was becoming obsessed with it, and neglecting the science fiction part of his stories in favor of the love interest.

More recently, George Turner, an Australian fan and novelist, went so far as to suggest that Sturgeon's famed love of sick and twisted humans was really sadism in disguise. (See SF COMMENTARY #19.)

Sturgeon, in the meantime, had turned away from writing science fiction and was busy instead producing scripts for movies and TV, where his interest in love was perhaps better appreciated.

But recently he has begun writing sf again, with a new preoccupation to add to his old one---ecology, or put in broader terms, good old-fashioned relevance.

"The Man Who Learned Loving," in F&SF's special 20th Anniversary Issue, is the first of these new stories, and while the old preoccupation with love is still dominant, ecology is an important background element.

In the story, the protagonist is forced to choose between two different kinds of love: love of his wife, and love of humanity. He decides (or perhaps I should say Sturgeon decides) that the latter is most important, so he gives up his wife and kooky little house and goes out to literally save the world.

He invents what I would call a "Supermachine," a gadget which will provide everyone with all the power they need without pollution. This device sounds like something out of a 1930's WONDER STORIES, and Sturgeon's protagonist manages to protect it from the lawyers of various large companies who would like to see it patented and conveniently forgotten.

In all, the story indicates Sturgeon's growing interest in ecology and other present-day social concerns, and his desire to incorporate these relevant items in his science fiction.

"Slow Sculpture" (GALAXY, Feb. 1970), is another transitional story in which the love interest is probably stronger than the ecological message.

A woman dying of cancer meets a frustrated inventor in an apple orchard, and he promises her a cure for her cancer. He takes her home, cures her and they fall in love. The inventor complains bitterly at the end of the story that several pollution-fighting devices he has discovered have been bought by auto companies but never used. The firms obviously bought them so no one else could

put them into production, and cut down on their profits.

The sole sf element in the story? A cure for cancer. That might be classified as a bit of relevance, too.

On the strength of that stunning display of inventiveness and imagination, "Slow Sculpture" won both the Hugo and Nebula.

"Necessary and Sufficient" (GALAXY, April, 1971), concerns a man and a new scientific discovery he has made: a drug that can blow over the land like fog and sterilize everyone in its path except Caucasians.

(Why this is so, Sturgeon never explains. I wonder how it would affect those of mixed blood, especially since the story is set in Peru, where there has been a lot of miscegenation. Would these people be half-sterilized, i.e., lose half their fertility?)

Even if Sturgeon's idea is scientifically impossible, it could make a very interesting story, for there is a deep moral issue involved. In order to save the world, is it right to discriminate against several races, while one suffers no harm? Does the end justify the means? Unfortunately, Sturgeon never bothers to develop the potential. The story simply remains another relevant mishmash.

"Occam's Scalpel" (IF, August 1971), is not sf, even though it has been selected for several Best SF of the Year anthologies.

It's about a man who can do nearly everything, a 'Mister Lucky". He was "born with everything. Michaelangelo muscles. Sent to private school...graduated in three years, summa cum."

Two of the characters in this story try to convince this man to "learn loving" for mankind——i.e., fight pollution. So they rig a fake alien body, which they show to Lucky just after the funeral of an important business executive, telling him its the body of the man who had just died. They carefully peel back the outer layer of "skin" on their alien body to reveal various alien organs, etc.——all fakes, cleverly made by an expert in artificial organs. This alien, the two men tell Lucky, breathes carbon dioxide, and has been using his position in the company to encourage pollution, so that the environment on Earth will be made more suitable for other members of his race.

Very clever, no? I got the impression, however, that Sturgeon meant this not only as a story but as a suggestion.

I mention this because suggestions and hints for stopping pollution or present-day problems of other sorts are scattered throughout some of the other Sturgeon stories I'm discussing here. These suggestions don't necessarily make the stories bad, of course, but they do seem to indicate that Sturgeon's motives for writing these stories are, again, heavily influenced by a concern for relevance and present-day social problems in general.

"Verity File" (GALAXY, May-June 1971), isn't quite as directly concerned with ecology as the other five stories, but it still has a very relevant theme.

The story is about an inventor and a new wonder drug he has discovered which is suppressed by a large pharmaceutical company (the inventor sold the rights to produce the drug to the company, but finds they won't put it into production——as with the auto pollution-fighting equipment in "Slow Sculpture").

The drug is yet another wondrous cancer cure, and does many other marvelous things as well——it sort of fits the description of the miracle "tonics" quacks used to sell in horse and buggy days——only it works.

"Dazed" (GALAXY, September 1971), isn't concerned too much with ecology either, but it must be the most relevant story of them all.

The list of relevant concerns it mentions seems endless; Sturgeon trots out suggestions for wars, racism, and all the other problems he sees around him.

One example: "...tell me——when someone's sure to die of an incurable disease and needs something for pain——why don't they give him heroin instead of morphine?

Is it because heroin's habit-forming? What difference could that possibly make? ...I'll tell you why——it's because heroin makes you feel wonderful and morphine makes you feel numb and gray. In other words, heroin's fun..."

A valid point, but it's not this sort of observation that makes a story a good piece of fiction.

The main flaw in "Dazed" is that it suffers from faulty logic. The story is about an unintentional time traveler who wants to solve some of the problems he sees coming in the future, but discovers the only way he can do this is by making things worse now——so that the ying and yang (bad and good) balance out. This reasoning seems to me absurd; causing someone to starve to death today isn't necessarily going to make someone else happy in tomorrow.

As can be seen from these six stories, Sturgeon's concern for relevant social issues such as ecology grows more and more pronounced, from the somewhat humorous, almost parody treatment of it in "The Man Who Learned Loving," to the illogical justification for present-day social ills and preachy suggestions in "Dazed."

Sturgeon has turned from writing stories for their own sake to constructing fictional soapboxes to spout his thoughts on the present-day social problems of the world.

I imagine Sturgeon's——as well as other sf writers'——reason for doing this is their concern about our future. They want to warn us of the consequences of pollution, racism, etc.

Unfortunately, what Sturgeon has actually done in these six stories is turn away from the future and stare at the present. Speculation and extrapolation are almost completely abandoned; only the very relevant problems we face now——pollution, racism, etc.——are important...and problems in the future of which we are as yet ignorant are ignored.

This attitude is really very similar to that of the stereotyped factory owner: he isn't concerned with what pollutants from his factory might do to the future ecology of a region——he's only concerned with his immediate problems, such as his competition, profits, and stockholders. ("Let the future take care of itself!")

Though Sturgeon——and other writers who insist that relevant present-day issues are the only ones worth dealing with in their stories——may not realize it, the outlook they express in this type of science fiction is similarly narrow.

But not only is this concern for relevant social issues not doing what Sturgeon and similar sf writers think it is doing, it may be positively harmful to their science fiction.

In his introduction to A SPECTRUM OF WORLDS, Thomas D. Clareson said that the "Galactic Empire" concept did something essential for sf. "It freed writers for the first time from the old voyage and utopia patterns; no longer must their travelers return to civilization, to Earth. The writers were freed to create imaginary worlds that bore no explicit relationship to Earth. They thus could develop in great detail individualized worlds capable of sustaining more vivid symbolic statement because of their differences." (My emphasis in all cases.)

If what Clareson says is true (and I think it is), then Sturgeon is putting an unnecessary straightjacket on his imagination in his concern for relevant social issues in his sf.

And, as Clareson points out, it is sf's differences from the present, its non-relevance if you will from current social issues, that makes it important——that makes it "capable of sustaining more vivid symbolic statement."

Yet another reason why relevance to current social issues is harmful to a sf story is advanced by Alexei & Cory Panshin in their "SF in Dimension" column in FANTASTIC, February 1972.

They point out that sf deals in universals——it suppresses the particular or 'mimet-

ic" perception as they call it, and deals with larger pictures of the universe.

A realistic or 'mimetic' story, because of its concern for particular moments and places (or relevance to the social and physical trappings of present-day society), cannot do this as well——its concern for the particular interferes with any attempt to portray a larger picture of the universe.

As an example, the Panshins mentioned Alexei's own novel, RITE OF PASSAGE. When Alexei began writing it in 1961, he thought the basic situation in the novel between powerful scientifically advanced spaceships and powerless colony worlds paralleled that of the Have vs. the Have-Not nations.

In 1967, when he gave the novel to Samuel R. Delany to read, Delany thought the novel was "too obviously" about the racial conflict between the blacks and whites in the U.S.A.

Six months later, while proofreading the novel during the Tet Offensive, Alexei said he thought readers would think it was about the U.S. in Vietnam.

Later, when the novel was first published, a reviewer said that it reminded him of the Sephardim and Ashkenazim in Israel, and asked if Panshin had this in mind while writing the novel.

It seems likely that future readers will see other parallels between the novel and other situation in society. The point is, if Alexei Panshin had tied his story to particular realist events——if he had, for instance, actually written a historical novel about the Sephardim and Ashkenazim in Israel ——then no one would have seen the parallels they did. It would not have had as much universal applicability.

Likewise, Sturgeon, by concerning himself so completely with current social issues in his stories, is destroying the possible wider, more universal applicability of his work. Perhaps his stories will have more immediate relevance to a reader than Panshin's RITE OF PASSAGE, but in the long run it is Panshin's book that will be relevant to <u>all</u> ages.

I believe knowledge of this is what caused David Lindsay, author of A VOYAGE TO ARCTURUS, to remark that while his fiction would never have wide popularity, at least once a year, as long as human civilization survives, someone, somewhere, would read his books.

Sturgeon, in these six stories, has cast aside one of the more important advantages of writing sf.

Also, almost inevitably it seems, when a writer becomes concerned with 'relevance' to current social issues, his fiction turns overly from art to ideology, from the story as a thing of beauty and wonder in itself to a story as a mere vehicle for a message or idea.

Craftsmanship obviously suffers, and Sturgeon is no exception to the rule: some of these stories are pretty shabby vehicles indeed. On just a superficial level I can point out that the same tired elements crop up in story after story: cancer cures and wonder drugs; super inventions and inventors; men who have plans to "save the world". None of these elements are particularly interesting, let alone imaginative or original. Can a writer ranked as one of sf's giants do no better than this?

In an interview in ENERGUMEN #9, Robert Silverberg said that "all good fiction is 'pertinent'——but in the excessive chase after 'pertinence' and 'relevance' lies the death of art."

What Silverberg was referring to in the first part of his statement is <u>emotional</u> relevance, rather than social relevance. All good fiction appeals to our emotions; this is at the core of literature——not ecology, racism, or social issues of any kind.

If you want to find out about current social concerns you need only consult a newspaper or appropriate magazines.

Writers like Sturgeon seem to have confused the two; they may believe that by making their stories relevant to current social issues they will make sf more mature and "non-escapist". More respectable.

However, since sf (along with fantasy)

is a highly imaginative and non-realist type of fiction, it is inherently unable to be as relevant to present social issues as contemporary realistic fiction and still retain its own unique virtues (such as the concern for the future and universality mentioned above).

This has led some of sf's own writers, such as Michael Moorcock, to conclude that sf thus also must be inherently inferior to other types of of fiction and a "minor artform." "Reasonable readers accept this fact," says Moorcock in the introduction to NEW WORLDS QUARTERLY 2.

On the other hand, sf is capable of being as emotionally relevant as any kind of fiction——and this actually is all that is required of good fiction.

"All good fiction is 'pertinent'——but in the excessive chase after 'pertinence' and 'relevance' lies the death of art," says Silverberg. Let Sturgeon——let all sf writers——chase after art instead, after emotional relevance and good craftsmanship. Then, perhaps, we'll have some better science fiction.

****
****

"On the Train of Thought 99% of the tickets sold are half fare."

——Ed Cagle,
KWALHIOQUA #8

((And Ed Cagle rides free.))

****

LETTER FROM MICHAEL K. SMITH

"What with STAR TREK and Vonnegut and 2001, I'd have thought that most people——certainly, most educated, halfway-literate people——would be aware by this time that sf is more than the fifth re-run of THE CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON. Well, unfortunately, that doesn't seem to be the case.

"I make my coins as a professional librarian in the Dallas Public Library system——a surprisingly progressive library, especially for this part of the country, but the staff is singularly devoid of science fiction readers.

"Recently the so-called 'specialists' at the Central Library (us 'generalists' are farmed out to the neighborhood branches, where we revel in independent commands, like Lieut. Hornblower in his first schooner) sent out the new Periodicals Selection List, from which the branches are supposed to choose the magazines they want (and can afford) to subscribe to. Each title listed is followed by a brief descriptive blurb, for the enlightenment of us poor colonials. In the category of 'Science Fiction' we had three choices, in descending order of supposed usefulness.

"ANALOG is characterized as 'superior'. Well, okay, I suppose so——certainly it's the best known to people on the outside. Of GALAXY they say 'story quality usually good, but variable'. Again, largely a matter of personal preference. However, F&SF, they say, 'attempts to be literary——often fails ——poor qualit stories on the whole; third choice.'

"After staring unbelievingly at that atrocity for some seconds, I called up the Collections Coordinator responsible for the list and inquired of him how it was that F&SF has won three Hugos in recent years if it had 'poor quality stories on the whole'? His reply indirectly answered my question: 'What's a Hugo?' Seems his brother, an electrical engineer, told him ANALOG had the only 'real' science fiction; all the other sf mags were junk.....Pain!

"A news note: Yesterday the new Dallas-Ft. Worth International Airport was dedicated. Aside from the sheer size of the place ——larger than the island of Manhattan, and you could lose Kennedy International, L.A. International, and O'Hare in it all at the same time——the thing that awed me was the realization that this is the first facility designed specifically for use in the not-too-distant future as a spaceport. Fantastic!

"I must abj ctly take issue with part of your review of R. D. Laing's THE POLITICS OF EXPERIENCE. You seem to believe in a kind of 'steady-state' anthropology. Do

you really think there are no essential differences, only superficial ones, between the Twentieth Century American and a First Century Roman——or a Sumerian or a Beaker Culture Farmer? What, no social evolution at all?

"Also, I agree that we are 'shaping the machine culture,' but does not the environment in which you exist (and which you have, in part, created) create feed-back which helps to shape you?

"On your observations about alienation, however, I mostly agree with you. In every society, there will be individuals who adapt to it easily and function optimally, & there will be those who for various social and psychological reasons cannot adapt. These become 'alienated' and wish to escape their society by a return to the mythical 'good old days' or by emigrating to some other society to which they might be able to adapt more easily. I suspect there might actually be more individuals in our present society who are to some degree alienated from it, because the cycle of change is moving ever faster and is becoming more difficult to adapt to. (Read FUTURE SHOCK if you haven't already)."

((Do you believe, if a Sumerian infant were time-ported to now, that it would grow up and be 'normal' in our society and culture? I do. Perhaps the human animal has evolved a tiny bit in seven or eight thousand years, but for all intents and purposes....

((Social evolution? No. Only to the extent that the animal whose instincts and animal needs determine the shapes and qualities of its societies (as influenced by the nature of the locale) has evolved.

((We seem to have made 'progress' socially because we can afford many social luxuries as a result of learning how to rape our planet's mineral wealth; slavery, for instance, is uneconomical in a mass-production machine culture, so we abandon slavery and pat ourselves on the back for our social enlightenment and humanitarianism. We pretend we have evolved for the better. Yet as soon as the machine culture breaks down, and slavery becomes economical again, we will embrace it again with self-serving rationalizations.

((Read the accounts of governmental politics in ancient Greece and Rome and tell me how the Nixon administration is any different at base.))

****

"Firearms? An Illinois state representative has been considering introducing a bill which would make the state a 'test' area for a new radar system to detect concealed weapons. The 'radam' device is being developed by International Signal Corp. of Lanchester, PA. It would possess the sophistication necessary to differentiate between a handgun and an object of similar size and weight.

"The gun monitoring unit, equipped with 'radam', would operate from concealment in a moving or parked vehicle.

"Cited as precedence for such usage was the 'general public acceptance' of electronic searches for weapons at airport terminals. Also given as an excuse for further handcuffing the inherent rights of the individual citizen was the 'implied consent' laws requiring breath tests for suspected drunk drivers.

"Brick by brick, it looks like some kind of wall is being constructed here. I hate to attempt to extrapolate its height, or breadth, or what it might encompass...."

——Ed Connor, THE POINTED STAKE
#8, September, 1973.

****

A LETTER FROM ALBERT DYTCH

"Congratulations on the fine ALIEN CRITICs you've been producing. They never go down smoothly, like say good scotch; either they stick in my craw or create jagged waves of hunger that ask for more. I read your issues in various states of elation or rage or surprise at the shock of pure adrenalin administered to the brain. So, yeah, congratulations.

"I've got an idea for an anthology, and although I've been writing lots of sf authors about it that's a very slow process. In

addition there are lots of writers I've no idea how to get in touch with, and I'm hoping THE ALIEN CRITIC can help me by running all or part of this letter.

"Let me get some personal background out of the way first.... When Fred Pohl was at Ace he hired me as his assistant, and when he left I handled Ace's science fiction for nearly a year. I left, too, for reasons others have been more articulate about, and moved to GALAXY and IF where I was managing editor for a few months. (By the way, Dick, when I was there I noticed in Bern Williams' collections some of the novels you had written for his Softcover Library — maybe Softcore is a better name.) But UPD, who owns the magazines, has its own peculiar problems. Now things are better: the weight of New York and compromise are lifted and I'm living on a farm outside of Florence.

"The anthology is to consist of original stories on the theme of convergence, the meeting point of technology and so-called mysticism, of the rational and the spiritual, or East and West.

"To Einstein, for example, the furthest fringes of science brought one to a point where religion or philosophy, whatever you care to call it, began: he felt an awe at the mystery and imponderability of the cosmos. Scientific knowledge can only carry man so far, and even the little we know, to extend Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle, is uncertain: beyond that, what is there?

"Is there some way of transcending our limits, by looking within or out into space, to the past or the future, to the East? Gregory Bateson, the anthropologist/psychologist, urges mankind to move toward an epistemology of relatedness, of everything in relation, and suggests that this mode of viewing things could descend to the level of our sensory apparatus and the functioning of the brain. Bateson extends the concept of mind——and expands the idea of consciousness——to include both man and his surroundings, since they comprise an integral whole. He and other scientists and philosophers challenge our perception of reality, and our assumptions and preconceptions about existence and consciousness. For example, John Lilly, the scientist, sees man as a human biocomputer capable of its own programming and claims that these perceptions, preconceptions and assumptions are programmed and hence capable of change.

"Are we capable of achieving a synthesis of science and philosophy, to view ourselves in relation to the world and the cosmos? The pre-Socratic philosophers seem to have had a vision of all in a related state of flux; Martin Heidegger, the German philosopher, goes so far as to suggest that civilization began to decline with Aristotle and the fragmented, particulate view the invention of science promulgated. Can man, better informed after thousands of years of information-gathering, regain such a vision?

"Before I go any further let me make it clear that it is far from my intention to condemn technology, but to pose the question whether science wedded to philosophy might not produce a more viable epistemology.

"Let me try to put it metaphorically: man is in a house whose walls delimit his perceptions, his consciousness, his possibilities. Termites are eating at the walls. Some visionaries——William Blake for example——may have seen beyond those walls. Can we learn to, or will they crumble down on us before we can? If we could tear them down, what would we find on the other side? another house? Or could we make several quantum jumps at once and reach a place beyond walls?

"I have come to see this as critical to man's physical and spiritual evolution, even to his survival. With an epistemology like Bateson's our ecological problems would never have appeared. Or look at it this way: can we confront space with any sanity within our present epistemological framework?

"For the sake of argument, imagine a world where the dominant organism had chosen not to manipulate its environment, or after manipulating it had chosen to merge with it. (Would there be, or appear to be, a dominant organism on such a world?) Imagine a way of seeing to which our mental topology were nothing more than a kind of

Flatland. If man chanced on such a world, would he learn to see in a new way? fail? destroy? be destroyed? Is the dolphin such an 'alien' who made an instinctive choice for harmony in its return to the sea, where technology and manipulation would be unnecessary?

"Science fiction writers have dealt with the theme of convergence——Clarke's 2001 and CHILDHOOD'S END, Olaf Stapledon, Herbert in a novel whose name I forget that deals with cybernetics and the workings of the brain, for example——but seldom, and more seldom in depth. The finest single example is LeGuin's story in the October GALAXY entitled "Field of Vision," which I recommend highly. I don't want to give the story away, but it's the kind of thing I'm interested in.

"If there is a literature that can handle convergence it is probably science fiction. Hence the anthology.

"Is anyone interested? I don't have a contract, although when I do I'll be sure to advertise as a market; but with some good writers tentatively lined up I think I can get one. I'm easy and reasonable to deal with, despite my checkere past——or maybe in part because of it.

"Primarily I am nterested in a response: comments, suggestions, questions, arguments welcome. But if you've got stories, send them! They will be well taken care of.

"You can reach me this way:

Albert Dytch, c/o Vidal
Star Route #1
Westlake, OR 97493"

((I tend to suspicion that if we adopt a philosophy of relatedness we'll end up living a stone-age life, because science and resulting technological manipulation will be anti-life, anti-God, and so on; obviously man cannot be one with Nature in an air-conditioned Chevy.

((Sooner or later we will do some serious experimentation with genes and DNA and produce some Strange Creatures. The terror of the masses (faced with possible replacement) will kill off those lines of research and development. Sometimes racial prejudice is a survival factor. Changing our biocomputer programming will be a risky business; man is NOT a rational animal when one or more of his sacred cows is threatened, and his racial purity and continuity is the most sacred——and instinctive.

((When philosophy climbs into the same bed with science, it is philosophy who yields her honor and conforms...as has religion.

((I suggest that in order to alter man's conceptions, preconceptions and assumptions, to let the average man break through into a different 'house', you'll have to radically alter the average body/mind, which means altering the species...and, again, the species probably won't sit still for it.

((Those are my off-the-cuff comments, out of sequence and ill-phrased, but still wholesomely negative. But your anthology idea is a good one and should provide some interesting and provocative stories if it gets off the ground. As I said in my private note, finding a good commercial title is the main problem.))

****

A LETTER FROM LON JONES

"Jeezus! What is it about the Panshins' SON OF BLACK MORCA that everyone thinks is so great? 'Sword & sorcery the way it should be done.' Bullshit. There isn't anything in SoBM that hasn't been done by de Camp, Jakes, Howard, or even Ted White, for that matter. The style was a bit more polished, but it was a lot less interesting, too. The dream sequences were impossibly boring, and the characters weren't much better. Haldane was a fairly realistic personality, but I've known too many people like him to be interested in an egotistical, stupid kid."

((I liked the first third of SON OF BLACK MORCA very much...but the following segments disappointed me as the novel drifted away from realistic magic and real life into a dreamy mystical-mythological framework and Haldane became a kind of psi-magic

demi-God. Unsatisfying. Too ambitious.))

LETTER FROM DAVID HARRIS

"Conscience dictates that I say something about Marion Zimmer Bradley's article on editorialese. Spreading this kind of stuff around will start to give people the wrong kind of impression about editors——an accurate one, true, but not good for the image. Not having had any magazine experience (know anyone who wants to sell me a magazine, cheap?) my obfuscatory powers have been channeled in a slightly different direction, but certain dicta still apply.

"The first thing I was told about being an editor (and the last thing, too) was, 'Never say anything that your average paranoid type would think of as negative.' And believe me, when you're reading the slush pile for a house ((Dell)) that does romances, gothics, westerns, and anything else that slips in accidentally, you see some of the undeniably worst writing in the world. Which should enable you to translate our slush rejection form (enclosed).

"Conscience also dictates (Conscience is my dying philodendron, who makes all my editorial decisions for me, as well as taking care of correspondence) that I say WHAT IN HELL HAPPENED TO THE ZINE? One of the things I liked most about the first number I saw was that most of it had very little to do with SF. Now, the bulk of the zine is devoted to being a critic (letters excepted). Frankly, having been trained in criticism at Large Eastern U., I opine that there are really two, and only two, schools of literary criticism. The first, to which I subscribe, asks the question, 'Should I recommend that this book be read?' If a book is fun, or educational, or mind-expanding, and liable to keep your interest up, then it's successful.

"On the other hand are those critics who believe in 'ART,' devotion to which becomes more important than any other factor. This is fine, except that the first purpose of writing, communication, tends to get lost in the shuffle. Personally, I see no point in writing for critics——there aren't very many of them, and they don't pay for their books anyway. (I have this recurring nightmare in which a review of a collection of critical essays is anthologized, and someone asks me to review the anthology.)

"But your criticisms seem to me to be hanging on the fence, ready to fall in one direction or the other. As one who feels that the future of SF is in its inability to take itself too seriously, I hope you make it a pratfall.

"And as loud a hurrah as possible for Ted White's column."

MAGAZINE NOTES (COMIC)

SMALL WORLD DEPT: Bhob Stewart Strikes Again

He has co-drawn and co-published a comic book of gruesome, satiric intent and gruesome execution called TALES FROM THE FRIDGE #1 (50¢ plus 15¢ mailing cost from Kitchen Sink Enterprises, POB 5699, Milwaukee, WIS 53211).

The comic is competently drawn (with a slight taint of amateurism) and possesses a suitably repulsive cast of characters, the biggest of which is Global McBlimp, a BIG EATER. If a horror story based on gluttony, murder, and a hungry return from the grave is your meat, this is your dish. It has a Hack Davis cover. For completists. It has a few X-rated panels in it: there's this near-sighted whore, see, who mistakes a turgid length of "awakened" (and rotting) McBlimp's intestines for his penis.... Yeeech!

I'm not sure (for you old-time sf fans and insiders) if this Bhob Stewart is the original Texas Bhob or the younger San Francisco Bhob of contemporary mid-50's ######-### fame.

#

A superior magazine, professionally printed, 8½ x 11, with a four-color Gahan Wilson cartoon cover, interviews with Gahan Wilson and Harry Harrison (all about cartooning and writing comic strips), with many of the best Wilson cartoons.... Send $1.00 for GRAPHIC STORY MAGAZINE #15, to: Bill Spicer, 329 North Avenue 66, Los Angeles, CA 90042.

LETTER FROM ARTHUR D. HLAVATY

"It's nice to see someone else who thinks that science fiction doesn't have to be hard to read to be good. I think history is on your side. Up until this century, it was generally assumed that all fiction, no matter how 'serious', should be intelligible on the surface, with the great books having deeper levels of meaning as well. Certainly, a book like HUCKLEBERRY FINN does not make excessive 'demands' on the reader. I think this ties in with something Tom Wolfe has been saying, namely, that the novel is dying and 'the new journalism' is replacing it because only journalists and hack novelists like Wallace and Hailey consider it worth their while to put in the background details that hold the reader's interest. This has been a problem in sf, with the books that show the most brilliant extrapolation often being badly written and peopled with little plastic men (the Kilgore Trout syndrome). I think that it's this desire for richness of background which explains the excitement that STAND ON ZANZIBAR caused (I know it explains my excitement), and I wish that more writers would try books like that.

"I think that you flatter yourself when you speak of how vicious your Alter Ego can be. Some of your correspondents seem able to outnasty you without half trying. For instance, Ted White's reference to Brian Aldiss as Harry Harrison's 'back-patting alter-ego' blew my mind. If I didn't know better, I would think that Aldiss is some sort of hanger-on instead of a major writer who is generally taken more seriously than Harrison himself.

"Then we have Michael Coney literally accusing Joanna Russ of penis envy. (I didn't think anybody believed in that anymore.) He seems to miss the point of her story, which is that it's a lot easier to imagine a world in which everyone is, say, Black, than one in which everyone is female."

REMEMBER* Send your change of address if you move, please.

*If you don't, the black spot will appear on your palms & it will last three months.

The Alien's FUTURE . . .

...LOOKS GOOD. THE ALIEN CRITIC #8 WILL FEATURE RICHARD DELAP'S "TOMORROW'S LIBIDO --SEX AND SCIENCE FICTION". This a a 5,000 word article that will grind a few teeth and glint a few eyes. Richard pulls no punches.

ALSO FEATURED IS ROBERT BLOCH'S HILARIOUS BANQUET SPEECH AT THE RECENT WORLD S-F CONVENTION AT TORONTO. It's Don Rickles with puns.

ALSO FEATURED IS JOHN BRUNNER'S COLUMN, "NOISE LEVEL". He has trouble with an editor.

ALSO: "CLARION WEST: A LOOK FROM THE INSIDE" BY BOB SABELLA. Tough, honest, revealing.

Also, hopefully, TED WHITE'S column, "THE TRENCHANT BLUDGEON". And of course the Critic's reviews, provocative, informative letters, the quotes and comment, and the Archives.

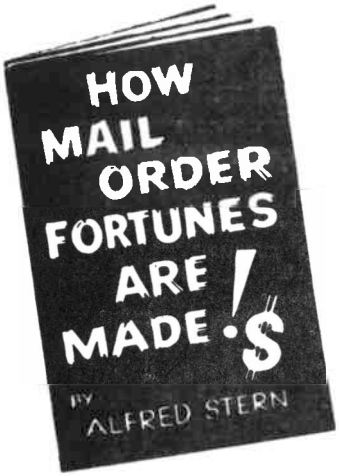
WHAT MORE COULD YOU ASK? How about a TIM KIRK cover?

SCHEDULED FOR #8: "READING HEINLEIN SUBJECTIVELY" by ALEXEI & CORY PANSHIN. 13,000 words of eye-opening psycho-cultural analysis. A must read.

ALSO: "WRITTEN TO A PULP:" Fond Memories of the Old Days by SAM MERWIN, JR.

HELP YOURSELF TO ADDED INCOME

IT'S EASY WHEN YOU HAVE THE "KNOW-HOW" AND EXPERIENCE OF SUCCESSFUL MAIL ORDER MERCHANTS GUIDING YOU EVERY STEP OF THE WAY.



HOW MAIL ORDER FORTUNES ARE MADE

#51 (N) $8.95

Others have made their fortune - you can too. 352 hardbound pages of how-to-do-it facts and figures fully illustrated with dozens of actual successful mail order ads. Every word is written so that even an inexperienced beginner can easily grasp the fundamental points ...Others have paid hundreds of dollars to get the information now presented for you by one of the most successful account executives in the mail order field.

Gerald L. Blucher
Box 42444
Portland, Oregon
97242

Personal checks
or M.O.'s, please.

You may order from us in complete confidence, knowing that you must be 100% satisfied or we will refund your money in full.

Sorry - No C.O.D.'s

Send 25¢ for catalog of money-making booklets.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

The Alien's Archives

BOOKS RECEIVED——It might be noted by some of you that I do not receive all the sf and fantasy books published. Some publishers are reluctant to send review copies, some are not yet aware of THE ALIEN CRITIC. I'm working on it. I'd like to make these Archives as complete as possible, yet I refuse to work from publisher's announcements of planned books; too often plans go awry. So I will continue to list only those books and magazines actually received.

Now....I open the creaking door...hold the lantern high...go down the steps.... Wha? What are you doing in here? Stay back! Stay b—— AAARRRRGHHHHH!

****

Asimov, Isaac. THE TRAGEDY OF THE MOON. Science essays. 1973. Doubleday. $6.95.

Introduction.

A—About the Moon.

1. The Tragedy of the Moon.
2. The Triumph of the Moon.
3. Moon Over Babylon.
4. The Week Excuse.

B—About Other Small Worlds.

5. The World Ceres.
6. The Clock in the Sky.

C—About Carbon.

7. The One and Only.
8. The Unlikely Twins.

D—About Micro-organisms.

9. Through the Microglass.
10. Down From the Amoeba.
11. The Cinderella Compound.

E—About the Thyroid Gland.

12. Doctor, Doctor, Cut My Throat.

F—About Society.

13. Lost in Non-Translation.
14. The Ancient and the Ultimate.
15. By the Numbers.

G—And (You Guessed It!) About Me.

16. The Cruise and I.
17. Academe and I.

Barr, Donald. SPACE RELATIONS. Novel. 1973. Charterhouse. $6.95.

Blish, James. STAR TREK #9. Six stories from S-T scripts. 1973. Bantam SP7808. 75¢.

Preface.
"Return To Tomorrow".
"The Ultimate Computer".
"That Which Survives".
"Obsession".
"The Return of the Archons".
"The Immunity Syndrome".

Boyd, John. THE DOOMSDAY GENE. Novel. 1973. Weybright and Talley. $5.95.

Carr, Terry. Editor. UNIVERSE 3. Orig. Coll. 1973. Random House. $5.95.
Introduction by Terry Carr.
"The Death of Doctor Island" by Gene Wolfe.
"The Ghost Writer" by Geo. Alec Effinger.
"Many Mansions" by Robert Silverberg.
"Randy-Tandy Man" by Ross Rocklynne.
"The World is a Sphere" by Edgar Pangborn.
"The Legend of Cougar Lou Landis" by Edward Bryant.
"Free City Blues" by Gordon Eklund.

THE BEST SCIENCE FICTION OF THE YEAR #2. Editor. Anthology. 1973. Ballantine 03312-4. $1.25. Cover by Chris Foss.
Introduction by Terry Carr.
"The Meeting" by Frederik Pohl and C. M. Kornbluth.
"Nobody's Home" by Joanna Russ.
"Fortune Hunter" by Poul Anderson.
"The Fifth Head of Cerberus" by Gene Wolfe.
"Caliban" by Robert Silverberg.
"Conversational Mode" by Grahame Leman.
"Their Thousandth Season" by Edward Bryant.
"Eurema's Dam" by R.A. Lafferty.
"Zero Gee" by Ben Bova.
"Sky Blue" by Alexei and Cory Panshin.
"Miss Omega Raven" by Naomi Mitchison.
"Patron of the Arts" by William Rotsler.
"Grasshopper Time" by Gordon Eklund.
"Hero" by Joe. W. Haldeman.
"When We Went To See the End of the World" by Robert Silverberg.
"Painwise" by James Tiptree, Jr.
Honorable Mentions by Terry Carr.

Carter, Lin. Editor. FLASHING SWORDS #1. Anthology. 1973. Dell 2640. 95¢.
Introduction: "Of Swordsmen and Sorcerers" by Lin Carter.
"The Sadness of the Executioner" by Fritz Leiber.
"Morreion" by Jack Vance.
"The Merman's Children" by Poul Anderson.
"The Higher Heresies of Oolimar" by Lin Carter.

Clarke, Arthur C. RENDEZVOUS WITH RAMA. Novel. 1973. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. $6.95.

Clement, Hal. OCEAN ON TOP. Novel. 1973. DAW UQ1057, 95.

Cowper, Richard. CLONE. Novel. 1973. Doubleday. $5.95.

Däniken, Erich von. THE GOLD OF THE GODS. Nonfiction. 1973. Putnam. $6.95.

Desmond, William H. Editor. THE SCIENCE-FICTION MAGAZINE CHECKLIST 1961-1972. Pamphlet. Archival Press. 1973. 75¢.

Dickson, Gordon. MUTANTS. Anthology collection. 1973. Collier Books. 01954, $1.25.
Introduction.
"Warrior".
"Of the People".
"Danger——Human!".
"Rehabilitated".
"Listen".
"Roofs of Silver".
"By New Hearth Fires".
"Idiot Solvant".
"The Immortal".
"Miss Prinks".
"Home From the Shore".

Effinger, Geo. Alec. RELATIVES. Novel. 1973. Harper & Row. $6.95.

Elwood, Roger. Editor. SHOWCASE. Original Anthology. 1973. Harper & Row. $5.95.
Introduction by Jack Dann.
"Breckenridge and the Continuum" by Robert Silverberg.
"The Childhood of the Human Hero" by Carol Emshwiller.
"John's Other Life" by Joe Haldeman.
"Trigomonomy" by Raylyn Moore.
"Barnaby's Clock" by R.A. Lafferty.
"The Arrangement" by Bruce McAllister.
"The Union Forever" by Barry N. Malzberg.
"The Bird Lover" by Joseph L. Green.
"The Man Who Saw Gunga Din Thirty Times" by Ben Bova.
"The Transition Trolley" by Joseph Howell.
"Going To the Beach" by Gene Wolfe.
"The Soul of a Servant" by Joanna Russ.

Garson, Paul. THE GREAT QUILL. Novel. 1973. Doubleday. $5.95.

Ghidalia, Vic. Editor. THE DEVIL'S GENERATION. 1973. Anthology. Lancer 75465, 95¢.
Introduction by Vic Ghidalia.
"Black Ferris" by Ray Bradbury.
"Call Him Demon" by Henry Kuttner.
"Mother By Protest" by Richard Matheson.
"Floral Tribute" by Robert Bloch.
"The Place In the Woods" by August Derleth.
"Hole in the Air" by Robert Silverberg.
"Mr. Lupescu" by Anthony Boucher.
"Day of Truce" by Clifford D. Simak.
"The Other Wing" by Algernon Blackwood.

Editor. THE ODDBALLS. 1973. Anthology. Manor Books 95266, 95¢.
"The Man Who Could Work Miracles" by H.G. Wells.

"The Lunatic Planet" by Robert Silverberg.
"Nobody Bothers Gus" by Algis Budrys.
"The Dreams of Albert Moreland" by Fritz Leiber.
"The Man Who Walked Through Glass" by Nelson Bond.
"Talent" by Robert Bloch.
"The Barbarian" by Poul Anderson.
"Each an Explorer" by Isaac Asimov.
"Passing of the Third Floor Back" by Jerome K. Jerome.

Goulart, Ron. WHAT'S BECOME OF SCREWLOOSE? AND OTHER INQUIRIES. 1971, 1973. Collection. DAW UQ1060, 95¢.
"What's Become of Screwloose?".
"Junior Partner".
"Hardcastle".
"Into the Shop".
"Prez".
"Confessions".
"Monte Cristo Complex".
"The Yes-Men of Venus".
"Keeping An Eye On Janey".
"Hobo Jungle".

Green, Joseph. CONSCIENCE INTERPLANETARY. Novel. Doubleday. 1973. $5.95.

Haiblum, Isadore. TRANSFER TO YESTERDAY. Novel. 1973. Ballantine 23418, $1.25.

Hall, H.W. SCIENCE FICTION BOOK REVIEW INDEX VOL. 3, 1972. Published 1973 by H.W. Hall. $1.50.

Harrison, Harry. Editor. ASTOUNDING—JOHN W. CAMPBELL MEMORIAL ANTHOLOGY. Original anthology. 1973. Random House. $7.95.
Introduction: "The Father of Science Fiction" by Isaac Asimov.
"Lodestar" by Poul Anderson.
"Thiotimoline To the Stars" by Isaac Asimov.
"Something Up There Likes Me" by Alfred Bester.
"Lecture Demonstration" by Hal Clement.
"Early Bird" by Theodore R. Cogswell and Theodore L. Thomas.
"The Emperor's Fan" by L. Sprague de Camp.
"Brothers" by Gordon R. Dickson.
"The Mothballed Spaceship" by Harry Harrison.
"Black Sheep Astray" by Mack Reynolds.
"Epilog" by Clifford D. Simak.
"Interlude" by George O. Smith.
"Helix the Cat" by Theodore Sturgeon.
"Probability Zero! The Population Implosion" by Theodore R. Cogswell.

Knight, Damon. Editor. ORBIT 12. Original Collection. 1973. Putnam. $5.95.
"Shark" by Edward Bryant.
"Direction of the Road" by Ursula K. LeGuin.
"The Windows in Dante's Hell" by Michael Bishop.
"Serpent Burning on an Altar"
"Woman in Sunlight With Mandoline"
"The Young Soldier's Horoscope"
"Castle Scene With Penitents"
—four stories by Brian Aldiss.
"The Red Canary" by Kate Wilhelm.
"What's the Matter With Herbie?" by Mel Gilden.
"Pinup" by Edward Bryant.
"The Genius Freaks" by Vonda N. McIntyre.
"Burger Creature" by Steve Chapman.
"Half the Kingdom" by Doris Piserchia.
"Continuing Westward" by Gene Wolfe.
Arcs & Secants: (news & notes on the contrib utors).

Kurtz, Katherine. HIGH DERYNI (Vol. III of The Deryni Chronicle). Novel. 1973. Ballantine 23485, $1.25.

Lancour, Gene. THE LERIOS MECCA. Novel. 1973. Doubleday. $4.95.

Laubenthal, Sanders Anne. EXCALIBUR. Novel. 1973. Introduction: "The Quest For King Arthur's Sword" by Lin Carter. Ballantine 23416-2, $1.25.

Lundwall, Sam J. BERNHARD THE CONQUEROR. Novel. 1973. DAW UQ1058, 95¢.

Macvey, John W. WHISPERS FROM SPACE. Non-fic- 1973. Macmillan. $8.95.

McCaffrey, Anne. Editor. COOKING OUT OF THIS WORLD. Cookbook, recipes. 1973. Ballantine 23413-8, $1.50.
TO RIDE PEGASUS. Novel. 1973. Ballantine 23417-0, $1.25.

McGhan, Barry. AN INDEX TO SCIENCE FICTION BOOK REVIEWS IN ASTOUNDING/ANALOG 1949-1969; FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION 1949-1969; GALAXY 1950-1969. 1973. SFRA Misc. Publication #1. $2.95.

Mitchell, Edward Page. THE CRYSTAL MAN. Collection edited by Sam Moskowitz. 1973. Doubleday. $7.95.
"Lost Giant of American Science Fiction—A Biographical Perspective" by Sam Moskowitz.
Science Fiction:
"The Crystal Man".
"The Balloon Tree".
"The Ablest Man in the World".
"The Tachypomp".
"The Man Without a Body".
"The Clock That Went Backward".
"The Senator's Daughter".

"Old Squids and Little Speller".
"The Facts in the Ratcliff Case".
"The Story of the Deluge".
"The Professor's Experiment".
"The Soul Spectroscope".
"The Inside of the Earth".

Unknown-Fantasy:

"An Uncommon Sort of Spectre".
"The Cave of the Splurgles".
"The Devil's Funeral".
"The Wonderful Corot".
"The Terrible Voyage of the Toad".

Supernatural:

"The Devilish Rat".
"Exchanging Their Souls".
"The Case of the Dow Twins".
"An Extraordinary Wedding".
"Back From That Bourne".
"The Last Cruise of the Judas Iscariot".
"The Flying Weathercock".
"The Legendary Ship".
"The Shadow on the Fancher Twins".

Neo-John Collier:

"The Pain Epicures".
"A Day Among the Liars".

Future War Farce:

"Our War With Monaco".

Moorcock, Michael. THE SILVER WARRIORS. Novel. 1973. Dell 7994, 95¢.

Niven, Larry. PROTECTOR. Novel. 1973. Ballantine 23486, $1.25.

THE FLIGHT OF THE HORSE. Anthology. 1973. Ballantine 23487, $1.25.

"The Flight of the Horse".
"Leviathan".
"Bird in the Hand".
"There's a Wolf in My Time Machine".
"Death in a Cage".
"Flash Crowd".
"What Good is a Glass Dagger?".
Afterword by Larry Niven.

Pangborn, Edgar. GOOD NEIGHBORS AND OTHER STRANGERS. Collection. 1973. Collier Books 02360, $1.50.

"Good Neighbors".
"A Better Mousehole".
"Longtooth".
"Maxwell's Monkey".
"The Ponsonby Case".
"Pickup for Olympus".
"Darius".
"Wogglebeast".
"Angel's Egg".
"The Wrens in Grampa's Whiskers".

Silverberg, Robert. Editor. CHAINS OF THE SEA. Three Original Novellas. 1973. Nelson. $6.50.

Introduction by Robert Silverberg.
"And Us, Too, I Guess" by Geo. Alec Effinger.
"Chains of the Sea" by Gardner R. Dozois.
"The Shrine of Sebastian" by Gordon Eklund.

UNFAMILIAR TERRITORY. Collection. 1973. Scribner's. $5.95.

"Caught in the Organ Draft".
"Now + n
Now - n".
"Some Notes on the Pre-Dynastic Epoch".
"In the Group".
"Caliban".
"Many Mansions".
"Good News From the Vatican".
"Push No More".
"The Mutant Season".
"When We Went to See the End of the World".
"What We Learned From This Morning's Newspaper".
"In Entropy's Jaws".
"The Wind and the Rain".

Smith, Clark Ashton. POSEIDONIS. Anthology. 1973. Edited by Lin Carter. Ballantine 03353-1, $1.25.

Introduction: "The Magic of Atlantis" by Lin Carter.

Poseidonis:

Editor's Note.
"The Muse of Atlantis".
"The Last Incantation".
"The Death of Malygris".
"Tolometh".
"The Double Shadow".
"A Voyage to Sfanomoë".
"A Vintage from Atlantis".
"Atlantis" (poem).

Lemuria:

Editor's Note.
"In Lemuria".
"An Offering to the Moon".
"The Uncharted Isle".
"Lemurienne".

Ptolemides:

Editor's Note.
"The Epiphany of Death".

Other Realms:

Editor's Note:
"In Cocaigne".
"Symposium of the Gorgon".
"The Venus of Azombeii".
"The Isle of Saturn".
"The Root of Ampoi".
"The Invisible City".
"Amithaine".

"The Willow Landscape".
"The Shadows".

Stapleford, Brian M. RHAPSODY IN BLACK. Novel. 1973. DAW UQ1059, 95¢.

Swenson, Peggy. (Pseud. of Richard E. Geis.) A GIRL POSSESSED. Novel. 1973. Brandon 6326, $1.95.

Swigart, Leslie Kay. HARLAN ELLISON: A BIBLIOGRAPHICAL CHECKLIST. 1973. Williams. $3.00.

Tiptree, James Jr. TEN THOUSAND LIGHT-YEARS FROM HOME. Anthology. 1973. Ace 80180, 95¢.
Introduction by Harry Harrison.
"And I Awoke and Found Me Here on the Cold Hill's Side".
"The Snows Are Melted, the Snows Are Gone".
"The Peacefulness of Vivyan".
"Mamma Come Home".
"Help".
"Painwise".
"Faithful to Thee, Terra, In Our Fashion".
"The Man Doors Said Hello To".
"The Man Who Walked Home".
"Forever to a Hudson Bay Blanket".
"I'll Be Waiting for You When the Swimming Pool is Empty".
"I'm Too Big but I Love to Play".
"Birth of a Salesman".
"Mother in the Sky With Diamonds".
"Beam Us Home".

Vance, Jack. THE BRAVE FREE MEN. Novel. 1973. Dell 1708, 95¢.

Wilson, Robin Scott. Editor. THOSE WHO CAN: A SCIENCE FICTION READER. Collection. 1973. Mentor - New American Library 451-MW1236, $1.50.
Introduction: "To the Reader".
Plot: The Tangled Web
"Jamboree" by Jack Williamson.
"Plotting 'Jamboree'" by Jack Williamson.
"We, in Some Strange Power's Employ, Move on a Rigorous Line" by Samuel R. Delany.
"Thickening the Plot" by Samuel R. Delany.
Character: The Determinant of Incident
"Crazy Maro" by Daniel Keyes.
"How Much Does a Character Cost?" by Daniel Keyes.
"Pretty Maggie Moneyeyes" by Harlan Ellison.
"The Whore with a Heart of Iron Pyrites; or, Where Does a Writer Go to Find a Maggie?" by Harlan Ellison.
Setting: A Local Habitation and a Name
"The Man Who Could Not See Devils" by Joanna Russ.
"On Setting" by Joanna Russ.
"Sundance" by Robert Silverberg.
"Introduction to 'Sundance'" by Robert Silverberg.
Theme: To Mean Intensely
"Nine Lives" by Ursula K. Le Guin.
"On Theme" by Ursula K. Le Guin.
"An Annotated 'Masks'" by Damon Knight.
Point of View: Who's Minding the Store?
"The Planners" by Kate Wilhelm.
"On Point of View" by Kate Wilhelm.
"For a While, There, Herbert Marcuse, I Thought You Were Maybe Right About Alienation and Eros" by Robin Scott Wilson.
"Point of View: The Quick-Change Artist in the Typewriter" by Robin Scott Wilson.
Style: The Dress of Thought
"The Listeners" by James E. Gunn.
"On Style" by James E. Gunn.
"Grandy Devil" by Frederik Pohl.
"Day Million" by Frederik Pohl.
"On Velocity Exercises" by Frederik Pohl.

Vacca, Roberto. THE COMING DARK AGE. Non-Fiction. 1973. Doubleday, $6.95.

MAGAZINES RECEIVED

AMAZING. October, 1973. Vol.47, No.3. 60¢.
Ted White, Ed. Cover by Jeff Jones.
Novelet: "The Gods of Zar" by William Rotsler.
Short Stories: "The Sun-Hunters" by Daphne Castell.
"Abdication" by C. L. Grant.
Novel: THE STONE THAT NEVER CAME DOWN by John Brunner (First of two parts. Serial.)
Editorial: Ted White.
The Club House: (fanzine reviews)by Ed Smith.
Or So You Say: (letters).

AMAZING. December, 1973. Vol.47, No.4. 60¢.
Ted White, Ed. Cover by Don Davis.
Novelet: "Moby, Too" by Gordon Eklund.
Short Stories: "The Immortality of Lazarus" by William Rotsler.
"Different Angle" by H.H. Hollis.
Novel: THE STONE THAT NEVER CAME DOWN by John Brunner (Serial. Conclusion.)
Editorial: Ted White.
The Club House: (fanzine reviews) by Ed Smith.
The Future In Books: (book reviews) by Cy Chauvin & Thomas Monteleone.
Or So You Say: (letters).

ANALOG. September, 1973. Vol. XCII, No.1. 60¢.
Ben Bova, Editor. Cover by Jack Gaughan.

ort Stories: "Persephone and Hades" by Scott W. Schumack.
"Prisoner 794" by M. Max Maxwell (Pseud.?).
"Crying Willow" by Edward Rager.
"Martyr" by Laurence M. Janifer.
Novelette:"Override" by George R.R. Martin.
Serial: THE FAR CALL by Gordon R. Dockson (Part two of three parts).
Science Fact: "The Case For The Hydrogen-Oxygen Car" by William J. D. Escher.
The Editor's Page: "The Hindenburg Society"
The Analytical Laboratory: (ratings).
The Reference Library: (book reviews) by P. Schuyler Miller.
Brass Tacks: (letters).
In Times To Come: (featured next issue).

ANALOG. October, 1973. Vol. XCII, No. 2. 60¢. Ben Bova, Editor. Cover by Rick Sterbach.
Science Fact: "A Program For Star Flight" by G. Harry Stine.
Novelette: "Whalekiller Grey" by William A. Cochrane.
Short Stories: "Notes From Magdalen More" by L*z*r*s L*ng.
"An Earnest of Intent" by Alfred D'Attore.
"Of Mist, and Grass, and Sand" by Vonda N. McIntyre.
"Antalogia" by Walt and Leigh Richmond.
"The Hand is Quicker" by Kevin O'Donnell, Jr.
Serial: THE FAR CALL by Gordon R. Dickson (Conclusion).
Guest Editorial: "Experiments in Utopias" by Carl Sagan.
The Analytical Laboratory: (ratings).
The Reference Library: (book reviews) by P. Schuyler Miller.
Brass Tacks: (letters).
In Times To Come: (featured next issue).

ANALOG. November, 1973. Vol. XCII, No. 3. 60¢. Ben Bova, Editor. Cover by Kelly Freas.
Serial: THE SINS OF THE FATHERS by Stanley Schmidt.
Novelette: "We Are Very Happy Here" by Joe Haldeman.
Short Stories: "Regarding Patient 724" by Ron Goulart.
"The Sons of Bingaloo" by Sonya Dorman.
"Epicycle" by P.J. Plauger.
Science Fact: "Styx and Stones and Maybe Charon Too" by George W. Harper.
The Editor's Page: "Quis Custodiet?"
The Analytical Laboratory: (ratings).
The Reference Library: (book reviews) by P. Schuyler Miller.
Brass Tacks: (letters).

ETERNITY. Vol.1, No. 2. 1973. $1.00. Stephen Gregg, Editor. Cover by Ed Romero & D. Anderson.
Fiction: "Sunchild" by Gustav Hasford.
"Island and Gold" by Arthur Byron Cover.
"Sunrise" by Glen Cook.
"The Dirty War" by David R. Bunch.
"Human Error" by Kris Neville & Barry N. Malzberg.
"Castles" by Scott Edelstein.
"Nothing Personal" by Grant Carrington.
"Splinters" by Robert Wissner.
Poetry: "Reflections" by Gene Van Troyer.
"Mold is All We Buffalo Have to Look Foward To" by Scott Edelstein.
"Poem" by Darrell Schweitzer.
"The Choice" by Neil McAndrew.
"Salome Among the Stars" by Peter Dillingham.
Article: "The Living Building" by Joe Dacy, II.
Interview: Thomas M. Disch.
Graphics: "Bowl of Pipe Stories" by Doug Lovenstein.
"Manni Kylani in 'Manny Experiances a Startling Revalation From Kingdom Come'" by Michael Stevens.
"Sing-Along" by Jay Kinney.
Features: Editorial by Stephen Gregg.
Books: (reviews) by Fred Patten, Jeff Clark, and Stephen Gregg.
Roaches: (reviews and recommendations of other, varied magazines).
Recordings: (record reviews) by Richard and Patricia Lupoff.
Contributors: (biographical notes).
Letters: (letters).

FANTASTIC. November, 1973. Vol.23, No.1. 60¢. Ted White, Editor. Cover by Dan Schilling.
Novel: JUNCTION by Jack Dann.
Short Stories: "Trapped in the Shadowland" by Fritz Leiber.
"Triptych" by Barry N. Malzberg.
"Chang Bhang" by Jack C. Haldeman II.
"War of the Magicians" by William Rotsler.
"A Matter of Time" by Jim Ross.
Editorial: by Ted White.
Article/Speech: "Mainstream SF & Genre SF" by Gardner Dozois.
Fantasy Books: (reviews) by Fritz Leiber.
According To You: (letters).

FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION. September, 1973. Vol. 45, No. 3, whole number 268. 75¢. Edward L. Ferman, Editor. Cover by Carol Pohl.

Novella: "In The Problem Pit" by Frederik Pohl.
Article: "Frederik Pohl: Frontiersman" by Lester del Rey.
Bibliography: Frederik Pohl by Mark Owings.
Novelet: "Cage a Man" by F.M. Busby.
Short Stories: "The Helmet" by Barry N. Malzberg.
"Dominions Beyond" by Ward Moore.
"I Wish I may, I Wish I Might..." by Bill Pronzini.
"The Cryonauts" by Edward Wellen.
Films: (reviews) by Baird Searles.
Cartoon: Gahan Wilson.
Science: "Sogns of the Times" by Isaac Asimov.

FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION. October, 1973. Vol. 45, No. 4., whole number 269. 75¢. Edward L. Ferman, Editor. Cover by Jacqui Morgan.
Novelets: "Old Uncle Tom Cobliegh and All" by R. Bretnor.
"Color Me Deadly" by Randall Garrett.
"Lights Out" by Geo. Alec Effinger.
Short Stories: "Cat Three" by Fritz Leiber.
"Whatever Happened to the Olmecs?" by Kate Wilhelm.
"The Last Wizard" by Avram Davidson.
"Dead Man's Chai " by Manly Wade Wellman.
"London Bridge" by Andre Norton.
Books: (reviews) by Avram Davidson.
Cartoon: Gahan Wilson.
Films: (reviews) by Baird Searles.
Poem: "Forecast From An Orbiting Satellite" by Sonya Dorman.
Science: #The Mispronounced Metal" by Isaac Asimov.

FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION. November, 1973. Vol. 45, No. 5., whole number 270. 75¢. Edward L. Ferman, Editor. Cover by Ron Walotsky.
Novelets: "Mother Lode" by Phyllis Gotlieb.
"The Beasts in the Jungle" by Gordon Eklund.
"The Pugilist" by Poul Anderson.
Short Stories: "Thirst" by Bill Pronzini.
"Big City" by Herbie Brennan.
"The Galaxy Travel Service" by Leonard Tushnet.
"Closed Sicilian" by Barry N. Malzberg.
Books: (reviews) by Sidney Coleman.
Cartoon: Gahan Wilson.
Films: (reviews) by Baird Searles.
Science: "The Figure of the Fastest" by Isaac Asimov.

GALAXY. September, 1973. Vol. 34, No. 8. 75¢. Ejler Jakobsson, Editor. Cover by Brian Boyle. (59¢ Trial Offer this issue).
Serial: RENDEZVOUS WITH RAMA by Arthur C. Clarke (Part One).
Novelette: "The Old King's Answers" by Colin Kapp.
Short Stories: "Triggerman" by Lou Fisher.
"Quickening" by W. Macfarlane.
"Quarantine" by Doris Piserchia.
"Circle of Flies" by Michael Hatt.
"And Baby Makes Three" by William J. Earls.
Galaxy Bookshelf: (reviews) by Theodore Sturgeon.
Editor's Page: Ejler Jakobsson.
Galaxy Stars: (autobiographical) Doris Piserchia.

GALAXY. October, 1973. Vol.34, No.1 (sic). 75¢. Ejler Jakobsson, Editor. Cover by Brian Boyle.
Serials: THE DREAM MILLENNIUM by James White (Part One).
RENDEZVOUS WITH RAMA by Arthur C. Clarke (Conclusion).
Short Stories: "Agnes, Accent, and Access" by Theodore Sturgeon.
"Cold Friend" by Harlan Ellison.
"Field of Vision" by Ursula K. LeGuin.
Poem: "Ode To Electric Ben" by Ray Bradbury.
Directions: (letters).
Galaxy Bookshelf: (reviews) by Theodore Sturgeon.

IF. July-August, 1973. Vol.21, No. 12. (#166). 75¢. Ejler Jakobsson, Editor. Cover by David A. Hardy.
Novelettes: "Pearsall's Return" by F. M. Busby.
"The Invaders" by Stephen Tall.
Serial: OUR CHILDREN'S CHILDREN by Clifford D. Simak (Conclusion).
Short Stories: "The Meaning of the Word" by Chelsea Quin Yarbro.
"Support Your Local Police" by David Magil.
"Westwind" by Gene Wolfe.
Hue and Cry: (letters).
SF Calendar: (listings).
Reading Room: (book reviews) by Lester del Rey.

IF. September-October 1973. Vol.22, No.1 (#168). 75¢. Ejler Jakobsson, Editor. Cover by David A. Hardy.
Serial: INHERITANCE by Robert Wells (Part One).
Novelette: "The Horns of Valora" by William Lee.
Short Stories: "Sentience" by Lee Killough.

"The Learning of Eeshta" by F.M. Busby.
"Time of the Cetis" by Gene Kilczer.
"The Merchant" by Larry Eisenberg.
"Space Bounce" by Stephen Tall.
SF Calendar: (listings).
Reading Room: (book reviews) by Lester del Rey.

THE LITERARY MAGAZINE OF FANTASY & TERROR. 1973. Vol.1, No.3. $1.50. Amos Salmonson, Editor. Cover: print by Gustave Dore.
Letter From the Editor: Amos Salmonson.
Fiction: "Elimdorath" by Darrell Schweitzer.
"The Cube Root of Richard Dunn" by Peter Glass.
"Cemetary Hill" by R. Neil Horman.
"City of the Enlightened" by Amos Salmonson.
Art Feature: "The Gustave Dore Sampler".
Rap Session: (letters).
P.S.: by the editor.

VERTEX. August, 1973. Vol. 1, No. 3. $1.50. Donald J. Pfeil, Editor. Cover by Tom Newsom.
Novelette: "All the Bridges Rusting" by Larry Niven.
Feature Fiction: "Experiment" by William Carlson.
"Future Perfect" by A. E. Van Vogt.
Short Stories: "Confrontation" by Herman Wrede.
"2000½—A Spaced Oddity" by F. M. Busby.
"Weed of Time" by Norman Spinrad.
"Adamant Eve" by Charles Fritch
"Brave Arms, Strong Arms" by Greg Joy.
"The Victim" by Scott Edelstein.
"Alas, Poor Tidy Toidy Girl" by Rachel Payes.
Feature Articles: "Weightlessness" by Gregory Benford.
"The Apollo/Soyuz Mission" by Igor Bohassian.
"Black Hole Mines in the Asteroid Belt" by Jerry Pournelle.
Personality: "An Interview With Poul Anderson" by Paul Turner.
Vertex Departments: Moment In History—"Crab Nebula".
News And Reviews.
Science Fiction Art Gallery—"The Art of Josh Kirby".

VERTEX. October, 1973. Vol. 1, No. 4. $1.50. Donald J. Pfeil, Editor. Cover by Josh Kirby.
Novelette: "Max" by E. Michael Blake.
Feature Fiction: "The Stars Have All Gone Out" by Alan Brennert.
"Cynthia" by Tak Hallus.
"World War Two" by Geo. Alec Effinger.
"Gerald Fitzgerald and The Time Machine" by William Rotsler and Charles E. Burbee.
"The Death of Life" by Anthony Lorenti.
"A Special Kind of Flower" by Walt Liebscher.
"The Missionaries" by Herman Wrede.
Feature Articles: "The Biography of a Star" by Igor Bohassian.
"Geothermal Power—Mother Nature's Home Remedy" by James Sutherland.
"Radio Astronomy Today" by Jay Arrow.
"Project Cyclops" by James Benford.
"Supercivilizations" by Gregory Benford.
"Atlantis: Fact or Myth?" by Jerry Pournelle, Ph.D.
Personality: "Vertex Interviews Frank Herbert" by Paul C. Turner.
Special Review: TIME ENOUGH FOR LOVE by Robert Heinlein, reviewed by Richard Ashby.
Vertex Departments: Moment in History—"The Experiment That Failed".
News and Reviews.

WEIRD TALES. Fall, 1973. Vol. 47, No. 2. 75¢. Sam Moskowitz, Editor. Cover: not credited.
Stories: "Eloi Eloi Sabachthani" by William Hope Hodgson.
"Atlantis" (Verse) by Stanton A. Coblentz.
"The Clash of Dishes" by Ian Maclaren.
"Eternal Rediffusion" by Eric Ftank Russell & Leslie J. Johnson.
"Sword in the Snow" by E. C. Tubb.
"Funeral in Another Town" byJerry Jacobson.
"The Man in the Bottle" by Gustav Meyrink.
"The Smiling People" by Ray Bradbury.
"Supernatural Horror in Literature" (essay) by H. P. Lovecraft.
"The Man in the Ground" by Robert E. Howard.
"Song For Wood Horns" (verse) by A. Merritt.
"William Hope Hodgson—The Novelist" (article; second of three parts) by Sam Moskowitz.
"Virgil Finlay" (folio)
"The Utmost Abomination" by Clark Ashton Smith & Lin Carter.
"The Buried Paradise" by Felix Marti-Ibanez, M.D.
"The Fate of the Senegambian Queen" by Wardon Allan Curtis.
"Great Ashtoreth" (verse) by Frank Belknap Long.
"The Eyrie" (letters).

THE BOOK PUBLISHERS

ACE BOOKS (Dept. MM) Box 576, Times Square Station, New York, NY 10036. (15¢ handling fee per copy.)

ADVENT, P.O.Box 9228, Chicago, IL 60690.

ATHENEUM, 122 East 42nd St., New York, NY 10017.

AVON BOOKS, 959 Eighth Av., New York, NY 10019. (15¢ for handling and mailing, per copy.)

AWARD BOOKS, P.O. Box 500, Farmingdale, L.I., N.Y. 11735. (25¢ postage & handling for one book, 35¢ for two or three books. They pay postage on all orders for four books or more.)

BALLANTINE BOOKS, Dept. CS, 36 West 20th St., New York, NY 10003. (10¢ handling fee per copy.)

BANTAM BOOKS, Dept. SF, 414 East Golf Road, Des Plaines, IL 60016. (If less than six books ordered, add 10¢ per book for postage and handling.)

BASILISK PRESS, P.O. Box 71, Fredonia, NY 14063.

BELMONT PRODUCTIONS, 185 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016. (Add 15¢ per book for handling and postage.)

BERKLEY PUBLISHING CORP., 200 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016. (15¢ per copy to cover mailing cost.)

CHILTON BOOK CO., Radnor, PA 19087.

COLLIER BOOKS, 866 Third Av., New York, N.Y. 10022. (15¢ per copy handling fee.)

COWARD, MCCANN & GEOGHEGAN, 200 Madison Av., New York, NY 10016.

DAW BOOKS, P.O. Box 999, Bergenfield, NJ 07621. (15¢ per copy to cover mailing costs.)

DAVID MCKAY, 750 Third Av., New York, NY 10017.

DELL BOOKS, P.O. Box 1000, Pinebrook, NJ 07058. (If less than five books ordered, add 15¢ per copy for handling and postage.)

DOBSON BOOKS, 80 Kensington Church Street. London W8, UNITED KINGDOM

DODD, MEAD & CO., 79 Madison Av., New York, NY 10016.

DOUBLEDAY & CO., 277 Park Av., New York, NY 10017.

DOVER PUBLICATIONS, 180 Varick St., New York, NY 10014.

EXPOSITION PRESS, 50 Jericho Turnpike, Jericho, NY 11753.

FABER AND FABER, 3 Queen Square, London WC1, UNITED KINGDOM.

FANTASY HOUSE, 6045 Vineland Av., North Hollywood, CA 91606.

FARRAR, STRAUS & GIROUX, 19 Union Square W., New York, NY 10003.

FAWCETT BOOKS, Mail Order Service, Fawcett Publications, Inc., Greenwich, CONN 06830. (15¢ each for postage and handling.)

GALE RESEARCH CO., Book Tower, Detroit, MI 48226.

GRANT, West Kingston, RI 02892.

GREENWOOD PRESS, Westport, CONN 06880.

HARCOURT BRACE JOVANOVICH, 757 Third Ave., New York, NY 10017.

HARPER & ROW, 10 East 53rd St., New York, NY 10022.

HAWTHORN BOOKS, 260 Madison Av., New York, NY 10016.

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN CO., 2 Park St., Boston, MA 02107.

LANCER BOOKS, (Order Dept.), 1560 Broadway, New York, NY 10036. (10¢ per book to cover mailing costs.)

J.B. LIPPINCOTT CO., E. Washington Square, Philadelphia, PA 19105.

MACMILLAN, 866 Third Av., New York, NY 10022.

MANOR BOOKS, 329 Fifth Av., New York, NY 10016.

MAYFLOWER BOOKS, Park Street, St. Albans, Herts, UNITED KINGDOM.

NESFA PRESS, Box G, MIT Branch Station, Cambridge, MASS 02139.

NEW AMERICAN LIBRARY, P.O. Box 999, Bergenfield, NJ 07621. (List price plus 25¢ for handling and mailing costs).

POCKET BOOKS, Mail Service Dept., 1 West 39th St., New York, NY 10018. (25¢ per copy to cover mailing and handling.)

PRENTICE-HALL, Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632.

PUTNAM'S, 200 Madison Av., New York, NY 10016.

PYRAMID PUBLICATIONS, Dept. M.O., 9 Garden St., Moonachie, NJ 07074. (25¢ postage and handling fee per copy if total order is less than $5.00.)

RANDOM HOUSE, 201 East 50th St., New York, NY 10022.

ST. MARTIN'S PRESS, 175 Fifth Av., New York, NY 10010.

SCRIBNER'S, 597 Fifth Av., New York, NY 10017.

SEABURY PRESS, 815 Second Av., New York, NY 10017.

SHERBOURNE PRESS, 1640 S. La Cienega Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90035.

SIDGWICK AND JACKSON, LTD., 1 Tavistock Chambers, Bloomsbury Way, London WC1A 2SG, UNITED KINGDOM.

SIGNET BOOKS, P.O. Box 999, Bergenfield, NJ 07621. (15¢ per copy to cover handling and mailing costs.)

STEIN AND DAY, 7 E. 48th St., New York, NY 10017.

THOMAS NELSON, 30 East 42nd St., New York, NY 10017.

TRIDENT PRESS, Rockefeller Center, 630 Fifth Av., New York, NY 10020.

VANTAGE PRESS, 516 West 34th St., New York, NY 10001.

VIKING PRESS, 625 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10022.

WALKER AND COMPANY, 720 Fifth Av., New York, NY 10019.

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

WEYBRIGHT AND TALLEY, 750 Third Ave., New York, NY 10017.

WILLIAM MORROW, 105 Madison Av., New York, NY 10016.

THE MAGAZINE PUBLISHERS

AMAZING
FANTASTIC
SCIENCE FICTION ADVENTURES CLASSICS
THRILLING SCIENCE FICTION
Published by Ultimate Publishing Co., Box 7, Flushing, NY 11364. ($3. yr. each title.)

ANALOG
Published by Conde Nast Publications, 420 Lexington Av., New York, NY 10017. ($6. yr.)

ETERNITY
Published by Stephen Gregg, P.O. Box 193, Sandy Springs, S.C. 29677. ($3.50 four issues.)

FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION
Published by Mercury Press, P.O. Box 56, Cornwall, CONN. 06753. ($8.50 yr.)

GALAXY
IF
Published by UPD Publishing Corp., 235 East 45th St., New York, NY 10017. ($4. yr. each.)

LITERARY MAGAZINE OF FANTASY & TERROR
Published by Amos Salmonson, Box 89517, Zenith, WA 98188. ($6. for 6 issues.)

VERTEX
Published by Mankind Publishing Co., 8060 Melrose Av., Los Angeles, CA 90046. ($6. yr.)

EIRD TALES
Published by Weird Tales, 8230 Beverly Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90048. (No subscription rate listed.)

SF/FANTASY IN MICROFICHE

SCIENCE FICTION ARCHIVES

British Science Fiction of the 1950s

'The Stars are Ours' by Ken Bulmer

'Terra!' by King Lang

'This Planet for Sale' by George Hay

'Man, Woman and Android' by George Hay

John W. Campbell, Jr. (Don A. Stuart)—Fiction

'Uncertainty'

Science Fiction Fan Magazines

'The Alien Critic' from No. 4., Vol 2, No. 1, edited by Richard E. Geis

FANTASY ARCHIVES

Material from 'Unknown Worlds' magazine

'Hell Hath Fury' anthology by George Hay. Stories by F. Leiber, L. Ron Hubbard, etc.

'The Elder Gods' by Don A. Stuart (John W. Campbell, Jr.)

All at 50p each from:

STARLIGHT RESEARCH,
c/o George Hay,
78 Downhills Way,
LONDON, N17 6BD

sf & fantasy books from t-k graphics

HEINLEIN IN DIMENSION by Alexei Panshin. Considered by many the definitive study of Robert Heinlein and his influence on the science fiction field.....Cloth, $6.00; paper, $2.45

DOC SAVAGE: HIS APOCALYPTIC LIFE by Philip Jose Farmer. A biography of Doc Savage and tracing of his family tree, similar to Farmer's biography of Tarzan.....Cloth, $6.95

MYTH, SYMBOL & RELIGION IN THE LORD OF THE RINGS by Sandra Miesel. In-depth study of the mythic background of Tolkien's Trilogy, illustrated by Judith Weiss.....Paper, $3.00

TIME ENOUGH FOR LOVE by Robert A. Heinlein. The monumental tying-together of the Future History stories.....Cloth, $7.95

THE REVISED LOVECRAFT BIBLIOGRAPHY by Mark Owings. The definitive guide to the works of H.P. Lovecraft.....Paper, $3.50

SF: THE OTHER SIDE OF REALISM ed. Prof. Thomas Clareson. A thick collection of essays on SF by Delany, Blish, Spinrad, Lem, Panshin, Aldiss, Merril and others....Cloth, $8.95; paper, $4.00

VALDAR THE OFT-BORN by George Griffith. A sword-and-sorcery novel much in the Robert E. Howard vein.....Cloth, $4.50

A REQUIEM FOR ASTOUNDING by Alva Rogers. History of Astounding SF 1936-1960, illustrated.....Cloth, $6.00; paper, $2.45

LOST CONTINENTS by L. Sprague de Camp. A study of the Atlantis theme in history, science and literature.....Paper, $2.75

ALL TITLES POSTPAID FROM:
T-K GRAPHICS, DEPT. A, PO Box 1951, BALTIMORE, MD 21203

TK GRAPHICS