

THE HUGO WINNER!!
SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW

INTERVIEWS: ☆ *A.E. VAN VOGT*
☆ *JACK VANCE*
☆ *RAY BRADBURY*
☆ *PIERS ANTHONY*

23

\$1.50

THE SILVERBERG THAT WAS BY ROBERT SILVERBERG



ALIEN THOUGHTS



8-5-77 A now area representative from Gestetner, Dan Cummings, dropped by and fixed my 466 for free, by cleaning a little plastic pop-up thingumy that was too gummy to pop.

This now permits me to run subscription forms, reminder forms, bookstore order forms...all kinds of necessary items and save a few bucks on offset printing.

I got a copy of ANDROMEDA 2 today, from Futura in England, and it's a good-looking pocketbook, with a first-class cover. And I'm happy that Peter Weston gave my story the catbird seat position, and that he called it a 'blockbuster.' Yes, this is all shameless egoboo and self-promotion on my part. Let me enjoy it. I cannot be blasé about this. I'm all puffed up and glowing.

"Hold it, Geis! Just hold it right there! Where do you get this shit about 'my story'? I wrote "One Immortal Man", and---"

Alter, you wrote something called "Tomb It May Concern," and I had to re-write it to make it even remotely publishable. Further---

Geis, all you did was change the title and a phrase or two! You're trying to rob me! You always try to rip me off! You---"

An Alter-Ego is born to be ripped-off by the Prime Self. It's always done this way. I'm just unlucky enough to have an alter-ego who has the power to talk back and interrupt my important writings.

"Comes the Revolution, Geis!"
Back to your hole, Alter.

T. Pflock, free-lance writer, who wrote,

'By the way, I'm now a REASON contributing editor--haven't contributed anything yet, however.

'And have you heard: J.J. Pierce is/has replacing(ed) J.Baen as GALAXY editor! Baen's going to Ace to replace LoBrutto, who's going to Doubleday to replace Jarvis, who's going to Playboy Press. Ah, musical editors. Such fun.'

Except for the editor at Playboy Press who got booted, to create the first vacancy.

And this item of similar, confirming mein, from Darrell Schweitzer:

'J.J. Pierce, that J.J. Pierce of 2nd Foundation fame, is the new editor of GALAXY. So I hear from Scithers via Meschkow from Pierce.'

Needless to say I have written both Jim and John for confirmation and anything publishable they care to send along. Alter-Ego is frantic with worry, of course. He thinks it's all a plot to keep him from writing further installments of his GALAXY column.

"Don't sneer, Geis! I know you're in on it! Eaten up with jealousy, frantic that I might be preferred by the readers, you conspired with Baen and the owners of GALAXY and J.J. Pierce, and arranged the change of editors! Pierce will decide my column is 'not appropriate' for GALAXY anymore. I know how that jazz goes! You must think I'm a fool! Rule or ruin, eh, Geis? Well, let me tell you---"

Oh, go screw a pterodactyl, Alter! We'll just have to wait and see what happens.

"Easy for you to say, Geis! Do you have any idea how difficult it is to find a young, goodlooking female Pterodactyl?"

Grumble, mutter, gripe, curse.

While I have it before me I am going to publish the rest of Darrell's letter:

LETTER FROM DARRELL SCHWEITZER

Anno Yuggothi MMCCXXIII

'Well I've read the new SFR, as

I always do immediately after receiving it. Other zines pile up, but this one becomes addictive.

'The Libertarians, like genuine Communists, and other idealists, are talking about a form of government which has never been tried on this planet, and which probably would never work beyond the level of a small, carefully engineered community populated entirely by zealots who are willing to force the official theory onto reality no matter what.

'There are many examples of the kind of elimination of competition in a free market that you hypothesize. When there's no government control, big companies take the opportunity to rub out little ones. This was commonplace in the early part of this century in the communications media. More powerful radio stations simply blew the smaller ones off the air by applying (and wasting) more juice than anybody else had. The result was mostly static. Then the FCC took over and assigned frequencies and times, and it got a lot more orderly. Also, in the very early days of the movie industry, the Edison people wanted to monopolize the motion picture. They hired thugs to destroy the equipment of the competition, rough up people, etc.

(The movie "Nickelodean" is about this period.) In those days, say, about 1910, the center of the movie business was New York. Ever wonder why it became Hollywood? Because the small companies had to move to California to stay out of the reach of the Edison company thugs. That's as close to a completely unrestricted market as has ever existed, and you can see how everyone behaved.

'On the evolution matter: There are examples of evolution anyone can see, which are not particularly esoteric. It is not a matter faith. Did you ever collect butterflies as a kid, Dick? If so, and if you ever understood what you were doing, these two will be familiar:

'(1) Industrial melanism in moths (geometrids) which rest by day on the trunks of trees. They rest flat, with wings outspread, and escape predators (mostly birds, but a wasp here and there) through camouflage. Virtually all of these moths evolved to look like pieces of lichen, with wing patterns of a basic light grey or white with wavy lines, spots and patches of darker grey up to almost black. Resting on a piece of lichen, they look like part of it.

'But air pollution, of the same sort that makes the statues in Venice crumble, killed off most of the lichen. This has happened in the

8-7-77 Two items struck me to the quick yesterday: A note from Karl

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RICHARD E. GEIS, EDITOR & PUBLISHER

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past 30 years or so. As a result, the moths described above became blatantly obvious on denuded tree trunks, and the birds ate them. Now, darker forms began to emerge, adapting to look like tree bark. The lighter forms didn't survive nearly as well, and now the darker forms (some of which are nearly black) are almost completely dominant. By collecting moths as a child in the early 1960s, I was able to observe in the course of only a few years, a complete reversal in the population, from dark forms very rare and light forms common, to light forms almost extinct and black forms common. I can think of at least three species in which this has happened, all quite recently. (I keep in touch--my brother is an etiologist at Yale.)

¹(2) Mimicry in butterflies. The common monarch butterfly feeds on milkweed. (The larva does. The adult sucks nectar from flowers like any normal, well-adjusted butterfly.) Both the larva and the adult are poisonous to birds, but not so much so as to kill the unlucky bird that eats one. The bird gets sick, and is "educated" not to eat green and multi-colored striped caterpillars or reddish-orange and black butterflies. (If the bird died, this device wouldn't work. They'd never learn better, just drop off.) Anyway, by this means the critter protects itself against predators.

²There's something called a Viceroy butterfly, which is not poisonous, but which looks like a Monarch butterfly in both adult and larval stages. Birds don't eat them much either. They're less common than the Monarch, so more likely than not the bird will get poisoned.

³There are also moths that look like wasps, and flies that look like bees or wasps. I had a startling encounter with a fly in the backyard today. It was a species I'd never seen before, almost an inch long, with a huge yellow body. It looked remarkably like the dreaded European hornet until it sat still for an instant and I could see it wasn't.

⁴This is clearly a case of adaptation, as described in evolutionary theory. A mutant strain that didn't look like the thing being mimicked wouldn't survive.

⁵But that's not conclusive evidence of actual evolution, from one form to another, but this is: My brother showed me a set of African butterflies, which have been carefully studied, bred in captivity, etc. to tell what's what. Species A, like the Monarch, is poisonous to birds. It is brightly colored (as opposed to edible butterflies, which

are often camouflaged), blackish blue with large white spots. Species B, which lives in an entirely different territory, not overlapping with Species A, is red and brown. It is also poisonous. Species C is yellow and white. Its range does not overlap with either A or B. It too is poisonous. Species D is not poisonous. Its range covers all the ranges of Species A, B, and C. And here's the cruncher: those specimens taken in the range of Species A are blue with white spots, a pretty good imitation of A. Those found in the range of B look like B. Those in the range of C look like C.

⁶A more obvious example, which has nothing to do with butterflies: You'll notice that mowing your lawn regularly won't get rid of the dandelions. Now the average dandelion stalk is about 6 inches, with the flower at that height. This has obvious advantages in a wild field, where everything is competing for sunlight and the attention of bees and butterflies which pollinate the flowers. If you cut your lawn regularly you should get all the six-inch



flowers before they go to seed. You would think this would wipe out the dandelions. Nope. Among the tall ones there are some short ones, with flowers an inch or less above the ground. On a cut lawn these will take over, because they are low enough to escape the lawnmower blade. If all dandelions grew on lawns, no doubt the short ones would take over completely, and the species would consist of nothing else. The favored traits survive better than the not-favored ones.

⁷You'll recall that Darwin formed his theory of evolution after taking a trip around the world and observing various flora and fauna. It wasn't faith at all. It's not even a very complicated concept. Even the layman can understand it, if he's willing to

⁸I'm still not utterly sure what you mean by "seemingly archaicism" in "The Lady of the Fountain." As far as I can tell the thing is in modern English, only with an absence of anachronisms like out of period references and 20th century slang.

⁹But thanks for the review of VOID anyway. By the way, the next 3 issues will be published as a single anthology, rather than an AN-ALOG Annual. This will contain only Australian writers, so I'm not in it. The next regular issue will be #9, out about Christmas. This will presumably have something of mine. I seem to be slated for every issue for the next two years or so. There are five stories of mine in the backlog.

¹⁰VORTEX is sending a form around to contributors saying they've suspended just short of the fifth issue for "reorganization" and a format change. Allegedly the magazine will continue, and all material will remain scheduled as before. I'm supposed to be in #8.

¹¹ASIMOV'S has recently bought stories from Richard Wilson and John Brunner, and an article on teaching SF from Jack Williamson. Things are definitely looking up. Issue #5 should be very good, with the short stuff (I'm not sure what--maybe Duntemann, Tuttle, Aldiss etc.) sandwiched between a deCamp novella and a longish Varley novelette. Illustrated covers begin with #4. The first is by Kelly Freas, and Dr. A's smiling visage is tucked away in the middle of the 'O' in the title.

8-11-77 Jerry Pournelle, in a letter received yesterday, confirms that J.J. Pierce is the new editor at GALAXY. Other sections of his letter will be published following some social/cultural commentary by me.

¹²Within fifteen years, artificial membranes that can duplicate the photosynthetic processes of green plants should be on the drawing boards, and could be a major source of energy, says chemist Melvin Calvin in the June CHEMTECH. Calvin is a Nobel Prize winner. This artificial membrane would break down water into hydrogen and oxygen.

Such man-made photosynthesis devices would use sunlight at a 75% efficiency.

In the meanwhile, Calvin says, some petroleum derivatives, such as ethylene (a raw material for many industrial chemicals), should soon be able to be produced economically from alcohol fermented from sugar cane. Also, Calvin calls certain plants related to rubber trees "gasoline trees," claiming that they could be used for "harvesting economic amounts of crude-oil-like hydrocarbons from land...which today cannot be easily used for food or fiber production."

Better living through chemistry. And as the price of oil and gas rises ever higher, these alternate sources of energy will become ever more useful. Of course, the big energy corporations will propagandize (perhaps) that such methods aren't useful for mass-production processes and aren't really economical.

But...ah, what if they ARE economical for a small farm? What if Sears offered a small home/farm gasoline still and an adapter for current gasoline engines so that the fermented "crude" could be used in the family Belchfire six?

What if a small greenhouse could with care produce enough sugar plants to fuel the still and yield as much as ten gallons of "gas" per week? Per month?

I still think personal and national salvation lies in millions of nearly self-sufficient households. But I recognize my beliefs may be a character/personality inspired bias.

We saw THE EXORCIST, Part II, "The Heretic" last night. We missed the opening credits, but as we entered the dark theater I caught the name John Boorman in big red letters on the screen, and presume he either directed or produced the film.

Whatever, he has fathered another interesting failure. I think his last was ZARD02.

Richard Burton, fighting to stay sober, hair dyed, made-up to look presentable---a corpse with a great voice---was the heretic (so-called, I guess) sent to investigate the exorcism and death of the priest who helped fight the demon who, in THE EXORCIST, inhabited the body/mind of lovely young Regan (Linda Blair, who is even more of a sex child now, only older, and on the verge of plumpness). The demon is apparently still lurking in her mind, and is named Mizuzu (phonetically speaking).

The story lacks coherency and the movie depends on shock and some incredible mental telepathy and psi powers.

There are some unexplained apparent hallucinations...the line between reality and dream is fuzzed.

The movie becomes grotesque and

ludicrous after a while, with locusts and the Titanic Battles Between Good and Evil.

All this tomfoolery degrades the elements of Church, Faith, God and Good to cheapo gimmicks which tend to become as unbelievable as Mizuzu and his locusts and Satan and all that jazz.

The shock effects---the burnings, the impalement, the rupturing and devastation of the house in Washington, D.C.---were well done. The acting is good. But, oh, what a waste.

The SATURDAY EVENING POST, convinced I still publish THE ALIEN CRITIC and am wealthy, sent along their rate card for advertising. They claim a base of 450,000 circulation, with a total readership of 2,808,000. For a four-color full page ad (680 line page--8-3/4 x 11-1/4) they ask \$7,118. Two-color full-page ads cost \$5,931, and a mere black and white full-page will run you \$4,745.

Let me see now...if I give up ice cream and cut out movies....

LETTER FROM JERRY POURNELLE

4 August, 1977

'Enjoyed #22, as usual, but somehow there was less in it for me than usual. Probably my state of mind. Novel not going well (not going quickly. Hardly going.) and much work staring me in the face. So busy I think I hadn't read a single book reviewed in #22, a record for me.

'I do think you ought to lay off S.F.W.A. As you said somewhere, it's for the members to decide. I completely agree, it's hardly worth the money to you; the dues are low for a professional organization (Nat. Assoc. of Science Writers went up to \$37.50 this year, and others are about that) but what's the point of a professional association to anyone other than a practicing member of the profession; which you don't intend to be.'

Not quite true: I am a practicing sf writer now, with the publication of "One Immortal Man," and probably other stories/novels in the future. The usefulness of S.F.W.A. to a sf professional is another matter.

'You don't need representation or a grievance committee or advice or even market reports, gossip about what royalty rates you can coax out of whom, who's got how much from what publisher and how he might have got more, let's try it this way next time....all the sort of thing use-

ful to those who write this crap or very much want to, and hardly worth a damn to you. But because it isn't to you is not much of a reason to blackguard the outfit, is it?'

I'll be happy, eager to rejoin S.F.W.A., Jerry, if you can show me a BULLETIN or a FORUM where such insider gossip is in print! All that info is word-of-mouth between sf writers, and is NOT for the relative public prints of S.F.W.A. publications. And I get it via phone calls and letters. And there's a lot more of it unavailable to me because I don't go to conventions and S.F.W.A. banquets where the writers



gossip and brag and fart and drink.

My point all along has been that the really vital, valuable information is forbidden to 75% of the S.F.W.A. membership because they don't live in L.A. or New York, or because they are not sociable. The one time a frank, honest, gossip-type discussion (on agents) was published in S.F.W.A. for the benefit of non-attending S.F.W.A. members, all hell broke loose and strict censorship was imposed. So much for THAT advantage to S.F.W.A. membership for the sf writer who lives outside the big sf centers.

As for the Grievance Committee: the committee will be made up of sf professionals, won't it? So Dick Geis is getting screwed by a publisher who puts out a lot of sf in a year. And maybe has bought from the members of the Grievance Committee. How far will the Committee go in offending the publisher, given that conflict of interest? Maybe the publisher or editor will get pissed off at the S.F.W.A. Grievance Committee and decide not to buy any more from him/them? This is a thought that will occur to that sf pro. Under the current setup, how valuable is that Grievance Committee to me...really?

Market Reports? With the FORUM always late the reports carried are often/mostly out of date. But back to your letter.

'Back when I was president I raised the dues, hired an executive secretary, and did a lot of those Awful Things which you've denounced ever since. The vote for those propositions was overwhelming, despite opposition from you and some others; and I think S.F.W.A. has done pretty well by its members ever since. Hardly the earth. I could survive without it. But one reason I can is that it exists/existed. As to our affair re AMAZING and FANTASTIC you must know the previous history of it all. Hell, Mr. Cohen made an agreement to pay some of our people, at a low monthly rate with no interest, made a few payments, and stopped sending the money. Add to that some pretty incredible stories about delays in reporting, "payment on demand" publication" according to Schweitzer (in a favorable market report) and like that, and what were we to do?'

Nothing. Present the facts of the situation as to selling to Ultimate, and let the individual member decide himself if he wants to do business with that publisher. But as with all "leaders" and authoritarians, as with all those who are tempted by what they conceive as power, and superiority, you and the officers of S.F.W.A. decided on some kind of a boycott...and later other officers(perhaps angered that neither the membership nor Ultimate would tremble and obey) decided to bar Ultimate-published stories from consideration for the Nebula awards. What is this but a history of ineffectuality? Now, I understand, the story ban has been dropped. Did too many members complain?

'Incidentally, I don't concede that other magazines have a record equal to Ultimate's for problems, but even if they did, so what? It took a number of years before we did ANYTHING about Ultimate; are not the others entitled to the same consideration?'

Who are you supposed to be serving, your members or the publishers? You're damned if you do and damned if you don't, which is an elected figure's reward for seeking office in the first place, and for wanting to Do Good, in the second place.

'Your monologs sound as if you get the publications of the US Labor Party, which has invited me to a reception tomorrow night for a couple of the national officers. That outfit is rather strange: I tend to agree with most of their policies, and a lot of their analysis, until they get to conspiracies and the Evil Rockefeller, and like that; and what they ascribe to con-

spiracy is to me just a mixture of self-interest and stupidity.'

Umm. I'm modifying my views on the Rockefellers and the super-rich. I'm convinced there is a working "conspiracy" (loaded word)... a strong self-interest among the top power loci of the financial world to cooperate in certain areas, and also a strong rivalry---one group headed by the Rockefellers---for control of this country and this geo-political area, and for the world.

But. Even with the best brains money can buy, even with vast financial leverage, they are having one hell of a time coping, and even they don't understand or control all the factors that move the social-cultural-economic worlds.

The tendency is to imagine the



owners of the world have perfect, fine-tuned control of their properties and employees. No way. Look how Nixon perished. And Jimmy Carter may hold some unpleasant surprises for his mortgage holders, too.

Thanks for writing.

Just got a call from J. J. Pierce and he is indeed the new editor of GALAXY, and he does want Alter-Ego to continue the column. Alter says: "A man of good taste and exquisite editorial judgement, Geis." Somehow, I knew you'd say that, Alter.

J.J. informed me that the August issue is now out, and subscription copies will be going out very soon. He is no longer the fire-eating critic he was during the SECOND FOUNDATION days. He wants to work smoothly and amicably with everyone. He will write an occasional editorial.

Poo. I wanted him to bring a

strong, opinionated new voice to science fiction. A New slant, a new--

"Short editorial career, eh, Geis?"

No, no, Alter. But J.W. Campbell, Jr. had strong opinions and turned ASTOUNDING into a winner.

"Give J.J. a year, Geis. I have a sneaking hunch he will surprise you, and others."

He said he is sending a letter for publication which will give more detail on the changeover and any editorial changes he plans.

LETTER FROM ROBERT BLOCH

Aug. 3, 1977

'SFR #22 is a super issue and confutes the nerds who say sf readers are only interested in mindless juvenalia. There's more evidence of thought in these pages, more genuine intellectual content and concern, than one finds in NEW YORK MAGAZINE, THE SATURDAY REVIEW, BOOKS AND BOOKMEN, or even HUSTLER. Speaking of which, I enjoyed Sam Merwin's piece on S-F And S-X, though I must correct his conclusions. There actually was quite a lot of sex-activity in sf during the Thirties and Forties, Sam -- it's just that we never told you about it. As for MZB, her article admirably demonstrates the intellectual qualities I mentioned; it also demonstrates a candor and insight seldom found in the self-serving effusions of so-called "mainstream" writers. Ted Tubbs' letter was of particular interest; I sadly agree with his conclusions and even more sadly agree with your brief comment on them. And the cover illo is great: I dig the symbolism. SF in peril, with Harlan coming to the rescue.'

Umm, no, that wasn't the symbolism I had in mind. What I wanted was a lot of newsstand browsers to be attracted by the nude and hooked by the cartoons and scraps of commentary and Names inside. I'm a naked capitalist.

LETTER FROM RICK BEBAN

8 Aug., 1977

'Don't know why you should malign the intelligence of dolphins when it's porpoises who get caught in tuna nets (SFR 22, page 25). However, for the good news on that score, I refer you to Senator Alan Cranston's office (D-Cal) which forwards the news that "Fisherman report that the porpoises have been far less cooperative this year" and are avoiding tuna schools when boats come near. Not only that, but they have apparently devised a method for escaping the nets if caught, which involves remaining calm (even

to the point of busying themselves with other tasks, i.e. procreation) until the fishermen, just before hauling in the tuna, dip the edge of the net. The porpoises then swim out.

'Less smart remarks about our smarter cousins.'

I will manfully resist any comments about sex resulting in a higher purpose in life....

8-12-77 I was forced by sheer agony to go to the dentist today. Lower right molar. Big rotten hole.

X-ray. Says, "That's a real deep one!"

Says, "That'll involve either root canal work and a crown, or extraction."

Says "Four hundred dollars for the root canal and crown, or twelve dollars for the extraction."

Says I: "Pull the sonofabitch!"

Berkley sent along a remarkable calendar with 13 full-color 14" x 10" John Schoenherr paintings accompanying the months (one is the cover--a terrifying open-mouthed view of a gigantic sandworm) themed on Frank Herbert's DUNE. The paintings are titled: "Alone on Arrakis," "Dawn at the Palace of Arrakeen," "Baron Vladimir Harkonnen," "The Sardaukar Warriors," "Ceremony at the Tomb of the Skull," "Desert Nightmare," "The Flight Through the Shield Wall," "Sietch Tabr," "Paul Muad'Dib Calling His First Sandworm," "Stilgar and his Men," "Paul Administers the Oath of the Fedaykin," "The Defeat of the Sardaukar."

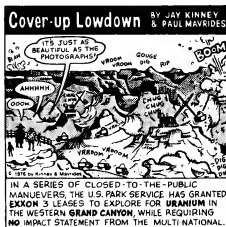
LETTER FROM BILL GIBSON

August 8, 1977

'I notice that my initial look through a new issue of SFR now follows a distinct pattern. After a glance at the table of contents, I flip through the magazine until I hit one of those depressing extrapolations of yours, and then, to distract myself from the imminent collapse of All We Hold Dear, I turn to whatever promises to be the most interesting article. Finished with that, I start flipping through again --this second browse usually lasting until I run across Darrell Schweitzer doing something pedestrian to a book he hasn't understood. In order to put that well out of my mind, I turn back to pop futurologist Geis projecting the horrors of a world without pennies or whatever. (What they'll do, by the way, probably will be to mind them in less and less expensive alloys; only very

wealthy countries still mind pennies --or the local equivalent--in copper. See Italy, Greece, Turkey, etc.)

'I haven't seen the SCIENCE FICTION STUDIES collection Schweitzer reviews in SFR 22, but nothing I've read of his so far has indicated much in the way of an ability to distinguish between Academicism and a vocabulary of advanced critical ideas. Thing that irritates me most in Schweitzer's criticism, considered as a body of work, isn't the narrowness of his literary viewpoint--he's less parochial than del Rey, but not by much--but his "I have the credentials" tone. Confronted with works drawn--successfully or not--from traditions he doesn't understand, he basically relies on buzz-words like "self-indulgent escapism" and "artistic rigor mortis". And that's about it; that pretty



well seems to be as far as the man is able to go, critically, when he finds himself off his home turf and confronted with anything at all that smacks of the century's various post-realist, post-symbolist 'avant-gardes'. There are credentials and then there are credentials; Schweitzer has a diploma, but no credentials. The really appalling thing is that there are people who have more diplomas than Darrell Schweitzer and know even less; it's enough to make you suspect the imminent collapse of All We Hold Dear.'

Okay, Darrell, go get him! Go for the throat! Buzz him to death!

8-13-77 You want Doom? I'll give you Doom. We here in Portland have had about three weeks of above 90° heat, and yesterday it was 105°, a new record for the day and the month.

All across the nation the heat and the rainfalls have been setting records. First last winter's cold, now the heat.

Something is screwing up the weather patterns....

Could it be the first clear consequence of pouring more and more ever more carbon dioxide and particulate pollutants into the atmosphere for 10 these many decades of industrialization? Yeah...could be. And if true, this winter will be as "interesting" as last.

We may discover new areas of fertility, and new areas of desert, with resulting social maladjustment and profit/loss.

Well, as Mother Nature might say, "I never promised you a rose garden."

John Brunner sent a clip from the 31 July London TIMES titled, "Medicine Comes Back to Earth."

Briefly, medical scientists are discovering that all kinds of advantageous drugs are available in plants and that old time 'nature remedies' weren't based on superstition and wish and fear after all. Herbs to the rescue. Hubris to the back of the bus.

For instance:

Dr. Stuart cites a few examples of healing plants that have come recently to light. "During a recent visit to Mexico I was given a half-inch long root section of a plant used by the natives as a local anesthetic. I chewed it and in next to no time the inside of my mouth was anaesthetised. Preliminary tests suggest that it is more powerful than lignocaine, commonly used by dentists.

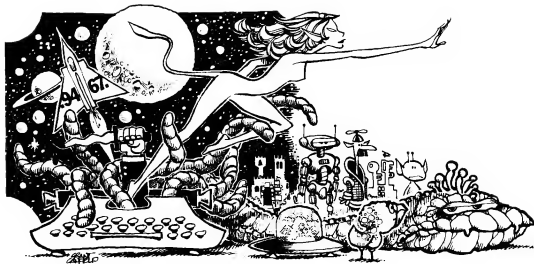
"And did you know that the carefully selected 'chewing sticks' used by Africans to clean their teeth show strong anti-bacterial activity, much more than that of twigs from other trees? Or that garlic oil, by one standard test, is 24 times as effective in killing typhoid bacilli than carbolic acid?"

As John comments in on the back of the article: 'Progress!' And let us hope that one day a counter-culture medical researcher will gather all this natural medicine info into a book, and a company will sell these plants, and we can all grow our own medicines [provided the A.M.A. and the drug companies don't pressure congress to make all this information illegal.]

ALIEN THOUGHTS CONTINUED ON P. 16

RICHARD (WATERSHIP DOWN) ADAMS ANNOUNCES HE IS GOING TO WRITE THE FIRST WHOLLY SUCCESSFUL EROTIC NOVEL.

--Ian Covell



THE SILVERBERG THAT WAS

BY ROBERT SILVERBERG

THE INTRODUCTIONS BY ROBERT SILVERBERG TO THE ACE REPRINT EDITIONS OF EARLY SILVERBERG NOVELS.

THE SEED OF EARTH, Ace 75875, \$1.50
 RECALLED TO LIFE, Ace 71085, \$1.75
 COLLISION COURSE, Ace 11510, \$1.50
 STEPSONS OF TERRA, Ace 78600, \$1.50
 THE SILENT INVADERS, Ace 76391, \$1.50
 NEXT STOP THE STARS, Ace 57420, \$1.50

THE SEED OF EARTH

Introduction

The science fiction world of the late 1950's was an odd place, a kind of fallen empire that had collapsed into eerie provincial decay. There had been a big publishing boom in s-f from about 1949 to 1953, with dozens of new magazines founded, the first rush of paperback science fiction, and even some activity on the part of large hardcover houses like Doubleday and Simon & Schuster. Then most of it fell apart. The magazines died in droves, because there simply weren't enough readers to go around. (In 1953 alone there were 39 s-f magazines, which was about 35 too many.) The paperback houses, having madly overextended themselves in their first hectic period of expansion, sent hundreds of millions of unsold books to the pulping machines and cut back drastically. And the hardcover people who had dabbled in science fiction found that sales were trifling: Doubleday stayed in the business, but nearly all the others dropped out.

Against this background of retreat and retrenchment I began my career as a professional writer, circa 1955. I would much rather have been starting out during the golden age of 1949-53, when new writ-

ters were desperately needed to fill all those blank pages, and spectacular careers were launched overnight by such beginners as Philip K. Dick, Robert Sheckley, and Algis Budrys. But I was too late for the gravy train, and I had to make do in the very much reduced circumstances of the next era.

Strange things went on during those pinched, dark years, and the publishing history of the book you are now holding provides a revealing look at how young writers coped with the situation that existed then.

THE SEED OF EARTH began as a short story, some 9000 words long, called "The Winds of Siros." I wrote it in March of 1957 for a magazine called VENTURE, published by the same house that published FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION and edited by Robert P. Mills. VENTURE, which had come into existence late in 1956, was an interesting project that deserved a better fate than it met. Its aim was to publish strong, hard stories, intense and robust; unlike all the rest of the science fiction magazines of the time, it was unafraid of the erotic forces, indeed

wanted its writers to acknowledge did other things beside pilot space-ships and invent time machines. And yet it was not just a magazine of sexy slam-bang pulp adventure fiction. It demanded literacy of its contributors, grace of style, intelligence of story construction. Since it was free of the taboos against sex and forthright characterization that afflicted its competitors, many writers who felt constricted by the timidity of the other magazines gladly offered outstanding work to VENTURE for a very modest fee. During its lifetime of only ten issues it ran such splendid fare as Theodore Sturgeon's "Affair With a Green Monkey" and "The Comedian's Children," C.M. Kornbluth's "Two Dooms," Walter Miller's "Vengeance for Nikolai," Algis Budrys' "The Edge of the Sea."

VENTURE was very much to my taste, for even as a fledgling writer I was concerned with such things as narrative intensity and emotional depth. In "The Winds of Siros" I did a story that combined a standard s-f theme---the struggles of a bunch of human colonists against hostile and bewildering alien beings---with something that was a bit new to the field, a study of human psy-

chosexual interactions under circumstances of stress. The original story began at a point in what is now Chapter Eleven of the novel THE SEED OF EARTH, and took place entirely in the cave where the four captive humans are penned. I liked the story and so did editor Bob Mills, who used it in VENTURE's fifth issue.

And then I set out to make a novel out of it.

By the summer of 1958, when I began seriously thinking of expanding my short story to book length, I had already written eight or nine novels, though I was still in my early twenties. Nearly all of those books had been Ace Double Novels--a publishing curiosity in which two novels were bound in one cover, upside down relative to one another, so that whichever way you turned the book you were at the front of somebody's story. Donald A. Wollheim, the progenitor of the Ace Double Novel, had seen some promise in me and had encouraged me to the extent of a book contract every three or four months all through 1957 and 1958. But I was growing restless with Ace. I was tired of having my books published with someone else's book tacked to them. And Ace, valuable market though it was for a hungry young writer, offered little prestige compared to Doubleday, or to Ballantine, the only other paperback house going science fiction at the time. Doubleday and Ballantine published books by Asimov, Heinlein, Sturgeon, Bradbury, Clarke. Ace generally published books by--well, kids like Silverberg, Phil Dick, Alan Nourse. Ace also published books by Asimov, van Vogt, Simak, de Camp, and others of that rank, but nevertheless there was something vaguely minor-league about the whole operation then. I wanted to get into the big leagues.

I remember taking a long walk before dinner through upper Manhattan one amazingly humid evening in July or August, 1958, wrestling with the unfocused ambitions and yearnings that were troubling me; and by the time I returned home from that restless stroll I knew what I would do. I would turn "The Winds of Siros" into a novel and sell it to Doubleday. Although when dealing with Don Wollheim at Ace it had been sufficient to turn in three chapters and an outline in order to get the next contract, I would take the risk of writing the entire novel before I showed it to any publisher. I felt that the big-time publishers would scorn to deal with the likes of me on the basis of a portion and outline.

(About this time, I wrote a short story entirely unrelated to

"The Winds of Siros" called "Journey's End," and sold it to another of the short-lived magazines of the day, SUPER-SCIENCE FICTION. When it came out in the April 1958 issue, the editor had changed its title to "The Seed of Earth." I liked the new title so much that I appropriated it for my expansion of "The Winds of Siros.")

I wrote THE SEED OF EARTH in October, 1958. It differed from my previous novels in its greater concentration on the exploration of character. You may not notice all the searching, probing details of character revelation that I thought I was putting into the book, because there really aren't a lot of those things in it, but I thought there were, and certainly my characters were a lot more real than any I had created before. I took the book downtown to my agent, told him it was going to be my breakthrough novel, and instructed him to sell it to Doubleday.

Doubleday turned it down.

That hurt. But they were publishing only one book a month of science fiction at Doubleday, and I decided they were just too busy doing Heinlein and Asimov to have room on the list for me. Well, there was always Ballantine. This time, instead of relying on my agent, I took the manuscript to Ballantine myself. I had a long and amiable chat with Betty Ballantine, told her all about my ambitions and yearnings, and gave her the book.

She turned it down, too.

I still thought it was a pretty good book--but obviously the big-league publishing companies were simply so preoccupied with the outputs of their big-league writers that I wasn't going to break into that charmed circle. Okay, I resigned myself to seeing THE SEED OF EARTH appear as one more Ace Double Novel.

But just then one of the outstanding s-f magazines, GALAXY, inaugurated a companion line of paperback novels that was designed to follow the old VENTURE policy: strong s-f adventure with a generous component of sex.

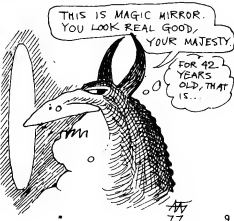
THE SEED OF EARTH fit their needs exactly, and so my agent let them have the book. The advance was the same as Ace would have paid--\$1,000---but the big difference, to me, was that GALAXY's edition wouldn't be a double novel. I'd have a whole paperback all to myself. I had never had that privilege.

I collected a down payment of \$500. In February, 1960, and waited

for the other half, which was due on publication. And waited and waited, and never got it, because the GALAXY paperback series sputtered to a halt and terminated without ever publishing my book. Eventually GALAXY, with my permission, recouped its \$500 investment by running THE SEED OF EARTH in the issue for June, 1962.

There are a lot of oddities about that. For one thing, stories in GALAXY are supposed to be previously unpublished, but a good chunk of THE SEED OF EARTH had been in VENTURE only five years before. For another, there had already been one "Seed of Earth" by Robert Silverberg in a science fiction magazine, the unrelated story in SUPER-SCIENCE; this one confused all the indexers. And, too, when GALAXY had bought the novel for its paperback series I had been asked to add a few graphic sex scenes to the original manuscript. This I did; but when the magazine ran the story, it had to be cut for reasons of space from 50,000 words to 35,000. The 15,000 words that went out did not include the inserts I had been asked to supply, which meant that GALAXY had first asked me to expand and then drastically to cut the same story, and had ended up publishing an abridged but unexpurgated version!

Amid such confusions did my novel finally see print--some of it, anyway. With GALAXY's ownership of the book discharged through the magazine release, I was again free to seek a book publisher, and shortly my agent found one: Ace. Don Wollheim, who probably would have bought the book willingly enough in 1958, gathered it in finally, after all these adventures, late in 1961, and in the summer of 1962 it reached the newsstands. Yes, as part of an Ace Double Book, but there was one consolation for me: the flip side of the volume was also a Silverberg title, a story collection called NEXT STOP THE STARS. At least I didn't have to complain that some other guy's book was riding with mine.



And here, fifteen years later, is THE SEED OF EARTH again, at last published in solitary splendor. I realize now that it's not the profound mixture of adventure and human insight that I thought it was in 1958, but I still think it's an okay book. And it's interesting to see how many of my later literary themes and obsessions turn up in it---notably the aliens who place human beings in a condition of stress for hidden purposes of their own, which shows up again in THORNS, MAN IN THE MAZE, and a good many other works of mine. I enjoyed reading it again and I'm not overly embarrassed at loosing this very early novel of mine on the newsstands. I hope you'll find pleasure in it not merely as an historical artifact.

Oakland, California
April, 1976

RECALLED TO LIFE

Introduction

"Recalled to life" is a phrase that has long had potent meaning for me. It is the title of a chapter in A TALE OF TWO CITIES, and refers literally to the return to society of an old man long imprisoned wrongly; but to me it has a magical metaphorical power going far beyond its role in Dickens' narrative. I first read A TALE OF TWO CITIES when I was about eleven, but I had already encountered it in its Classic Comics version at the age of eight or nine, and I think---correct me if need be, O collectors of comic rarities---that the "recalled to life" phrase figured even in that adaptation. At any rate, it was planted in me early.

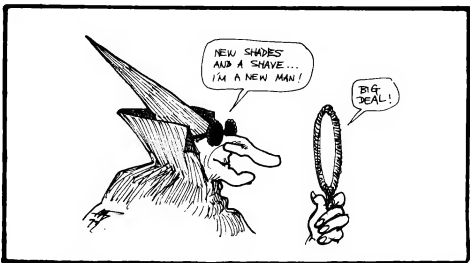
No wonder, then that it would suggest itself to me when in 1957 I set out to write a serious and straightforward novel about the conquest of death. Dickens' phrase, carrying with it in my mind a sense of being summoned back from an unknown realm, seemed the perfect title. (I was surprised, as things unfolded, to discover how many people thought I had invented it. Doesn't anybody read Dickens anymore?)

I had written seven or eight novels already. Most of them were adventure stories set in distant galaxies or remote epochs; two of them, MASTER OF LIFE AND DEATH and INVADERS FROM EARTH, did take place on the Earth of the relatively near future, but even they, though seri-

ously conceived, were full of science fiction props such as alien beings and spaceships. I intended the new book to have the texture of a mainstream novel, with nothing very extraordinary about its furniture except the one big hypothesis that would qualify it as science fiction and serve as the mainspring of the plot: What if death could be made a reversible process? I wanted to explore the social consequences of a startling invention; and I wanted to explore those consequences, not in the never-never land of some science-fiction universe, but in a world not very different in its fundamental reactions from the one we inhabit. So, although RECALLED TO LIFE is set nominally in the year 2033, it was basically the world of 1957 I was writing about, the timid, fretful, complacent, placid 1957, the first year of what we used to call the Space Age.

pleasure with it, accepted it promptly.

The vagaries of magazine publishing being what they are, RECALLED TO LIFE appeared in two installments, not three, and so much for my carefully crafted cliffhangers. The reason for the change was a shift in INFINITY's schedule from monthly to bi-monthly publication; stretching a serial out over six months was not a good idea, but happily there turned out to be a breakpoint right in the middle of my novel that was superior to the two I had built into it by design, and it split nicely into two parts, for the une and August 1958 issues of INFINITY. The readers responded with a bunch of enthusiastic letters about it, calling it a gem and a classic and a lot of other nifty exaggerations, and even the formidable critic Damon Knight dropped me a note to tell me how much he liked



In the early autumn of 1957, Larry Shaw, the editor of the new and venturesome science fiction magazine INFINITY, to which I had been contributing some of my best short stories, asked me to try a novel for him. We talked briefly about RECALLED TO LIFE, and he gave me a go-ahead (though I think he asked mildly if I would consider changing the title; maybe that's a phantom memory). The traditional format for the science-fiction magazine serial was a three-part novel, with cliffhanging breaks at the 20,000 and 35,000-word points, and that was how I constructed things---rather deftly, I thought. (I congratulated myself a lot in those days. Of course, I was only in my early twenties and selling fiction as fast as I could write it, or even faster, so there were reasons for feeling self-satisfied.) I turned the novel in at the end of 1957 and editor Shaw, expressing much

ed the first installment. (He was less enthusiastic about the second.) With that kind of reaction, I figured I could expect a Hugo nomination at the very least, if not a Pulitzer Prize.

Unfortunately, we ran into a little more trouble when we tried to find a publisher to do the book version.

I have, right here in my lower left-hand desk drawer, a file of my rejection slips. Most of them, thank God, were acquired between the ages of 16 and 19, but some date from the first five years of my professional career, and a few are even more recent than that. I treasure them all. (Even the deepest wounds heal eventually.) I've just spent half an hour picking through that file, for the first time in many years, and I find five letters concerning RECALLED TO LIFE.

The first, dated February 17,

1958, is from Simon & Schuster. (My agent and I were aiming high with this book, trying to get it out of the s-f ghetto.) "It does have certain strength," the man says, "a sense of excitement and some good detail---but this seems outweighed by the real morbidity of the subject (an impression which gathers as you read along) and cliched, overplotted scenes." Then we have a note from Ballantine Books, far more encouraging: "We didn't feel like making an offer on this particular title but we would like to see what Sliverberg (sic!) is doing next. As I understand it, RECALLED TO LIFE will be serialized in one of the science fiction magazines. If, however, it fails to hit there, could we look at it again? Our interest in the book would be stronger if it did not appear as a science-fiction serial." Promising, but the serialization of RECALLED TO LIFE was already in the works, and we never showed the book to Ballantine again. (We did let them see my next one, but they turned it down.)

Next comes Gold Medal Books, saying no in July: "A lot of us here like Robert Silverberg's RECALLED TO LIFE but we all felt that the manuscript was filled with too many moral ramifications and that it moved too slowly. Therefore, in spite of the many things which appealed to us..." A month later Mac Talley of New American Library reports that "the Silverberg novel is a good one, but we are just too committed to a number of science fiction reissues to be able to take on all but a very few new titles at this time." And on December 8, 1958, Avon Books wraps it up: "This is a fascinating story in some ways, but I will admit that it is bona fide science fiction in the sense of speculative writing about the future; however, the problem of reincarnation as dealt with here is primarily a social and religious issue, and, as such, is at the same time too limited and too controversial. The story lacks the sweep and flash of current science fiction favorites (the toying with time and space, etc.)."

Notice certain interesting resonances among these rejections. One publisher is bothered by "the real morbidity of the subject." Another is worried by "too many moral ramifications." A third finds it insufficiently flashy and "too limited and too controversial" because of its social and religious content. The book also had some flaws as fiction, of course, but these, it seems, were secondary to the rejecters. What they were telling me was: Science fiction is kinky stuff full of rayguns, rocketships and jut-jawed heroes. Don't get too morbid, kid.

This thing is too much like real fiction. It'll depress the customers.

It depressed me, for sure. I had finally written a book about which even Damon Knight could find something nice to say, and nobody wanted to publish it, on grounds of excessive morbidity and moral ramification. I suppose my next move would have been to offer the book to Ace, my regular publishers---or perhaps I did, and it got turned down there too, on the same grounds. But in 1959 or 1960 the publisher of INFINITY decided to shift from magazines to paperbacks; he started a line called Lancer Books, with Larry T. Shaw as his editor, and Shaw, once he received permission to start a science fiction line, asked me to let him publish RECALLED TO LIFE.

Most gleefully I did accept, and eventually it appeared, early in 1962, along with books by Jack Vance and Stanley G. Weinbaum, in the Lancer Science Fiction Library. These were priced at 75¢---an enormously high figure in those days, when the 50¢ paperback was still a novelty---and proudly bore the label, "LIMITED EDITION." Limited, I guess, to the number of copies the market would absorb. Which turned out to be about 50,000, after which the book was reissued in a different Lancer series at 50¢, after which it went out of print, after which---some time after---Lancer Books went out of business. And that was how I got my novel published. Jump now to the summer of 1971. I have talked Doubleday & Company---who must have rejected the book in 1958, though I find nothing on file about it---into reissuing RECALLED TO LIFE. But, as I pause to glance through this thirteen-year-old novel, I notice something about it more worrisome than mere morbidity or undue social and religious content.

It isn't written very well.

That surprised me. I had thought all those publishers were turning it down back then because I had dared to rise above the pulp magazine formulas; well, I had, but I had also done a lot of my clumsy, implausible, melodramatic stuff which had seemed okay to my boyish self but which was definitely unacceptable to me of 1971. So---as the foreword to the Doubleday edition tells you---I did something otherwise unprecedented in my career, by putting the entire novel through the typewriter and revising my young alter-ego's work. It became a better book, no doubt of that. It still has all that morbidity and socioreligious content, for which I make no apologies, and it has a few plot twists

that the sophisticated reader may find hard to swallow, but I think it deserved republication nonetheless. It might be interesting to compare it to my novella of sixteen years later, "Born With the Dead," which is virtually its sequel. They make a curious pair. Here, then, recalled to life, is RECALLED TO LIFE.

Oakland, California
June, 1976



COLLISION COURSE

Introduction

COLLISION COURSE was written in November, 1958, which would make it something like my ninth or tenth book. I was writing them at a rate of two or three a year back then, short novels done with a facility that led someone to call me an American Simenon. Would that I had been; would that the books I was writing with such speed and ease had had some of Simenon's power and insight into humanity. As it is, all I had in common with the great French master of the short novel at that time was prolificity. He could write a novel in ten days or so of sustained effort, and so could I. But he was a wise old bird, and I was a kid, and by the time I got to the age where my knowledge of human beings was worth turning into fiction, I had lost the knack of writing swiftly. Simenon never did.

At any rate, COLLISION COURSE occupied me for two or three busy weeks in the autumn of 1958. Despite the seeming haste with which it was written, I actually gave it what was for me at that time unusual care in composition, for I had relatively high ambitions for it. I intended it as a two-part serial in John W. Campbell's famed magazine, ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION. Exactly why I set out to write a two-parter is something I no longer know, but it may have had something to do with the state of Campbell's inventory that season. I was writing short stories regularly for him then, and frequently visiting his office. Probably I told him I had a novel in mind, and he, thinking of all the serials he had awaiting publication, said something like, "Keep it short."

So I did. The novels I had written up to that point were 55,000 to 60,000 words long---the standard paperback length of the era, and also the standard length for a three-

part magazine serial. I carefully constructed each of them with two interior cliffhangers, for the convenience of my editors; but the only one of those novels that actually did become a three-part serial was THE DAWNING LIGHT, which Randall Garrett and I wrote for Campbell in 1956. Another, RECALLED TO LIFE, conceived in three parts, was published in two long installments by INFINITY SCIENCE FICTION, and the others, I think, failed to find magazine publication at all.

But COLLISION COURSE was designed for two-part serialization. I planned it for 40,000 words---it came out something like 43,000---and I designed a major climax for the end of the eighth out of my sixteen chapters, a nice portentous curtain-line for Part One:

"The Earthmen filed out of the tent, into the alien darkness, into the suddenly hostile wind."

Thus did the book split neatly in half. Because the intended purchaser was John Campbell, I eschewed melodrama and swordplay, and attempted to write an adult story about adults, since that was the kind of fiction Campbell preferred. Unfortunately, my idea of adult fiction turned out to be not quite the same as John's. I believed then, and believe now, that it's a good idea to examine your motives, to ask why actions are appropriate. My characters tend to be introspective, tend constantly to question themselves, tend

sometimes to decide that their values need revision. Campbell didn't exactly disagree with these notions, but John was an outrageous Homo sapiens-chauvinist. He believed that human beings were better than anybody, and that when we got around to going to the stars we would swiftly and automatically demonstrate our superiority over any alien races that happened to hang out there. For John, a story about Earthmen who have doubts, who admit the possibility that grabbing half the galaxy on behalf of imperialist Earth might not be a good idea, and who ultimately run into superior opponents, was not a story that he was going to publish, because it advocated points of view that were just downright wrong. I didn't realize this. I knew it in an intellectual way, because I had been reading his magazine for a long time and was aware that the Earthmen always won, but I hadn't quite digested the fact that he was unwilling to consider alternate possibilities.

So I put together a serious, earnest, questioning two-part novel and delivered it to Campbell at Thanksgiving time. Looking at it now, I don't find much that's objectionable about it, except for the habit of having my characters talk to themselves in italic type that I later came to find crude. It's a smoothly crafted, reasonably competent short novel of stellar empires in opposition. But the Earthmen don't emerge as the race that will rule the Sevagram, and John Campbell, giving me the usual quick reading that his inner circle of regular writers always got, told me a week later that he was turning the book down. Nicely written, he said, but it has a fundamental philosophical error. When Homo sapiens encounter other intelligent species, this isn't the way things are going to happen.

I knew better than to say, "But this is fiction, John. I'm just making up a story. I'm not drafting a blueprint for the future." To Campbell, in the latter days of his editorship, fiction's prime use was a didactic one. Stories were supposed to entertain, yes, but they also had to demonstrate certain essential correct point about the nature of the universe. What was correct for me---and COLLISION COURSE, advocating a certain humility, was correct for me---obviously wasn't correct for Campbell. It was his magazine, after all. I took my story somewhere else.

I took it over to Paul Fairman, who was editing AMAZING STORIES for the big publishing house of Ziff-Davis. A lot of my Campbell rejects

wound up in AMAZING. It was a logical place to offer this one, for AMAZING at that time had a policy of running short novels, 30,000 to 40,000 in length, complete in one issue. Fairman bought COLLISION COURSE for his July, 1959 issue, and do much for my carefully constructed two-part serial.

Placing book rights was just as easily accomplished. I would have liked to see the book picked up by some major house like Doubleday, but I was still too obscure a writer to break into that level of publishing. We ended up placing COLLISION COURSE with a small, very small, now forgotten company in New York that was publishing a monthly s-f novel. They paid me all of \$350. for the hardcover rights, and published it early in 1961. Later that year paperback reprint rights were purchased by Ace Books, and it duly appeared in the Ace Double Novel series in one binding with Leigh Brackett's novel THE NEMESIS FROM TERRA. (I had quite forgotten, until I looked five minutes ago, that I had once been back-to-back with Leigh Brackett. I might have done worse.) Eventually there were German and Italian editions, and some years later a publisher in Spain put it out, but so far as I know the book has been totally out of print in the known galaxy for nine or ten years. I wish I had not written all that italicized introspection into it, but otherwise I have no serious quarrel with the book that that very young man wrote in the autumn of 1958.

Oakland, California
April, 1976



THIS DEVICE WILL LOCATE
AN HONEST MAN... AND THEN
CORRUPT HIM!



STEPSONS OF TERRA

Introduction

Unless I have lost count, which is entirely possible, STEPSONS OF TERRA was my sixth novel---which makes it a very early work even among my early work, because in the far-off days of the 1950's I was writing a novel every few months, and I had a couple of dozen of things on my record before I sprouted my first gray hair.

Beyond any doubt my first book was the juvenile novel, REVOLT ON ALPHA C, which I wrote in 1954 when I was still practically a juvenile myself. Then came another juvenile, STARMAN'S QUEST, in 1956, and later

that year my first ostensibly adult novel, *THE THIRTEENTH IMMORTAL*, and in early 1957 the quite respectable novel *MASTER OF LIFE AND DEATH*--which probably ought to be given another turn in print one of these days. A few months later I wrote *INVADERS FROM EARTH*, another early book that causes me no embarrassment today. That's five. And so *STEPSONS OF TERRA*, written in October of 1957, would be the sixth. Of course, there were also the two "Robert Randall" collaborations with Randal Garrett, *THE SHROUDED PLANET* and *THE DAWNING OF LIGHT*, in 1955 and 1956, but those weren't solo jobs. And there were a couple of items like the pseudonymous *LEST WE FORGET THEE, O EARTH* (1957) and *INVISIBLE BARRIERS* (1957) that were patched together out of previously published magazine pieces, but they weren't originally conceived as full-length novels, and I don't feel like counting them, and I hope you'll be willing to ignore them too. So the book you are now holding is my sixth novel, give or take a few exceptions and footnotes.

It was written at the behest of Larry T. Shaw, a bespectacled and pipesmoking gentleman who edited a pair of magazines called *INFINITY* and *SCIENCE FICTION ADVENTURES*. Shaw, an old-time s-f fan, might have had a splendid career as an editor if he had ever found a major publisher to back him, for his taste was superb and he had the useful knack of coaxing writers to do their best work without seeming actually to be nagging them; but it was his fate always to work for marginal companies in short-lived ventures. (He has moved to California, like almost everyone else I knew in New York in those days, and edits a line of paperbacks out of Los Angeles for a company you've probably never heard of.) *INFINITY* was his special pride, a low-budget magazine that ran high-budget stories by the likes of Arthur C. Clarke, Isaac Asimov, James Blish, Damon Knight, C.M. Kornbluth, and Algis Budrys; it even published Harlan Ellison's first science fiction story. I was a regular contributor to *INFINITY* and many of my best short stories appeared there. The companion magazine, *SCIENCE FICTION ADVENTURES*, was less ambitious, a blood-and-thunder operation done strictly for fun, featuring novelets of interstellar intrigue and blazing ray-guns. I was a regular contributor to SFA, too: in fact, I practically wrote the whole magazine. As I look through my file copies, I see a long story or two by me (usually under some pseudonym) in virtually every issue--"Battle for the Thousand Suns," "Slaves of the Star Giants," "Spawn of the Deadly Sea," and so on. I had fun writing these

melodramas of the spaceways, and the readers evidently enjoyed them too, for my stories (under whatever pseudonym) were usually the most popular offerings in each issue.

The original format of SFA provided Three Complete New Action Novels! (actually, novelets 15,000 to 20,000 words in length) in each issue, plus a few short stories and features. But with the seventh issue, October, 1957, editor Shaw decided to vary the pattern a bit, running only two "novels," a long one and a short one. I was his most reliable contributor, so he asked me to write the "Book-Length Novel" to lead off that issue. I turned in a 28,000-word piece called "Thunder Over Starhaven," which appeared under a pseudonym and which I eventually expanded into a novel. The innovation was successful, apparently, for soon Shaw tried another experiment: filling virtually an entire issue with one novel.

Again he asked me to do the job. This time it was agreed that the story would appear under my own byline, since "Robert Silverberg" was by now a better known name than any of the pseudonyms I had been using in the magazines; and, since the story would bear my own name, I was a trifle less flamboyant about making use of the pulp-magazine clichés beloved by the magazine's readers. There would be no hissing villains and basilisk-eyed princesses in this one, no desperate duels with dagger and mace, no feudal overlords swagging about the stars. Rather I would write a straightforward science fiction novel, strongly plotted but not unduly weighing toward breathless adventure.

"Shadow on the Stars" is what I called it, and that was the name it appeared under in the April, 1958 issue of *SCIENCE FICTION ADVENTURES*. The cover announced in big yellow letters, "A COMPLETE NEW BOOK--35¢" and indeed it did take up most of the issue, spanning 112 of the 130 pages and leaving room for only two tiny short stories and the feature columns. Mainly it was a time-paradox novel--a theme that always has fascinated me--but there was at least one concession to the traditional policy of the magazine, a vast space battle involving an "unstoppable armada" of "seven hundred seventy-five dreadnaughts." I chose to handle the big battle scene, though, in a very untraditional underplayed manner, as you will see; and I did a bit of fooling around with the ending, too, providing two twentieth chapters.

The readers loved it. The next issue was full of letters of praise, including one that said, "Silverberg

is becoming a really disciplined artist," and asserted that "Shadow on the Stars" seemed somehow to synthesize the previously antithetical traditions of Robert A. Heinlein and E.E. Smith. (Actually, I thought it owed more to A.E. van Vogt.) And then *SCIENCE FICTION ADVENTURES* went out of business, for reasons unconnected with the quantity of material I was contributing to it. A lot of magazines folded in 1958, including a few that I never wrote for at all.

The next destination for "Shadow on the Stars" was Ace Books. Editor Donald A. Wollheim bought it, retitled it *STEPSONS OF TERRA*, and published it later in 1958 in his Ace Double Novel series, with a book by a British writer, Ian Wright, on the other side.

What Ian Wright is doing these days, I have no idea. But here is *STEPSONS OF TERRA*, back in print for the first time since its historic original appearance eighteen or nineteen years ago, for your amusement.

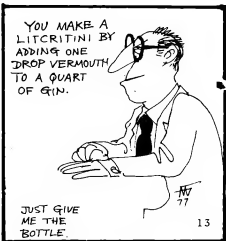
Oakland, California
April, 1976



THE SILENT INVADERS

Introduction

It is a strange and wonderful thing for a writer to forget the existence of one of his own novels. Rather like a parent forgetting one of his children; but I imagine that Johann Sebastian Bach, who was responsible for some twenty offspring, occasionally had trouble reciting the names of the whole tribe from memory, and I, well, I have written a lot of novels. *THE SILENT INVADERS* is one that did indeed slip from my mind.



The occasion on which I rediscovered it was an odd one, a bit schizophrenic, a moment in which I experienced that curious split between the "Robert Silverberg" who is my own personal identity and the "Robert Silverberg" who is the world-Famous Science Fiction Writer of someone else's scenario. I mean, I have been carrying my identity around for a long time, and the fact that I have written s-f is part of that identity, but not by any means all of it; a whole goulash of other events, activities, preferences, habits, hobbies, and whatnot is part of it too. But to readers I am simply a character in a great unfolding drama of science fiction that goes on in their heads; I am an abstraction, a name on a title page, a structure made of words.

Anyway, there I was in Alamogordo, New Mexico, on a summer day in 1973, midway in a rambling jaunt through the Southwest from Carlsbad to Santa Fe. I stopped in a luncheonette/news company on the main street for a cold drink, and sauntered over to explore the book racks. Naturally I checked the science fiction shelves, and (it is forgivable egocentricity) my eye happened to wander to that familiar place between Shekley and Simak where the Silverberg titles are often kept, and in that place I spied an unfamiliar and rather handsome paperback, the cover of which declared:

THE SILENT INVADERS

By the Winner of Science Fiction's Hugo and Nebula Awards

ROBERT SILVERBERG

"Ah," I said instantly to myself, "there's a new Silverberg novel out. How splendid!"

And I reached for it, and only when my hand was midway to the shelf did I tremble a bit and remember that I was Silverberg, and that my new novel was called DYING INSIDE, not THE SILENT INVADERS, and that in fact I couldn't remember anything called THE SILENT INVADERS at all. Was there some other Robert Silverberg in the s-f business now? Had I carelessly turned this novel out last year without noticing it? No. No. Please, no.

A glance at the copyright page told me everything. The book had first been published in 1963. It had been written somewhat earlier, of course. It had been out of print for a long time, and out of mind for nearly as long. Someone at Ace had reached into the back list and yanked it forth. And there it was, to my surprise, on public sale in Alamogordo, New Mexico. I paid my \$54---this was in 1973, remember, and pap-

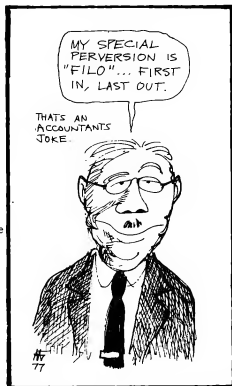
erbacks were a mere 95¢ then---and walked off with the book, and that night dropped a postcard to my agent to find out what the dickens was going on. It was, indeed, a reissue, and nobody had warned me it was coming. And now, again, a few years later, the book comes forth, only this time with some advance warning to its author, who will have only himself to blame if he is startled once again to find it on sale.

For the bibliographical record: I wrote the original version of THE SILENT INVADERS, a 16,000 word novella, all the way back in December, 1957, when good old Ike was in the White House and I was still a beardless boy. (As it happens, I began to grow the beard that is so familiar a part of my appearance the very week I was working on the short version of THE SILENT INVADERS. (It was that long ago.) The story was commissioned by one of my most dependable markets, a magazine called SCIENCE FICTION ADVENTURES, edited by the estimable Larry T. Shaw. Alas, Shaw folded a few months later, and Shaw used the story in his surviving magazine, INFINITY, where it appeared under the pseudonym of Calvin M. Knox. I have the issue before me as I write---the date is October, 1958, the cover is a bright red job by Emsh, and the headline reads, "WAS SHE A WOMAN---OR A MONSTER?...a great CALVIN KNOX novel." Wasn't a bad story, wasn't an amazingly good one---just a routine job of the sort I knocked out pretty rapidly in those days to pay the bills. (My ledger reveals I was paid in December of 1958 for this story that I wrote one year earlier---\$237. Which is one reason why young writers of science fiction then tended to knock out a lot of stories for the sake of paying their bills.)

Subsequently---a long time subsequently---I hatched the notion of expanding that novella into a novel for Ace books. The contract for THE SILENT INVADERS is dated March 14, 1962. I had a lot of bills to pay that month, too, bills of a size that would have stupefied the lad who wrote that story four years previously; for in February of 1962 I had moved into Fiorello La Guardia's old house in Riverdale, New York, your basic neat little fifteen-room mansion, and I was desperately trying to get it repainted, furnished, and otherwise up to snuff. Which meant selling a lot of books in a hurry, and it was tempting to resuscitate old properties and blow them up to book length. I finished my expansion of the story a bit later in March of 1962 and Ace published it the following spring, in a double volume with William F. Temple's BAT-

TLE OF VENUS on the flip side.

Comparing the shorter version with the book is instructive. So far as the plot goes, the two are virtually identical, and neither is what you'd call Hugo-quality work. But the expansion allowed me to put a coat of recognizably Silverberg-sounding prose over the bare bones of the cloak-and-dagger adventure story beneath. The most significant place of this sort is Chapter Nine; the telepathy scene, in which my 1962 self suddenly burst out with a flourish of imagery and passion that sounds much more like the Silverberg of 1970 or 1971, the Silverberg of DYING INSIDE and TOWER OF GLASS, than the kid who wrote the original story in 1957. The same scene, in



the magazine version, is perfunctory by comparison. I find it most interesting to see these phases in my own development lying there like the strata of some buried city.

I would not try to pretend that THE SILENT INVADERS is a landmark in American literature, or even a very important segment of the oeuvre of Robert Silverberg. It is, after all, a book whose very existence I managed to forget in just eleven years---not because I was repressing the memory, mind you, just because I had no reason to keep it in mind. It's a decent action story, cobbled together out of second-hand ingredients by a young man who had to buy a few thousand buckets of house paint, and not much more. I could tell you in some detail why it isn't as memorable a book as DYING INSIDE or DOWNWARD TO THE

EARTH or NIGHTINGS, but you still probably be able to arrive at the reasons on your own. On the other hand, there are always people at science fiction conventions who will seek me out to tell me how much they loved my straightforward melodramatic adventure novels of twenty years ago, and how much they wish I hadn't deviated into writing all that arty literary stuff. They know what they like and who am I to quarrel with them? In its original printing this book was dedicated to a beloved tomcat of mine, long since gone to his reward; I let that dedication stand, but now I dedicate this book also to all those people who yearn for the good old days when the "Robert Silverberg" byline meant books like THE SILENT INVADERS.

Oakland, California
June, 1976



NEXT STOP THE STARS

Introduction

NEXT STOP THE STARS was the first collection of my short stories to be published, and holds a special place in my affections for that reason. By now my collected short stories run to sixteen or seventeen volumes, and some of those volumes are a good deal more impressive than this one; but first is first, and first things never lose their significance. Besides, it's an interesting book in its own right, for a lot of reasons.

The thing about short story collections is that they generally don't sell as well as novels, unless the author is someone who is primarily known only for short stories--as, for example, Ray Bradbury. Story collections are usually awarded by publishers as bribes, or, shall we say, sweeteners, to writers whose good will they wish to earn. The theory is that if you let a writer bring out a volume of collected short stories, you may also be able to get him to let you have one of his novels.

Circa 1957, when I first tried to interest a publisher in doing a book of my short stories, no one was especially interested in earning my good will in that fashion. I was a promising young writer--indeed, I had in 1956 been awarded a Hugo as Most Promising New Writer--and I had sold a whole raft of stories and novels, some of them pretty good,

some awful; but I was still operating very much in a buyer's market for my work. I had the feeling common to most young writers that whatever I managed to get published was making its way into print mainly because the editor had a certain number of blank pages to fill every month, and what I was writing was decent enough to make the minimum grade in the absence of anything better. That is to say, if Heinlein or Sturgeon or Leiber or Asimov had bothered to turn in a story that month, I'd have been out, but they didn't and so I racked up another sale. On the other hand, I also had the feeling common to most young writers that some of what I was writing was pretty good, maybe even as good as the stuff the really big-time authors were producing, and deserved the immortality of a book edition just as much as anything they had produced. Since they were having short-story collections published, I put together one of my own. I don't now remember what it was called, but it contained ten or twelve of the best stories I had written in the three or four years of my career. I shipped it down to my agent with the usual high hopes.

The problem was that my books were then being published by Ace, and Ace didn't do short story collections. So the collection had to be offered to houses like Ballantine and Doubleday, which did collections only as sweeteners for their regular novelists, of whom I was not then one. So there was no sale, and I looked ruefully at the other writers' collections with feelings of envy and sorrow.

Eventually Ace did start doing collections--the first, an Eric Frank Russell volume, appeared in 1958--and I began hinting to the Ace editor, Donald Wollheim, that I would appreciate one myself. The Ace system was a bit different from that of other publishers: instead of doing a separate volume of short stories, Ace tacked the collection to a novel by the same author, doing both works in one binding in the celebrated Ace Double format. That wasn't quite as satisfying to the author as a single book of his stories would have been, but it was much less risky for the publisher, and at least the author had the satisfaction of having an entire Ace Double to himself.

I hinted, but Wollheim didn't seem to get the hint, and I went uncollected for another couple of years. Late in 1961 Ace acquired a book of mine called THE SEED OF EARTH, the complex history of which is recounted in the new edition issued as a companion to this present volume.

And--with a little nudge from my agent--Don finally agreed to do a Silverberg story collection as the flip half of the double volume.

Hastily I unearthed my unsold collection of 1957. I picked the four best stories from it, and added to them a novella, "Slaves of the Star Giants," that had not been included in the original group. The main reason for the substitution was that Ace, back then, preferred strong, colorful, action-oriented adventure stories, and none of the short stories in my original story collection quite qualified as that. "Star Giants" did. It had been written for the first issue of an ephemeral magazine called SCIENCE FICTION ADVENTURES, and it was an appropriately colorful job, decorated with mutants, giant aliens, mad robots, and other such equipment. It gave the book a certain solidity, even though it wasn't exactly what I considered an ideal kind of science fiction.

The four stories appended to it, though, were something else again. In their various ways they represented the young Silverberg at his best, striving to master the difficult art of the science fiction short story.

Oldest of them was "Hopper," written in June of 1954, when I was in my sophomore year at college. Here we see an early try at the time-paradox plot, to which I would return throughout my career; here also are decent attempts at characterization, style, and creation of a plausible future society. I thought it was quite a mature story for a writer not yet out of his teens, and still do; and I was much wounded when "Hopper" failed to sell to ASTOUNDING, GALAXY, or any of the other leading magazines of the time. (It was finally published in Larry Shaw's superb, much-underrated magazine, INFINITY, two years after I wrote it. Years later I expanded it into a novel, THE TIME HOPPERS, for Doubleday.)

In June of 1955, while still an undergraduate, I wrote "The Songs of Summer"--an extremely ambiguous technical stunt, an attempt at telling a story through a series of fragmented monologs. I thought it came off quite well, but again the important magazines chose to turn it down, and after a year in the wilderness the story was purchased by my friend Robert W. Lowndes for his SCIENCE FICTION STORIES, a magazine that managed a surprising level of excellence even though its word rates were the lowest in the field.

You can imagine, I think, the discouraging effect on a young writer to have stories of this caliber go begging for a home for a year or

more. I think that "Hopper" and "Songs of Summer" and my other ambitious works of 1954 and 1955 found publishers when I wrote them. I would probably never have deviated into the attitudes that led me to write "Slaves of the Star Giants" and score of other adventure stories. But none of those early good stories sold on their merits; they all got published eventually only because I had established working professional contacts with editors; and the cynicism that they engineered in me taught me a lesson I was years in unlearning, that is, that there was no sense in trying to do my best.

The remaining stories in the collection were written only a few years after the first two, but they come from an entirely different era. "Slaves of the Star Giants" dates from September, 1956. I was out of college then, already married, a Hugo winner, and an established professional author. No longer was I sending stories off into the void and hoping they would sell; I had demonstrated to editors that I could reliably supply them with publishable commodities, and they were asking me for stories, generally of a certain length to be delivered by a certain date. "Star Giants" was such an assigned story. I remember writing it in the first weeks of my marriage, on a folding table in the cavernous, still almost unfurnished apartment we had rented on West End Avenue in Manhattan. No masterpiece, certainly, but its young author, certainly, was a pro.

And the other two date from 1957, when I was already growing restless doing adventure fiction and was trying to work my way back to the more serious s-f I had set out originally to write in 1954. "Warm Man," written in January, 1957, was my first ale to urbane and sophisticated Anthony Boucher of FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION, and an appropriately urbane and sophisticated story it is, too, a far cry from the thud-and-blunder of "Star Giants." Later that same month I did "Blaze of Glory," a study in irony that has many points of resonance with my later fiction, and sold it to Horace L. Gold of GALAXY, probably the most demanding editor in the business, a man who constantly goaded me (with some belated success) to stretch my talents beyond their present reach.

Not a bad group of stories for a writer who was still in his very early twenties when the last of them was written. I was very much excited when they finally appeared in collected form in 1962 as half of Ace Double Book F-145, with my novel THE SEED OF EARTH on the other side. NEXT STOP THE STARS was given a

striking cover painting by Ed Emsh, SEED OF EARTH a less impressive but still attractive illustration, perhaps by Ed Valigursky, making for a pleasant little package.

Oakland, California
April, 1976

ALIEN THOUGHTS CONTINUED FROM P. 7

8-16-77 Have you wondered why the Big Push is on to "sell" the new treaty with Panama? Why was Ellisworth Bunker (an old-time Rockefeller man) sent down there to work out a deal? Why have Kissinger (a newer Rockefeller man) and Gerald Ford (a minor elected ex-official) been given prominent play and their ritual approval words presented on every newscast? Could it be because if the treaty is approved by the U.S. Senate vast tracts of the land held now by the U.S. govt. will revert to the Panamanian govt? And that that land is due to be exploited by something called the Panama Development Corporation? And could it be that the PDC is owned by...the Chase Manhattan Bank? Yep. The PDC has a mutually profitable arrangement with the Panamanian govt. regarding those canal lands. And so all these Rockefeller agents and the Rockefeller owned or leveraged media will go into action to push the deal. We might even have some "demonstrations" in Panama to further convince people to pass the treaty.

LETTER FROM GREG BENFORD

August, 1977

'Barry Malzberg is one of the most damned interesting commentators on s-f we've ever had, particularly in his unbelievable recall of details/events from a decade ago. His charge--that the s-f field isn't as open now as when he started in 1967---may well be true. Certainly the s-f magazines are not so bold (and may soon die off to a group of 3 or 4), and a recent trip to NYC convinced me that the major houses are mostly in the hands of troglodytes. I think it is harder to do first class inventive work now, and get it published---not because of what's happened to me (I've been lucky; I use hard science out of preference, not duty), but because of others' experiences. (Secondhand story: a certain editor for a large paperback house bid on Le Guin's THE DISPOSSESSED's paperback rights, but required that the ending be changed, to show exactly what the protagonist found on his return to his home world. Somehow, Ursula didn't go

along with that....)

'So it's doubly sorrowing that Malzberg is quitting his column here, because it's fascinating stuff. I'd love to hear him talk about the State of the Art. He could call it "SF After George Lucas: STAR WHORES."

'Your disagreement with him (p. 56) rests on the assumption that "people and Wonder" are orthogonal aspects in sf. Not so. Often, yes, you're right, and GATEWAY is an example---I didn't think the analysis worked dramatically therein---but there's no general reason why this must be so. (I struggled with precisely this problem for years, without verbalizing it that way, while writing IN THE OCEAN OF NIGHT.)'

((I guess I'll go back to using light italic for my reactions/responses to letters, since more than a few people complain that my pica Delegate is too much like the above Adjutant.

((For those who don't know what 'orthogonal' means (I had to look it up), it says in my Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary: Right-angled; rectangular.

((Since Barry is still writing sf---selling stories to AMAZING and FANTASTIC and perhaps other mags---perhaps he'll resume his column here one day. I'd love to have him continue whenever he wishes. I am accused of favoring old-fashioned sf and of being unfair and non-understanding of experimental sf, yet getting an exponent of such to write...a well-known exponent...to write a commentary column is difficult.))

8-20-77 This Panama Canal business is strange, in a way. The Panamanians (and their dictator) and the Carter administration, say the terms of the treaty in existence are unfair, and the Panamanians should have sovereignty over the canal...because it is an insult to them as a nation, otherwise.

Yeah...but, the United States fomented the rebellion which split Panama off from Columbia in 1903 (because the Columbian govt. was holding out for more money for giving the U.S. the right to build the canal), and sent warships to prevent Columbia from putting down the rebellion. The great nation of Panama is our creation. We stole it (as Senator Hayakawa says) fair and square. So, to be absolutely fair about the Canal Issue---shouldn't we give that land back to Columbia, and negotiate with Columbia about the new treaty?

ALIEN THOUGHTS CONTINUED ON P. 18

THE ANNUAL NEBULOUS AWARDS

PRESENTED BY GREG & JIM BENFORD

My instinct, when asked to be toastmaster for the Nebula West Coast Banquet, was to finesse it, make a few innocent jokes, and hand out the Awards. But I was to co-toast with my twin brother, Jim, and we sat around his pool the morning before the banquet, and in the misty glow of northern California that seemed, well...a bit tame. So, with some help from Dick Lupoff, we made up the awards that couldn't really be given, marking the year 1976 with those scars and blackheads that really make the year come alive, y'know.

It was an impressive year. We have seen, over the past few years, a fundamentalist Baptist with a winning smile come out of nowhere, sweeping all before him, and soon dominating the landscape. An amazing rise. But enough of Roger Elwood....

THE WHEN-YOU'RE-SAILING-ON-THE-TITANIC-WHY-GO-STEERING AWARD

To: The publishers of GALLILEO, COSMOS and ISAAC ASIMOV'S MAGAZINE, for starting three new sf magazines in the same year that the United Nations appealed to all member nations to take fresh measures to halt the swift defoliation of the planet's forests.

THE PROGRESSIVE PUBLISHING AWARD

To: HONORABLE MENTION: Ace Books for PERRY RHODAN.

SECOND PLACE: DAW Books for the John Norman *Gor* series.

CLEAR WINNER: Del Rey Books, for establishing the best sf publishing house of 1946.

THE SARAH BERNHARDT AWARD FOR MOST FAREMELLS

To: SECOND PLACE: Robert Silverberg.
WINNER: Barry Malzberg.

THE PROPHECY WITHOUT A LOSS AWARD

To: S. Lem
For criticising, in several European journals, all American sf writers, because they write books which people want to read.

THE 'FESS UP AWARD OF THE YEAR

To: Larry Niven
For acknowledging, in the dedication of *A WORLD OUT OF TIME*, that in his earlier hard sf novel, *RINGWORLD*, he had described the rotation of the Earth in such a manner that the sun rose in the west and set in the east.

THE NOTHING EXCEEDS LIKE EXCESS AWARD

To: The publishers of ALFRED HITCHCOCK'S MAGAZINE for recognising that having a picture of an overweight, aging man on the cover of every issue was the secret of their success, and extending this method to ISAAC ASIMOV'S MAGAZINE.

THE RIEMANNIAN HYPERSPACE ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

To: Barry Malzberg
For establishing new principles of nonlinear differential geometry by leaving the field three times in one year, without ever being seen to re-enter it.

THE CONSPICUOUS RESUMPTION AWARD

To: Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle.
For authoring *INFERNO*, in which a drunken sf author is pushed out a window at a worldcon, and awakens to find himself in Dante's inferno, i.e. hell. Only at the conclusion of the book does he discover that he is in fact in the SFWA hospitality Suite.

THE SHORTEST HALF-LIFE AWARD

To: ODYSSEY MAGAZINE
(A clear winner, since it started out only half alive anyway.)

BEST DRAMATIC PRESENTATION AWARD

To: Harlan Ellison
For his resignation from SFWA because it decided to henceforth drop the Dramatic Presentation Nubula. (Reports that Harlan was resigning this time simply because it is an odd-numbered year proved false. Such rumors are out of place in as esteemed an organization as this, and indeed, seem nasty, brutish and short...)

THE CHEAP SHOT OF THE YEAR AWARD

To: Gerald Ford
For naming the space shuttle "Enterprise", with no credit whatever to Gene Roddenberry, in the closing days of the Presidential campaign. (There are indications that, in a last desperate bid for more votes, the Vice Presidential nominee, Robert Dole, tried to appear in public wearing Spock ears, but was restrained by the Secret Service.)

THE DRACULA AWARD

To: Robert A. Heinlein
For his labors for blood donors in SFWA and fandom. (This was also the first known attempt to get fresh blood out of the field.)



ITS THE PR CROSS,
FOR LYING ABOVE AND
BEYOND THE CALL OF
DUTY!



THE ROBERT SILVERBERG AWARD FOR BEST UNWRITTEN SHORT STORY

To: Noah Ward
(Unfortunately, there is no award this year because there were not enough unwritten applicants. Too many short stories were not left undone this year.)

THE DOGGED PERSISTENCE AWARD

To: Frank Herbert
For producing the first best-seller sf novel, CHILDREN OF DUNE. There have been hints of a 4th blockbuster title in the Dune sequence, LORNA DUNE.

THE MODERN SF ALCHEMIST AWARD

To: Harlan Ellison
For selling "A Boy and His Dog" as a TV series. This is the first verified case of a writer who has successfully turned pure brass into gold.

AND NOW,
LADIES AND
GENTLEMEN
I SHALL CRITIQUE
THIS SO-CALLED
REVIEW OF MY
ACT!



HAND ME
THE ELE-
PHANT
TUP, WILLY!

ALIEN THOUGHTS CONTINUED FROM P. 16

Elvis Presley is gone now (42 years old! Christ, that makes me feel good! All that money, all those beautiful women, and he died so deliciously young.) And just last night Groucho Marx bit the dust. I presume he is now in heaven hectoring Margaret Dumont about her wings and harp. And now, according to the old saying that says famous people die in cycles of three, we await the third fatality...within the next week.

LETTER FROM A. PETER CANNON

6 August, 1977

'On page 6 ((SFR #22)) you quote Dr. Franz Pick, "I know of no example in history where any government has ever repaid its debts in the purchasing power in which the innocent bought its bonds..." I can of one example where it happened, but it may do as much to prove Pick's point as disprove it. In 1790 Alexander Hamilton persuaded the congress to honor at par all debts of the Continental congress which fought the American Revolution. But the purpose was avowedly to tie the interests of the rich to the new government set up under the Constitution. Most of the bonds and the money printed by the Continental Congress had passed into the hands of speculators at a fraction of their value and these men would obviously support the new government if it meant a quick profit on their speculation.'

I suspect that 'at par' is the key phrase. That does not compensate for the inflation then current...and Dr. Pick's quote still stands. The intricacies of debt structures and sleight-of-hand bookkeeping have made the old kingly game of coin-clipping and adding lead to gold coinage even more easy and less obvious. Nowadays government have prostitute economists, P.R. men and sycophants and media agents who willingly misled the public on money/economic matters.

They're still urging you to buy govt. savings bonds, aren't they? With the inflation rate (the rate of loss of money value) higher than the interest rate paid on those bonds. Yee, indeed, "Invest In America"---and get screwed.

LETTER FROM JOHN CHALMERS

August 7, 1977

'Ron Lambert's letter in SFR 22 is speculative, but hardly informative. Like the bulk of Crea-

tionist literature, it appropriates the facts, theories and concepts of science when they support religious dogma, but willfully neglects to mention those aspects which do not. This is simply a dishonest attempt to exploit the authority of science and is unworthy of any individual or organization which claims moral leadership. The situation would be comical except that Creationist material is being incorporated into science textbooks and causes a gross misunderstanding of the nature and goals of science.

'The hypothesis of a radio-opaque layer of water in the atmosphere is pure ad-hocery. The only way consistent with science to get that much water into the air and keep it there is to raise the temperature of the earth. Even if this didn't preclude life, it would cause a clearly measurable isotopes in sea shells. None is seen of the appropriate age. Secondly, there are a number of other dating techniques which do not depend on the constancy of the cosmic ray flux, and these all indicate that the earth is ancient, not merely a few thousand years old. Furthermore, even if the earth, and hence the atmosphere, were warmer, the water vapor would still freeze out at some level and the nitrogen would still diffuse up through this zone and be subjected to cosmic ray bombardment.

'Although there may be an "excess" of tritium at present, this cannot possibly be due to conditions which ended 4500 years ago. The half-life of tritium is 12.5 years an 4500 years is 360 half-lives, which corresponds to a depletion by a factor of 10 to 108+ power. For there to be as much as a single atom of Creationist tritium on earth now would necessitate there being on the earth more tritium than there are particles of all sorts in the entire visible universe. True, the resulting radiation would have boiled all that water mentioned above, but we're talking about conditions more like the Big Bang itself. In any case there would be a lot more helium-3, if there was this much tritium in the atmosphere.

'Hyperbaric oxygen is used to treat a few diseases states, but hyperbaric oxygen is also toxic if endured (twisting illegible!) too long or at too high a pressure. Besides most reports of purported long-lived populations come from the Andes or Caucasus mountains.

ALIEN THOUGHTS CONTINUED ON P. 23

AN INTERVIEW

WITH A. E. VAN VOGT



Photo Credit: Chris Gemignani

A.E. Van Vugt is one of the most celebrated science fiction writers in America. He stands beside Asimov, Heinlein, and Clarke as one of the nation's most gifted writers of imaginative fiction. His books, which include *THE WEAPON SHOPS OF ISHER*, *THE UNIVERSE MAKER*, *THE WAR AGAINST THE RULL*, *THE WINGED MAN* and *THE WORLD OF NULL-A* have been translated into several languages -- French, German, Italian -- and even recorded on "talking records" for the blind.

In assessing Van Vugt's career, Barry Malzberg has observed: "So much of his work, reread after many years, seems to work in terms which are sub or trans-literary; so much of his power seems to come not from sophisticated technique and/or pyrotechnic style as from his ability to tap archetypal power, archetypal "them," and open up veins of awe or bedazzlement that otherwise are found in love or dreams." Indeed, throughout his long career, Van Vugt has championed important concepts years ahead of his time, concepts such as hypnotism, "similarization," semantics, "Nexialism," and dianetics. Perhaps that is why Forrest Ackerman has dubbed him "the undisputed Idea Man of the Futuristic field."

Van Vugt does his writing in Hollywood, California, high atop the hills, accessible only to those with strong legs or a high-powered automobile. A spectacular view stretches across his panoramic hilltop home. The decor is comfortable, modest by

most standards, the kind of home which looks warm and lived in. There on a rare rainy June morning in his cluttered study, Van Vugt talked about his checkered career.

SFR: How did you start writing science fiction?

VAN VOGT: I started reading science fiction when I was about fourteen. I remember buying the November, 1926 issue of *AMAZING*, which caught my eye on the newsstand. At the time, I always thought it was *THE* science fiction magazine. I didn't really become interested in science fiction until 1939, when I picked up a copy of *ASTOUNDING STORIES*, and read what I thought was a fantastic science fiction story. After examining the magazine, I sent the editor a brief paragraph outlining an idea I had for a short story. I told him I had already sold numerous stories to other publications. If he hadn't answered the letter, I probably wouldn't have become a science fiction writer. I discovered later, however, that he answered all such letters. Actually, all he said in the letter was, "When you do the story, do it with lots of atmosphere!" In other words, he wanted me to use plenty of "purple prose." I understood what he meant. I started writing when I was twenty. I sold my first story to *TRUE STORY MAGAZINE* about that time. They bought it for

\$245, which was a lot of money in the depression. So I knew what he meant by colorful language. I've always tried to spice up my stories with plenty of atmosphere.

SFR: What was your reaction when you received his letter?

VAN VOGT: Naturally, I started to write feverishly. I was intrigued by the idea, and his letter served to reinstate my earlier interest in science fiction. My story was entitled "Vault of the Beast." It was published in the July, 1939 issue of *ASTOUNDING*.

SFR: How conversant were you with the science fiction field when you wrote that first story?

VAN VOGT: Actually, I knew next-to nothing about the field, except perhaps, what I had read in *AMAZING*. The whole field was new to me. It didn't take me long, however, to discover who were the best writers.

SFR: When did you decide that you wanted to become a science fiction writer?

VAN VOGT: After my first sale. As I mentioned, I had written many things before publishing in *AMAZING*. However, I had made very little money up to that point. I had written several stories for *TRUE STORY MAGAZINE*, although they weren't particularly lucrative. In fact, I had to write them all anonymously, as though I were divulging my hidden past. It was imperative that the stories be real or based on real material. The publisher even made me sign affidavits to that effect. One day, however, while I was working on one of those stories, I thought to myself, "What in God's name am I doing writing these things?" That was the end of my career with *TRUE*. At that point, I began to write radio plays and work as a trade paper journalist. Fortunately, I was able to eek out a living by combining the two jobs.

SFR: How stiff was the competition when you began your career in the science fiction field?

VAN VOGT: Well, we had Asimov, Del Rey, Heinlein, Leiber and several other well-known science fiction writers.

Conducted By JEFFREY ELLIOT

SFR: Is it more difficult today for someone to break into the science fiction field than it was when you began your career?

VAN VOGT: Yes, I think so. The real problem is the shortage of science fiction magazines. Most of these publications are fighting for their lives. Unfortunately, that's where most new writers gain their experience. It's tough to break in with a novel. It seems as though there are a thousand or more science fiction writers around today. And they are all working every day.

SFR: Are you concerned about competition from other science fiction writers?

VAN VOGT: No, not at all. I have no sense of competition in my own field. I was fortunate to get started when magazines were the only thing going. Not long ago, for example, the editor of *ANALOG* asked me to do a story for the magazine. I'm reluctant to do it, however, since it means that I'd be taking away space from new writers. It's awfully difficult for new writers to get started.

SFR: Some critics maintain that your work cannot be judged in the same terms as other science fiction writers -- that your approach to writing is totally different. Is that a fair statement?

VAN VOGT: Yes, I suppose so. First of all, I write my stories differently than most science fiction writers. Most of the writers today are intuitive writers or else they learned how to write in college. That's not my method. I write my science fiction in eight-hundred-word scenes. Each scene has five steps. I write in what I call "presentation units." When I was writing confession-type (reality) stories, every sentence had to have an emotion in it. For instance, you wouldn't say, "I live at 323 Brand Street." That's just a statement. There's no emotion in it. Instead, you would say, "Tears came to my eyes as I thought of my little room at 323 Brand Street." I would use another emotion in the next sentence, and another one after that, and so on. I call these "fictional sentences." In writing science fiction, I try to write each sentence so that the reader will have to make a creative contribution. Each sentence has a hang-up in it. There's something missing in each sentence. As Marshall McLuhan would say, I write my science fiction "hot." That means that the reader must get involved. He must make a creative contribution because that's how I write my stories. It's impossible, therefore, to read my work fast. The reader must solve the hang-up before

going on to the next sentence. By comparison, many science fiction writers use the narrative approach -- that is, they write from the author's point of view. Sometimes they succeed beautifully, as does Robert Silverberg, who employs this method. However, my approach to writing science fiction is quite different. It's much more time consuming. You must make sure that each sentence has the essential ingredients. In addition, I try to use certain sounds, sounds which convey particular emotions. Normally, after writing a story, I would try to change words to make use of a specific sound. I thought it would bring a kind of musical backdrop to my story. However, I try not to overdo it. There is just enough so that it serves as an "extra". It's meant to create a special effect, something the reader might not notice at the time, but which would have a specific impact on him at the end of the story.



SFR: How conscious are you of technique as you're writing a story?

VAN VOGT: Oh, I'm aware of it at all times. I write with total conscious craftsmanship. I'm always aware of the techniques I employ -- my eight-hundred-word scenes, my five-step process, my fictional sentences, my presentation units. All of my writing contains these basic ingredients, although I'm not successful in every case. For instance, sometimes it's necessary to have the person just say, "Yes." You can't have him say, "Yes, he whispered." It simply doesn't fit.

SFR: Do you employ a similar approach with other genres?

VAN VOGT: Yes. After all, every type of writing should possess a certain imagery. Without it, one's writing is too colorless. Also, I try to keep my sentences short. In the current SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW, John Brunner stands up for the long sentence. That's not for me. If a

sentence gets too long, I get scared. I'm afraid that I'll lose my reader midway through the sentence.

SFR: Is it possible for you to stick to your rules in writing non-fiction?

VAN VOGT: Well, I never really did much in terms of non-fiction. What little writing I did do, was as a trade journalist for several newspapers. At the time, they paid 20¢ a column-inch. Although I published something in every issue, I never seemed to make much money.

SFR: When did you get to the point that you could support yourself through your writing?

VAN VOGT: I suppose it was when I was awarded a \$1,000 first prize by TRUE STORY MAGAZINE. I used the money to buy my mother a radio, a couch and several other household items. I spent most of what was left on the movies, which I went to every evening as long as my money lasted.

SFR: Do you find it personally challenging to write science fiction?

VAN VOGT: Yes, very much so. When I write my eight-hundred-word scenes, I must work at a very slow pace, much slower than even the reader, who must solve the hang-ups as he goes along. In my science fiction, the reader is required to do an incredible job. Not only must he read the story, but he must also make a creative contribution in order to understand it. My readers are extremely bright people. They must create much of the story as they go along, largely out of their own imagination, because of the various hang-ups which are built in. Once a person has read any science fiction of mine, his brain will no longer be the same. Hopefully, he will be changed for the better.

SFR: How carefully do you plan out a story before you begin writing?

VAN VOGT: Well, that has always been my problem. I don't work that way, which has proved to be a real problem in terms of television and film. Unfortunately, most producers require the entire outline in advance. I write a story, for the most part, as I go along. In fact, I'm not always sure where it's going.

SFR: Don't you then have to reread each segment before proceeding to the next one?

VAN VOGT: It's only necessary to reread a segment if I put it aside for some time. However, I have devised a much quicker method for writing a novel. With my old approach, it would normally take me about two years to put together a book. In 1965, however, I borrowed a technique

that I learned from L. Ron Hubbard, as a result of my work in dianetics. It requires the writer to create his story at several key places throughout its development. For instance, I would write, perhaps three sentences at the beginning, maybe a paragraph midway through, a few sentences later on, and a couple of paragraphs near the end. I discovered that after I wrote three or four of these sentences, another three or four would come forth. The story began to fit together a lot more quickly. Eventually, I had enough to write a novel. It worked out much better than my previous method, which was extremely time-consuming. In fact, it has enabled me to write many more books than I would have otherwise.

SFR: Does your approach to writing require substantial rewriting and editing?

VAN VOGT: Yes, an incredible amount. It's a long, difficult process. I'm not a super-fast writer. I can't write straight from my head onto the typewriter. That's beyond my capabilities. I've tried, instead, to develop quicker methods of writing, but it's still a long, drawn-out process. Perhaps the best example of someone who writes slowly, somewhat as I do, is Ray Bradbury. His work is super-successful because of the skillful way that he puts a story together. He might work on a manuscript for a period of five-six months. But this painstaking approach has paid off for him in the long run. It has for me, too. Most of my stories are still in print or under contract. A good example of the speed-approach is John Brunner. He would "hurry" a story for awhile and then sit down at the typewriter and compose it in no time. Looking back on my own career, my approach has worked out extremely well. My stories never seem to become dated, largely because the reader is required to make a creative contribution. It has enabled me to reach a much larger audience.

SFR: Are you a disciplined writer? Do you follow a set regimen each day in terms of writing?

VAN VOGT: No, not any more. The way I operate these days, is that I do what I must. In other words, I do what's next. I allow myself to be interrupted. For example, even though I gave up dianetics in 1965, I feel a certain obligation to those people who came to my wife and I for assistance. Should any of these people call up in an emergency situation, I would drop whatever I was doing and try to help in any way possible. When my wife was alive, if she needed something from the store, I would never refuse. I would always

go and get it. However, earlier in my career, when I used to work on six novels simultaneously, I would work for four hours on the one I wanted to finish first, and 1 1/2 hours on each of the other five, although I never got to number six. When I went to bed at eleven o'clock, I would always be at work on number five.

SFR: Do you find it difficult to work on several books simultaneously?

VAN VOGT: No, not at all. In fact, I discovered it was the best thing I could do. After working on a story for a long time, several problems would inevitably arise. By putting it aside for awhile, and working on something else, many of the problems would seem to work themselves out.

THE PROBLEM WITH BEING SUPER-INTELLIGENT IS THAT YOU GET SUPER-BORED



SFR: How does your approach to writing differ today from the way in which you worked previously?

VAN VOGT: When my wife became ill, she needed a lot of attention. Everything changed in my life. There was a great deal of emotion in me. I'm not as alert today as I was earlier in my career. It's something I'm trying to solve. I've come to the conclusion that one never really recovers from the loss of a loved one, particularly someone as close as a wife. The real problem isn't grief, although that is great, but what I would call "vivid memories". These are special remembrances which induce fear or sorrow or guilt. These vivid memories serve to inhibit thought and action. I still have not resolved my wife's death in my own mind. I don't think I ever will.

I've tried, however, to deal with the problem in a variety of ways. For example, I experimented with small amounts of alcohol and, by God, the memories dimmed. But that was no solution for me. I discovered that the best thing to do was to put the whole matter out of my mind, which is obviously much easier said than done. Some people do this by changing their surroundings -- by pulling up stakes, selling the house, discarding the furniture, throwing away the pictures. However, I felt that that approach was wrong. I couldn't bring myself to do it. For me, I had to learn how to deal with these images. When they would come, I would simply say, "No, not now. I'll think about it on Sunday." In other words, I would put it off until a later time. I wasn't throwing it away, but I was postponing it until I could better deal with it. Usually, I would postpone these images until the end of the month, at which time I would think about them.

SFR: Are you now able to put distance between the memories?

VAN VOGT: Yes, I'm able to do it more easily today, largely because I've developed a system for dealing with it more effectively. I don't view the problem as solved, however. My immortality is still in danger.

SFR: Are you able to write with more or less the same discipline that you were before your wife's death?

VAN VOGT: No, not really. I'm not able to work the way I did when she was alive. I'm not investing the same amount of time or energy. But I'm getting better at dealing with the problem.

SFR: Do you find writing to be a lonely activity? Does the daily regimen bother you?

VAN VOGT: No, I never was a 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. writer. I still write from the time I wake up until the time I go to bed, except that I allow myself to be interrupted. However, I discovered a long time ago, that in order to write, you must keep at it. You can't allow yourself to take breaks. Once you start taking breaks, you lose your high energy state. It takes a considerable amount of time to bring that state up again. Writing requires an extremely high energy state. The moment you shift gears and do something else, you're immediately operating at a lower energy state. Actually, I thoroughly enjoy the process of writing, particularly science fiction. I sometimes feel that I've invented at least six sub-fields that will have an important impact on the scientific community. For instance, I would cite my work in dream therapy. It's a process that requires

little effort, but which can do much to heighten awareness.

SFR: In terms of the ideas of your stories, where do most of them come from?

VAN VOGT: I try to keep abreast of new developments by reading the scientific magazines and journals, although I haven't been as successful in recent years, probably due to my wife's death. Even so, I only rely on science for information. Most of my ideas come from something I have thought about or experienced. Occasionally, I might get an idea from an editor, a producer, or even a fan. I'm presently writing a screenplay based on an idea suggested by a producer. I was furnished with a title, and then asked to write a first draft based on that suggestion.

SFR: Is it your view that science fiction has a function beyond entertainment?

VAN VOGT: I think so. Today's science fiction writers are concerned with developing a worldview. They're trying to provide the reader with a look at the past, present, and future. Most science fiction readers are extremely bright. They have good jobs. They're interested in the world. They have inquisitive minds. They're involved in lots of things. In fact, Robert Kennedy was a great fan of science fiction.

SFR: How important is "message" in your work?

VAN VOGT: Well, I'm known as a "message" writer. But I've never really thought of myself in those terms. I simply developed an interest in my subjects and wrote about them for my own amazement. My main objective, however, is to write a good story, as opposed to conveying a particular message. That thought only occurred to me after it was pointed out by a critic.

SFR: What do you see as your strengths and weaknesses as a writer?

VAN VOGT: I resigned myself to my particular approach to writing some time ago. I can't bring myself to become a narrative writer, even though I've dabbled a bit in that area. I've often been faulted for not having enough characterization in my stories. It seems to me that my method requires considerably more characterization, particularly since the reader is required to make a creative contribution, than if I were simply to describe the character to the reader. With my approach, the reader is asked to contribute to the characterization, which makes my task considerably more difficult.

SFR: Who are your favorite writers of science fiction?

VAN VOGT: R.A. Lafferty. I think he writes the most original stories in the science fiction world, perhaps in the entire world, today. When I first met Lafferty, I asked him who most influenced his thinking. His answer was C.K. Chesterton. As a result, I've been doing some research on Chesterton, whom I hadn't heard of until then. I used to consider Robert Heinlein my favorite science fiction writer, until he started to write those super-long stories, which I absolutely refuse to read. Once a writer goes beyond 100,000 words, he loses me. In fact, I won't even start a book of that length. I can't bring myself to read a long novel.

I'm 107 years old.
I ran away from home when
I was eleven. I've never
gone back, because I
know I'll get the 'paddle'
if I do.



SFR: Some critics have charged that your recent work fails to live up to your previously high standards. Is there any truth in that charge?

VAN VOGT: I've heard that criticism before. After hearing it the first time, I reread some of my work. I discovered that I hadn't followed as many of my rigid rules in my later novels as I did in earlier works. For the most part, I merely pointed in that direction. I wrote a bit more by intuition. I was a little less demanding in terms of my craftsmanship. And yet, it doesn't seem to have mattered too much. My work continues to sell just as well today. I'm willing, however, to ex-

periment and see whether my new approach results in any significant differences.

SFR: Your latest book, THE ANARCHISTIC COLLOSSUS, deals with a future Earth where anarchy has become a way of life. What motivated you to write such a novel?

VAN VOGT: I had thought about the subject for some time. I asked myself the question, "What technology would it take to produce an anarchistic society?" I don't believe that human nature is "pure" enough to have such a system. The idea proved extremely interesting to me. In the process of examining the question, I amassed many books on the subject. After reading them, I could only shake my head at their naivete. After all, communism is supposed to result in an anarchistic society, and yet there are no real signs of it on the horizon.

SFR: In the book, you contend that the human species is unlikely to change for the better. How do you view the nature of man?

VAN VOGT: Unfortunately, there are many people who have negative motives that we don't need on this planet. These are the people who have the small impulse to do damage which precludes the possibility of an anarchistic society. A sizeable number of young people fit into this category. It's an almost perverse desire to do some needless inconvenience. For instance, consider the case of the child who stuffs up a toilet in a public restroom or the adult who double parks on a busy street. These kinds of negative impulses must somehow be controlled if we ever hope to create an anarchistic society.

SFR: Do you see anarchism as a desirable state in which to live?

VAN VOGT: Well, it's an outrage that the majority is able to dictate behavior for everybody. Where do they get that right? It has historical validity, but no truth in the reality of things. Unfortunately, we must yield to these controls because of the negative harassments perpetrated by the minority. These are the people who must be controlled. It's a sad fact, but there are people who wouldn't contribute a cent to the commonwealth unless they were compelled to do so. They would look for every possible excuse to avoid their obligations. However, the present system is all wrong. We should not have to elect a government to keep the population in check. But we're forced to do so because we're a bunch of villains -- apathetic, selfish, and unfeeling.

SFR: In a recent interview, you stated that you intend "to move more and more away from science fiction."

What plans do you have for the future?

VAN VOGT: As I mentioned, I'm presently working on a screenplay. However, my ability to work in this area is not yet established. It's a very different field, and I haven't yet developed real craftsmanship-security. However, I've solved several of my problems in this area. After all, you can't write an eight-hundred-word scene in a screenplay. So I wasn't quite sure how to tap my knowledge in this field. The procedures require a very detailed outline, something which just kills me. As I see it, however, if other people can do it, I should be able to do it, too. Also, I'm hard at work on four new books, all simultaneously. I hope to have them finished within the next year or so.

SFR: How do you feel about science fiction fandom?

VAN VOGT: I like my fans a great deal. It's nice to meet them at the various science fiction conventions which are held throughout the country. Unfortunately, I haven't been able to attend as many of these meetings as I would have liked. But I do enjoy the feedback -- the give-and-take. It gives me a much better picture of the real world. It's also a good opportunity to get away from my work, which is particularly important, since I always feel guilty when I'm not working. But I know I should do these things. It's wrong to simply work all the time.

SFR: Thank you, Mr. Van Vogt.

ALIEN THOUGHTS CONTINUED FROM P. 18

'Creationists are, of course, free to invoke Divine Intervention and to otherwise invent their own laws of Physics to avoid contradictions of the kind shown above. However, let's not confuse what they think they are doing with Science, which, despite them, is a reasonably self-consistent system for phenomena of medium scale and energy. Perhaps they should just go off and contemplate OMPHALOS (by Phillip Gosse).'

Don't ask me; I just work here.

LETTER FROM PEARL

August 6, 1977

'Although I've been meaning to write to you for some time, it was a letter from George Warren of BOOKSWEST magazine that triggered this missive. I'm not at all familiar with the mag and his letter

didn't mention money but I'm flattered that he went to some trouble to locate me and of course, I will call him. Eeek, I just noticed it's a toll call and I am.....

- a) unemployed
- b) disqualified from collecting unemployment compensation
- c) living on my own money (think of it!)
- d) back in the Singles scuffle with my hair dyed red-blond.

I've had two jobs since I last wrote. The first was with a feminist/activist organization geared toward getting women into the work force which, I thought, might be an interesting change. BUT, the working conditions and work load were deplorable and after 8 days I departed with the forever impression that all feminist/activists are small titted, fat assed and mysteriously motivated. I mean, I for one can't get fired up over establishing a day care center so that more mothers can to to work as machinists helpers @ \$3.75 per hour.

'My second job was with a staid insurance agency in the staid mid-Wilshire area---very Vanilla and head in the armpit. My three week impersonation of a mature, dignified bookkeeper evidently didn't sell and I was let go in a way that made me ineligible for b) (see above).

'c) is too painful for me to discuss at length but d) has been a lot of fun---probably because I entered the fray this time like a bulldog determined to get my teeth into the seat of someone's pants. The plain truth is: I can get along without fucking but I perish for lack of mind-fucking. And I was fading fast by the time I decided to sacrifice my pretty white hair in the interest of playing The Game.

'So there I was, looking like a strawberry-blonde Winston Churchill (for that is the direction Time is taking with my face) and my first time out, found myself attracted to two men in their forties and an astonishingly youthful gent of 56. This gave me a lot of hope for the future---an entire new age spread to toy with---but by my second trip to Singelands, I was up to my young tricks again and took a 33 year old Turk home with me. He was sensational (and so was I), bringing to five, the total number of men with whom I've had transcendental sexual experiences. The Turk left me with a set of sheets which had to be laundered immediately due to his

quint custom of using vinegar as a body rub (all the rage in Istanbul?) and a lot of hope for the future.'

August 8th

'Gee, what an interesting day. This A.M. I went to see about a job at CORE and was interviewed by Mayor Bradley's nephew. He was dressed in a lavishly embroidered dashiki and had all sorts of fun stories to relate about Flo Kennedy, Idi Amin and people of that ilk. I am supposed to be thinking right now about how I'd feel working for a predominantly black organization but I suspect it would be a dangerous environment for a dedicated bigot given to slips of the tongue.

'Then, this afternoon, I had an interview with a transportation school and found myself facing a long-haired, beautiful youth who does accounting work to support himself while he's trying to make it as a recording artist. The Christlike tranquility of his face might well have been Vallium induced so perhaps he didn't notice the overage groupie number I was doing.

'To wrap it up, I called George Warren and was pleased to hear that he intends to pay me. I'm seeing him and his frau tomorrow to discuss getting me started reviewing paperbacks.

'Side Issues

Did you know that the price of grass has gone up to \$55./\$80. a lid? I will say that the quality is terrifying and you really have to get yourself psychologically together before you dare light up.

'PASSAGES is unreadable if you haven't lived a conventional life.'

((Good luck with your writing career, Pearl; you're a natural.

And a note to talented writers of any age: George Warren read and admired Pearl's letters in THE ALIEN CRITIC and SFR of a couple years ago and remembered! When he had the opportunity to use her writing, he sought her out. Most good editors will do this; they're always on the lookout for good, talented writers or artists. Don't be afraid to let your stuff be seen, even by way of letters to editors of small press mags. Pearl wasn't trying to be noticed for career purposes, and publishing her letters was my idea, but the principle is the same: expose yourself!

Shudder

Not that way!))

'Well, SFR #2 arrived today. And, as usual, tho' I've done little more than skim it, it has held up the start of my work day---which usually begins at the crack of noon.

'Unfortunately, you typoed my letter. The next-to-last sentence, 2nd graf should read: She's been married to the same guy for thirty years and he [not she] was involved in the early satellite programs.

'Re your reply to Glen Bever: If libertarians (presumably you mean libertarian anarchists) there are other sorts, you know. Me, I'm a libertarian monarchist) live in a "wish world," you live in an equally unreal nightmare world. I suspect that reality lies somewhere in between, neither as rosey as the vision of the anarcho-capitalists (ugh! what an awful coinage), nor as black as yours.

'You ask when there has ever been a genuine free market in the history of the world. I suggest you reflect on frontier history---not just physical frontiers but trailblazing in general. Where there's a frontier there's freedom and free markets. For a while. Until the "monopolists" and their political/bureaucratic minions (with a little help from their dupes, The People) move in and "civilize" things. (Not infrequently the "monopolists" turn out to be the folks who opened the frontier in the first place, back when they were free marketers. Sigh...)

'Of course it's true that many a frontier has been opened by the State and/or "monopolists." But things have a way of getting out of hand on a frontier. (For a while. Until the "civilizers" and "humanizers" can [re]gain the upper hand.) Just wait until space is opened up... the endless frontier... I can see it now, the coronation of the planet/space colony TANSTAAPL's king, the first of a line to reign inspired by the moto "Plerumque non regimus"... Wish, wish.

'Oh, and by the by, there never was any argument about how many angels could dance on the head of a pin. That was a base canard ginned up by some antipapist or other. Shame on thee for perpetuating it.'

((I didn't know that!))

'Glad to see Darrell the Dull/Dumb relegated to the back of the

book this time. Still, his six pages are six pages too many for my money.

'Alexis Gilliland for Best Fan Artist of '77!!'

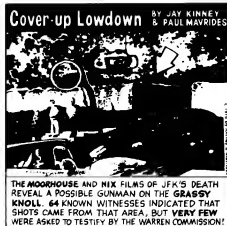
'Enough. Gotta write a story for Jerry Pournelle's black holes antho, and the deadline draws nigh.'

Darrell's column was located in the back pages because it came in last, and I had most of the issue already pasted up.

LETTER FROM ANDREW PORTER
ALGOL Editor & Publisher
P.O. Box 4175, N.Y., N.Y., 10017

August 12, 1977

'I wrote a very long letter to Doug Fratz about THRUST and Ted and various and sundry things. One thing



I was amazed at was Fratz mails out THRUST at 2nd class rates, knows he's doing it illegally, and hopes no one will notice. I am amazed. I never had the nerve to do that. Besides I don't want to ever have the chance to see the inside of a federal jail.

'The column in THRUST is the final link in a long chain, which my letter to Fratz explains. I notice in the ad in the July LOCUS he quotes out of context---hopefully when he prints the whole letter he'll resist that tendency (even if you do practice "let's you and him fight" you're a good editor who knows his job and doesn't cut people's words up too much).

'Speaking of editors, the new editor at GALAXY is J.J. Pierce. Gardner Dozois and I were both considered--Fred Pohl tells me Abrams called him up and asked him if he wanted the job again; Fred just laughed--but the payment problems, and other considerations caused us

both to decline. I've always wanted to edit a bigtime prozine, but one with terminal gangrene is not the ideal spot to begin. I think you'd make a good editor for GALAXY, but you'd have to give up SFR and move to New York, and I can't see you doing that for a dying magazine. I think Baen was making \$14,000 at it, and he was the only one getting paid on time...

'Next time you do a review of ALGOL (or the ALGOL press stuff I send you), put in the address, will ya?'

((There is a Second Class Transient rate which, I understand, is available to anyone who publishes a periodical. The current rates are: 10¢ first 2 ounces, and 6¢ each additional ounce. After five ounces it's cheaper to use Book Rate at 30¢ per pound.

((It is impossible to casually mail at Second Class permit rates... without a permit.

((I'm not so sure GALAXY is in its terminal phase. But you're right about me: even if offered the editorship of ANALOG I wouldn't move to New York...))

LETTER FROM THEODORE R. COGSWELL

August 12, 1977

'Such a quiet issue (SFR #22), Dick. Looks as if most of your regulars have finally made it through the male menopause. But since a couple of your comments on Busby's letter (p. 28) could be misconstrued, I'd like to clear up a couple of points for the benefit of collectors of SFWA trivia.

'1. Only regular members of SFWA were supposed to have received my election flyer--I was after votes, not outside publicity for an internal matter. I evidently used an out-of-date set of stickers that still listed you as a member.

'2. The flyer didn't say--and I've never said elsewhere--that the president fired me as editor of the FORUM or asked me to resign. I dare say there were a few sighs of relief when I quit. But the idea was entirely my own. Those interested in my reasons are referred to e.e. cummings' "I sing of Olaf glad and big"--no scatophagy, he.'

'YOU PARANOIDS JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND US SCHIZOPHRENICS.

--John Morrissey



SCIENCE FICTION SHELF

EXO-PSYCHOLOGY, By Timothy Leary, Peace Press, Los Angeles, 134 pp., \$7.

THE EIGHTH TOWER, By John A. Keel, Signet, New York, 1977, 250 pp., \$1.75.

PROLONGEVITY, By Albert Rosenfeld, Knopf, New York, 1976, 250 pp., \$8.95.

THE IMMORTALIST, By Alan Harrington, Celestial Arts, Millbrae, 1977, 313 pp., \$5.95.

Reviewed By Robert Anton Wilson

It is getting harder and harder to draw a line between science-fact and science-fiction, because the implications of current science are often more staggering than anything published in *ANALOG* or *GALAXY* ten years ago. The rate of acceleration of social-technological change is itself changing at an accelerating rate; Prof. Gerard O'Neill's space-city designs are already more futuristic than the Clarke-Kubrick space-ships in *2001*.

Dr. Timothy Leary, typically, has accepted the interpenetration of science-fact and science-fiction cheerfully, as an inevitable development; he calls his new book, *EXO-PSYCHOLOGY*, "science-fiction," on the grounds that his facts come from science and his style or way of organizing the facts is deliberately science-fiction in flavor.

EXO-PSYCHOLOGY is an astonishing performance even for the Most Controversial Man in America. It's only 134 pages long, but it incorporates literally hundreds of bright new ideas in psychology, neurology, ethology, astro-physics, genetics, sociology and dozens of other sciences, making it one of the most compressed, condensed, highly charged books I've ever seen. Attempting to summarize it is like attempting to summarize the *BRITANNICA*; to review it is like reviewing 20th Century culture itself.

Leary asserts that DNA was seeded on Earth (and on millions of other planets) by Higher Intelligence. This does not mean "the police-court Jehovah" of monotheism, he says precisely. Higher Intelligence might be (a) an advanced interstellar civilization, as suggested by Nobel geneticist Sir Francis Crick, the first to propose that DNA was seeded here; or (b) ourselves-in-the-future traveling backwards in time, as suggested by physicists Jack Sarfatti and Saul Paul Sirag; or (c) sun-atomic consciousness, as suggested by physicist Evan Harris Walker.

Higher Intelligence, Leary proceeds, designed the DNA to evolve, through metamorphoses and migration, into ever more complex and more intelligent forms. Evolution is not guided by "least possible effort and greatest possible blunder" (Neitzsche's caricature of Darwinism) but by a pre-programmed "brain" within the DNA tape-loop.

All living organisms, then, are survival-machines designed by DNA to transport itself about, reproduce itself and create more and better DNA. In short, we are, as geneticist Herbert Miller likes to say, "giant robots" programmed by DNA for its own purposes; we are "fragile, easily replicable units," Leary adds, because DNA can make myriads of duplicates of us.

At each stage of development, each individual robot takes a new imprint in the ethological sense and thus mutates from one "tunnel-reality" to another. For instance, the

emotional game-playing of the toddling infant recapitulates mammalian territorial rituals, and the infant lives in a primate tunnel-reality at that stage. The school-child learning to parrot lessons lives in a paleolithic tunnel-reality. The adolescent gang recapitulates the barbarian horde (Attila, Genghis Khan, etc.) The domesticated adult lives in the tunnel-reality of his or her tribal guilt-virtue game.

No conditioning techniques, Leary insists, can permanently change such imprints. Skinner's Behavior Mod works only so long as the conditioner has the victim more or less imprisoned and totally controls reward and punishment. Once the subject gets free of the conditioner, behavior drifts back to the biochemical circuits of the original imprint.

The only way to change an imprint, then, is to dissolve it chemically at the synaptic level. If anybody but yourself alters your imprints this way, by chemical intervention in the nervous system, that person can totally brainwash you.

On the other hand, Leary says, if you can learn how to use neurochemicals for serial re-imprinting of your own nervous system, you graduate to a new level of evolution, which he calls I², which means intelligence-squared, or intelligence-studying-intelligence, i.e. the nervous system studying and re-imprinting itself. You can then become as smart as you wish, as brave as you wish, as happy as you wish, as wise as you wish. This is a quantum jump above the robot-level at which animal life, and most of humanity, have functioned hitherto.

There is no end to this serial imprinting. "The more intelligent you become," Leary says, "the more you see the advantage in becoming even more intelligent."

The result of this self-metaprogramming is that all the Utopias and Heavenly visions of our imagination can be achieved; we need only imprint these possibilities to make them

neurologically real, and then we can begin making them physically real." "Since no one can allow the game to become bigger than Hir concept of the game (what is not imprinted is not real to the primate brain) therefore let us define the game as large, fast, intense, precise as possible: Unlimited Space, Unlimited Time and Unlimited Intelligence to enjoy same."

Leary summarizes this goal into the acronym, SMI²LE, which means Space Migration, Intelligence² and Life Extension. After the neuropsychology of imprinting is clarified, most of EXO-PSYCHOLOGY deals with the practicality of beginning this Triple Mutation immediately.

Albert Rosenfeld's PROLONGEVITY deals with 1/3 of Dr. Leary's Triple Mutation program---Life Extension. Rosenfeld, who was science editor of LIFE for 11 years and is now science editor of SATURDAY REVIEW, seems to have interviewed everybody engaged in Life Extension research in the United States---or, if not, he probably didn't miss more than a few of them. They all agree that a quantum jump in human lifespan is a very real possibility very soon.

There are degrees of optimism, of course; some speak of merely doubling human lifespan, adding another 70 years; others talk of extending life into centuries or thousands of years; one chapter is devoted to scientific Immortalists, who think we can conquer death entirely sooner or later.

PROLONGEVITY (a title James Joyce would have loved) is sheer science-fiction; the implications are staggering, but the sources are all reputable scientists, who have hard facts to back up their hopes.

Rosenfeld concludes with a 40-page philosophical discussion titled "Should We Do It?", in which he discusses the arguments against Life Extension and finds them all weak and short-sighted.

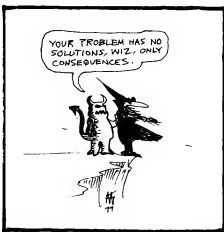
Longevity, to Rosenfeld, means "To have time to travel everywhere"---he neglects to note that this must eventually include Leary's Unlimited Space---"and go back again and again to favorite places. To go on learning---new skills, new sports, new languages, new musical instruments... To read everything you want to read. To listen to all the music, to look at all the pictures, and even paint a few. To savor and re-savor experience and arrive, not at boredom but at new levels of appreciation..." (Serial re-imprinting, or I².)

"There could arise a new breed of human being," Rosenfeld says, "who, merely by virtue of longevity,

through acquisition of a steadily maturing wisdom and a steadily expanding awareness, could finally become...a being worthy to be the trustee of our future evolution."

Rosenfeld agrees with Leary that DNA has programmed us (all life-forms on this planet) to survive, reproduce and die. He also suggests that, in creating humanity, DNA programmed a robot conscious enough to resent death and intelligent enough to do something about it eventually.

Leary and Rosenfeld could say, like Gurdjieff, "Our way is against God and against Nature"---except that they see DNA (the modern equivalent of what mystics meant by "God" and "Nature") as programming this rebellion also. As a "self-developing organism" (Gurdjieff's term), Humankind seems to have been programmed with all the characteristics necessary to transcend the limitations of biological life as it has



hitherto existed on this planet.

The ultimate, or a kind of ultimate, in this line of speculation is Alan Harrington's THE IMMORTALIST, which may be as important as DAS KAPITAL or THE ORIGIN OF SPECIES or THE GOLDEN BOUGH. Harrington, an old friend of Kerouac and Ginsberg and one of the original creators of the Beat Generation of the 1950s, has not mellowed out on Buddhism, tranquilized himself with Transcendental Masturbation, or collapsed into paranoia and bitterness. Instead, he has become more revolutionary and more Utopian over the years. THE IMMORTALIST is one of those rare books that challenges you to re-think your basic philosophy about the universe totally. It is the literary equivalent of finding a rattlesnake in your bedsheets; you can't ignore it! you have to take a stand and make a decision about it.

When Harrington last spoke in Berkeley, a few months ago, he was

shouted down and booted off the stage in a demonstration of hooliganism that hasn't been seen here since Alan Watts was similarly mistreated by Left Fascists back in 1966. It is, of course, a tribute to both Watts and Harrington that they were not permitted to speak; this shows how powerful their ideas are, and how frightening such ideas are to certain neophobes.

THE IMMORTALIST carries current life extension research and theory to the logical conclusion: Humanity, Harrington proposes, can and should ultimately conquer death.

"Death," Harrington says, "is an imposition on the human race, and no longer acceptable."

"Let us hire the scientists," he says, "and spend the money, and hunt down death like an outlaw."

Where Rosenfeld provides the scientific evidence that longevity and eventual immortality are possible, Harrington tackles the much heavier question of their desirability, and does not hesitate to damn and blast every organized ideology based on the acceptance of death. Christianity has never received such a brilliant philosophical assault since the days of H. L. Menckens, and Buddhism and other, more intellectually fashionable religions are treated with no more tenderness. Those who love death, Harrington insists, have the right to die; but they have no right to tell those who love life that we have no moral or metaphysical right to extend it indefinitely. He is quite willing to dance on their graves, but he is not going to let them persuade him to crawl into the grave next to them.

THE IMMORTALIST smashes more sacred cows, questions more "unquestionable" dogmas, assaults more prejudices, than any single book I have ever read. Gore Vidal has already said, with some awe, "Mr. Harrington may have written the most important book of our time." I would go further: Alan Harrington has written the most important book of the millenium.

"Poor Allen Ginsberg," Tim Leary said to me recently. "He lives in constant fear that the future is going to be different from the past." The same fate has overtaken most of the radicals of the 50's and 60's, who are now the most nostalgic and reactionary people around. Alan Harrington stands head and shoulders above all of them, looking bravely into the future while they day-dream wistfully of a dead and irrelevant past.

"Let us now turn to the gentiles," as St. Thomas once wrote. John A. Keel's THE EIGHTH TOWER is as apocalyptic as the works of Leary, Rosenfeld or Harrington, but in an entirely different way. It is the UFO book in the "revisionist" tradition of Dr. Jacques Vallee, Dr. J. Alan Hynek and Brad Steiger; that is, it accepts UFOs as real and tangible, not hallucatory, but it rejects the extra-terrestrial interpretation of these beasties offered by most UFO writers and almost all "Contactees."

Keel, in an earlier book, THIS HAUNTED PLANET, had attributed UFOs to a group he called "Wings Over The World" (WOW), a hypothetical super-mensa frankly derived from H. G. Wells' THINGS TO COME. He has also called them "ultra-terrestrials," an inconveniently ambiguous term, or "the crew that never rests" (a phrase borrowed by Sir Walter Scott's LETTERS ON WITCHCRAFT.

NOW or the crew that never rests has been around since the beginning of history, Keel argues. Where skeptics ask, "Why haven't they contacted us," Keel asks instead, "Why the hell won't they leave us alone?" They created all the miracles of the major religions and can manifest gods, demons, angels or UFOs as easily as a stage magician pulls rabbits from a hat. The Bavarian Illuminati, the Nine Unknown Men, the Ascended Masters, the Secret Chiefs, etc. are other routines this versatile magical theatre has used in its games with humanity.

Keel presents an enormous amount of evidence in only 200 pages, and he does not make comfortable reading. If you want to regard WOW as a single intelligence and call it "God," Keel will go along with you on that metaphor, but he insists that you face the consequences. On the basis of its dealing with humanity, he points out, it looks as if "God is a crackpot."

The only other book I've seen that goes that far was called GOD RIDES A FLYING SAUCER (author forgotten, alas) which concludes clinically, on the basis of the same sort of evidence that Keel sifts through here, that "God" is a paranoid schizophrenic.

Keel once admitted (in OUR HAUNTED PLANET) that some of his theories are tongue-in-cheek; although he doesn't admit that here, I suspect that it is still true. He does quote The Master of Those Who Don't Know, Charles Fort, to the effect that there is no way to discover something new without being offensive, and he certainly is offensive. I suspect that his ultimate aim is ag-

nostic to make us aware that there are mysteries we cannot yet explain.

I suppose Keel will be experienced as a royal pain-in-the-neck by Fundamentalists of all persuasions, whether they stopped their intellectual growth with the theology of the 13th Century, like religious conservatives, or with the science of 1950, like Martin Gardner, high priest of the Materialist Church. To those with really open minds, Keel is bracing, provocative and even amusing.



WEIRD HEROES: VOLUME 1
Edited by Byron Preiss
Pyramid A3746, \$1.50

WEIRD HEROES: VOLUME 2
Edited by Byron Preiss
Pyramid A4044, \$1.50

WEIRD HEROES: VOLUME 5: DOC
PHOENIX, THE OZ ENCOUNTER
By Ted White and Marv Wolfman
Edited by Byron Preiss
Pyramid A4036, \$1.50

WEIRD HEROES: VOLUME 6
Edited by Byron Preiss
Pyramid A4037, \$1.75

Reviewed by Ian McDowell

When I first saw the ads in ANALOG over two years ago, I immediately began searching the local book store racks for WEIRD HEROES: VOLUME 1. Upon finding it I purchased the book and skimmed Editor Preiss's introduction.

'WEIRD HEROES is a collective effort to do something new: to approach three popular heroic fantasy forms--science fiction, the pulps and the comics--from different and exciting directions...

'WEIRD HEROES is a collective effort to give back to heroic fiction its thrilling sense of

adventure and entertainment--the heartbeat of the old pulps...

'...WEIRD HEROES refreshes that concept of fiction as an adventure in itself, without relating to the new wave of violence and pornography in the production of exciting stories.'

Sounded great. I began the book with a great deal of anticipation.

Well now, I have just put down WEIRD HEROES: VOLUME 6 with a mild feeling of disappointment. So far the series has fallen short of its potential. From a visual standpoint it is an unqualified success. The books are beautifully designed and profusely illustrated by some of the best graphic artists in the business. No, the main problem is the stories. Too many of them are attempts at humor and satire. Nothing wrong with that, but I prefer my humor to be funny. Most of these simply aren't.

The first story in VOLUME 1 is "Quest of the Gypsy" by Ron Goulart. This is a bit more straight-faced than Goulart's usual product. I found it rather boring.

Archie Goodwin's "Stalker" is much better. This is probably the best story in the series so far. Goodwin writes in a lean, tough style only hinted at in his previous comic book work. Stalker is probably the most realistic "Weird Hero" in the bunch. This story could have probably been published as a straight mystery.

Preiss's contribution, "Guts", struck me as rather pretentious. Too many stylistic tricks and gimmicks. I don't mind this sort of thing in a story with something serious to say, but it's rather irritating in a piece meant to be "mere" entertainment. Also, I don't share the rest of the world's nostalgic enthusiasm for the 1950s.

"Rose in the Sunshine State" by Joan Kobin is well written but its all-too-obvious literary magazine origins make it out of place here. Very nice illoes by Jeff Jones, though.

The final story in the book, "Showdown at Shootout", is another one of Phillip Jose Farmer's attempts at farce. I wish Farmer would stop this sort of strained and unfunny literary grave robbing and go back to the sort of fiction he used to do so well.

VOLUME 2 is a slight improvement. Ted White's "Doc Phoenix" sounds in description like an unwieldy combination of THE DREAM MASTER and Doc Savage, but White (a very underrated writer) handles it rather well. Still, this is more of

FEATHERS ARE
THE DUMBEST IDEA
I EVER HEARD OF!



Feb 77

a preview of coming attractions than a story in its own right.

"The New York Review of Bird" is the best story in VOLUME 2. Harlan Ellison's no-holds-barred attack on the New York literary establishment is the only genuinely funny piece in the entire series (and Ellison's alter ego, Cordwainer Bird, is easily the most appealing hero). Sic 'em, Harlan.

From here on its down hill all the way. Charlie Swift's western, "The Camden Kid", bored me and I found Steve Engleheart's, "Viva", over-written and rather silly. Eliot S. Maggin's, "SPV: The Underground Express", is another attempt at humour that falls flat on its face. I stopped reading Farmer's, "The Return of Greathart Silver", after six pages. Not only was it un-funny but Farmer's fascination with his character's genealogical histories is becoming a pain in the ass.

I skipped VOLUME 3 featuring a novel length QUEST OF THE GYPSY and VOLUME 4 never appeared on the racks here. I did buy VOLUME 5: THE OZ ENCOUNTER featuring Doc Phoenix. I had high hopes for this one. The introductory story was one of the better pieces in VOLUME 2. Unfortunately, White had been unable to write the novel and so it had been turned over to Mary Wolfman. Some excellent concepts, but Wolfman's style is rather banal. Still, the book has an excellent Jeff Jones cover and many fine illustrations by Stephen Fabian. If you're looking for a good read you could do worse.

VOLUME 6 is back to the anthology format. In his introduction Preiss says that the series will be more sf and fantasy oriented in the future. This volume is more even in quality than its predecessors. Nothing as enjoyable as "Bird" or "Stalker", but nothing really bad either.

"Shinbott Investigates" is one of the few Ron Goulart stories that I really liked. I never laughed but I at least smiled a couple of times. "The Edmond Hamilton Papers" is a nice tribute to the pioneering sf author. "Greathart Silver in the First Command" is the mixture as before. "Galactic Gumshoe" is a bit

less outrageous than Arthur Byron Cover's usual output. Good but somewhat overlong. Preiss claims that Ben Bova's "Orion" will be the favorite story in the book. Well, Bova's style is a bit flat, but as a series it definitely has potential. I'm looking forward to the next installment. At least Bova plays it straight.

And that's the main problem with the series so far. In his afterword to "Viva", Steve Engleheart says, "Comics, at least the best ones, are just like that: straight-facedly serious and off-the-walldedly outrageous at the same time. No matter how somber a saga seems, there is always an amiable awareness of its own absurdity, and it's that ambivalence that attracts me as an author." Unfortunately, that ambivalence is a difficult thing to attain. There's nothing wrong with writing tongue-in-cheek adventures (Lester Dent's best Doc Savage novels have a rather nice sense of screwball comedy and in modern comic books Steve Gerber is consistently outrageous and hilarious) but unless it's done carefully the whole thing gets self consciously silly.

Byron Preiss seems to be a man of considerable taste and intelligence, but in the future he would be well-advised to have his writers steer clear of camp and play it straight.

LORD KALVAN OF OTHERWHEN
By H. Beam Piper
Ace Books 0-441-49051
249 pages, \$1.50

Reviewed by Paul McGuire

Sideways in Time, Cross Time, Lateral Time Travel -- call it whatever you wish, we are talking about Alternate Worlds. When the ability to travel between worlds is patented some organization like the Paratime Society soon follow. Only one more ingredient is left, a man from our world must become involved.

About that last, what kind of man is it that stumbles into another world and survives? Here are some of the qualifications: (1) excellent physical condition, (2) knowledge of military history and strategy, (3) a gift for learning languages, (4) a very good well-rounded education, (5) excellent memory, (6) trained swordsman, or be an amazingly quick learner, (7) charm, at least a sense of humor, ironic preferred, (8) at least average horsemanship, (9) COURAGE, (10) imagina-

tion, (11) ability to command, (12) luck. There are places in this country of ours where such men are considered to be somewhat rare.

Calvin Morrison of the Pennsylvania State Police has all of the above qualities plus a bonus. When asked about the gods of his lost land the hero turns out to be the type who would (and does) answer, "Oh, my people had many gods. There was Conformity, and Authority, and Expense Account, and Opinion. And there was Status... And there was Atom Bomb, the dread destroyer, who would some day come to end the world. None were very good gods, and I worshipped none of them." (pp. 40-41)

Calvin likes the world he has landed in much better, becomes Kalvan, and starts taking over. One religion has a monopoly on gunpowder in that flintlock society, so Kalvan sets up his own factory. Meanwhile the Paratime Police are hot on his trail -- and another H. Beam Piper SF spaceship is underway!

Piper often used standard plots, but he excellently developed them. Situations were never static. Although action novels, Piper's books are concerned with change and human growth, of which he seemed to feel war was an agent. (At times Kalvan reads like an military history text book.) And Piper knows that it is not the scientist who wades hip deep through new worlds, but the adventurer.

'Look what he has, on his new time-line, that his old one could never give him. He's a great nobleman; they have gone out of fashion on Euro-American, where the Common Man is the ideal. He's going to marry a beautiful princess, and they've even gone out of fashion for children's fairy tales. He's a sword-swinging soldier of fortune, and they've vanished from a nuclear weapons world. He's commanding a good little army, and making a better one of it, the work he loves. And he has a cause worth fighting for, and an enemy worth beating.' (pp. 92-93)

Which makes for a novel worth reading, especially when the Paratime Police start slipping agents in, and...

The characters are not unusual but Piper made them both more complex and simultaneously more human. In contrast, his hero's actions always seemed the more extraordinary.

In simple straight-up prose,

Piper, using familiar enough plots, would people and pace his novels with uncanny insight. He did what everyone else did, but he did it a lot better.

H. Beam Piper is one who showed that the storytelling can be more vital than the story, and the "familiar" can be made more wondrous and exciting than the farther reaches of speculation provided the author has enough talent, knowledge and skill. The man could knock out a mean yarn, in other words.

'Carrying the ball to an open window, he tossed it outside, and then looked up as it vanished in the night. After a few seconds, high above, there was an instant's flash among the many visible stars. It looked like a meteor; a Hostig, seeing it, would have made a wish.'

(p. 75)

DRAGONSINGER

By Anne McCaffrey
Atheneum, 1977
264 pages, \$7.95

Reviewed by John DiPrete

McCaffrey's DRAGONSINGER is a sequel to her DRAGONSONG, an SF juvenile that's OK for adults.

DRAGONSINGER is about a music-centered world called Pern, a dragonsinger named Menolly, and a musician's academy, The Harper Craft Hall. Menolly, a new arrival here, has trouble making friends -- owing to the fact she is a girl (harpers are all boys) and she owns fire lizards. Her dragonlike pets arouse scorn and envy from her rivals.

The backbone of the novel concerns Menolly's problems: feelings of isolation, painful memories, and guilt. Her interactions are of live interest: they center around her instructors, rivals and friends. There are loads of characters -- Master Domick, an acidic, short-tempered instructor; Camo, a half-witted cook; Piemur, an impish rascal; Silvina, the strong-willed matriarch -- and dozens of others.

The novel's Good Stuff starts on page 70 or so (it takes 70 pages to explain the setting in full detail, but it's worth the wait.) There's some gentle, insightful prose, vivid imagery, and subtle philosophy. Definitely a good yarn for people who like people (in their fiction, at least.) Recommended.

AN ENCYCLOPEDIA OF FAIRIES
By Katharine Briggs
Pantheon Books, 1977
481 pages, \$12.95

Reviewed by John DiPrete

Katharine Briggs must be well-acquainted with hobgoblins, bogies, brownies, and other mythological creatures -- she's compiled an encyclopedia! It's entitled (you guessed it) AN ENCYCLOPEDIA OF FAIRIES, and it's for all ages.

Ms. Briggs's authoritative textbook spans 1,000 years of the supernatural -- from gnomes to dragons to elves -- all in alphabetical order. The book is a valuable guide for scholars and laymen, inasmuch as it overflows with odd, fascinating information. Like for instance: Did you know that elves esteem qualities of "heatness, cheerfulness, and generosity" in human beings, and look down upon "braggarts and meddlers"? (In this respect, it would seem elves resemble a great many ordinary people.)

As a companion to the writing, vivid and lifelike artwork graces the interior of the volume. Twenty-three plates of fantasy and alien settings are reproduced with superb detail and add a visual dimension throughout. Legendary artists like Henry Russell, J. Simmons, Richard Doyle and Kay Nielson are represented here. Art and content go hand in hand in this comprehensive, but entertaining, document. It's not for everyone, but -- who cares? (90% of Everything is Not for Everyone -- DiPrete's Law.)

THE FUTURIANS

By Damon Knight
John Day Company, \$10.95

Reviewed by Steve Miller

The comparison is inevitable. THE FUTURIANS by Knight versus Harry Warner Junior's ALL OUR YESTERDAYS. You'll never be able to multiply by the two books: they are as different as apples and oranges.

Warner's book is basically a history, neatly subdivided and organized, relying on a few letters and a lot of memory. Memory, of course, is failable. THE FUTURIANS, on the other hand, depends on primary sources wherever possible -- letters, books, pamphlets, fan magazines and multiple interviews. If there is a difference between the recall of the people involved, Knight is careful to so inform the reader. Ultimately

though, the biggest difference is that THE FUTURIANS is a biography of a group: The Futurians. Warner found it expedient to limit his discussion of people to their involvement in science fiction and science fiction fandom -- Knight was not bound by this limitation.

THE FUTURIANS is a compelling book. In a way the book is embarrassing, something like walking into a room and discovering your younger sister making out with her boyfriend. Like the history of any family there are stories of falling in love (or lust) and falling out again. There is the continuing saga of John Michael, a long-time member of the Futurians who eventually died in a frozen puddle of water. There is Wollheim, serious and steady, knowing that one day he will be on top. There is Asimov, Knight, Merrill and others, each presented not as science fiction writer but as person, with a person's weakness and strengths.

The Futurians as a group was to provide a number of major writers and editors to today's SF field. Additionally Damon Knight credits his association with the group and the constant writing that was part of being with the group as a source for the Milford Writing Conference, and later on the Clarion SF Workshops. And again, since Knight was the founder of SPWA, one wonders if that, too, might not be traceable back to the short-lived heyday of The Futurians.

Who were they, these Futurians? A group of brash, awkward, and sometimes starving young people who banded together against the whole world. Knight's spare prose and the excellent interviews show them in excellent light, as do the outtakes from publications and even quotes from Isaac Asimov's diary. These insecure quasi-revolutionary writers, editors, and publishers helped shape each other's future as well as the future of the genre, and it seems a wonder after reading the book that they



managed not to kill each other off.

THE FUTURIANS is well worth reading, but the cover price of \$10.95 makes me wonder who will be reading it. I hope that libraries will order the book, and that fans will lend other fans the book. I also wonder if the cover design is planned in such a way that casual observers will think that it is an anthology with works by Knight, Asimov, Blish, Wollheim etc. The audience for THE FUTURIANS seems limited to me--I hope it catches on.

REG NOTE: When I was a kid, s-f editors were Gods. When I started writing in 1959, s-f editors--any editor--were Gods. Since that time I've met editors and writers and publishers...and they're all people.

What will strike you as you read THE FUTURIANS is how scroungy this group was in the beginning. Apparently misfits all, some physical disasters as well. Hopeless.

And of course I kept thinking of myself---the 15-year-old self I was in 1942---and how I've changed [and how I've not changed!] The world of the Thirties and Forties is as alien now as the civilization of ancient Egypt.

Yet time did its work on the members of the Futurians, and the survivors are mostly successes, and if you didn't know different you'd think they had always been normal people....

What I'm trying to say is that to a misfit s-f fan of today who feels hopeless and doomed and a social leper...have faith, kid. Read this book and know that some ugly ducklings DO turn into swans.

THE DREAM OF X

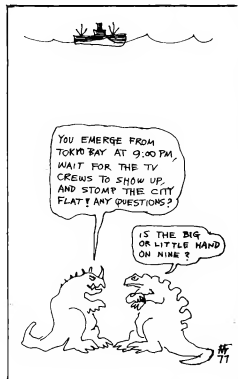
By William Hope Hodgson
Donald M. Grant, 140 pp, \$15.00

Reviewed by Lee Weinstein

THE DREAM OF X is a beautifully packaged condensation of Hodgson's massive novel THE NIGHT LAND, lavishly illustrated by Steve Fabian. A short introduction by Sam Moskowitz explains how Hodgson came to abridge his 200,000 word novel to the size of a 20,000 word novelette, and emphasizes that all the alterations in the text were made solely by Hodgson.

A digression concerning the parent novel may be in order here. THE NIGHT LAND is a book of tremendous power and vision, although it is severely flawed. It is set in the remote future, millions of years after the sun has burned out. The last outpost of mankind is an eight

mile high metal pyramid set in a great chasm 100 miles below the Earth's frozen surface. Surrounding the pyramid is a strange, surreal landscape beset with glowing fire-holes and dimly lit monstrous beings that lie in wait for the pyramid's power to burn out. It is across this nightmarish landscape that the hero must journey to rescue a young maiden (with whom he is in telepathic contact) from a newly discovered second pyramid which has fallen prey to the beseeching monstrosities. It is explained in the first chapter that both the hero and the maiden are future incarnations of a 17th century man and his wife. Both have visited this future land in dreams,



and when the wife dies, these dreams are the man's only hope of being reunited with her.

The novel suffers from two major flaws. Firstly, it is written in an inaccurate attempt at 17th century English, which is so awkward and verbose that many people find it unreadable over such great length. Secondly, a great portion of the book is taken up by interminable Victorian love scenes which H.P. Lovecraft described as "nauseously sticky romantic sentimentality".

THE DREAM OF X consists largely of the opening and closing sequences of the novel. The bulk of the novel, a detailed hour-by-hour description of the hero's progress over the dark desolation has been reduced to about 14 pages. Footnotes inserted by Hodgson close up the gaps, and

what remains is still quite coherent, although a tremendous number of evocative scenes, and with them much of the inventiveness of the original have been left out.

However, the brilliant description of the pyramid and its surroundings from the beginning of the novel, perhaps the most powerful section of the book, has been retained in its entirety, as has the long sequence beginning with the return of the couple to the vicinity of the pyramid.

On comparing the texts of the two versions, I find that very little has actually been rewritten. Most of the text of the condensation has merely been transplanted from the original. Although the affected prose is unchanged, it is perhaps more bearable over this shorter length, and most of the romantic sequences have been eliminated. The sequences which remain still convey much of the awe, terror and mystery of the original. The prose, despite its failings, still manages to create some of the most vivid and potent imagery in English literature.

If the text were all this book contained, it would be worth getting, but Steve Fabian has graced it with a large number of illustrations, including 14 full color plates. Fabian is a real craftsman and has a true feeling for Hodgson's work. My only complaint is one plate which has been printed out of register, although I suppose this is forgivable since it appears correctly on the dust jacket.

RAISE THE TITANIC!

By Clive Cussler
Viking Press, N.Y., 1976, \$8.95

Reviewed by Nick Coleman

Midnight April 15, 1912--Cold, confusion and fear grip thousands of people as the stage is set for the worst sea disaster in the history of the North Atlantic. Only one individual, a lone gunman, remains calm as he forces a young ship's officer to lead him to the number one cargo hold. In the hole a large vault is opened by the gunman. Entering the vault, he releases the officer by stating that "Yes, I'm staying. I've murdered eight good and true men. I can't live with that." The officer flees, barely able to reach the safety of freezing waters as waves close over the R.M.S. Titanic.

July 1987--American scientists working with Meta Section, a top secret research group covertly formed by the president, are con-

vinced of their ability to construct the first impregnable defense system. Only one element is required for its completion—byzantium, a rare mineral found only in minute amounts. As several pounds are required to activate the system, an intensive world-wide search begins.

The search ends only to begin anew on the Russian island of Novaya in the Arctic Sea. A covert American mission, successful in arousing the curiosity of the Russians, is successful too in its discovery that a large amount of byzantium was taken from the island in 1911-12 by a group of American miners. The precious mineral was transported to the United States via an erratic and hazardous route, a route that ended aboard the White Star Liner R.M.S. Titanic.

Thus begins the task of raising the Titanic. And if nature alone couldn't heighten the odds against success, the Russians could.

COMMENT: The romanticism of the Titanic and the notion of raising this great ship so that she might complete her maiden voyage will provide the appeal to make this book a prime seller on the paperback market. But do not expect to be overwhelmed by Titanic trivia or historical footnote. Although present, it is in much smaller doses than expected. (One would do better here to read Clarke's IMPERIAL EARTH.) However, if the desire is for a competent cast of characters caught up in a novel of the near future that is jam-packed with suspense, international intrigue, mystery and just plain high adventure, then grab a copy of RAISE THE TITANIC!

Taut suspense is maintained throughout the novel by weaving together an increasing Russian interest and the development of natural forces. Espionage and counter-espionage blows are dealt above the surface while sabotage attempts below conjure up memories of Herbert's UNDER PRESSURE. By the time a hurricane develops in the gulf with a predicted course of 41° 46' North 50° 14' West, you may find your fingers racing for the end.

As if the Russians and nature were not enough, Cussler has taken a salt shaker of traditional skits and sprinkled them liberally throughout the novel. Included is a locked room murder in a deep sea submarine, the solving of a 75-year-old mystery, a daring rescue, a combat assault and (yep, 'fraid so) the final story twist. Minor mysteries, questions and problems, however, are solved as the story progresses, adding much to the novel's momentum and the reader's satisfaction.

Although marketed as a mainstream

novel, RAISE THE TITANIC! is as clearly within the Science Fiction genre as Bova's MILLENIUM. Not only is the novel set in the near future, but it contains scientific data and technological developments concerning that other unknown universe, the ocean, to keep the scientifically-minded satisfied throughout.

ALIEN THOUGHTS CONTINUED FROM P. 24

"THE LUST FOR POWER IS CONDEMNED BY THOSE WITH NO HEART FOR THE BATTLE. POWER IS FREEDOM, POWER IS NEVER HAVING TO SAY, 'YES, SIR,' AND POWER IS NEVER HAVING TO COUNT THE COST. POWER HAS MANY FACES, BEING POWERLESS IS BEING A SLAVE, I'VE BEEN A SLAVE AND I'VE BEEN FREE; AND FREE IS BETTER."

—A.L. TEREJO



"THE LUST FOR POWER IS ROOTED NOT IN STRENGTH BUT IN WEAKNESS."

—ERICH FROMM

It is becoming obvious at least to me that there is no real "solution" to the "welfare mess." What most Liberals don't realize is that most "underprivileged" people who go onto welfare see the programs to help them differently from the politicians and the administrators.

Those on the receiving end see a free handout, a subsidy, a way of beating the world to a degree, and they see it as a something-for-nothing goodie. And they have no qualms about cheating on the "rules", because they correctly see the rules as idiosyncrasy. The government is break-

ing the rules of nature with this free money program in the first place. Somebody else has to pay for this, somebody has to work to be taxed to give the money to them who do no work in return. That is inherently immoral, and they know it. They also know there are millions of public employees making damned good wages, making careers, from these programs and that those high salaries are a further rip-off of the taxpayers.

The government is seen, constantly, as immoral, and is seen (in the news) as a constant violator of its own rules.

And so The Game is to get the most, lie, warp the truth....get that extra welfare money, that extra grant, that extra (you name it).

So why the surprise and lament when these people loot and burn and steal when the lights go out and the opportunity for 'Christmas in July' comes? It's just another form of welfare, man. You dig? It's just another way of beating The System.

The politicians take care of themselves with increased salaries and marvelous fringe benefits and very, very generous retirement funds. The unions use their leverage to get higher and higher rates and benefits. Everybody has to look out for number one and if necessary shaft number two, right?

The wonder of wonders is that the people who pay for these politicians' games and Liberal games and welfare games stand still for it.

Oh, hell, who cares? I do, a few others do... There are a few signs that the times are a-changin', and the inevitable adjustments will cause all kinds of howls. More fun.

For instance, the conventional wisdom is that we will be in for unending inflation in the years ahead. But don't count on it. If inflation is the creation of fiat money by government, then deflation is the destruction of money by non-government forces.

What can destroy money? Debt liquidation and its consequences. The government may run a 100 billion dollar deficit in one year, but what happens if that is cancelled by 100 billion dollars worth of bankruptcies? Think about that and the mountain of personal, corporate and public debt which has been created and structured into the economy to the point that ever-increasing consumer and corporate and government debt is absolutely necessary to keep the economy growing at its present modest pace. Farm debt, for instance is enormous, and might be the trigger that brings the slow, growing avalanche of bankruptcies which will mark the next Great Depression.

There, I've had my Doomsaying for this issue...unless something momentous happens on the economic front.

I've decided to stick with the present subscription and retail rates for another year--through 1978 at least, despite constant postal and printing cost increases. In fact, I'm yielding to a lust for color by adding a heavy orange cover stock this issue (other color stock in subsequent issues) which should give the lovely Fabian nude a great display. I have to expect that the heavy cover will result in increased sales in bookstores and thus help pay the extra costs. I also expect to go to heaven.

Gee, aren't I a good-guy publisher?

"What's the catch, Geis? What hidden motive lurks in that diseased mind?"

I am simply noble and altruistic, Alter. Get back into your dungeon.

"No, no, don't try to con me, Geis! You're up to something! Ever since you increased from 48 to 56 pages, and then to 80 pages, I've smelled a submerged rat. No sane fan does these things without a profit in mind of some kind. Come on! Tell the truth!"

No...no, you'll never get it out of me, Alter! Go away.

"The truth, Geis! Confess! Confess!"

No! I'm just uncomfortable in a too-profitable position! I don't like to make too much money on fan-oriented sf work.

"Bull! You're... I know! You want to be loved! That's it, isn't it? You lust for love, affection, and praise! Your whole life is ruled by a carefully lusted lust for egoboo!"

Arrrrghhhhhh! You had to tell, didn't you?

"Of course! What's an Alter-Ego for?"

For misleading the readers. I actually want to drive ALGOL to the wall, dominate fandom, win at least one Hugo per year, and become a legendary figure like John Campbell, Jr.

"Crap. If that were true you'd never write a dialogue like this and let it be published. Come on, Geis, tell us why you really act this way."

"Well....okay. It all goes back to my childhood. I was a sickly child and full of neurosis. By the time I was five....

"Forget it, Geis. I've got better things to do than listen to your life story."

berg on another matter served to remind me that I had planned to run his six Ace introductions in this issue, and forgot to mention them in the run-down of coming items in the tail-end of last issue.

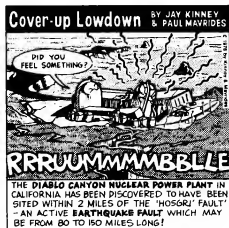
Hmm. I may have a reschedule an interview.

Jerry Pournelle had some further thoughts on the SFWA question and my positions as expressed on pages 5 and 6.

LETTER FROM J.E. POURNELLE

August 15, 1977

'Hell, man, we can't print most of what we know about things. And the fact that we're willing to share information with those not members--not so very many of those, really--would seem a point in our favor, not



against us. As to Grievance, I assure you we've done pretty well for people.

'You don't write enough sf to make it worthwhile being a member, and the outfit wasn't designed for you. It has tended to have a bit of social club atmosphere, and I don't really regret that; trouble is sometimes that obscures the real functions. One thing SFWA had done is preventative--our people are not screwed as regularly as those in other genre, precisely because we do tend to hang together. I think I could prove that if I wanted to.

'A good bit more than 30% of the membership gets to cons, and a great deal of those who don't talk to members who've been at conventions; the information gets around, for those who have some need for it and a desire to find out.

'I can see why you don't bother with membership, and I doubt I would in your place--but is that the same as saying the outfit oughtn't exist? What we probably need is tighter

membership rules, but then we'd get screams from the part-timers. Got any suggestions on what to do about that?'

((If you disenfranchise the part-time writers, and the one-story-sold-every-year-or-so writers, your membership will slip probably below 100 members, which will force SEVERE retrenchments in the budget. You know where. SFWA needs the fringe professional the way the government needs multitudes of quiet, long-suffering taxpayers.))

LETTER FROM NEAL WILGUS:

August 18, 1977

'Chris Evans' confusion over the proper spelling of Llandysillogogoch is understandable since he's talking about the modern Welsh village of Llanfairpwllgwyngillogerychwyrndrobwlllantysiliogogoch, which does indeed employ a t rather than a d in some references. The point Evans missed is that the planet called Llandysillogogoch was discovered toward the end of the 23rd century when the t had turned to d. "goch" rhymed with "smooch" and the full name had evolved into something that wouldn't filter through even Alter's typer. Reference: 999th edition of GUINNESS BOOK OF RECORDS, oddest Q-type planet in Sector 23t.

'Update to my letter in SFR #22: Rumor has it there's a movie version of ILLUMINATUS! in the works; as of August first the Lovecraft marker fund was only \$170 short of the \$1200 needed to erect the headstones on August 20, HPL's birthday; and HPL-marker-fund coordinator Dirk Mosis has a new address:

C/o Department of Psychology
Kearney State College
Kearney, NE 68847 '

LETTER FROM MICHAEL T. SHOEMAKER

August 16, 1977

'About that computer chess game that was advertised. Gary Grady, Ned Brooks and I discussed it at Disclave, and they are of the opinion that something that good, that small, that cheap can't exist. I don't know. I do know that even the best computer chess players can be led to make atrocious mistakes against human players because the computers have no positional understanding of the game. Computers have no understanding of pawn structure, nor of strong and weak squares. These are

things that can't be quantified the way tactics can.

'By the way, a robot domestic is scheduled to go on sale for \$4000 in 1979. "Developed by Quasar Industries, Inc., Rutherford, N.J., the 5 foot 4 inch 180 pound robot can be programmed to fry an egg, mop the floors, mow lawns, vacuum rugs, even babysit the kids."

((I'll wait for the sex-mate model.))

8-27-77 AND this past week we've had record rainfalls for August--over three inches in three days. Something is Wrong... *Mutter, mutter...*

I have had frivolous thoughts about stenciling a novel or two and running off limited editions on the old Gestetner...dreams, dreams. But a few days ago the friendly Gestetner representative for this section of Portland called and suggested I buy a lot of ink if I needed it, because beginning Sept. 1st the prices of all Gestetner supplies would go up 10%.

Out of curiosity I asked what a tube of basic black ink costs now (it being several years since I've bought any) and he stunned me by saying, 5.95 per tube!

And due to go up to \$.645 per tube in a few days!

Astonishing, how a company can price itself out of its market. The selling point of mimeographs has been their economy, in the past. But now the local Quick-Print budget offset printing company can give you better looking professional printing for less money, less effort, less everything, than mimeo. And it would cost me more to mimeograph SFR now, at 5000 copies, than it costs to have it all done commercially by offset. (To say nothing of all that labor saved!)

So, goodbye, Gestetner. I have nearly 80 tubes of ink left over from three or four years ago (at \$.35 or so per tube!) and I'll gradually use it up doing subscription forms and notices and such. After that--offset. And any private editions of my novels will be done by Times Litho.

A further discouraging sign of the times is that the local post office is having ten or twelve foot high fencing with barbed wire angled outward at the top placed around its parking lot/loading dock area, because of rampant vandalism: the Jeeps and trucks have been spray-painted, batteries stolen, tires cut, name it.

More and more we are coming to live in a fortress society, a suspicious society, an us/them society.

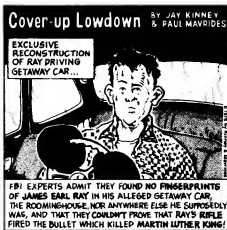
Not only do the local grocery stores have more or less uniformed security men on duty, very visible, but so does the local bank, and now the local Penny's store, too, has a gun-toting guard. Last week, too, one of their plate glass windows was broken during the night.

Why are these guards necessary? They save the merchants money. Their presence inhibits, also, shoplifting, which is endemic in black neighborhoods.

What gets me is that in the Great Depression when times were so tough, guards in stores were not necessary. Shoplifting was a minor expense. It was safe to walk the streets.

What's different? Television, and the death of God.

Television is a terrific educational machine. It opens the world



to those who watch it. It cracks open minds, it shatters Faith, it undermines social institutions---simply by Being. It could be rigidly censored for violence and sex, and still it would explode social and cultural structures.

And, despite the surface twitches of fundamentalists and sects and widely publicized pseudo-religions, God is dead. Science and television have made Him ridiculous---the creature of emotional cripples and lower class zealots and hypocritical middle-class phonyes.

There is a vacuum in the world; it's impossible to believe in an afterlife and a supreme being and a Hell and a Heaven---and keep a straight face and intellectual integrity.

We would all like to Believe in God, and we need to Believe in God, but the answers to the natural questions that occur to a questioning, curious mind, an educated mind, aren't good enough as given by the religionists. They all come down to "You must have faith," and arguments based on ignorance, misinformation, and misdirection.

If there is no Hell or Heaven, there is no sin. There is only situational ethics and force. What you see is what you get, so get what you can while you can, because there ain't no pie in the sky. That's the true operating morality going in the world today. What used to be the philosophy of upper class cynics and Leaders and men of high finance has now been adopted by the entire populace.

Until science proves there is a God we'll have to live without Him.

Something happened at the post office when I delivered the forty or so sacks of SFR #22 for mailing.

I had as usual stacked the sacks with care on a big open-sided cart, taken the paperwork in to the Permits Desk, and returned to show the man (Mr. Jacobs) the cart so that the mail could begin the process... As I was putting four sacks full of #3 mail sacks (for use next mailing) in the car trunk, I noticed that he had opened a huge trap door in the floor of the five-foot high loading dock and was unceremoniously, even brutally (to my concerned eyes) throwing, kicking, shoving the sacks of SFR down into the hole.

I cringed and asked what he was doing that for? Seems there's a conveyor belt system under there, and the sacks were on the way to be distributed in the multi-leveled machinery-bowled innards of the huge building.

But...but that had to be at least a three foot drop to the conveyor, and I could see in my mind's eye the crunch and crush of the envelopes and SFRs in the sacks. So if you have received a bent, battered copy in the mails, don't think it's MY fault; it's the way they handle those sacks. And I resent that callous brutality. There has to be a better way of coping with the volume of mail. The most heavy envelope made couldn't withstand the crush I witnessed.

I saw my children mauled, dehumanized, treated like...like junk mail, and I resent it!

We saw ORCA and the latest Sinbad movie a week ago, at a 99¢ movie.

ORCA, with Richard Harris as a modern-day Ahab, is a thinly disguised copy of MOBY DICK, with an amazingly intelligent killer whale as a kind of hero who is out to get revenge on the clod who killed his pregnant mate. Worth seeing, but the whale's cunning and smarts seem a bit Too Much.

The SINBAD movie was remarkable for the bad lines Patrick Wayne had to use in his exhibition of bad acting, and the nude bathing scene (long shot) and side-view bare breast

flashes in what was supposed to be a pure G-rated children's film.

LETTER FROM JUDY MEHOWN

July, 1977

'First: I enjoy your magazine immensely. So do my friends who are too cheap to buy their own copies, but I suppose they don't really count.

'Second: A tale which might amuse/depress you. I recently graduated from high school, a product of the nation-wide Advanced Placement program which allows some high schoolers to take college level courses with an eye towards college credit. Did rather well, I did (in English and European History) and am expecting about nine hours credit this fall plus the opportunity of avoiding various freshman classes.

'Well and good, but now for the good part.

'Our school board has attacked the program at my ex-high school for 'fostering elitism'---that is, the classes do not slow down for 'average/below average' students and the teachers are quite liberal in handing out D's and F's.

'I've never heard fellow students---A.P. or not---really complain about the program. Certainly not along those lines.

'The program's future is in doubt: waste of taxpayers' money. Track team is more important than learning to think.

'The good die young; the bad die young. Only the mediocre survive."

'PS: Who put the 'sin' in 'sincere'?"

((Politicians put the 'sin' in 'sincere', I'dear. And thanks for the information. It's long been obvious that "equal opportunity" and "head start" apply, in liberal thinking, to only the dumb 10% of the country's children. The idea that an educational system might help naturally superior minds develop to their full potential (along with inferior minds) seems to terrify

---with good reason: superior children tend to see through mediocre thinking, flawed policies, ego-tripping social engineering... You see, there is only so much money and they certainly don't want to use it to develop the best minds with the most to contribute. That would be a 'waste'.))

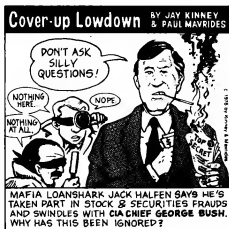
LETTER FROM LUISE WHITE, UK

July, 1977

'Just found SFR #21 and read

page 33 on nasty Rhodesian guerrillas killing missionaries. Wish you could do more than make sexist jokes. Both missionaries (RC) had officiated at Nkonio's wedding and were leading supporters of ZAPH(?) for past 15 years. Perhaps if you read one book on Rhodesia before commenting on it (what I've written is common info in most of the literate world but not necessarily in all newspapers) you'd actually appear intelligent. Please note that missionaries were supporters of one faction of nationalists, not classified info that!!'

((Thanks for your viewpoint, Luise, and sorry I couldn't read your scribble clearly. I didn't realize officiating at a wedding and favoring one group over another was a capital offense in your mind, and thus excused summary execution



((I assume you would have no quarrel with an opposition sympathizer who might live in England and who might look you up and cut your throat? Fair is fair, and the end does justify the means, now, doesn't it?))

Last night, just as RHODA was ending and A YEAR AT THE TOP was beginning, I received my very first obscene phone call, and it was from a suitably vile-linguaged young lady, too, and was long distance.

I am flattered.

The call lasted nearly half an hour and consisted mostly of complaints about men in the sexual arena. It was not really obscene; mostly venting-of-spleen.

But that's okay.

I could sympathize with all her complaints about male virgins, male crudities, male impotence, male sexual selfishness, male lies... but when she said she didn't like the idea of going to bed with 50-year-old men for fear of them dying of a heart

attack! That cut me to the quick.

So, dear young lady, whoever you are, call again if you wish, and maybe Dr. Sigmund Geis can help you. I listen good and give out with suitably sage advice which no one ever takes, so no harm done. And remember: it is true that we live and learn. We change, all of us. And the agony of the turbulent emotional now will pass....

"GAAAK! Geis, what is this shit you're laying down? These clichés are rotten to the core!"

I'm merely trying to help a troubled soul, Alter. I---

"Shut up, Geis. The A.M.A. will have you up for practicing illegal fraud. Only licensed Psychologists and Psychiatrists are permitted to practice fraud."

Don't you mean Freud?

"Would you be happier if I said witch-doctoring? Faith-healing? These lucrative positions are restricted to those who have gone to official fraud schools and paid all their dues. They will not permit interlopers to dip into the pool of suckers and skim some of the profits."

Oh. I didn't realize...

"Okay. Just knock it off with advice to troubled young broads. Talk about something else."

I find it amusing that the Los Angeles Times has decided to no longer carry ads for sex movies and/or other sex businesses, declaring that type of commerce to be vile, ugly, and without re-eming social value. They make note that their virtue will cost them \$500,000 in advertising revenues per year.

Ahhh, the sanctimoniousness of it all! This country is still so strung out on the horror of sex that it cannot face its existence, or the fact that a multi-billion dollar business that never ever goes away (no matter how hard you don't admit it) must be socially significant, and that its services must have value to society.

But actually all this decision by the Times does is give a lift to the counter-culture press in the L.A. area. They'll print the sex ads (they do already!) and they'll be known, now, as the only place such ads appear. Their circulations ought to increase and harden, now.

LETTER FROM IAN COVELL

August, 1977

'Collectors of Jack Williamson may be interested to know that the new Sphere edition of ONE AGAINST THE LEGION also contains a massive novella (82 pages of a 220 page book)

called "Nowhere Near" which is @ 1967 and may have been in an earlier edition, but it's the first thing I've heard about it.

I also see from LOCUS that Gordon Eklund has taken over a Doc Smith series; Will someone kindly tell me what in the name of all that's true has Eklund got to do with the aims, characters, morality or any other part of Doc Smith? They don't even inhabit the same social system; Who picks these authors? And where does he keep his guide dog when he's doing it?'

(Easy, Ian, easy... Give Gordon a chance. Judge on the work produced, not on expectations and prejudice. Remember how good a job James Blish did on the STAR TREK novelizations? And remember that nothing concentrates the mind and changes viewpoints so much as the prospect of making a lot of money.)

LETTER FROM DANIEL SAY

August 24, 1977

I thought that you might be interested in the enclosed photocopies of pages mentioning you and your works from a really awful book on MODERN EROTIC LITERATURE.

'Perhaps you already have the book or know Michael Perkins since the same name shows up in the Essex House lists.

'It is not a book worth buying. Much better to get it through the local library (call number should be 809.933) or through the local library's interlibrary loan system.

'It is (p. 152) "to acquaint... people with the masterpieces of the genre." It is a Masterplots book, a Reader's Digest of recent paperbacks. How can a person write such a book when they read only one language, don't mention or know of G. Legman, don't read anything but new books and then only if available in paperbacks, and calls a sparse cornerstore selection of recent paperbacks a "Selected Bibliography".

'Readers might be interested in Perkins' Readers Disgust versions of some books by Geis, (of course), Hank Stine, Barry Malzberg, Samuel R. Delaney and Philip Jose Farmer and the chapter on Essex House, etc.

'Not mentioning Legman, tsk, tsk, tsk...

'THE SECRET RECORD

By Michael Perkins
(New York: William Morrow & Co. 1976)'

(Yes, thanks for the copies of the passages concerning me and my porno. I'm tempted beyond endurance to quote the things Perkins has to say about RAW MEAT.

"Richard E. Geis' RAW MEAT (1969) is an example of how a heavy-handed use of these devices may stifle any erotic content." RAW MEAT is more of a utopian fable like BRAVE NEW WORLD than it is an erotic novel, despite the fact that the principal device of the book is sexual. Geis posits a computer-dominated world of the future in which sex has been totally divorced from reproduction, where birth is not mentioned in polite conversation. This world is run by 'Mother Computer.'

MOTHER CONTROLS THE POPULATION BY REGULATING BIRTHS TO DEATHS. SEX HAS BEEN SEPAR-



ATED COMPLETELY FROM WHAT THE ANCIENTS CALLED FAMILY LIFE, AND FROM THE PATTERN OF... CHILDREN...PREGNANCY AND BIRTH.

"In RAW MEAT Geis speculates on some interesting ideas concerning the teleological significance of birth to sexuality, but like so many science fiction writers he expresses his ideas through the mouths of cartoon figures. The best s-f writers at least substitute a certain emotional ambience for the lack of breathing characters, just as erotic novelists substitute evocations of physicality and sensuality for full psychological characterizations. Geis' people in RAW MEAT are puppets, but his theme starts a train of thought about the symbolic importance of reproduction in erotic fiction and rushes it to a logical destination.

"The implications of his theme ultimately seem more memorable than his fictional exposition of it: the causal relationship between sex and reproduction is implicit in the work of serious erotic writers, contrary to the opinion of critics who casti-

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gate the genre for its unreality. Granted, birth is not viewed as a possible result of sexual activity in the typical formalistic fantasies of bad erotic fiction, just as the biological facts of death are not dwelt upon in murder mysteries; but eroticism is a means, a path, rather than an end to itself in erotic literature from Sade through Bataille to many of the Essex House novelists. So while the question of reproduction as one of the consequences of the sexual act is seldom directly confronted in erotic fiction, its importance is implicit. We do not have to see an autopsy report to realize the importance of a death in fiction, or that death is a consequence of the act of murder. But rather than focus on the consequence mystery writers concentrate on the causative act of murder, as erotic writers do on the act of sex. The act of sex, or murder, contains more potential for the dramatic revelation of important themes than their issues, the importance of which the reader must assume."

((I now join the ranks of those writers who cannot recognise their books from the 'analysis' by Critics.

((A lot of the books Perkins examines were bad novels because they let literary pretensions get in the way of their main reason-for-existence: erotic sex scenes embedded in a good, high-tension story. That's what the readers wanted and thought they were buying. To the degree the authors (and editors) evaded that pay-off, they were cheating the buyer. And despite some office politics and cultural/intellectual/personality clashes, I think buyer dissatisfaction and low sales were the main reasons why Essex House died. (Correct me if I'm wrong, Brian.)

((The reason porno novels don't include the consequences of sex--- pregnancy and venereal disease--- is simply that the readers don't want them in their sex fantasies! And the readers won't buy a porn novel that includes sexual consequences of that type.

((Perkins is indulging in pretentious intellectual bullshitting.))

LETTER FROM KEN HAHN

August 20, 1977

'Neil Kvern is kicking around the idea of editing a "Best of the Year" series of stories culled from various semi-pro zines. He'd like feedback from editors and interested persons. Address: Neil Kvern, Box 258, Cataldo, Idaho, 83810.'

ALIEN THOUGHTS CONTINUED ON PAGE 42

AN INTERVIEW WITH JACK VANCE

VANCE: I'll try to cooperate with you by answering questions which, in my opinion, don't diminish the impact of the stories themselves. As you are aware, I am not anxious to discuss myself personally, and I won't undertake to analyze sources, influence, etcetera, in any great detail. However, feel free to ask questions, to which I in turn may or may not respond.

SFR: When you mention sources and influences in that way, I'm reminded of Asimov's anecdote in THE HUGO WINNERS, transmitted from Bob Silverberg; apparently he asked you in conversation whether you regarded Kafka or Dunsany as a greater influence upon your work, whereupon you changed the subject. Faced with such a question, I imagine most writers might have done the same thing, but could you say anything about your reluctance to dissect your work?

VANCE: I think the situation is that, once I finish a story, I regard it as finished, out of the way. I enjoy writing, but when I go back and reconsider the product, then I see faults, and it annoys me.

SFR: A number of writers have been cited as influential upon you -- Stapledon, Burroughs, Chambers, Campbell, Howard -- and, outside the genre, R.L. Stevenson, Wren, Saki, Woodhouse and Jeffrey Farnol. I'd regard most of these as peripheral, although some affinities are recognizable, such as Saki's talent for detached, ironic humor and economic characterization, Stevenson's color and themes, Farnol's handling of action, bargaining scenes and female characters, and Woodhouse's influence in SPACE OPERA...

VANCE: I think everything I've ever read has worked on me to some effect. The names you mention are more or less picked at random from my background. I don't, personally, take these influences too seriously; I think in general I'm my own man. These other writers have certainly served to show me what can be accomplished with words and ideas; they're ineffect, exemplars, although maybe that's not the right word either.

SFR: I think your style, themes and plotting weren't greatly influenced by other writers.

VANCE: This is essentially correct.

SFR: For example, I've seen Hodgson's NIGHT LAND cited as an influence upon your "Dying Earth" stories, although they have almost nothing in common except a cold sun; Clark Ashton Smith's "Zothique" stories are maybe closer...

VANCE: I'm not aware of Hodgson -- I've never read THE NIGHT LAND. I have, of course, read Clark Ashton Smith, when I was an adolescent. We lived in the country in those days; our mailbox was about a mile from our house, and, on the day I might expect WEIRD TALES in the mail, I can remember walking down to that mailbox, peering in there, and being very unhappy if WEIRD TALES hadn't arrived.

SFR: As regards your style, I think James Blish summarized it very well in a review of EIGHT FANTASMS AND MAGICIS, in which he said, "Vance's marvelous feeling for the telling of sensual detail, his incantatory tone, his muted humor, his rather arcane vocabulary, his ear for exactly the right proper names, his love for the mediaeval and for anachronisms in general... have been with him from the beginning." There's also your very strong visual sense, your characteristic dialogue, your elaborate syntax and meticulous grammar -- there's a split infinitive in THE DIRDIR that's conspicuous by its uniqueness --

VANCE: I remember that split infinitive! The rhythm of that particular sentence demanded that that infinitive be split. I tried the adverb on either side but I found no other recourse... so I did it. I've always regretted it a bit. I could have used different syntax.

SFR: Any comments on the development of your style -- is it very disciplined, or does it more or less come naturally to you to write in this way?

VANCE: My style certainly isn't accidental; I know exactly what I want to do, and work something over until I get what I want. I try, perhaps subconsciously, to use a style which is appropriate to the subject matter. I do this more or less automatically, I think, without any particular self-consciousness. There is, from time to time, the occasional happy accident, where the sentence reads properly the first time through.

SFR: Have you ever tried to introduce technical devices into your writing? I'm thinking of things like Poul Anderson's practice of using at least three sensory modalities in descriptive passages, or Van Vogt's 800-word scenes.

VANCE: I don't use, and I'm not aware of such technical devices; I think that when you start using artifices, you destroy your flexibility, so to speak. I don't think Poul takes such artificial techniques seriously; he's too good a writer.

SFR: In tracking down your output since the beginning of your career, I expected to find a fairly straightforward development from pretty bad at the beginning, through mediocre to competent and then increasing sophistication. This wasn't really the case; your very first story stands up remarkably well to present-day reading (that was "The World Thinker" in 1945) and much of your early work is of consistently high quality...

VANCE: I generally prefer to forget my early stories. I decided when I got out of college that I was going to be a professional writer and set about learning the trade. These early stories represent my apprenticeship.



CONDUCTED BY PETER CLOSE

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SFR: You established quite a following among the readers with the "Magnus Ridolph" series in STARTLING

VANCE: I set out doing these to see if I could be a million-word-a-year man, you know, one of these chaps that writes prodigiously, on the order of John Creasey, Max Brand, Simonon... So one weekend, I wrote the first two "Magnus Ridolph" stories - I forget what their names were; "Hard Luck Digging" and something else. They were first-draft work and, of course, absolutely terrible.

SFR: They did seem to get better, though, after "The Howling Bounders" I think.

VANCE: I think there is a definite improvement towards the end of the series. Some I rather liked -- "The Kokod Warriors"; the last two or three anyway. I've used some of these in collections.

Oddly enough, "Hard Luck Digging", the worst thing I ever wrote, was picked up by 20th Century Fox for a movie. And, to my amazement, I was hired to prepare a treatment and a scenario from this wretched story. I worked in the studio for several months, until my producer, Julian Blaustein, was promoted to executive producer and all his projects were shelved, and I was required no longer. Which didn't hurt my feelings too much. I was afraid of getting trapped in the golden snare. I was trapped paid handsomely of course, but I think, by and large, I've been happier as a freelance writer.

A little later I did some television work, CAPTAIN VIDEO, an early space program. A number of other writers worked on it as well -- Robert Richardson; Arthur Clarke, I think, was involved; Sheckley; I don't know whether Poul Anderson did any of that or not, but I don't think so.

It was about this time that I met Frank Herbert. My wife and I were living in the mountains and he lived in the same area. Our two families went down to Mexico and set up a "writers' household" on Lake Chapala. We stayed there for three or four months and neither of us sold anything very significant, and we returned to the States in utter poverty.

SFR: Yes, you weren't very prolific for the first few years, up to around 1950 -- although you did break into ASTOUNDING in 1947 with "I'll Build Your Dream Castle."

VANCE: Although "I'll Build Your Dream Castle" sold to Campbell, it's a story I never liked particularly.

SFR: Most of your early work appeared in STARTLING and THRILLING WONDER

and other pulps, which weren't very prestigious. This seems to have happened quite frequently throughout your career -- you've often chosen poor markets for your work.

VANCE: The fact of the matter is, I was happy to sell anywhere. I never became part of John Campbell's entourage. I met him only once or twice. There's no mystery about my appearing in these markets -- a matter of expedience.

SFR: You were in ASTOUNDING again in 1950 with "The Potters of Firk", but the major step forward in that year must have been THE DYING EARTH. Is it correct that you wrote these stories at an early stage of your career, and had trouble getting them published?

VANCE: The stories were written at sea and failed to sell individually, so I rewrote them, tied them together and sold them to Hillman as a book.

SFR: Were you happy with the Hillman deal? I've always thought it was an appallingly shoddy edition -- did you think the book deserved better?

VANCE: I didn't think much about it at all. I was writing something else and, as I mentioned, once I finish a book, I tend rather to lose interest in it. Then it's my agent's responsibility and he's supposed to do the best he can with the material.

A friend, Tim Underwood, has published the book in a hardcover edition, a very nice job, illustrated by George Barr. So this book has been reprinted several times -- first Hillman, then Lancer, now Pocket Books. Lancer, I think, had two printings.

VANCE: There are some discrepancies in later editions -- for example, "Mazirian the Magician" is the first story in the original edition, although, chronologically, it follows "Turjan of Miir"; the order is reversed in subsequent publication.

It was my intention to make "Mazirian" the first chapter; I thought it led into the second story better than the second story led into the first.

SFR: "Guyal of Sferre" also exists in two versions--the story as printed in EIGHT FANTASMS and MAGICS is quite heavily cut. Sometimes this is for the better (for example, you replace the "Book of Kells", which is an extant manuscript, with the "Lost Book of Caraz", which is invented) but mostly, I think, the editing damages the story. You've edited most of the long descriptive passages, such as the entrance hall of the Museum of Man...

KNIGHT WITH 1,000 EYES



VANCE: As I re-read it, I thought that I'd better make a few changes, but both Bob Silverberg and yourself have not approved of these changes. At the time, I thought I was eliminating over-exuberant expressions and extravagance.

SFR: Also in 1950, you published a story called "Ultimate Quest" under the name "John Holbrook", which is, of course, a version of your full name, John Holbrook Vance, which you put on your mystery stories. Any particular reason for using a pseudonym of sorts?

VANCE: I was starting to write more prolifically and I think I had some vague intention of segregating stories--for a good story, I'd use one name, and for stories that were not so good, I'd use another. But it didn't work out; one story was much like another, so I used the same name for everything.

There is a story which I used another pseudonym for, and which I've always rather liked. It appeared in a magazine called MALCOLM'S MAGAZINE, not many people are aware of this story. It was called, I think, "First Star I See Tonight". I have forgotten the pseudonym I used, but it was a mystery story, dealing with astronomers who became annoyed with each other. In my opinion, it's a pretty good story.

SFR: The sociological or anthropological element in your work was now becoming evident. Was this sort of direction a conscious decision on your part?

VANCE: I experimented with the "gimmick" story, the "pure" or "hard core"



The other names that you mention were used because they sounded right in the context.

SFR: My only cavil concerns SERVANTS OF THE WANGH--I was unable to buy the original edition when one of London's major sf bookshops, located in a rather red-light area, sold out almost at once to a variety of passers-by who were apparently under the impression that it dealt with an exotic form of masturbation...

(American readers are generally unaware of the vulgar British word "wank")

science fiction--and I found it rather tedious. I don't care to write stories whose punch, or denouement, is based on some unfamiliar aspect of science; it seems a rather sterile approach. I gradually drifted into the sociological or anthropological stories which I've found myself more interested in, although I have a scientific background. I originally started university as a mining engineer, became a physics major, then decided that a technical life was not for me. I ultimately wound up in journalism--although I'm certainly not cut out to be a reporter by any means.

SFR: Have you had any formal education in social science?

VANCE: No, none whatever. In fact, I think education in social science is a terrible waste of time, and it is a study which people go into when they can't think of anything better to do...

SFR: It's well known that you've travelled very widely--do you think this has helped to generate the alien societies which you specialize in?

VANCE: For the most part I don't think travel has generated any alien folkways or customs.

SFR: You have a legendary skill with proper names. Is this natural inventiveness, or do you have techniques for making up or collecting exotic names?

VANCE: No, I don't have any particular technique. Usually it's just a matter of trial and error.

SFR: I'm thinking of such examples as the old English legal meaning of "deodand" as an instrument of death, the Latin root for humour in "lucounu", and so on. I'm completely at a loss as to the etymology of things like "LOUN stones", "Scop Sivij Suthiro" or "Ballenkarch"...

VANCE: "Deodand"--I hesitated over that word. Then I thought it had a good sound, and very few readers are acquainted with rather archaic legal terminology, so I used it anyway.

VANCE: I was unaware of the British usage until, I think, John Brunner informed me. Of course, if I'd known, I'd have avoided the term.

SFR: I don't want to dwell in excessive detail upon your output during the prolific period from 1950 to 1953--

VANCE: I don't want to dwell upon it either!

SFR: Nonetheless, during this time, you sold an excellent and complex "hard" sf short to GALAXY (Winner Lose All), contributed a thoughtful, if poorly resolved, psi story to ASTOUNDING (Telek), diversified to a number of other markets, invented the unique and devastatingly cool Jean Parlier, in "Abercrombie Station" and "Cholwell's Chickens", struck off in new directions with very atmospheric stories such as "Noise" and "The Mittr", and published VANDALS OF THE VOID, a juvenile novel eagerly sought after by many enthusiasts, including me, despite the negative opinions of those few who have read it. Any comments?

VANCE: You mention VANDALS OF THE VOID. This was a story commissioned by Winston. As I recall, I wrote it in Italy--Positano, which you're probably acquainted with. We had a beautiful flat overlooking the water, and lived there all one spring while I wrote the book.

My boy John--John II--has read the book, and he likes it, although the rascal won't read any of my other books. I think he finds them too grown-up. But he thinks I'm a good writer on the basis of VANDALS OF THE VOID.

SFR: There was "Big Planet", of course, in 1952. Richard Tiedman, in his monograph JACK VANCE: SCIENCE FICTION STYLIST, quotes you as saying that the story originally ran to 120,000 words, with three entire sequences cut by Sam Mines (against your better judgment) for its appearance in STARTLING.

VANCE: I wrote that as a longer story, with a few more incidents and episodes in it, but when I sold it, the editor, whoever it was, wanted it shorter. So I cut out some of the episodes, and I don't think it hurt the story too much. It was "against my better judgment", I suppose, to some extent--because the more I sold, the more I'd get paid.

When it was published as a book, somebody else edited it, and this was done without my consent--changing the name, for instance, of "Heinzelman" to "Atman". This bothered me tremendously.

SFR: How did you come to write such a massive story in the first place?

VANCE: Oh, I just felt in the mood.

SFR: Your next major work was your first formal adult novel, TO LIVE FOREVER. I like this a lot, but I think the most pressing question about it must be why it falls apart so badly right at the end, in an unreal setting of chaos and improbable instantaneous revolution. This has happened time and again in subsequent stories, too. No doubt you've heard this many times before; would you be willing to comment on it?

VANCE: No, I don't have any particular comment, except that sometimes I write myself into traps. I have to end the story some way or another. I should take much more trouble with my plotting than I do. I think I start writing on the basis of a mood and figure: Oh, well, the story will take care of itself. Of course the story doesn't take care of itself, and halfway through, I start asking myself where is the story going? Sometimes I find that in order to end the story in 60,000-70,000 words, I have to go through some rather undignified antics. Well, I'll try to do better in future...

SFR: I'll skip quickly through the next few years--there's "The Men Return" (one of your best short stories), THE LANGUAGES OF PAO, the excellent baroque, "The Miracle Workers", "Ullward's Retreat", which seems to be one of your own favorites, "Dodkin's Job" ... In 1960, you published THE MAN IN THE CAGE, a mystery novel set in Morocco, which won you an Edgar award from the Mystery Writers of America. Do you want to say anything about how you moved into this field?

VANCE: I wanted to see if I could make any money in suspense, murder--so I started writing these things. I stopped because I make more money with science fiction and fantasy. Although two or three years ago I wrote BAD RONALD which did pretty well, although I think it deserved better. It should have been pub-

lished in hardcovers; Softcovers... you fling them out into this abyss, and they're gone. I like this particular book. It was bought by TV and a rather successful TV movie was made of the thing. I like THE FOX VALLEY MURDERS and THE PLEASANT GROVE MURDERS; these are the two California mysteries. They're part of California which Europeans are not aware of; they think in terms of San Francisco and Los Angeles and Hollywood, and of course California is an enormous number of different environments.

SFR: In the next couple of years you wrote THE MOON MOTH (perhaps the best novelette of your career), "The Augmented Agent", "The Dragon Masters" (your first Hugo winner and one of your best-known stories)... In 1963 you made your first appearance in F&SF with "Green Magic" and also began the splendid "Demon Princes" series with "The Star King" in GALAXY. There's a lot to be said about this series--for example, the way in which Gersen develops and grows through the sequence, after starting off as a very repressed, withdrawn character...

VANCE: I did not develop Gersen purposefully. The more you work with a character the more real he becomes. I think this is probably what happened in the case of Gersen--after working with him for three novels, he began to become a human being.

SFR: GALAXY ran "The Star King" and "The Palace of Love", and "The Killing Machine" was scheduled for IF, but never appeared--what happened there?

VANCE: "The Killing Machine" was sold to Fred Pohl, and it was about to appear; in fact he'd got the art work ready and was all set to go. But through a mistake at the agency, Berkley brought the softcover out before Fred Pohl had a chance to get the story into the magazine. In other words, it was just an administrative error, back in New York. So Fred Pohl couldn't use the story... and in order to repay him for the money he'd advanced me, I wrote "The Last Castle" for GALAXY. At the time, as I recall, we were living in Tahiti; we'd gone down there and rented a lovely cottage about 15 miles south of Papeete. Like Positano it was just an absolutely glorious place to work--but it wasn't so glorious finding I had to write this story for nothing.

SFR: How was it that you never finished the series?

VANCE: I don't remember why I didn't go on with the last two. I think maybe I got sidetracked into a murder mystery, THE DEADLY ISLES. The milieu was the South Pacific, the

Marquesas, Tahiti, big sailing vessels--well, not big, but 120-foot schooners.

This is one of my interests, deep-sea sailing. We currently have a small sailboat (well, it's my boy Johnny's boat) and we keep talking about our next one. All my life I have planned deep-sea sailing and somehow the plans never materialize. My wife's not a deep-sea type but my boy is, and hopefully we'll at least cruise the South Pacific.

But to get back to the two final stories in the "Demon Princes" series--I'm currently trying to work out a deal. I don't know when they'll come out; I haven't got the contracts yet.

SFR: In 1964 Ballantine brought out your first collection, FUTURE TENSE. You had been publishing stories since 1945--any reason why you waited so long before issuing a collection?

VANCE: I was never happy with the earlier material. The material now in collections is about the only stories that I want to reissue.

SFR: 1965--you brought out several books and started the "Cugel" sequence in F&SF. You also had a couple of stories in British magazines--one was "Alfred's Ark" in NEW WORLDS, which is a very odd little vignette.

VANCE: I'd written that as a kind of recreation and had it hanging around for years. Meredith finally sold it.

SFR: There was also "The Secret" in IMPULSE. Is this related to the "lost" story of that title that you mention in THE BEST OF JACK VANCE? [As Mr. Vance began to answer this, the cassette ran out.]

VANCE: It's only appropriate that, just as I was talking about "The Secret", the tape runs out... these have been the circumstances connected with this story--things like that happen. I wasn't even aware it had been published; I never got paid for it. There's been a terrible foul-up somewhere.

SFR: I've always admired the "Cugel" series, THE EYES OF THE OVERWORLD, immensely, but there're some questions about it. Cugel seems to start off as a sympathetic sort of character--crafty and opportunistic, but fairly amiable--but towards the end of the sequence, he's becoming much more evil; he tricks all those pilgrims into accompanying him across the desert on a trek which only he survives, he betrays Fabeln and his daughter to a grisly fate among the rat-folk....

VANCE: I think you exaggerate the differences in Cugel's character from the beginning to the end. I never thought of him as either sympathetic or unsympathetic, but just the person he is--a rogue and a scoundrel, capricious, self-serving. I think you're making too much of changes in Cugel's personality. I have never thought of him as developing from story to story.

SFR: That's interesting, because the "Cil" episode, which does portray Cugel as a very malicious, selfish sort of person, is the second story in THE EYES OF THE OVERWORLD, yet didn't appear in the sequence as published in F&SF. I thought that perhaps this was inserted afterwards to shift the characterization at an early point in the story.

VANCE: No, this isn't at all the case. For some reason, which to this day I've never been able to figure out, Ferman at F&SF decided not to publish this second story, "Cil". Why, I don't know; he had access to the whole book, but he chose not to publish this episode.

I'm planning a second book of Cugel stories. "The Seventeen Virgins" had already appeared. Lin Carter has a second story--he's had it for several years now--which is called "A Bagful of Dreams". I've got stories plotted and I'm very anxious to get at them. Along with the PALACE OF LOVE I think EYES OF THE OVERWORLD is my favourite book. These two I like very much indeed.

Tim Underwood, who's published THE DYING EARTH, is going to do a nicely-illustrated hardcover job on EYES OF THE OVERWORLD too. (That's not my title, incidentally. In fact lots of my novels--TO LIVE FOREVER, SHOWBOAT WORLD--aren't my titles!).

SFR: Your output was rather restricted in 1967.

WELL, GET OFF THE HORN DUMMY, AND LET ME TALK TO THE COMPUTER!



VANCE: A friend and I became involved in restoring an old Victorian type mansion which meant a lot of fancy ornament. I wasn't particularly making any money doing this but I got interested in it, and my writing suffered because we spent all our time producing fancy woodwork.

SFR: There was "The Narrow Land" in FANTASTIC; this was supposed to be the first in a series.

VANCE: I wrote this for ANALOG, the first of three-story sequence, but Campbell didn't like it very much. In fact, he was rather unreasonable. Since it didn't sell in a good market, I never completed the sequence.

SFR: In 1968 you began to publish the "Planet of Adventure" series. Compared to some of the stories you had been writing immediately prior to this, I don't see these books as being among your best.

VANCE: The "Tschai" set was commissioned by Ace. They enticed me with talk of big promotion, million-copy sales... Owing to BATMAN AND ROBIN they wanted a juvenile in it, so I put a juvenile in; I don't think he has too much function. Well, I won't say that; I think I've probably used him as well as I could in the circumstances. I had fun writing these things, although I never made much money out of them.

The word "money" must seem a recent theme, but I think you'll find that when someone supports himself by his writing, he's very much aware of how much a story is making for him.

SFR: EIGHT FANTASMS AND MAGICS came out at about this time; it's an impressive collection, if a little familiar in parts, and the stated unifying theme of "the paranormal" didn't fit too well.

VANCE: Unfortunately I don't have too many stories that I'd want to re-issue, so I had to scratch through rather familiar things. They changed the title a bit; originally it was something like EIGHT FANTASMS, UNFAMILIAR SCIENCES, AND... something else.

SFR: Then there is BIPHRYIO, which first appeared as a serial in FANTASTIC. This has had some rave reviews, including an exceptionally perceptive one from Joanna Russ in F&SF, and I think it's a splendid novel which represents the very peak of your achievement. I can only urge you to do what you can to restore it to print.

VANCE: I'd forgotten it ran in FANTASTIC and I haven't seen Joanna

Russ's review. This will probably be reissued soon.

SFR: Over the next couple of years, there was the "Durdane" series and in '73 a couple of commissioned stories--"Morrison" and "Rumfuddle". And you started a new series with TRULLION: ALASTOR 2262, which is a thoroughly entertaining novel. The game of hussade is a splendid invention and could usefully be staged at a science fiction convention, although the selection of shierls might be controversial.

VANCE: By all means! I appoint you to take charge of this ...

SFR: You also came back to the mystery field with BAD RONALD from Ballantine; I haven't seen this one, just the rather arch publicity.

VANCE: I didn't like Ballantine's production at all, or their cover. I didn't see any of their publicity.



SFR: You used the name "John Holbrook Vance" on this one, as on all your mysteries. Is this maybe intended to direct them to a different readership?

VANCE: I use that name for murder mysteries or suspense stories, to differentiate between these two aspects of my work. I've often thought that maybe, if I were starting all over again, I probably wouldn't use "Jack Vance" as a byline. "John Vance" would be somewhat more dignified perhaps.

SFR: What about THE GRAY PRINCE? I don't consider this as successful as some of your other recent books.

VANCE: This isn't one of my favourite stories, although I think there are some pretty good parts in it. I prefer the ALASTOR series, the "Demon Prince" sequence, and, of course, "Ougel" and THE PALACE OF LOVE.

SFR: Then there's "Assault on a City" in Terry Carr's anthology UNIVERSE 4--this one seems to me as if it were written against a deadline..

VANCE: Well, I won't comment on that. I don't think it's quite the case.

SFR: ... and "The Seventeen Virgins", already mentioned; colourful, prodigiously inventive, perfectly paced, neatly plotted--a jewel of a story...and SHOWBOAT WORLD--an unexpected surprise...

VANCE: I like this story, too. I think there's scope here for a beautiful movie, but unfortunately, I do not think anyone would spend the money on it.

SFR: You brought out the second book in the ALASTOR series a couple of years after TRULLION--this was MARINE: ALASTOR 933. I don't like this one as much as the first--the plot seems to lurch around rather a lot and the story shows signs of haste. For example, giving a character a name and then changing it a

few chapters later tends to be confusing to readers.

VANCE: Well, de gustibus...As for signs of haste, not really. "Confusing" perhaps--but I thought I made it clear that the name given to him was, in a sense, a stop-gap. He needed a name, but I couldn't use his real name because, for the first half of the book, his real name was not known. It was just something which had to be done.

I'm currently working on number three in the ALASTOR sequence; in fact, the story's just about done. It's completely different from the other two, and I think you may like it better than MARINE.

SFR: What about THE BEST OF JACK VANCE? Who picked the stories?

VANCE: I selected them.

SFR: All the stories have appeared at least once in other books, several of which are still in print or readily available. I'd have thought that a representative "best" collection would have included stories like

"The World-Thinker", "I'll Build Your Dream Castle", a Ridolph story, "The Potters of First", "The Overlords of Maxis", certainly "Winner Lose All"...

VANCE: Well, I picked stories for the reasons I've already mentioned, and all these that you mention here, I'm not too happy with.

SFR: "Green Magic"? "The Seventeen Virgins"?

VANCE: "Green Magic" has appeared in several collections and I'm saving "The Seventeen Virgins"--oh, well, I could have put that one in, I suppose. It doesn't make that much difference. Maybe what I'd like to do is THE SECOND-BEST OF JACK VANCE and put these in...or the THIRD-BEST, FOURTH-BEST stories...

SFR: MASKE: THAERY is your latest novel, which I haven't seen yet.

VANCE: I'll probably do others in this sequence; I have two more in mind at least. But I've got so many books ahead of me...I don't know. I hope I'll get time to do it all.

SFR: Most of your recent work has been at book length and in series--do you expect this to continue?

VANCE: It takes me just about as long to plot a short story as to plot a novel. I remember I sweated for a month and a half over "Sulwens Planet" and I never did come up with a decent ending.

SFR: Your recent shorter work has mostly been in original anthologies, but I notice you're one of the few major writers who hasn't contributed to Harlan Ellison's DANGEROUS VISIONS series. Do you want to say why that is?

VANCE: I don't know Harlan Ellison very well; I've only met him once or twice. He asked me to do a story, but I was busy otherwise.

SFR: What about Michael Shea's QUEST FOR SIMBILIS, which attempts to continue the adventures of Cugel? Were you involved in this at all?

VANCE: No. I made no contribution to his work; I didn't comment on the manuscript, or make any suggestions. I told him to go ahead and publish it if he could find a publisher, which he did. I just asked him: "Please don't kill off Cugel!"

SFR: You've already stated that you don't wish to discuss yourself personally--

VANCE: Well, about my reasons--I'm not at all shy or anything of the sort. However, on many books, the back cover shows a picture of the author holding a cat or smoking a pipe and he looks an utter ass. He's obviously posing. A reader is not

supposed to be aware that someone's written the story--he's supposed to be completely immersed, submerged in the environment. Now, if you're aware of the back cover, of this funny-looking chap with his cat or his guitar with the studio lights on him, it certainly subtracts from the effect of the story.

Also, the biographical notes about people...they're so much the same somehow. What they do again is bring to life a kind of...not a stereotype, but a superficiality. There's nothing wrong with me; I'm not deformed or grotesque or anything of that sort--in fact, I'm quite normal. But I'd much prefer to be "Jack Vance"--those two words on the byline--than any picture on the back of the jacket with my biography, "born such-and-such a time" and "went to school such-and-such a place" and "does this, does that"--they have no bearing on the story; they interest the readers not at all and create distortions.

SFR: Well, I'll limit myself to reproducing what I've already written about your background, derived from various published sources; if there is anything you'd want to correct or expand upon, I hope you'll let me know.

'As regards Vance's biography and personal circumstances, public information is limited. He has the reputation of a man who guards his privacy, and has stated in print on several occasions that he feels a writer does his work no service by intruding his own persona upon the reader's attention. In a brief autobiographical note accompanying his first published story in 1945, he described himself as "taciturn" and this seems to have been an enduring component of his personality. Even his age is uncertain, although he was in his early twenties in 1945.

'Vance has apparently led an adventurous life and has traveled widely throughout the world, spending several years in the Merchant Marines. He has now settled in California with his family, although continuing to travel. An elegant biographical sketch of Vance by Avram Davidson appeared in THE BEST FROM F&SF: 13th SERIES accompanying "Green Magic"--excerpts:

"...slightly delayed honeymoon enabled us to meet the pleasant Mr. Vance, pleasant wife, and

pleasant boy-child...Vance span the state of California in space and time, one great-great-grandfather arriving 11 years before the Gold Rush; Jack born in San Francisco, raised in the San Joaquin-Sacramento Delta, high-schooled in Los Angeles, attended

U. of C.--picked fruit, hopped bells, canned, mined, constructed, rigged, fared at sea, played jazz band comets--lives in an old house in the Oakland Hills, defies storms and tempests in building the famous houseboat with Frank Herbert and Paul Anderson...says he is in favour of "...feasting and festivity, sailing, ceramics, books, Scotch Bourbon, beer, gin and wine" and is against "...modern architecture, psychiatry, confusion, Picasso, Muzak, progressives and reactionaries," etc."

'There are various snippets of information to the effect that Vance is also an expert ceramicist, that his house is on the side of a cliff and can only be reached on foot, and that the legendary houseboat displayed an unfortunate propensity to sink (perhaps under the weight of its owners' accumulated awards) and passed into other hands.'

VANCE: This is more or less accurate...I don't "guard my privacy"; I've got lots of friends. I'm not particularly taciturn...

Our houseboat only sank once. A big storm came up and Paul Anderson and I had to go down in wetsuits and lift it up with all manner of means. Anyway, we're talking about building a new one now--just talk, so far.

SFR: You were Guest of Honour at a convention in Sweden last year--did you enjoy this?

VANCE: Yes, I did, very much. I had a splendid time--in fact much better than I anticipated. Perhaps you know John Henry Holmberg who's a fine fellow--I number him among my friends now.

SFR: Do you think the convention helped your career?

VANCE: No, I don't think so! They are not selling too much of my stuff over in Sweden. But I had a good time. First time I've ever been to Scandinavia, as a matter fact, which is one reason I went.

SFR: Do you think you're still learning as a writer?

VANCE: Oh, I don't know about that...I don't think so. I do feel that each story must be better than the one before, and I'm more afraid of reiteration and of duplicating myself than I am of...I think I've learned the techniques of writing by this time. If not, then I'm in a sorry condition.

SFR: What about plans for the future?

VANCE: The main problem is time. We've got a thousand projects going here; we're working on our house and it's coming along very slowly. We are gradually remodelling it; when we get done it'll be a very large place. My boy has been draigooned in to service and we just finished putting down a big slate floor in our living room. Next year it's just conceivable that we might come to Europe, but this is by no means certain. Of course, I've got all kinds of writing to be done. Two "Demon Princes" novels; I'd like to do a second in the MASKE sequence, then finish the "Cugel" stories...I've really got to work harder than I have been heretofore.

SFR: I wish you the best of luck and look forward to seeing the results. Mr. Vance, thank you very much.

ALIEN THOUGHTS CONTINUED FROM P. 35

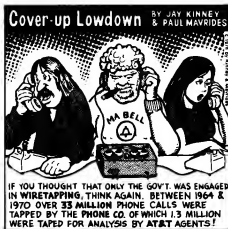
LETTER FROM AVE DON CAROL

9 August, 1977

I have this tendency to read letters without first looking at the names of who wrote them, and I was only barely into this one letter when I found myself saying--"This moron is a doctor!"--and I looked up, and sure enough, it says, "Neil Blumberg, M.D." After a while you can tell, you see, because doctors always seem to take this attitude that somehow it is the patient who is at fault no matter how bad the malpractice is.

"Look. I gave up the career I'd spent a lifetime in training for so I could study enough medicine to keep me from getting murdered by doctors. I had to give up my career, because nobody has time to study that much medicine and still carry on another vocation. I wasn't just randomly picking any odd doctor who came along, either. I was getting all kinds of recommendations for anyone I decided to see, I was seeing the most respected experts in the field--and I still almost got murdered more than once. You simply can't go to a doctor and expect him to help you, and that's all there is to it. You must, in fact, avoid

doctors unless you already know you are seriously in need of one... And my advice there is that unless you know what you have or are in severe pain, you just don't go to see one. It's too risky. It is simply not worth it to see a shrink; there is too much danger of having them give you dangerous drugs which are not likely to do you any good. Blumberg implies that Victoria Vayne's story is somehow unique, but as a professional I have heard this story far too often to discount it. It is normal for doctors to improperly diagnose and treat their patients. I frequently see patients who would have been "cured!"--that is, rid of their symptoms---years ago if they had simply not bothered to see a shrink. Eyesenck proved that therapy does more harm than good, Hooker, Little and Schneidman proved the inconsistency and utter fallibility of diagnosis, and what I've seen with



my own eyes is enough to tell me the rest. I must know at least ten people, as personal friends, who right now are suffering from drug abuse that was forced on them by their doctors. These people were suffering situational depressions, things they would have worked out by now but that their doctors put them on drugs which depressed them further, making them unable to think through and adjust to their problems. I've seen full-time depressives diagnosed as manic-depressives and placed on Lithium--a drug which should be administered only during severe manic episodes and discontinued immediately after the fit abates. I've seen perfectly healthy people shoved into nut houses at the flick of a pen-point, and come out so paranoid they could hardly function.

'On the medical side as well as when taking psychoactive drugs, I recommend that no one take any drug a doctor gives without first consulting the PDR. It is difficult, I know, and more than we should have

to do after paying extortionate fees to doctors, to have to find these heavy tomes and figure out just what the doctor is doing to us, but there simply isn't anyone you can trust. I'd say in half the cases I see, what I am treating is something a doctor did to my patient, rather than an independently contracted disease. If I didn't have to spend so much time treating iatrogenic disease, I might have time to take care of people who were just plain old sick for a change. Unfortunately, they have to come next, because the doctor-caused diseases are usually worse, and the patient who has an iatrogenic disease is more likely to go back to a doctor and therefore get into even worse shape.

'On doctor shows they always have some situation where they show a patient who has an "unreasonable fear of hospitals." What a joke! There is no such thing as an "unreasonable" fear of hospitals or doctors. Anybody who knows what's going on must carry with her at all times a good healthy suspicion that borders on paranoia when consulting any medical personnel, and that includes me. You'd better know that every damn one of us is playing guessing games with your health, and though I may be a lot less likely than most to play these games, I'm making guesses and judgements too. Like when I tell a patient to use vinegarm which should work without side-effects, instead of flagyl, which also should work (a little better than vinegarm, [?] but it is very carcinogenic and you can't keep giving it to someone with chronic trichomonas), there is a chance that if it doesn't work and you still have it, you could end up with dysplasia... but I'm figuring that if the vinegarm doesn't work we can always try something else, and you'll be none the worse for wear, but if I give you the flagyl and it doesn't work, the next doctor you see may also give it to you, and then you'll be building up for a good case of cancer, you see. But I've had more than one doctor tell me, without a sign of guilt or remorse, that they know they have done, and continue to do, things which endanger the patient's health because it is more convenient than to do otherwise and take safeguards for the patient.

'Blumberg implies that doctors know something you don't about weighing your own drug needs---don't believe it! A general practitioner may never have seen a case like yours before, and may never have had an opportunity to develop an informed opinion---he may, in other words, be at least as ignorant as you. And if you've been dealing with the same problem for a while, you could very

well know a great deal more about it than the doctor you are now seeing. Contrary to what you may like to believe, there is little direct follow-up, so doctors don't necessarily know (even, and perhaps especially, so-called experts) what happens to you after they treat you, so no matter how many patients they may have treated for what you've got, they have no idea what their opinion was worth. They may convince themselves that you didn't come back to them because you were cured by them, but it could be that you didn't come back because you can't face paying even more money to someone who didn't help you the first time. Experts have a nice way of ignoring what patients tell them, so what good is their experience and intuition? You'd be amazed (or would you?) to know the number of truly sick people who find themselves dismissed as psychosomatic cases because doctors refuse to believe that their work was inadequate.

'The problem with you and Larry Flint, Geis, is that you want to destroy society as we now know it. If people could really write and talk freely about sex, they might start to see through some of the myths that hold this culture together, and then where would we be? You'd be out of business, anyway. How much fun would descriptions of cumlingus in which our virile hero never gets his tongue anywhere near the woman's clitoris be if everyone knew what a clit is?'

(Tek. You obviously haven't read any of my hard-core porno. I know where and what a clitoris is, and so do my heroes and heroines.)

'And if we really had a sexually free and knowledgeable society, who'd want to read about it?'

(No society is ever perfectly or completely free or unfree in any given area...so there is always a few-always an audience-for whatever.)

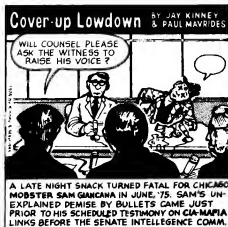
'Where do you think women's lib came from? Buncha women got together and start talking about sex, next thing you know, they actually know something about it, and don't want to put up with Things As They Are anymore. You're talking about ripping the fabric of society here, kid, messing up the Sacred Family (I read that the Family was Sacred in the Washington Post, etc. What are you, some kind of commie?'

(I'm happy to hear the Washington Post holds something sacred.)

'Actually, I don't write pornography, but some people think I do. Some people, like Anita Bryant,

think that when a Woman tries to tell other women about their bodies so that they can protect their health, it is lesbianism--and that's dirty. Hundreds of Concerned Parents swarm the libraries to get That Dirty Book--OUR BODIES OURSELVES--off the shelves before their daughters get their hands on it and find out about you-know-what. Margaret Sanger was arrested when she tried to give out birth control information--for breaking the obscenity laws. But the censors are getting more lenient. I've heard the word "pregnant" on television at least twice so far this year--impossible ten years ago--on prime time! Isn't progress wonderful?

'Ted White and Marion Zimmer Bradley are both braver than me. I'm glad I don't have a record of the things I said and thought ten years ago. Still, I'd like to see Marion



fix up WINDOW ON THE NIGHT and see how it holds up. Maybe its time has come? I'd like to see such a novel. Imagine, I don't have to read tiresome passages about why the lady radiologist should go to bed with the captain to prove she's a real woman, or any garbage like that! On the other hand, of course, I deeply resent Marion's assertion that feminist rhetoric says that "abortions are Always Good." That is hardly the case, and she should know it. Nobody likes abortion, but as a feminist I cannot agree that any woman should be forced to have a child she does not want. I am overjoyed when I see a woman patient who really wants a child and is informed and prepared for that come in and get a pregnancy test, and it gives me a real thrill to see the look on her face when I get to be the first to congratulate her--but I also know that an unwanted pregnancy is a terrifying, horrible thing to have to go through, and that an abortion is better--not Good, just better--than having to go through such a degrading thing as an unwanted pregnancy

and delivery. I don't believe people should be asked to take such risks and make such sacrifices for things they do not believe in.

'I can sympathise with Marion's desire to show a supportive relationship between women that is not based on sex--after so many stories in which any respect for one woman by another is twisted into some sort of "perversion", as in Wilhelm's THE CLEWISTON TEST, perhaps it is best that Bradley resisted the temptation to make those of her characters in THE SHATTERED CHAIN lesbian relationships. Yet I still yearn for that story that shows me a believable lesbian relationship that I can really relate to. Maybe someday ...

'P.S. Do you think right-to-life-ers would have prevented Julie Christie from aborting her demon seed?'

7-31-77 I presume you have all heard about that Wisconsin judge who is self-assuredly 'old-fashioned' and who ruled (controversially!) that a 15-year-old high school boy was not wholly at fault for raping a 16-year-old high school girl because "girls today dress and act in a provocative sexual manner."

There is an element of truth in this -- especially for us old geezers who grew up in the puritan days of the thirties and forties when a bra-less woman (if you ever saw one!) was a prostitute, and no mistake, man!

The good judge is himself guilty of telling us he is enraged by the temptation he feels and he wants to blame girls now for not being around when he was a kid. The man feels cheated. The sexually permissive society wasn't in existence in his youth, so he flails out...

But that 15-year-old boy -- and others, millions of others -- don't go mad with lust on the beach at the sight of acres of bikinis. There are no stories of mass rapes.

And then there is the argument that businessmen should not mind being robbed, having their merchandise taken from busted windows by advertising-maddened consumers...The acquisitive instinct is as powerful as the sexual instinct, is it not? Should not jewelry stores have no recourse if a particularly provocative display of diamonds drives a youth to theft?

No, civilized life requires self-discipline, and the 15-year-old boy in question hadn't enough of it (for whatever reasons) and should be pun-

ished for that lack or at least kept out of society if he obviously is incapable of managing his desires.

And just as obviously the judge is a Sexist of the most naked (and unconscious) kind.

I understand there will be a recall election soon, and the voters will have a chance to turn him out of office. Fine. He let his emotions get the better of his judgment -- and will likely pay a high price.

KINKY SEX
IS KISSING
WITH YOUR
MOUTH OPEN.



LETTER FROM ALAN R. BECHTOLD

August 17, 1977

I'm writing this in two parts. The first is to update you and your readers concerning APOCALYPSE PRESS, its demise and etc. The second is an open letter to Harlan Ellison concerning some matters I'm sure have been discussed before, but that I feel need airing again.

APOCALYPSE PRESS and its FAMOUS SCIENCE FICTION CHAPBOOK SERIES have ceased publication. The first two editions, "The Apocalypse Papers," by the Firesign Theatre, and "Good Taste," by Isaac Asimov, are still available from me in their original two editions, personally signed \$5.50 pp., plate-signed \$2.50 pp. "Down Deep," by Harlan Ellison, scheduled to be third in the series, has been cancelled before seeing print. Advance reservation holders should return their reservation confirmation cards, indicating whether they want their refunds in copies of the first two editions or cash.

Why did I quit, you may ask (and you may)? Easy. I started TFSFCSBS as a means by which I could afford to eat and pay the rent while working within the field, thus freeing me from my 8 hours-a-day job at American Yearbook Company. This would allow me the added bonus of extra time to WRITE science fiction without infringing too much on my normal eat/sleep/cleanup/social life. But

it didn't work. I had to get a new edition out every two months and, excepting Dr. Asimov, NO ONE followed their deadlines. And, though a critical success I was proud to have initiated, the series just plain was not paying for itself. This made my work-a-day job even more needed, to help pay those ever-increasing bills. Finally, when Harlan was eighteen months late with his story without an explanation why, I wrote him to the effect that it was over. His book was cancelled. He called me with more or less a plea for more time, saying he was still looking forward to doing the story, but his life the past year had been a shambles, he'd pulled many a small press out of the red before, etc. I was tempted to say yes, but it wasn't just the lateness and lack of money that made me decide to quit. I WANTED to quit. I decided I WANT TO WRITE FICTION, NOT CONTINUE TO PUBLISH THAT OF OTHERS!!! And this is probably where I'll stay...a regular contributor of LOCs to you, Dick, and to a few choice others, and a hopeful (someday professional?) author of science fiction.

OPEN LETTER TO HARLAN ELLISON

'Now...Harlan: In your introduction to NO DOORS, NO WINDOWS and in the July Special Harlan Ellison Issue of FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION, you expressed several gripes. Three of them I'd like to take issue with now.

'First: You told your readers why, in a way, you'd like to leave the SF field behind you by not allowing your work to be classified as science fiction with any mention of those awful words on the covers of your books. Your reasons seem pretty well-founded, too. Publishers just don't push their SF titles like the others. Mainstream readers don't browse the SF racks. Reviewers don't review SF titles. With such things against the genre, it would be wiser, to further your own career, to ignore the field entirely. But has it occurred to you that you could be just the one to bridge the gap between "mainstream" and "SF"? The blending of the two will never occur if the best of the field "move on" to mainstream markets, failing to mention that their work is still very much SF. What good is this going to do for the average mainstreamer reading one of your books? Your work (fiction) is still very much SF & Fantasy, but he's possibly not even going to know what it is he's reading because you won't allow the publisher to tell him! Maybe he'll respect you as a "weird" mainstream

author, but he won't care any more for the field as a whole because of it. In the light of the recent STAR WARS popularity there are bound to be follow-ups from other filmmakers, SF TV series, more SF books, and you should have some of your top-flight work in there, rather than leaving a void to be filled by second-rate hacks more than willing to sacrifice the field for a few bucks. You're reducing yourself to a position of aiding these thieves by leaving the field now. I THINK YOU OWE US SOMETHING, DAMNIT, and I'm personally going to stop buying your books if they aren't clearly marked SF! I suggest others who feel the same follow suit. WE HELPED GET YOU WHERE YOU ARE, HARLAN, and if you want to "move on" to the mainstream now, it should be without our support!

'Second: You mentioned an annoyance with your fans, the ones wanting a chance to boast of "destroying" Ellison verbally. Well, from what I saw at MAC last year, this problem must be pretty much singular. The fans there had nothing but respect and courtesy for their peer group favorites, authors and fans alike. It sounds to me like your reputation is catching up with you and you can't take it. I've always been a believer in the adage that if you always come out with both guns blazing, you've got to expect someone, somewhere, no matter how much of a punk he really is, to shoot back. You ask for it every time you open your mouth in print! I love you for it! And now you tell us of how sick of our bullshit you are. TOUGH SHIT! I personally don't look forward to the chance of throwing insults your way, and I'd be willing to bet that's the exception rather than the rule, but I'd love to meet you, maybe even argue on some half-intelligent point a half hour or so. Most of your fans would love to meet you, but don't have anything of value to say when they get the chance so... insults! That's the way to get Harlan! Get him talking! I'd probably bore you too, but I'd still like to meet you. That's life. A few of us get to the Big Time Author stage and the rest of us have to settle with being fans, no matter how much we're hated by our idols. Bear with us. We buy your work. We pay your way and, every now and then, we expect the right to get a little petty about it, regardless of the burden it may cause. You knew what you were getting into before you started and now that you're there you don't care for it! Again, TOUGH SHIT! We are your sounding board and you are ours. Isn't that fair? In reaching for literary success and fame you've opened yourself up to the limelight and, according to law, your life is now in the public domain. That's

the way it is. If you don't like it, why not DROP OUT OF IT ALTOGETHER? Are you getting paranoid? Don't you realise that all this nonsense you hear from people just might be in fun? Don't you?

'Last: Again in F&SF, you told of your problems the past year. The same ones that, as you told me on the phone, put you farther behind on your work schedule than you already were. I feel for you. I think I told you at the time I've been through similar hassles. Smaller but similar. Devastating to the creative mind. BUT YOU SIGNED A CONTRACT WITH ME! A promised delivery date in print and signed! And I had to write you to get an explanation at all. That's legal grounds for lawsuit and I seriously considered it, to repay some of my losses (not to mention the cancellation of the series altogether) if it hadn't been for your offer to go ahead and do this story, to help bring me out of the hole. That and my enormous respect for you. I didn't want to add to your troubles or mine. I got in to the business mainly for fun and I got out of it because it wasn't. Lots of advance order customers mad at me, a bit in the hole for advertising, disappointed in you, but still madly in love with what you can do with words. Oh, well, I guess I DON'T know you. In spite of how I feel about your work, sometimes I think I'm glad I don't.

'In case it's not obvious enough, I directed this scream-session at you because I love science fiction, regardless of its money-making potential, and want to do what I can to make its acceptance more widespread and more lucrative for its writers and artists at the same time. But we've ALL got to work at it. You are the one that pulled my interest back to SF, after I'd tired of the usual space/robot/war schmuck and turning to the mainstream for my reading entertainment. I'll never forget you for that, Harlan, but I'll never forgive you if you leave us behind when we need you most.

'Dick, thanks for the chance to get that off my chest. I'm sure you've heard it all before, but it was effective therapy for myself anyhow. I've been a silent reader of yours for too long now. The blessed silence is over.'

GETIS NOTE: The address for Apocabyse Press is: P.O. Box 1821
Topeka, KS 66601

REPLY FROM HARLAN ELLISON

August 26, 1977

'You have sent me a Xerox of Mr.

Bechtold's letter and you have suggested I might wish to make a response for publication. In truth, my instincts advise against such a response. Not only because Mr. Bechtold advances his view of my life and seems upset that I don't care to adopt it as my own, but because I find his sending a letter to me, through you, for open publication, merely a self-serving device. If he has reflections on the way I choose to live my life, it would seem appropriate to address them to me. But no, he chooses to say looka me and writes to a public journal. I think the word that comes to mind is "tacky."

'But if response is needed, let this serve:

'Mr. Bechtold is entitled to live his life and pursue his life's work in any way he deems fit for himself. I will do the same. It is unfortunate, not to suggest pure cockeyed, that Mr. Bechtold is so hung up on labels that he feels intelligent readers need specific designations to know whether they've read a good book or a bad book. Since I intend to insist in all my book contracts that the words "science fiction" do not appear on volumes of my work—chiefly because I do not write SF and thus feel it is dishonest advertising to say that's what it is—he is advised that while I will certainly suffer the torments of Hell because he won't buy my books, I will struggle on heroically.

'His position is so amateur, so sophomoric, so wrongheaded, that to comment further would only serve to feed his delusions.

'Suffice it to end this nonsense that you didn't help me to get anywhere, Clown. I got there on my own, sitting behind a typewriter for twenty years. I owe you only one thing: the work. If it isn't sufficient for you to pick up a book by me and know you're getting a book by me, without moronic labels, then

move on to someone who is easier to badger. But don't for an instant abuse yourself with the ludicrous belief that I'm going to limit my writing or my life by the demands of an insular, tunnel-visioned, frustrated fan who thinks he has the right to sink his fangs into my existence.

'Were I not a polite and decent human being, I would advise you to piss off. And that goes for the jackass you rode in on.'

LETTER FROM ALGIS BUDRYS

August 22, 1977

'I don't ordinarily write letters about reviews, unless the reviewer has published a direct question which elicits what I think would be a useful response to a sincere interest. Most reviews mis-describe the book, either favorably or otherwise, and I can take 'em or leave 'em alone, although I prefer the favorable ones.

'Charles Platt's review of MICH-AELMAS is different. From my point of view, it's perfect. He's read the book, thought it through, related it to my previous work, and wrapped that all up in his essay. I enjoy the fact that he liked it and said nice things about me. More important, he has accurately traced me to where I live.

'The references to Kornbluth and Hammett are stunningly apt; and has named the man who had the most artistic influence on me when I was a new member of the New York professional SF community, and he has named one of my favorite writers from the days when I was an adolescent aiming compulsively toward my present career. (The others are Greene, Ambler, Geoffrey Household as the author of—oddy—ROGUE MALE, and Chandler, in addition to the HG Wells of THE INVISIBLE MAN.)



'No one with the possible exception of Fred Pohl was ever Cyril's bosom buddy. But his famous grumpiness arose from his inability to tolerate pretension disguising ignorance, and willful ignorance as an evasion of what he saw as duty. An artist's duty, as Cyril saw it, was to turn every stone he could perceive. When I arrived on the scene, I brought with me that same Middle European kvetch as the one useful item in the bag my folks had packed for me. We also had similar tastes in delicatessen. In 1954, when Cyril would drop by Edna's and my apartment, Lester del Rey with unfailing patience and great generosity, had already taught me most of what I knew about technique. Cyril and I, in what were really very few conversations and yet what was really one extended communication, agreed on how it was best for me to put all that to use. He is one of the best friends I have today. Damon Knight taught me how to take apart a half-bad story, and Jim Blish taught me how to extend my learning until I could use the word "art" and know what I was talking about. But if we're talking about a sense of "duty", it was Cyril who demonstrated to me that it was a strength--for us, the best strength--as well as a burden.

'As for Hammett, I have never had such a revelation into attitude as I had when I read THE MALTESE FALCON at the age of 12, and everything else of his I could find immediately thereafter. Other writers--the ones I've listed, plus Robert Heinlein, Cordwainer Smith and Frederik Pohl, in that chronological order, and CS Forester and Nevil Shute as constant companions--have done a lot for me. My short story style in the 1950s was heavily dependent on my reading of Clifford Simak and Lester del Rey short work in the 1940s. But as a novelist I go back principally to Hammett and then Chandler for their protagonists. Platt has found that out just from

reading my work, and that impresses me no end.

'I think Charles is being kind when he rules out hope of acclaim, or narcissism, as motivations for my writing. Sometimes late at night, when the children are asleep, I sneak over to the bookshelf and stealthily take down a book with my name on it. Algis Budrys, after all, writes the kind of SF I like best, and he does it better than anybody else does it. But now and again I am reminded that this would not be true if Cyril were still with us, instead of with me.'

LETTER FROM ORSON SCOTT CARD

September, 1977

'Avram Davidson's letter in #22 included his complaint against the Meddling Morons--those who "correct" his Portuguese to Spanish. He cited the example of the MM changing his *facienda* to *hacienda*. Well, I speak Portuguese--lived in Brazil for two years speaking the language almost exclusively--and there ain't no such word in Portuguese as *facienda*. The word is *fazenda*, and the meaning is rather different, too, from the Spanish cognate. The Meddling Moron may have corrected *facienda* the wrong direction, but it sure as heck needed correction!

'Which brings me to a pet gripe in sf use of Portuguese. Writers look at their maps and see the obvious fact that Brazil is the only South American nation likely to be important in the future (overlooking the fact that any economic force that would reduce the U.S.'s importance in the world would completely destroy Brazil); so they whip out the old conversational Portuguese book and toss in guidebook phrases. To all who care: those guidebook phrases bear about as much relation to spoken Portuguese as they do to spoken Swahili. How often do you say, "How do you do, Mr. Ablick. It is a pleasure to speak with you today."?

'And a word for the Meddling Morons. As a book editor in a university press for several years and a proofreader before that, I discovered that the only people dumber than editors are writers. After only two weeks of proofreading incredibly bad writing, I learned a contempt for the average writer's grammatical ability and good sense only matched by my contempt for people who steal candy from children. The occasional writer who knows what he's doing with the English language is so rare that you can hardly blame

the Meddling Moron for not noticing the difference anymore. Of course, none of the writers I edited and proofread were sf writers, who are undoubtedly a breed apart. But I believe that were it not for the Meddling Morons, writers would come out looking a lot dumber than they do.'

LETTER FROM GORDON LARKIN

June 26, 1977

'I have just chanced upon a copy of your very excellent SFR #21...hence this brief note. Page 57 carries mention of the British Fantasy Society Bulletin...slightly inaccurate. I am the editor of this, not the venerable Brian Mooney (who is actually Treasurer/Secretary). The type size is bloody small...which must be why you got the editor wrong. Ah well, I've just sent you a copy of the new issue. (There must be better ways to go blind!!)

'I enjoy your magazine immensely and it's nice to get 24 extra pages. Pleased to see a review of Steve King's THE SHINING, a title I am eager to read. You may or may not know that this novel is being filmed by Stanley Kubrick with--possibly--Jack Nicholson starring. Shooting starts at Eelstree in November.

'We recently had an excellent hoax on TV over here. ALTERNATIVE 3 by David Ambrose. A piece of SF documentary-drama that convinced half the nation of the imminent collapse of planet Earth and the emergency colonization of Mars using the top brains in many fields. A delight this.

'Gordon Larkin
113a High Street,
Whitstable, Kent CT5 1AY
UNITED KINGDOM'

"FOR THOSE WHO KNOW IT AT FIRST HAND, INSANITY HAS VERY LITTLE ROMANCE. IT IS UGLY, PAINFUL, FRIGHTENING. AND IT LEAVES ITS VICTIMS IN THAT TERRIBLE SITUATION DESCRIBED BY LARA JEFFERSON, STRAIGHTJACKETED IN ONE OF THE MIDWESTERN ASYLUMS OF A GENERATION AGO: 'HERE I SIT--MAD AS THE HATTER--WITH NOTHING TO DO BUT EITHER BECOME Madder AND Madder OR ELSE RECOVER ENOUGH OF MY SANITY TO BE ALLOWED TO GO BACK TO THE LIFE WHICH DROVE ME MAD."

---OTTO FRIEDRICH
GOING CRAZY



THE CONAN CAPERS By Mark Mansell

One of the biggest trends in fantasy publishing these days is sword and sorcery (or heroic fantasy, as others prefer to call it.) I doubt that many are unaware that modern sword and sorcery is a sub-genre begun in its present form by the prolific Robert E. Howard with his tales of Kull, Solomon Kane, Bran Mak Morn, and especially Conan back in the greatest fantasy/horror pulp magazine of them all: WEIRD TALES.

I enjoy sword and sorcery, and I like seeing Howard's works reprinted, but in recent months it seems his most popular character, Conan, has gotten all the attention by publishers and most of the public, to the exclusion of his other stuff. I'm not complaining (much), publishers do what they think will sell, and Howard is one of the most marketable authors around. What this article is about is the recent glut of Conan books that have ensued after certain lawsuits concerning the now-defunct Lancer Books which originally carried the Conan series.

Now for the facts: I was in the local bookstore today and scanned the Howard section. Lo and behold, there were already two sets of Conan books. Ace Books gained rights to reprint the Lancer series with the same Frazetta covers, the stories as edited, completed, or written by Howard, de Camp, and Carter, along with the Clark and Miller chronology of Conan's career. In addition, the last Conan book (11th chronological-ly), CONAN OF AQUILONIA was finally published. It is by de Camp and Carter, originally supposed to come out from Lancer, but it was never in book form before due to Lancer's collapse. It did see publication in FANTASTIC as four separate stories. Right next to the Ace editions sat the Sphere Books edition. It is from Sphere Books in England, and is identical to the Lancer and Ace versions in covers and contents. However, the Sphere version has better looking borders to the covers (dark shades instead of the glaring white of the Ace), and excludes AQUILONIA.

That's just the start of the story. Now it gets more confusing than the time Ace and Ballantine ran competing editions of the Burroughs and Tolkien books. In August, Berkley Books, having bought the rights to reprint from the Howard estate (reportedly for \$300,000), will bring out the first of their Conan line. These will differ from the Ace/Lancer/Sphere editions by being the or-



iginal versions as published in WEIRD TALES, edited this time by Karl Wagner, well-known sword and sorcery author, creator of Kane and the center of his own nucleus of fans (and also a friend of mine.) The Berkley edition (starting with HOUR OF THE DRAGON, a.k.a. CONAN THE CONQUEROR) will contain none of the deCamp-Carter material, will have different covers, and will also contain some of the interior art as originally published with the stories in WEIRD TALES.

Ah, but that's the obvious part. Less well-known, but still popular are the deluxe illustrated editions being published by Grant Books, also of the original WEIRD TALES versions. Grant has been issuing this series for a couple of years now, and each is a collector's item with one or two Conan tales in a large-size format printed with illustrations by some of the top people in fantasy illustrating. These volumes go for around \$15 apiece, while the Ace/Sphere are around \$1.75-1.95. The Lancers, which I still can get at several used bookstores in my area (not even science fiction specialty shops) originally sold for 60¢-95¢.

Enough of the original Conans. But the beat goes on. According to LOCUS, Bantam Books will be bringing out 6 new de Camp and Carter Conan tales (everybody wants to get into the act, to quote Mr. Durante). I have no other data regarding these. Of course, there are also the Marvel comics version of the Conan saga, CONAN THE BARBARIAN, the usual color comics size, and THE SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN which is a larger sized black and white with superior art and story work. For comics, they hold pretty closely to the original plots and ideas of the Conan tales they portray. Marvel also has a Red Sonja series based on a character

Ray Thomas took out of a non-Conan Howard story (or was it a poem?) and wrote in as a female swordswoman contemporary companion to Conan. KULL THE DESTROYER is also published in the usual comics format about Howard's next famous character: Kull of Atlantis.

Hmm, quite a list so far. Besides the Conan series, confusion is also occurring in other Howard publishing areas. Grant, Fictioneer, FAX, and others have been putting out editions of Howard's lesser-known characters and stories, which are reprinted by Zebra practically the moment they're off the presses. Also, Zebra and others are reprinting Howard material in cheaper book format very quickly after publication in such Howard fanzines as HOWARD REVIEW, CROSS PLAINS, LONE STAR FICTIONEER, and TWO GUN RACOUNTREER. This quick reprinting has hurt some fan publishers by causing some of their buyers to wait for a few months for the material to get into cheaper paperback editions. Yet another Howard snafu is the question of what is a first edition. Many publishers of Howard material reprint books with new artwork or an additional extra story.

This is not to say that anybody's a crook. But the Howard situation is a quivering morass that is quite easy to lose oneself in. The fans keep buying and buying almost anything with Howard's name on it, often ignoring other, equally deserving talents such as Wagner, Schweitzer, Leiber, Saunders, et al. It's gotten so some publishers have used the words "Robert E. Howard" and "Conan" as magic words to get fans to buy. Zebra Books has used "In the tradition of Robert E. Howard" to blurb its Howard stories about non-Conan characters with the blurb "By the creator of Conan: Robert E. Howard" with "By the creator of..." in its bitsy dark type that blends in with the cover, while "...Conan: Robert E. Howard" in large white type that is larger and more prominent than the title itself. Also, such diverse stories as Howard's fight tales, sailor stories, pirate stories, Arabian stories, and cowboy stories are misleadingly blurred to sound like fantasy/adventure. I'm not crying "Gyp!" or accusing anyone of out and out fraud, but I'd like the material to be honestly blurred (a contradiction of terms?) so I can buy it anyway without compunctions.

Thanks to LOCUS from which the major facts and figures are derived. Also thanks to Karl Edward Wagner, Darrell Schweitzer and Wayne Warfield for various tidbits of information that helped make this article.

AN INTERVIEW WITH RAY BRADBURY



CONDUCTED BY JEFFREY ELLIOT

This interview first appeared in the June 1977 issue of the San Francisco Review of Books

It is difficult in a few words to capture the renaissance talent of a writer as gifted as Ray Bradbury. America's most famous writer of science fiction, Bradbury is also an accomplished writer of poetry, short stories, novels, childrens' books, plays, and a variety of other literary genres. When asked to assess Bradbury's artistic merit, Gilbert Highet observed: "Ray Bradbury is, I believe, the finest living writer of fantastic fiction. He has apparently inexhaustible invention, a fine sensitive style, elegant good taste, and that unusual combination of gifts: a sense of horror and a sense of humor."

Born in Waukegan, Illinois, Bradbury grew up in Los Angeles, where he learned his craft as a writer. The author of over two dozen books, he is best known for such popular works as FAHRENHEIT 451, THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES, DANDELION WINE, THE ILLUSTRATED MAN, SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES, and THE OCTOBER COUNTRY.

As objective as one tries to be, there is something extraordinary about Ray Bradbury. He is more of everything in the flesh than he is in his books. A man of rare wit, energy and drive, Bradbury lives as he writes -- with style, and gusto, and daring. Unlike many writers, he is wary of the "super-intellectual." For Bradbury, the artist is one who can feel deeply about things, who doesn't over-intellectualize, who is self-disciplined and hard-working, and who doesn't take himself or life too seriously.

The interview was conducted at Bradbury's home in Los Angeles. There, surrounded by mementoes of his varied career, he discusses his philosophy of writing, his interest in the arts, his attitudes about popular literature, his feelings about television, and a host of other topics.

SFR: By your own admission, you write both science fiction and fantasy. What do you see as the basic difference between the two genres?

BRADBURY: Science fiction is the art of the possible. There's never anything fantastic about science fiction. It's always based on the laws of physics; on those things that can absolutely come to pass. Fantasy, on the other hand, is always the art of the impossible. It goes against all the laws of physics. When you write about invisible men, or walking through walls, or magic carpets, you are dealing with the impossible. Science fiction has a long history which goes back to the cavemen. Plato's book, THE REPUBLIC, is a good example of science fiction. Everything starts in the head and then moves out into the world. Whenever you create something in the head first, you're writing science fiction. The history of science fiction is the history of ideas that have been laughed at. These same ideas are then born in fact and later change the world.

SFR: In terms of your own experience, which of the two genres do you prefer?

BRADBURY: I don't really have a preference. I love to do everything. If a fantasy idea comes to me, then I'll do it. If a science fiction idea excites me, then I'll do that. I never plan ahead. Everything is always spontaneous and passionate. I never sit down and think things out. I also do a great deal of day-dreaming. Oh, I do some thinking in between, but it's a very loose thing.

It's not super-intellectual. If it feels right, then I'll do it. I'll give you a good example of how ideas come to me. The other night I was in a local bookstore when a stranger came up and started to talk. He told me that he wanted to be a poet. We began to discuss football, when he remarked what a shame it was that they couldn't invent a machine that would suck in all the energy that goes into football and apply it to curing cancer. Well, I thought that was a great idea! I asked him if I could have it, and he said, "Yes." I'll probably do a poem on it, or perhaps a short story, or even a novel.

SFR: One journalist attributes your interest in both of these literary forms to your boyhood experiences with carnivals and circuses. In what ways did they affect your decision to become a writer?

BRADBURY: I'm a product of many art forms. Thank God I had a mother who was madly in love with movies. She started taking me to all sorts of fantastic films when I was three, beginning with *The Hunchback of Notre*

Dame. Along the way, I went to a lot of magic shows. Once I even jumped up on stage and helped Blackstone with his act. When I was nine, I began to collect comic strips -- Buck Rogers, Flash Gordon, Tarzan. About that time I started to hang around circuses and carnivals. I struck up a great friendship with a man named "Mr. Electrico," who really impressed me. I think that it was his influence which really encouraged me to become a writer. After we had several long talks, I went out and bought a typewriter and started writing. I've never stopped writing since then.

SFR: One writer said of your early work, "He did not cease to be a teacher when he stopped writing science fiction, but he did place a moratorium on the more evangelistic kind of moralizing which he was practicing in the 1940s and early 1950s." As you look back on your career, did you of ten moralize in your early work?

BRADBURY: Oh, I'm sure I did. I still do. It's important, however, to do it as subtly as possible. You don't want to be a bore about it. That was the nice thing about George Bernard Shaw. He could moralize, but turn it into a lot of fun. He was always making one point or another. But he never was so serious that he spoiled the fun. I suppose that's why my book, *FAHRENHEIT 451* is still around. While I was making serious points, I also wrote a good suspense novel. The novel was so good, that you had to put up with the moralizing.

SFR: As you see it, what is the relationship between art and propaganda?

BRADBURY: Well, since we're all a part of life, I don't see how it's possible not to propagandize. We all have strong feelings about certain things -- love, sex, war, politics. These things should be the mainstays of one's art. They're an integral part of life. They can't be separated from art.

SFR: In 1962, you observed: "We must seek ways to know and encourage the good in ourselves, the will toward life." How have you attempted to achieve that goal in your own life?

BRADBURY: As best you can, you attempt to set an example that will help you to know yourself and others. That means you must be totally honest with yourself, particularly about your destructive impulses. You must learn to face up to them in yourself. If you can do that, the people around you will be much more forgiving of your mistakes.

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SFR: In a recent article, you argued that all arts, big and small, should aim toward "the elimination of wasted motion in favor of concise declaration." What did you mean by that statement?

BRADBURY: In order to be a good writer, you must first explode passionately and render it down. It's always best to do the big thing initially, and then cut it down to size. Every time I write a short story, I will do about 30 pages and then pare it down to around 20 pages. The important thing is getting it out and not thinking about it. I've seen more good ideas ruined by people thinking about them instead of doing them. When you're writing something, don't think about it, just do it!

SFR: Generally speaking, you've received extremely good reviews from the critics. What do you see as the proper role of a critic?

BRADBURY: Whenever I'm asked to review a book, I never do so unless I really like it. I don't see my job as trying to destroy the book. Unfortunately, there are many critics who enjoy that role. I only pick those books that I'm super-enthused about, and then try to sell them to people. I want them to share my loves, not my hates.

SFR: Some time ago, you expressed the view that the American novel was bankrupt of idea, style and imagination on any level. Who do you think that's true?

BRADBURY: I don't know. You have the "New York Mafia" which rolls logs for each other -- people like Updike, Roth, Mailer. It's a very insular thing. It's also extremely intellectual, which makes it partic-

ularly dangerous. I suppose it's inevitable that there must be some type of conflict between the people who think and the people who feel. The truth is, not one of these writers would know a good idea if it came up and bit him. Updike is all style and no idea. It's amazing how little this man thinks. It's unfortunate that these writers receive so much attention. Look at Mailer and the publicity he received from his book on graffiti. I thought it was a ridiculous book. Whether he knows it or not, graffiti isn't beautiful; it's ugly. If we're not careful, it will destroy our cities. Come on, that's a lousy idea!

SFR: Several times you've referred to the one-dimensional nature of the intellectual, of his inability to think and feel at the same time. What lies at the heart of the problem?

BRADBURY: I'm not sure. After all, ideas can be lots of fun. The intellect is a great game. Some of the most enjoyable evenings of my life have been spent with bright friends in the science fiction field. We would get an idea, throw it up in the air, and create with it. It's like a lot of kids playing basketball. You're all over the court, throwing the ball around, scoring points from all directions. There are some writers, however, who had this quality. Gerald Heard had it. Bertrand Russell had it. Aldous Huxley had it. When you met them, they were like bright children. They could be serious, but they also had a wonderful sense of humor.

SFR: Throughout your life, you've had a love affair with books. With so many people turned off to reading, how did you develop such a keen in-

terest in books?

BRADBURY: I found in books the romance and ideas on which to feed. I was really quite a glutton. I used to memorize entire books. I suppose that's where the ending of FAHRENHEIT 451 comes from -- where the book people wander through the wilderness and each of them is a book. That was me when I was ten. I was TARZAN OF THE APES. I used to love all of Edgar Rice Burroughs' books. I've always enjoyed the smell of books. If you don't have the primitive feeling about books to begin with, I don't think you'll ever make it as a writer. I've kept up my acquaintance with children's books throughout the years. All of my books, really, are children's books. I don't write books only for grown-ups. I just write books. Now, they are passing them from one generation to another. I'm so proud to be sharing the shelves with my real heroes -- Jules Verne, H.G. Wells, Robert Louis Stevenson, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Edgar Allan Poe. All of their books have somehow found their way into the hands of children. As for libraries, they're great places. I can't stay away from them. I had to educate myself after I left high school. I used to take home ten books at a time. I read every book I could find on writing. I also got into philosophy, religion, music, art and poetry. I've educated myself in virtually every art form that exists.

SFR: Obviously, you enjoy being a writer. What about that life style most agrees with you?

BRADBURY: I'm not sure that I have a particular life style. I've been extremely lucky to have a good family and raise four lovely daughters. My daughters are all film enthusiasts, so it has been relatively easy for me to share a lot of my loves with them. I never get bored with life. I don't let myself get into a rut. Writers are fortunate because they can shift gears more easily than the average person. I have continually put myself in a position to fail so that I could become a student again. It has taken me 35 years to learn to write poetry. And that has been lots of fun. In fact, it has kept me alive at times. I rarely get depressed. Whenever I feel down, I walk away and do something else. I find that writing is still a challenge. I'm experimenting more with novels. I'm also learning to write screenplays. Recently, I have been getting more and more into music.

SFR: On your office door, there's a sign stating that you're a working writer -- that you arrive at nine o'clock and leave at four o'clock.

Do you start each day with the idea of writing a fixed number of pages, or do you take the view whatever happens, happens?

BRADBURY: Basically, I just go in with the idea of writing something. I usually start the day off with poetry. I go through a process of free association. I do the same thing with short stories. A lot of my best poetry has come from just sitting down at the typewriter and thinking up some crazy line. As far as work goes, once I've done four good pages, then I'll let myself off for the day, unless it's going extremely well. If that's the case, I might work until the piece is finished. I think that the work a person does in a single day is very important. In many ways, writing a novel resembles a segmented worm. Each day you're a different person. By the time that you've reached the end of a novel, you're much different from when you started. In fact, you can have 365 different novels on your hands unless you're careful. If I'm writing a novel, I try to finish it within about nine days. Otherwise, it will usually bog down, become overly intellectual, and lose its fun.

SFR: Are you a very rapid writer? Do words come easily to you?

BRADBURY: Yes, especially now. They didn't use to. Of course, when you start out, the words come quickly, but they're usually lousy. That's the most difficult thing to get students to understand. If I were teaching the short story in high school, I wouldn't be interested in quality at all. I would only be interested in product. I would simply want them to do it. After they were finished, I would put them on the head. I would correct their grammar. I would make them repeat courses. I would emphasize quantity, which would guarantee quality, eventually. It's at that point, I think, that you can begin to criticize their work. Otherwise, you run the risk of doing real damage.

SFR: Once you've finished your initial draft, do you do much re-writing or are you pretty much satisfied with your first effort?

BRADBURY: If it doesn't come out right the first time, then it's generally no good, ever. Again, that's why the emotional explosion is so important. The main thing that I do is to pare down. Virtually every story that I've ever written was initially too long. It really becomes a question of knowing where to cut.

SFR: Which writers have most influenced your own development?

BRADBURY: Oh, that's hard. There are many of them; each one has affected me in a different way at a different time. A lot of women writers have influenced me -- Eudora Welty, Edith Wharton, Katherine Anne Porter, Ellen Glasgow, Jessamyn West. Other writers like Ernest Hemingway, Thomas Wolfe, John Steinbeck and William Faulkner have taught me a great deal. I've also been influenced by writers like George Bernard Shaw, William Shakespeare, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Alexander Pope and G.K. Chesterton. There's no one around today, however, who really impresses me.

SFR: What accounts for the short supply of good writers in America today?

BRADBURY: That's a tough one. The short story has certainly languished, hasn't it? Even the biggest writers rarely do short stories. I suppose that television is part of the problem. More and more writers are going into television. They see it as much easier work. However, you can't learn writing by writing for television. There's no real writing in the average script. Many of these writers are enticed by the big money that television offers. Money has never really been a driving motivation in my life. I've been glad when it showed up, but for many years, I was smart enough to stick to my loves, even when it meant \$30 or \$40 a week. That continued until I was 29 or 30. My wife even had to work to support us when we were first married.

SFR: Have you ever wanted to be a performer?

BRADBURY: Yes. In fact, when I started out, I was an actor. I did a lot of theatre work until I was 20. It was great fun to perform. That's one reason why I stay in the theatre. It's certainly not for the money. None of my plays have ever made a dime, and that's after 45 years in the theatre. I suppose that's why I lecture as much as I do. It gives me a chance to perform. I'll usually do scenes from some of my plays, or perhaps read some of my poetry. I enjoy the feeling of being in front of an audience.

SFR: Are you a fan of television?

BRADBURY: Sure. The really good writing takes place in the comedy end of television. There are very few people who write good drama.

SFR: Thank you, Mr. Bradbury.

LETTER FROM GEORGE SCITHERS

August 18, 1977

'Some comment on the creationists--if it weren't for the creationists' record of trying to suppress thoughts in conflict with their own, paleontologists, biologists, et al. would simply ignore their demands for proof and yet more proof. But people have faced criminal charges in these United States for offending the creationists' view of reality, while no one has been similarly prosecuted for going against evolution.

'Of course there are vast gaps in the fossil record--if there were not, we'd be up to our ears in fossils. Of all the animals that ever lived, only a minute, minute fraction have (1) been fossilized (2) not been subsequently destroyed and (3) been close enough to the surface to be found. It's hardly surprising that countless species have left no fossil record whatever.

'The creationists' argument, that there are no current, in-transitional examples, appears to be so sloppily worded that any example one might cite can be dismissed because "that's not what we meant." The Platypus is transitional between reptile and mammal, and seems perfectly happy to stay that way. If some minor variant of the Platypus design would allow the variant ones to prosper and multiply, presumably they would; if not, not.

'Imagine, if you will, how to cope with someone who insisted that the Dachshund and the Collie (and all other breeds of dog, cattle, etc.) were individually created by the Lord God Almighty. Can you come up with a complete fossil record of the transition from ancestral wolf-dog to Dachshund? And if you can, how about the Collie--or the Boxer--or...and so on for endless demands for "proof". If you demonstrate that crosses between breeds of dogs lead toward the ancestral wolf-dog, our hypothetical someone can dismiss the demonstration as 'irrelevant'. If you bring up the historical record of the development of the Dachshund, that 'proof' can be dismissed as evidence of an Ancient and Evil Conspira-cy against God. And if you try to ignore the zealots, and go about your business as a dog breeder or dwarf-peach-tree-grower, they'll pass laws against heresy...

'Do I overstate the case? Not by much. The creationists think basically in terms of Revealed Word; they imagine their enemies (i.e., anyone who doesn't agree with them)

also to be doctrinaire followers of a competing, heretical catechism--and these imaginings just ain't so.

'Your 'source' was a Jehovah's Witnesses' tract. Giddings has cited a collection of references, tons of bones and other real evidence...if you're too busy to look up some of the references, it's past time to drop the whole silly debate; but if you do dig into some basic paleontology texts, you'll find a strange and wonderful world--own own past--that the creationists are forever blind to--a world that the creationists would, if they could, make us blind to as well.'

((Okay, thanks, George, and thanks to the other writers on this subject, this issue. It's all been pro-evolution, since a Creationist response hasn't appeared.))



LETTER FROM RICHARD BERGERON

August, 1977

'Well, SFR seems to be indispensable--as always. The Willis issue of Warhoon should be out in the next 2 months. It runs to 480 pages and after that I expect to revise Warhoon on a somewhat more frequent and much smaller scale. If you'd like to trade, I'd be most happy to receive SFR. (Some of your paranoid interlineations are worth a Hugo in themselves!) (And that reply to Bob Shaw! Lovely.)

((WHY ARE YOU COMPLIMENTING ME?

((But, seriously, Rich, the news that the long-delayed Walter Willis issue of WARHOON (Legendary Fanstine) will appear soon is most welcome. Even more joyous is the news that WARHOON will appear regularly again. Once a prominent fan publisher...it's impossible to quit for good, isn't it?))

LETTER FROM DAVE BATH

28th June 1977

'In the introduction to your story, "One Immortal Man" in the anthology ANDROMEDA 2 it says that this is your first published sf story, but that you have been involved in the field for twenty years. I have read your articles in GALAXY magazine over the past few issues and have found them to be mildly enjoyable. I have seen occasional copies of your publications, and once again these seem very professional and informative. However, I sincerely hope that over the next few years you will gradually phase out your involvement with such projects.

'I cannot express just how much I enjoyed your story in ANDROMEDA 2. This is where your talent truly lies. The preceding stories in the volume were of a pretty acceptable standard, but from the very first page I was totally gripped with your story.

'I am a member of the British Fantasy Society, and within a few hours of reading "One Immortal Man" I immediately wrote a review which I have sent off to the Society. I have raved about this story to every member I have met, and have had feedback now from several, agreeing that it is a superb piece of work. I was particularly interested in the reaction of a fan called Pete Watts who is somewhat of an authority on Philip Jose Farmer. He agreed with me that the story was more like Farmer than Farmer's own work, and like me he could not wait for a sequel.

'I am not in the habit of waxing so enthusiastic over a short story, and it is certainly unlike me to write direct to the Author to put across my feelings. At the British Fantasy Society's annual Convention in February of this year, I was on the voting panel for the best short story of 1976, and I hope to be serving a similar function at our next Convention in February 1978. I am not sure exactly what items to vote for but certainly your piece is heading the list at the moment. My main reason for writing to you is simply to say PLEASE continue the series. I would be extremely grateful if you could let me know where future stories of this character will appear, as I intend reading more of the series as soon as they appear.'

((Excuse me, people, while I gorge on this lovely egoboo. Just one more ecstatic rereading... Ahh...))

((Yes, thank you, Dave. As I think I wrote earlier in this issue, unless a publisher makes me an offer I cannot refuse, I'll be self-pub-

Lishing the further adventures of Vik Kunner and other heroes still lurking in Alter-Ego's mind, and these efforts will be available to SFR readers by mail, and possibly by bookstore.))

I have very recently received from an amateur artist in England a large drawing. He hoped I could use it in SFR. Alas, I cannot, and I must take this route to tell him so, since he scribbled his name and address so illegibly that all hope of direct communication is impossible.

So, D. Gal---?, sorry. You sent a 9 x 12 pen drawing, and you live on 22 Ravens--- Road, Heat---, N-Upon Type 6.

Shame on you (AND OTHERS!) for not having sense enough to PRINT vital information, and for not sending international postal coupons for return.

LETTER FROM TOM DUNLAP

August, 1977

'MZB's piece was very interesting. I have been reading the DARKOVER stories for some time, can't remember just when I started. The series is getting better as the stories get longer and the characters are developed at length. I still, though, have a few glitches. How, for instance, did Danilo go through life supposing that everyone could read thoughts? (p. 160, HERITAGE OF HASTUR) Surely in a society like Darkover, someone should have tumbled to the fact or he should have found out from someone that this was some kind of special talent. Another thing, the atmosphere is more like a pocket kingdom than a world. Though much of the series needs large spaces, I seem to be floating in some small cloud-land. Maybe Bradley is just not into geography and maps.'

LETTER FROM BUZZ DIXON

August, 1977

'Speaking of weird book (titles) Roger Elwood's latest is SALVATION BEHIND BARS. I am what you would probably call a "born again Christian" yet at times the antics of the Elwoods and Bryants make me sick. I think I'll start a new religion (why not? Look what it did for L. Ron Hubbard).

'I suggest you get your eyes checked. Geis. I liked the remake of KING KONG because it was a pas-

sage which swiped ideas all the way from MAD to THE NEW YORKER. However, the special effects were pretty sucky. I saw it at a drive-in and I could still see blue matte lines, jiggling composite shots, occasionally transparent scene elements, mis-matched perspectives, and generally shoddy miniatures.

'George Warren pretty accurately summed up my views on science fiction. The main problem is making a subject interesting. I've read stf novels where the whole galaxy was at stake which pale when compared to a simple short story dealing with an almost miniscule problem.

'The John Varley interview was very, very good. I've only read two stories by him but they have burned themselves in my mind. The difference between Varley and 99% of other stf writers is that they write about contemporary people with contemporary values in the future (Larry Ni-



ven and Jerry Pournelle are prime examples of this. Niven writes about contemporary Libertarians and Pournelle about contemporary reactionaries).

'Varley, on the other hand, creates a viable future society of highly advanced technology and peoples it with human beings from such a society. I'm looking forward with awe and anticipation to the future growth of Varley's career.

'The Vidal quote on page 28 shows just how much shit the man is full of. If we're so fucking illiterate how come more books and periodicals per capita are being pubbed now than ever before in this country? Our illiteracy rate is low (while admittedly looser and looser standards of literacy are being applied--but there is a change in the winds viz the school superintendent who flunked half the 8th grade students in his district rather than let them go on to highschool unable to do the work). Er, I've just looked over my spel-

ling in the above paragraph. Would you believe it's 2 a.m. and fatigue poisons are setting in? No? Okay, strike the whole argument...

'I would have illustrated Nolan's article with a big cow pie. Nolan has always wanted the public to believe LOGAN'S RUN is a great work of art. George Clayton Johnson has always claimed it was a fast buck con-game-as-novel scam which paid off in big bucks (read the interview with him in issue 5:1 of CINEFANTASTIQUE).

'I must confess having read very, very little of Marion Zimmer Bradley. Now I feel compelled to go and buy the entire DARKOVER series.

'Hmm, whatever I write seems to suffer typos at the hands of either you or Alter. First 105% of science fiction, now "East shit, pigfucker." I wonder if some of our pseudo-hip friends will read my letter, think it's new jargon, and incorporate it into their vocabularies. If you hear somebody called an "east shit pigfucker" in a couple of years, we will know where it came from.'

((East Shit sounds like a location. A way of putting damn a neighborhood or a city: East Shit, New York; East Shit, Chicago....))

LETTER FROM MICHAEL E. KERPAN, JR.

August 31, 1977

'In a course this past year called Public Law and the Economy, our professor introduced us to "Reading the Budget critically." In fact, by looking at the numbers therein, one can see just why the Congress likes the tax system pretty much just the way it is. Due to peculiarities in the way the tax structure is set up, income taxes rise much faster than incomes. This sounds like a truism, but I never realized just what this means in \$ & ¢, till I actually looked at the Budget.

'It turns out that, short of an extravagance like Johnson's Vietnam Follies, Congress should virtually never have to actually vote for a tax increase. The tax structure automatically raises taxes so much that Congress usually has the privilege of voting for "tax decreases" instead.

'This happens due to three features of the American economic system: 1) We have a "progressive" tax system, wherein each ascending tax bracket pays a higher percentage than the one below. 2) Bracket

divisions are fixed from year to year. 3) We live with a constant state of inflation. Thus, suppose \$9,999.99 is taxed at $x\%$ and \$10,000.00 at $x+1\%$. Further, suppose a 5% rate of inflation. Therefore, a taxpayer making \$9,999.99, who gets a 5% cost-of-living increase, does not maintain his status quo but loses a portion of his real income.

In only one case, over only one year, such tax encroachments may not seem like too much, but over a period of years, the cost to all American tax payers is horrendous. Looking at the government's own figures, we get an interesting picture. Between 1977 and 1982, it estimates wages and salaries will increase from 996 billion to 1562 billion, about a 57% increase. Other personal income and corporate profits are expected to have similar increases. Tax receipts, assuming no change whatsoever in the tax law as of 1 January, 1977, will skyrocket from 360.9 billion to 634.8 billion, a 76% increase. Were total tax receipts merely to keep pace with inflation etc., only \$566.6 billion would be collected for 1982. So, the government has almost 70 billion extra dollars to play around with. You can bet your last dollar they won't give it all back to the taxpayers.

If you only look at personal income tax figures, the picture is even more repulsive. Once again, assuming no change in the tax law, between 1977 and 1982, revenues from personal income tax are projected to rise from 159.1 billion to 330.2 billion. Thus, taxes would more than double (108% increase), while wages and salaries went up merely 57%. Clearly, the current income tax set-up is politically brilliant, a true work of genius, though one hardly knows who to congratulate. It operates analogously to Congress's instant, no-vote payraise scheme. In both instances, Congress can do what it wants without taking explicit responsibility for what they are doing. There is no vote on record for constituents to object to.

There has been a perennial plan for rectifying this situation, which has been perennially ignored--by whichever party was in power at the time. If only brackets were flexible, rather than absolutely fixed from year to year, this situation could be remedied. For example, if this year a particular bracket started at \$10,000.00 and the inflation rate during the year was 5%, next year the same bracket would start, instead, at \$10,500.00. Thus, taxes would merely keep pace with infla-

WHAT POSTERITY HAS DONE FOR US, MISTER SPEAKER, IS LOAN US BILLIONS OF DOLLARS!

PORE BASTARDS.



tion (and real economic growth, if any). Any extra revenue gathering would then require an affirmative vote by Congress, it would no longer occur magically, with no Congressional responsibility. Arrogant Congressional leaders would find it harder to win (even faint applause) by handing back only a small portion of "extra" tax dollars. It would, perhaps, be harder for Congressmen to routinely consider our dollars to be theirs.

((Given the fact that welfare payments and social security and unemployment benefits are all non-taxable income, the point may soon be reached where it is simply not worth it to work. I suspect that for some people that point has already been reached, and every year more and more people will come to the same conclusion--as the tax rates escalate.))

LETTER FROM JOHN J. PIERCE New Editor of GALAXY

August 11, 1977

'Pardon lack of typing--I'm trying to write this and follow the Son of Sam capture at the same time.

'Yes, I am the new editor of GALAXY. Believe me, it's as much a surprise to me as it is to you. How it came about is thusly:

'Two or three years ago, I told both the del Reys and Fred Pohl I'd be interested in a science fiction job if they heard of any openings. As you know, I have since edited THE BEST OF CORDWAINER SMITH (I recently finished work on THE BEST OF MURRAY

LEINSTER AND THE BEST OF RAYMOND Z. GALLUM, both of which will come out next year).

'A few weeks ago, I was over to see the del Reys, and they mentioned Pat Lobrutto had left Ace. So I mailed in a resume the next day. The day after that, Fred phoned me to say Jim Baen was leaving GALAXY to take over Ace, and that he (Fred, that is) had recommended me for the GALAXY vacancy. So I set up an appointment with Arnold Abramson, and made a good enough impression, combined with the support of Fred and the del Reys and Jim himself to land the job.

'Now, to lay your fears to rest. Alter Ego will remain in GALAXY as long as you want to write it. Likewise, Jerry Pournelle and Spider Robinson are welcome to stay as long as they want to. I've liked the way Jim has run the magazine, and apparently the readers have too--circulation is up to nearly 90,000. I'd be a fool to tamper with a successful formula.

'Problems. Yes, I know GALAXY has problems, and you and I and all the writers and artists know what they are. I can assure you the situation doesn't please me any more than it does them. I have been given to understand that this situation can be corrected within the next 8 months to a year, and I will certainly do everything in my power to see that it is.

'One innovation of a sort: The quality of the slush pile being what it is, I have already purchased one translation of a good short story by a top Russian writer. I may do more of this, but not as a gesture for improved international relations--only when I think a particular story is worthy of publication under the same standards we apply to American SF.

'When conditions permit, I would like to try to get serial rights to novels by some of the better new writers whose works are not serialized at all now. I will try to keep the writers Jim has developed and to develop new ones from the slush pile. I will even try for big names--Mrs. Genevieve Linebarger could be in GALAXY with a new Cordwainer Smith story if she'll only finish it.

'No immediate change of format--and no change of publishing schedule. I don't believe in missing issues; neither did Jim--but circumstances beyond an editor's control sometimes ... Well, all I can say is, I'll do my best. And I'll try to represent all of GALAXY's readers and be fair to all writers--in this job, I neither can, should or want to be a part-

isan of any faction or cause. My feuding days are over.

'I'll be working at the office in Scarsdale (address on contents page); the New York P.O. Box will be closed. Of course, I'll take a lot of work home, but I won't be based at home as Jim was. (Personal note: Whenever you'd normally have sent your next column to Jim is when I want it).

'A note in response to Bryce H. Mouw (Letter, page 48, SFR 22): Actually, I don't know either German or Chinese. A lot of what I know comes from a concordance edited by Tony Lewis (but never published) which explained many German and other terms, but few Chinese. Mrs. Linebarger explained some Chinese words to me—for example, Chang, the name of a character in "Scanners Live in Vain" means "enduring" and "Aojou Nan Bien", the Chinesian City-State or what was once Australia, means "The south side of the old Golden Mountains"—What the Chinese called Australia during a 19th century gold rush. But she didn't happen to mention the Chinese meaning of "An Fang". I'm glad to hear about it, and no doubt there are other multilingual puns in Cordwainer Smith's fiction that haven't been unraveled yet.

'Best wishes.'

((Thanks for taking the time to write, J.J. And good luck. Alter, of course, is pleased as punch that his column will continue.))

LETTER FROM GEORGE WARREN

August 3, 1977

'Forry Ackerman quoted me on the back of Rhodan #106, CALLER FROM ETERNITY:

'Are you holding the magazine of the future in your hands? Journalist George Warren thinks so: 'Forry Ackerman has invented the next replacement species that will replace the magazine of fiction and comment. This mad invention may well have far-reaching effects, and everybody ought to know where it came from.'

'Unfortunately for my rep as a seer, Ace decided to do away with the magabook or bookazine format and went double-back on the Rhodans. Seems they did an audience survey and were so foolish as to pay heed to it. Frankly, my opinion of JWC went way the hell up when I learned

that he always did the ANALYTICAL LAB figures out of whole cloth.

'SFR was interesting as usual, particularly as you indulged your Rockefeller paranoia (the political comment and economic analysis is still in some ways the best part of the book even when you're wrong). The lead interview was weak, with a nebby interviewing a patzer. I do wish Malzberg would stick to his resolve to shut up about his Former Career. I am beginning to like the guy, sort of, and the column was embarrassing. Marion Bradley I find tedious. On the other hand I must second Gitsler's suggestion that it is time Gitsler get a Hugo or two. I think he's the best of his kind all the way around, and the most consistently satisfying contributor you've got.

'Alter is far and away the best writer in the mag. And he is never, ever wrong about anything. Even when he's in error he's right, and I am for him all the way.

'If you are going to continue to comment about STAR WARS without seeing it you are going to land yourself in the shit. Go see it ... and



don't wait for the 99¢ movie because the thing absolutely has to be seen with the 70mm print and the Dolby sound on the biggest goddam screen you can find. Anything less is a transcription of Beethoven's Ninth for solo kazoo. But this business of editorializing about it on the basis of what so-and-so says it's like or what you imagine it to be about is silly and will just land you a lot of unnecessary embarrassment.

'E.C. Tubb's letter sounds like prophecy. This is Good Ole Liberal America a few years from now. The combination of public employee unionization (which is unforgivable) and the creation of a fixed and irresponsible bureaucrat class is going to be the death of all the liberal democracies.

'My trucking novel sold to Playboy Press for \$5,000. That might keep me out of jail for a couple months. This time too I have a reasonable amount of time to finish it in. I only have 250,000 words to write in the novel form alone by Xmas. Maybe by then I will get rights to my sf novel back from Lasser and can market it elsewhere. I still have a perverse liking for it despite flaws which I will admit freely, most of them due to the fact that (to your chagrin) I found I could not write the Mindless Musclem from Moo stuff this time around and had to let my own revulsion against machismo take over. (I went back to the macho shit for Nick Carter but this time it had a certain amount of humor attached.) Anyhow, I march slowly upward from shit publishers to slightly better ones, one midget step at a time. My brother is about to sell his second hard-back (he writes sports books) and I have yet to sell my first. (On the other hand he can't sell a word of his fiction, and envies me no end for continuing to sell in this line.)

'I finally get to meet my littry agent, Dick Curtis, for the first time this weekend. Marilyn Granbeck is throwing a party for Dick at her place in Agoura. She and Art Moore, her husband, are friends of ours and were over here for dinner a few nights back. Both of them have been hacking away for 15 years without success until they have finally hit in the last year. Marilyn's romance CELIA is a big seller (but below the "best-seller" category) at Pyramid and she recently sold another one to the same firm for \$100,000. This is unusual in that the book is a paperback original. VERY high advance for an original. Art, meanwhile, is doing Family Sagas and doing well, but not that well yet. Both were working for the same markets as me one year ago. I am crossing my fingers.'

LETTER FROM PEARL

August 24, 1977

'I have met George Warren. He is brilliant, articulate and loquacious. Except for an occasional TV interview with Gore Vidal, my only recent experience with intelligent conversation has been interior monologues. I wasn't ready for a two-way connection and my tongue stuck to the roof of my mouth. George never noticed; he really is loquacious.

'So George swept all the recent paperback arrivals off a shelf, dumped them in a box and sent me on my way with instructions to do three pithy sentences on each. That was good. I hadn't done any writing in so long, I figured it would be a good exercise in turning out pointed, barbed prose and it was. I did 22 reviews in ten days and can now see a terrific future for me as a composer of telegrams, a specialist in night letters, a winner of contests that require you to complete a phrase in 25 words or less.

'It didn't take me long to learn that: for a lot of these books, two pithy sentences is stretching it. Berkley Medallion is a sleazy publishing house. Every publisher who buys a book about a married woman who plays around thinks he has another Fear of Flying on his hands and wants us to think so too. Paperback blurbs have little to do with the contents.

'I have also discovered that I am not emotionally constituted to review Fantasy. It's definitely not my bag but how the fuck do you put down fairies? Actually, I'd never been aware that there was such a category or that a readership existed and now I'm fascinated. Would love to meet someone who reads this stuff and find out where they're at. For openers, I'd like to know what sort of driving obsession can get them past the cover artwork which, on Fantasy, is usually pretty bad. I had only three books in this category but on two, the covers were enough to give one pause. One showed a cretinous-looking youth holding an obviously untrustworthy bird (The Blue Hawk) and the other depicted a stout, red-faced man in some sort of transport (Lud-In-The-Mist). The latter looked like nothing less than an old queen who had spied the village boys nekkid at the swimming hole.

'And, I don't feel qualified to review science fiction. As you know, I don't read much of it because of the (generally) poor quality writing and so I lack background. I did a scathing putdown on Keith Laumer's WORLDS OF THE IMPERIUM, calling him unimaginative, old-fashioned, graceless and unfit to write science fiction. But how do I know? Maybe he is a highly imaginative, gifted creator of SF (although it hardly seems possible) and this was just a bad book.

'Conversely, I gurgled all over Colin Kapp's THE CHAOS WEAPON...heavy-weight writer, brilliant vocabulary, marvelous ideas. But how do I know his story line hasn't been done a hundred times before and is

considered old hat by SF fans? I don't.

'Faced with Heinlein's ROCKET-SHIP GALLILEO, I just couldn't bring myself to read it. I know he's supposed to be a good writer but it's a 1947 book about a trip to the moon and the welcoming committee the astronauts encounter there. Seems rather after-the-fact, doesn't it, and about as relevant as that drama about illegal abortions I saw the other night on TV.

'Well, it's fun and exciting and I have regained my facility with words in great, choking handfuls but, of course, I can't count on this wordplay as a source of income. I was out on the street again today, hitting on an employment agency and trying to look only middling-anxious for work. So wouldn't you know it, those bastards--a repository of all



the plum jobs in the accounting field--solicited me to go to work for them as a counselor. No way do I want to be a counselor but this happened to me before and I know from experience that if you turn their offer down flat, they consider you short-sighted, intractable and not the calibre they like to send out under their agency banner.

'I have got to wriggle out of this situation slowly and gracefully and meanwhile, they're sending out other people to get these plum jobs. I thought I had an out when they told me I'd have to wear dresses and I demurred, pleading ugly, varicose-veined legs (not true yet) and now they're going to see if they can't make an exception in my case! "And if they won't," sniffed the office manager (a man), "you can always wear Supp-Hose."

'All I want is an adding machine, a fine-line pen, an excellent salary and to be left alone. I definitely do not want a closet full of missy skirts and a dozen pairs of Supp-Hose. Sometimes, having an engaging

personality can be hell.

'I'm having problems with my wardrobe too. Seems when I get toggled out mid-Wilshire conservative I find myself in offices where everyone's zipping around in blue jeans and wispy peasant tops, rosy-tipped nipples peeping through the gauze. They stare at me as though I'd just stepped out of some historical costume drama and in no time at all, I'm hauling my frumpy ass back to the car. On the other hand, when I try to array myself in clothes with a more casual feel, I'm regarded as a hippie who needs to be taken in hand.

'Ordinarily, none of these things would mean doodly-fuck to me but when you're job-hunting, it's the small shit that can put you out of the running.

'P.S. I continue to be astonished at the amount of passion poured into your mag by your contributors. It don't seem decent somehow.'

"POSSIBLY THE GREATEST OF ALL THE INSIDIOUS FRAUDS OF CIVILIZATION IS THIS IDEA THAT THE MIND IS A LOGICAL ORGAN. PEOPLE WHO CONSIDER THEMSELVES IRREPROACHABLY RATIONAL CAN STAND IN A ROOM EXHIBITING A PICTURE OF WASHINGTON CROSSING THE DEL-AWARE AND DENOUNCE A FOREIGN COUNTRY FOR BREAKING A CHRISTMAS TRUCE; THEY CAN SUBSCRIBE TO A RELIGION THAT BELIEVES IN THREE GODS IN ONE FOR ONE DAY IN SEVEN; THEY CAN SEE THEMSELVES THREATENED DAILY BY DISSIDENTS WHO DEMAND TO BE TREATED EQUALLY AND DISSIDENTS WHO ARE TIRED OF BEING TREATED ALL THE SAME, AND THEN DEFEND FREEDOM OF SPEECH BY CLAMPING DOWN ON ANYONE WHO TRIES TO SPEAK OUT. TO SAY THAT SOMETHING "DOESN'T MAKE SENSE" IS TO IMPLY A CRITICISM OF THE THING, YET ALL IT REALLY INDICATES IS THAT IT IS PART OF THE GENERAL SCHEME OF THINGS. RATIONALITY IS ONE OF THE MORE RECENT ADDITIONS TO THE CUMBERSOME MENTAL BAGGAGE, AND AS A NEWCOMER IT IS DEEPLY MISTRUSTED BY ALL THE STABLE AND RESPECTABLE INSTINCTS LIKE AGGRESSION AND PROPAGATION AND SELF-PRESERVATION, WHO WERE THERE FIRST AND AIM TO KEEP IT THAT WAY. IN ANY CRISIS OR TIGHT SITUATION, LOGIC CAN BE COUNTED ON TO BE CONSULTED LAST, EXCEPT IN MOVIES, CHEAP NOVELS AND TV SHOWS. THE CONCEPT OF RATIONALITY IS NOT MUCH MORE THAN AN UNSEEN IDEAL LIKE JUSTICE, PERFECTION, IMMORTALITY AND THE PUBLIC SERVANT.

—GROUCHO, HARPO, CHICO AND SOMETIMES ZEPPERO
BY JOE ADAMSON

Thanks to Ian Covell

ALIEN THOUGHTS CONTINUED ON P. 62



PIERS ANTHONY JACOB

AN INTERVIEW WITH PIERS ANTHONY

Conducted By CLIFF BIGGERS

New Books by Piers Anthony:

A SPELL FOR CHAMELEON, Ballantine 25855, \$1.95
CLUSTER, Avon 34686, \$1.75

First published in *FUTURE RETROSPECTIVE*
Drawing of Piers Anthony by Wade Gilbreath

INTROSPECTIVE: PIERS ANTHONY

Piers anthony is an author who needs little introduction to science fiction readers of the past fifteen years; Piers has been active in sf, both as a professional and as a fan, and has achieved notoriety in both areas. At the end of March, Piers took some time off in the middle of a current novel and answered the questions for this interview via mail.

FR: You seemed to burst into sf full-force, with two major works -- *SOS THE ROPE* and *GITHON*. Do you have any idea why you came to sf to begin with, and how actively involved were you in sf before you became a professional?

ANTHONY: The key word is "seemed". I was an avid, completist reader of SF from 1947 on, and developed a considerable collection of magazines. I started serious SF writing in 1954, sold my first story in 1962, and my first novel in 1966. So it was hard to "burst"; I had worked my way up through the slush pile for many years before my head broke the surface, and by then my talent had solidified. I had no fan activity prior to my first sale, but I was as deeply involved in SF as I could be.

It would be difficult to trace everything, though. I was addressing a class of high school students last month, and a girl asked me why I had taken up writing, and I gave her a direct answer -- and was amazed to hear what I said. The real key seems

to be not 'why SF?' but 'why write?' The answer to the first is, that is what I was familiar with, so when I decided to get serious about writing, it had to be SF. That tells you almost nothing; you need to know why I was an SF nut, and why I was motivated to write, instead of being a good, sensible mundane civilian. Actually, the why SF and why write items are linked -- well, you asked for it...

My early life was unhappy. I was not mistreated or hungry or anything like that; it was more subtle. I was born in Oxford, England, and lived there about four years. Yes -- John Brunner hails from the same time and place. I was happy there, until the time came to leave; then I discovered that my beloved nurse was not my mother, and that I had to go away with two comparative strangers who were my real parents. We went to Spain in 1939, when I was just about turning five; I began to learn Spanish and forget English. My father was head of the AFSC (American Friends Service Committee), the international activity arm of the Quakers) relief program in Spain during the civil war there. He was feeding the starving children, who there, as in many wars, were the real victims of combat. Then General Franco won, and apparently the new quasi-fascist government was suspicious of anyone who was giving out food for nothing, so one day my father disappeared. Nobody knew what had happened, until he managed to smuggle out a note; then my moth-

er faced the authorities with the note, showing that they had lied about not knowing anything about the case, and since had done no wrong, they were in an awkward position. So they covered up by letting him go -- provided he left the country. He has some interesting things to say about his time in that prison; apparently there were no toilets, just a trench in the men's section -- so when the women needed to go, they had to come into the men's section to use the trench, and the men stood around and saw whatever they could see while the show was on. And that's just one example...

Anyway, we left Spain in August 1940, and I had my 6th birthday on the ship. They were short of supplies, since WW II was then on in Europe, so my birthday cake was made out of sawdust, iced and candied like any other cake. Today my own children, the age I was then, delight to hear about that wonderful sawdust cake, though I recall being disappointed that I couldn't eat it. I had a harmonica for a birthday present, and played it all over the ship. Lot of fun, right? Well, yes, except for the seasickness; but another thing is, this was my second uprooting, going to a new country with another language, and I suffered. I had a string of psychological problems such as bed wetting, convulsive head and hand motions, and fear of the dark. A single nightmare terrified me for three years. I was small for my age, finishing 9th grade at exactly 100 pounds and 5 feet even, the smallest in my class, male

or female (I have considerable sympathy for Harlan Ellison, who is also my age; I may have been smaller than he, until I started to grow, and I kept growing until my third year of college, and now stand at 5'11" or so in the morning, and shrink some during the day). So I got bullied. Also my parents didn't get along; they were divorced when I was eighteen, but they might as well have done it when I was eight, because the tension was worse than the finality. This represented my third uprooting really. So I had an untenable emotional situation, and had my life ended there, I would have preferred not to have been born. I've glossed over the details, of course; it was not all bad. But I had to get out of it or lose my mind. And that was where SF came in. When I discovered ASTOUNDING SF magazine at the age of 13, a whole new world opened up for me -- a glorious, adventurous wonderful world, so much better than my own. I suppose today kids in my situation discover hard drugs instead; I guess I could have been a drug addict, but never encountered that, and did encounter science fiction. I was hooked; I lived for SF thereafter. So that's the "why SF?" answer. The "why writing?" ties in; I was nothing and less than nothing -- that is, I would have been happier not living -- and there seemed to be precious little justification for my existence. When I was 16 my closest cousin, age 15, who had everything to live for, died of cancer; it really seemed unfair, since obviously I was the one who should have gone. It was as though I had to justify my life somehow. And so this compulsion to figure it out, to understand why I did live, and to make that clear to the world -- assuming there was a rationale for it. By the time I had figured the things I needed to know, I was a vegetarian -- because of my aversion to death, which I suppose may be taken as a positive sign after my prior attitude -- and I was able to express complex thoughts pretty well. So -- I wrote. And became Someone, instead of No-one. That is the essence of what I told the girl in class, and listened to myself tell. I am an SF writer today because without SF and writing I would be nothing at all today.

To wrap up the question: I took seven years to struggle through CHTHON, finally got it untangled and completed in 1965. It sold a year later, and was published the year after that. Meanwhile I had written the collaborative novel THE PRETENDER (Borgo Press should publish that in a couple of years) and was working on HASAN. I wrote three novels, OMNIVORE, SOS THE ROPE, and THE RING

(collaborative) in 1967, and they all sold, and I've been going at a similar writing pace since. So it was not as sudden as it seemed; it was just that once I cracked the novel-publishing barrier, I moved right on ahead. My second novel sale was actually OMNIVORE.

FR: You seemed to have run into some problems quite early; I've heard that you had some problems with your dealings with BALLANTINE concerning OMNIVORE. What did happen?

ANTHONY: They violated both their contracts with me, on CHTHON and OMNIVORE, and blacklisted me when I protested. I took back both novels and had them republished elsewhere.

I have a tremendous amount of material relating to this matter, and it is too complex to cover entirely here. So I'll summarize as I remember it, and you must bear in mind that the others named would naturally put different interpretations on the matter. I got along fine with BALLANTINE at first, but then they played it fast and loose with the terms of the contract, and tried to tough it out rather than admit error, and involved other people, and suggested that I was the one at fault -- well, you don't do that to me unless you are prepared for a real fight.

One good example: when OMNIVORE was picked up by the book club, they never showed me the contract or told me its terms; they just sent me a note saying my 50% share would be sent along soon. Well, time passed; the book club edition was published, and no money came. So I inquired, gently; how come no money and no author's copies? They ignored this. Then, a month after the book club publication they sent me a statement of account -- and did not even list the book club sale. Or the two European sales of CHTHON. That was when I hit the ceiling and sent a stiff note, demanding to know why such things weren't listed.

As a result, Betty Ballantine blacklisted me there, returning my novel ORN -- already editorially marked for the typesetters, or at least partially marked. So I wrote to the SFWA Contracts Committee, that was set up to handle such things, run by Damon Knight. He did not respond directly; instead he passed the letter along to Robert Silverberg, who passed it (or word of it) to Betty Ballantine; then both Silverberg and Ballantine wrote me what I felt were arrogant notes, suggesting I was guilty of libelling the finest publisher in the world and had harmed my career by my rash-

ness. As it happened, my wife was pregnant at the time, and she had lost three babies before and had surgery in an effort to hold this one; she began to get hysterical, and I don't mean with laughter. SFWA and Gordon Dickson, then President of SFWA, offered to arbitrate, and we all chose arbiters, and after a long passage of time, it was obvious to me that someone was stalling and nothing was going to come of it, so I quit SFWA (and never have rejoined) and handled it myself. I ended up getting \$800 and after that it went pretty much my way. I never did get my book club author's copies, incidentally. And of course, the word was spread all over about what an unreasonable person Piers Anthony was; I got feedbacks from that from more than one direction and had trouble selling my books, and my income decreased while my unsold backlog increased. But I survived it without compromising my principles.

FR: Why is it that you're now back with Ballantine, after all those problems? Is it changing editors, changing policies, or what?

ANTHONY: Both, in fact. The administration changed at Ballantine, and the Del Reys took over there. I've always gotten along fine with both Del Reys. I admired Lester's editing way back in the early 50s, and met him personally in 1966 and told him he was the sort of editor I could write for, and I meant it, and I was right. I've had experience with good and bad editors: he's a good one. So I'm doing fantasy for him now, and enjoying it.

FR: And then there was MACROSCOPE, undoubtedly one of the most controversial non-Hugo winners in SF. Did you have trouble selling the book?

ANTHONY: Yes. Five American publishers bounced it, and finally Avon took it. It has paid back a lot of money since then; I expect the total to pass \$20,000 this year. But the most important thing is that it got me a good publisher; Avon has treated me in a way that no other publisher did. Almost all my best work is at Avon now.

FR: What about Hugos in general; how do you feel about SF awards, whether from fans or pros?



ANTHONY: I've gotten rather cynical about those awards, for a number of reasons. I'm not sure I would accept either a fan or a pro award today. Some of my earlier novels were contenders for awards; CHTHON placed third in both Hugo and Nebula. MACROSCOPE was distributed late, so the people who were waiting to read it and perhaps nominate it for the Nebula could not do so, and they refused to allow write-ins so it was frozen out without a hearing. It was on the Hugo ballot -- but I had received the word privately that a lot of fans didn't like my arrogance, and refused to read it. I feel both the fan and the pro attitude were wrong, and I also feel that MACROSCOPE was a better novel than the one that won. That was LeGuin's LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS -- which was a very fine novel, but which won by default. You see, that was the year, 1969, that Disch's CAMP CONCENTRATION was published; I never found that on sale so have never been able to read it, but I understand from all accounts, including LeGuin's own, that it was the best novel of that year. There was also Spinrad's BUG JACK BARRON, tremendously controversial -- but what a number of people seemed to overlook was the fact that under all that provocative language was an excellent novel. With people voting for or against Spinrad's novel for the wrong reasons, and with both mine and Disch's excluded from the ballot (for different reasons) -- well, LeGuin's might have won fairly, in the Nebula, but did not. The Nebula win carries a lot of impact with the fans, and I think in recent years the winner of the Nebula has often won the Hugo automatically, regardless of its merit. So I feel both awards have been debased by error and politics, and that isn't the sort of thing I care to participate in. It is possible that I might have a more optimistic attitude had one of my prior novels won, of course; but I try not to be a hypocrite, and feel I have legitimate objections to these awards. So I rather expect to pass them up, not because I feel my work is unworthy, but because the awards are unworthy. The fans who did not like my arrogance before will now have more ammunition -- but there is no arrogance on Earth like that of an ignorant fan.

FR: When Ted White first took over AMAZING and FANTASTIC, he ran a stunning fantasy novel of yours, HASAN, which remained unsold in book form for seven years. More recently, you've been noticeably absent in AMAZING and FANTASTIC; is this due to financial aspects or other reasons?

ANTHONY: Both the fantasy HASAN (which was sold in book form, but written off without publication by

Berkley, and now will be published by Borgo) and the SF novel ORN were serialized in Ted White's magazines. I have no quarrel with White in this connection. But his publisher is a rogue who reneges on agreements and cheats authors, so I decline to do business. I did compromise by showing Ted a collaborative novel, DEAD MORN; he has had it for over three years now without a report or response to my queries, and I presume this means he will not publish it. I'd like to get it back, in fact. I would have shown Ted OX had his publisher behaved, but he did not so I did not.

About Ted, though -- and this relates to an earlier question -- let me say this. When all the mess with Ballantine broke, and it seemed that my career as a writer could be finished because of the blacklist, and I felt SFWA had betrayed me, I needed good advice. So I turned to what I felt was the best source for advice relating to this sort of problem: Ted White, who has had a similar problem. And he answered with a long, fine sensible analysis: what threats were real, what were bluffs, what I could expect to gain or lose following what courses. It put the whole thing into tactical perspective and enabled me to carry it through to its eventual more-or-less successful conclusion. I have always been grateful to Ted White for this, and that is why I am so careful to say that my quarrels with AMAZING have been with his publisher, not him. I never forget how he helped me when I needed it.

FR: Why did you have so much trouble getting HASAN sold? In fact, you still have numerous manuscripts unsold -- an amazing thing for a professional of your caliber. Do you have any ideas why?

ANTHONY: Well, I did have trouble with that blacklist; one publisher bounced HASAN for that reason, and others may have without admitting it. But I think it is mainly that editors have particular tastes and not too much competence, and often don't know

a successful manuscript from a dud. A number said that HASAN fell between categories, and thus would not sell well. Make of that what you will.

FR: Another rather amazing fact is the absence of a Piers Anthony short story collection from your published works. Why?

ANTHONY: I don't know how writers get short story collections published; no publisher has ever been interested in anything of the sort from me. Maybe if I had more aggressive agents who thought in those terms -- but by and large, story collections are not in demand. Since only one in four of my stories ever sold anyway, I don't have a big list of published stories to draw from; maybe twenty or so.

But I did try one innovation; I collected almost all of my unsold stories into one 100,000 word volume entitled ANTHOLOGY, which I thought was a clever title. I felt that many of those stories should have been published, and would have been, had my name been Clarke or Heinlein or Asimov. However, many of them were not good stories, too. So I put them all together with my commentary, telling where they had been marketed and what sort of editorial responses I had gotten and why I thought they had failed. The volume thus became a kind of new -- writer's text: here is this story, here is what the editor said about it, here is what was wrong with it. I think it made good reading of a unique kind: The reader could read a story, enjoy it, then guess what was going to happen to it, and maybe get some pointers on how to avoid a similar failure himself. But -- the volume itself could find no publisher. I think this was for several reasons; one reason was that the editors knew these were rejected stories, so felt they must be bad, and read with a prejudiced mind. Another was that it was a collection by a not-well-known writer, a sure drug on the market. But mainly, it called a spade a spade when it came



to editing. I quoted editor's comments on given pieces -- well, from memory, here's an example: I did a story called "Balook" about the animation of the largest mammal ever known, Baluchitherium, eighteen feet tall at the shoulders, twice the size of an elephant. But people found it strange, so they were mean to it, taking pot shots, throwing firecrackers, and so on, so the experiment failed not because of the animal but because of the people in our society. I thought this was a very important concept to get across, and a good SF story too. But one editor rejected it because he couldn't believe people would be that cruel, and John Campbell rejected it because he said he already knew people were that mean; he even gave an example of such cruelty, where someone had fed a can of lye to a zoo hippopotamus and killed it. So there you have two opposite reasons for rejection -- and this tends to show up editors more than the story. So editors bounce the collection that shows this.

Editors have much more sensitivity about criticism of them than they do for the merits of a given story. One editor rejected the volume saying in her experience it was not true; that editors did not treat unagitated authors worse, pay them less, etc., as I had suggested in ANTHOLOGY. Well, at that time two of my manuscripts were shown to that publisher. PROSTHO PLUS (a novelized collection of dental stories) I submitted on my own; then a couple of months later I had obtained an agent, and he submitted ANTHOLOGY. I got a report on the latter, with that comment about the fairness of editors, before I got one on PROSTHO PLUS. Finally, when something like six months had passed, and my query to the publisher had been ignored, I obtained a copy of the bound galley of the British edition of that novel and gave it to my agent to re-market elsewhere. Immediately he got an offer for it from the same publisher, who I thought had lost the original manuscript. For \$500 more than they said they might have paid me. So that editor struck me as exactly the sort of hypocrite she denied being. She gave better ser-

vices to agent---and I had the proof. Ironical that ANTHOLOGY, the very manuscript she chastized on this score, was the one that proved my case.

But how to get past the barrier on that book -- I don't know. I sent it to Richard Delap to review, the way he had for HASAN, that resulted in the first sale of HASAN. He said he was going to review it -- but a number of years have passed with no word. So I'm out the top copy, and one day I'll query Delap to learn what happened. It seems to be another jinxed manuscript. But there's why I have no short story collection in print.

FR: You're not a convention goer at all; you mentioned once that you'd probably not go to a Worldcon that was only a few hours away from you. Why is that?

ANTHONY: When they set up a Worldcon in Orlando, I decided to go; that's only a hundred miles or so. When they moved it to Miami, I decided not to go; that's too far away. I don't like it traveling anyway; my family is important to me, and so is my writing. We can't all go because we have animals to care for and my wife has a job and my kids have school, and I don't like going alone. I did make a trip to Vermont last summer, but I've never been to an sf convention.

FR: You dislike traveling, yet you mentioned a trip to Vermont -- what was that about?

ANTHONY: I think that was the first trip I'd taken out of the state in a decade. I visited Andy Offutt in Kentucky back in 1964, and attended the Milford session in Pennsylvania in 1966. The trips were worthwhile, but fandom simply isn't that important to me. But the Vermont trip -- my college professor asked me to come for a Science Fiction & Future sort of program, and because I did have my degree in writing from there and had good instruction, I felt the college had a call on me. I have a long memory for who I owe what, be it a favor or a curse. So I went, taking my daughter Penny along. It was just twenty years after my graduation, and now they have co-ed dorms and such -- when I had been suspended for being in a girls' lounge with five other people at 10:40 pm, just talking. Times change, and I reminded them of that. Ed Mesky, one of the editors of NIEKAS, attended, but overall their program was a disaster. Hardly any students bothered to attend; it was the first nice day in some time, and they were all outside enjoying the sun. We had confirmed reservations going home -- and the

airplane would not let us aboard. I had planned to meet an editor in New York, and everything was fouled up. Anyway, I had several days good conversation with SF writer Katherine McLean, and my daughter enjoyed it, so I don't regret it. I adapted the experience to my novel GOD OF TAROT; I adapted everything I can to my writing, as a matter of policy. This May I'll take my younger daughter to Pennsylvania, to my 25th high school reunion, because the 25th is the only one I'm willing to make the effort for, and we have a high concentration of family there to visit, and we try to be fair with our children: one daughter had her turn, now the other must have hers. That's the way we operate.

FR: It's quite obvious that your daughters are extremely important to you; how much of a change in your life came about when Penny and Chery were born?

ANTHONY: I regard the birth of my first child as the most significant change in my life, ever. You see, we'd been married eleven years, and lost three children, and not been certain we could ever have a child of our own, and of course the adoption agencies would not have accepted a vegetarian who wrote science fiction as a good parent. So when we finally got one we could keep, it was a complete transformation. My wife returned to work, and I took care of Penny. She was my little girl; I doted her, I fed her, I held her at night, because she was colicky and had to be held or she could not sleep; I got very little sleep those days! There was not a moment of my day or night when she was not somewhere in my mind; I had to know what she was doing, where she was, that she was all right. My writing efficiency was cut in half. Thus this birth made more difference to me than marriage itself. Chery, born 2 1/2 years later, was her mother's girl, and did not affect my life so much. As my mother-in-law put it; one child already takes up 100% of your time. So the second can't make as much difference. I'm making notes for a book, now, to be entitled TANGLEHAIR TALES (a borrowing from Hawthorne's TANGLEWOOD TALES) about the experience of raising two cute, bright little girls. (The school tested Chery's IQ at 150, and she's doing 2nd grade work in the first grade. As I said: bright.) Penny is hyperactive and learning-disabled -- both terms referring to rather complicated syndromes; I did a whole article on that subject and sold it to the local newspaper. So we've had a lot of experience, good and bad -- but I'd never trade it for the alternative. A number of fans have objected to my talking



about my children; sorry, my children are more important to me than the fans.

FR: You have very few dealings with fanzines nowadays; is this because of your heavy writing schedule, or are there other reasons?

ANTHONY: I really entered fandom and prodom simultaneously, late in 1962, getting in touch with NFFF while my first sale was being made. I did not tell the fans I had made a sale, and they regarded me as a "neo" despite my fifteen years of SF addiction, and I never cared to go beyond that status. Someone discovered I was a pro and printed my address and I was deluged with fanzines begging a response. I wrote to each explaining that I preferred not to participate, and some of them would run my note and maybe ridicule it, though I had not intended it for print, so finally I lumped three fanzines together and gave them a multipage letter putting it all on the line. One of them printed excerpts -- negative ones, not positive ones, of course, and that started a major fan feud. If I say "this is good and this is bad," and a fanzine prints only the latter and objects to my being negative -- well, I had a bellyfull of that sort of thing, and now I simply don't answer fanzines without a special reason. I used to write to half a dozen fanzines, good ones like SFR and DOUBLE BILL and NIEKAS, and refused to write to any others after that. FR is an exception, mainly because I do have an interest in SF reviewing. You may remember that our first contract was when you invited me to attend an unpretentious con in Georgia (Halfacon '74 - Susan), and I declined, and then you printed your fanzine and did not lambast me. That showed the difference between you and a number of other fans. I'm still in touch with Joanne Burger and hope to see her this year, so I don't eschew all fans, but I certainly don't go out of my way to interact with them. It is true I'd rather write than waste time at cons, and if I ever do attend a con I'll probably do it anonymously, because I don't like class distinctions. As I said: I have a reputation for arrogance, and well-earned -- but there are a number of fans -- and pros -- who deserve much more of that reputation than I do, and I'm damned if I'll cater to them.

FR: Several people in fandom seem to see you as a hot-tempered, feuding sort; yet you're not that kind of person at all. Your VORTEX feud, for instance, was a case of your offering moral support to a new author who'd gotten a bad deal -- have any of these other feuds been on more

personal levels, and do you still get feedback on them? I know you've told me that "I never had a feud with an honest person; I hate dishonesty and hypocrisy, and my definitions are stricter than the norm." Do you care to elaborate?

ANTHONY: Something you have to realize, there is no person in this world who is not reasonable by his own lights. Harlan Ellison has quite a reputation for feuding, yet he can be the most considerate, nicest person you'd want to meet. As I've shown here, Ted White can be most accommodating. So most of these feuds are really misunderstandings.

So I must qualify my statement: I do hate dishonesty and hypocrisy, and try to live a moral life myself -- but what I call dishonest, another person may call practical. Don Pfeel of VORTEX treated me perfectly well, and he was merely running his business as he saw fit; I took off on him because my standards differ. I'm sensitive to contract violations and blacklisting and setting stories in type without contracts, but he obviously felt that some of these practices were proper. He made the tactical mistake of challenging me, so he paid the penalty; I do know how to fight, as I think even my fanish enemies will concede. I don't think I've ever lost a battle in fandom, though my positions have been misrepresented many times. I've also had run-ins of small or great extent with agents Scott Meredith and Jay Garon, and with pros Ted White, Harlan Ellison, Harry Harrison, Dean Koontz, Wilson Tucker, Lin Carter and others I've forgotten. There are a number of people who don't like me -- but the root of it has generally been my objection to their standards, rather than the other way around. If you ever encounter someone who seriously believes I have acted with dishonesty, tell me; I'd say the chances are ten to one he'll be correctly informally or in court. I don't say "to know me is to like me", I say that when the dust settles down, most people will have to admit the bastard is right, and many of the rest will show themselves about the way Dean Koontz did. Dear won't understand what I mean, of course. Yet I do have very close and good relationships with those who meet my criteria, and some who don't; for example I differ extremely from Roberto Fuentes, but we've collaborated on six novels and sold five, and we're good friends. I don't take the credit for that; it's just that Roberto can get along with anybody, for all that he doesn't have to, being a third degree black belt in judo. Anyway,

a number of people are like this; they apply talent and drive and courage to whatever they do (Harlan Ellison being an obvious example), including combat, so they achieve more and make more enemies than other people do. I am of this type, apt to be more generous in both friendship and adversity than the average person. So don't be too free about saying I'm not hot-tempered feuding sort; had you challenged my competence or ethics in print, you might have encountered quite another facet of my character. Yet if I were not this way, I would not have made it this far as a writer.

FR: You received poor treatment as a writer at Laser; Elwood had your book rewritten by Robert Coulson, and then listed it as a collaboration. What were your feelings on this? Did this lead to financial problems concerning royalties? Do you feel that the manuscript needed sufficient rewriting to classify it as a collaboration?

ANTHONY: This is another question that requires a complex answer. My feelings were and are strongly negative; it seems Elwood deceived both me and Coulson, telling me that there were only minor changes so he was having Coulson retype it rather than bothering me with the details, while he told Coulson that I had agreed to such major revision as to require collaboration. Had Elwood not been fired because of the lack of success of the Laser line, I believe I could have gotten him fired because of the ethical and contractual violations he perpetrated in this case. I feel that no revision at all was necessary, and that my original novel was superior to the mess that saw print. There were no financial problems, because I had already been paid; Coulson was paid a pittance by the company and promised a 50% share of future proceeds. Since there was no contractual authority for that, it was an empty promise; the "collaboration" was illegal. The manuscript did suffer sufficient rewriting to qualify as collaboration; the problem is that it did not need that rewriting, and was not improved by it. I now have the publisher's apology and the reversion of rights to my original text; Elwood is gone and the Laser line is finished. I think that suffices. It was Elwood, and not the publisher, who did it; Elwood deceived his own publisher, too.

FR: You take environmentalism quite seriously; how did your interest in this come about? Are you satisfied that the American public is giving environmentalism the attention it deserves, or do you think it's being glossed over?

ANTHONY: This ties in with my pro-

fiction and my family. Professionally, I want a halfway decent world for my children to go out into. What I perceive is disquieting. We are not headed for any utopia. It isn't just a matter of corruption and money-grubbing; there has always been that, and though I don't approve, the world will no doubt survive it. It is that we cannot maintain our present trends without destroying the world as we know it. Food, energy, environment -- we're running out of them all. Our grandchildren may starve and shiver and cough, with no recourse. No need to go into a long discussion here; there is plenty of documentation elsewhere. I have been active in Common Cause, trying to correct the political roots of misgovernment -- but it will take more than that. I don't know how to make people who are stupid or willfully blind do what is necessary; merely economizing myself doesn't solve the problem when others are wasting precious resources. So I am doing what little I can; I am removing my family from it. I use bicycles to take my children to and from school -- tandem bikes with extra seats, so I can take one or two children at once. I've been doing that for six years, and amassed about 7000 miles on four bikes -- which represents a fair amount of gasoline saved. We use solar water heating, and open windows in lieu of air conditioning and wood in the fireplace in lieu of electric or oil heating. So we are living cheaply. We're now building a house on several acres of forest land next to a state forest, where we can continue and extend these things and grow a better garden. If civilization collapses, maybe we'll be able to survive. More important, maybe we'll show people it can be done so that others will cut down on wastage and pollution, and the damage will lessen. And of course it shows in my writing; I had many of these things in my Laser novel, before the editors interfered. But I don't think the American public is taking these things seriously enough -- and I fear we all may die of it.

FR: What other non-sf activities are you involved in?

ANTHONY: I've mentioned most of them already, actually. One other is judo. I got into that because of my collaborator, Roberto Fuentes, and the martial arts novels we are doing. I'll probably leave it this summer, after three years, because I am moving and I don't think there is a judo club where I'm going. But it has been good while it lasted. I'm a green belt, now, which is no high rank -- it might be reckoned as getting a story published in a fanzine, while the black belt level of

judo is pro, if that analogy helps. But if I'm ever mugged on a street, I could probably dispatch the mugger; judo is self-defense, and some of those techniques are devastating. Apart from that, it has kept me exercising vigorously, and that is good for my health, especially at my age. I do about 13 chins each morning, and three times a week assorted other exercises that give my system a good workout. I don't kill myself, but I'm probably in better shape than 95% of men my age. So you might say physical health is one of my activities, and that includes healthy eating -- no free sugar, smoking, coffee, etc. I hope to measure out a half-mile track around our forest property and run a couple of laps regularly; I think running is the best exercise there is.

FR: Your Jason Striker series of Kung-fu books did a nice job of combining this interest with semi-fantasy themes. Why was the series cancelled after five books?

ANTHONY: Ouch: not kung-fu. Judo. Important difference. It was cancelled because of a change of editors at Berkley. The old editors told us the series was doing well, and they wanted more, so we worked up a 6th novel -- but in the interim, George Ernsberger, who was editor at Avon when I started there with MACROSCOPE, and who moved to Berkley and bought many more novels there -- he left, and the new editors said the series was not doing well and bounced the next novel. I don't know what went on there; one fan reviewer, David Hartwell, I believe, did a bad review of my juvenile novel RACE AGAINST TIME, implying I was a racist and he went to Berkley as an editor, and that could account for our loss of favor. I don't know; no doubt Hartwell will deny it, but he did show a bad attitude about a novel that was not racist. The sales figures show that the martial arts novels were doing about as well there as PROSTHO PLUS, which is science fiction -- but that hasn't done that well, either. The fact is, the editor, more than the particular book, determines what publishers buy my work; when Ernsberger left Berkley, I was in again. (And on this matter of racism: my best friend, one of the few bright spots of my childhood, was a Negro. I believe in the integration of races, and my major novels feature integrated casts: MACROSCOPE, GHOST, GOD OF TAROT, and others: my Laser book had a black character -- who was expurgated to white by someone.)

FR: I know that you've been most proud of your upcoming CLUSTER/GOD OF TAROT series of novels; what are

Y'WANNA STRAY
HEALTHY? SANTOS,
Y'GETTER
HOPE THAT
WRITER'S BLOCK
IS PERMANENT!



77

these novels, and how important are they to you as a writer?

ANTHONY: Crucially, important. I regard the three Cluster novels (CLUSTER, CHAINING THE LADY and KIRLIAN QUEST) as the best sf adventure I have done; together they amount to 349,000 words and range the full galactic cluster. I think the readers will like them best of all my works. GOD OF TAROT is linked, but of a different type; I hope it will be my best serious novel. (I'm working on it now, and it is difficult, so I can't say it is my best -- just that I'm trying.) If I succeed, GOD OF TAROT will eclipse MACROSCOPE as a novel I am known by. The fans may not like it, because it isn't what they expect from me, but I'm aiming for a larger audience. Those who didn't like the astrology in MACROSCOPE will be appalled at the tarot theme of this one, not to mention the serious religion. But I refuse to shy away from serious material; for example, I'm doing a nonfiction book on kidney disease --

FR: How did you come to do a book on kidney disease?

ANTHONY: That's another long story. I'm getting tired, so let's see if I can condense it into a short answer. Back in 1962 I was fired from my good job at an electronics company and my wife lost her third baby, and a doctor told me the constant fatigue I felt was all in my mind -- on the same day. Because of the unemployment problem I tried my first full year as a writer, and my wife, having no baby to care for, went to work to support us, and my insurance

company rideder me for all mental disease because of the fatigue, which never left me. I carried on. In 1972 I was a professional writer, and my wife had carried two babies, and I had found insurance that didn't think I was crazy -- but fatigue remained. Finally I had a competent physical exam; it cost \$169 -- they discovered I had diabetes. This was the source of my fatigue. The doctor, who supervised about 250 kidney dialysis treatments a week and handles all the kidney business for this area, said he had this notion for a book, and -- and so we collaborated. He is the doctor, I am the writer; we bring our respective skills to it. We had one collaborative article published in a newspaper, and now at last have placed our book, DEATH OR DIALYSIS, with a small local publisher. It covers kidney disease, and dialysis, and transplantation of kidneys, and has fascinating episodes, like the time the tubing burst in the middle of a treatment, shooting a geyser of blood up to the ceiling, or when they took a kidney from the mother of a patient for transplant and discovered it was cancerous, so that her act of generosity literally saved her life. I'm sorry no big New York publisher wanted this book. I did it because I believe it will save lives, and I want to do more than merely entertain people.

FR: You've collaborated a great deal; do you prefer collaborating? Have you ever had any problems with collaborations?

ANTHONY: Endless problems! Collaboration is as much work as individual novel writing -- for each party, yet each only gets half the money. I collaborate because I refuse to be limited by my own limitations. I knew nothing about martial arts, so I collaborated with a judo black belt; I know nothing about medicine, so I collaborated with a doctor. It is hard work -- but I'm not in writing for money or ease. I did a whole fanzine article on collaborating for OUTWORLD, so I'll leave it at that.

FR: You also mentioned once that you were contemplating a massive historical work; how did you get motivated to this, and what will it deal with?

ANTHONY: Again, I went into this in a fanzine, BEABOHEMA, some years back. History is one of my hobbies, but school classes often make it dull; I want to make it bright, and think I can -- if I can ever find a willing publisher. My project will cover the entire history of man, told in stories and graphically. I mean, graphically as in graphs, pictures; what did you think I meant? But let me cop out on this; it's too

big to go into detail on here...

FR: Before we close -- do you claim any influences from other writers?

ANTHONY: Everything influences me, even bad examples like Hemingway. But basically I am my own man, emulating nobody. Borgo will do a booklet on me, later in their series, and possibly they will fathom my literary antecedents better than I can. I think this interview shows that I am not quite like other people, even other writers.

FR: Thank you, Piers.

[This interview has undergone only marginal editing for purposes of space, otherwise, it is presented as written.]

REG NOTE: With his permission to print this interview from FUTURE RETROSPECTIVE, Piers sent along an additional paragraph for one of his responses, and the following extra information:

June 6, 1977

'And a ... note to you, suggested by something in one of the other interview questions: I am now working on GOD OF TAROT, the most horrendously complex novel I have done. If it makes it through the various censors along the way, I recommend it to you for reading, not because I give a damn about any possible SFR review (though I do) (but who knows whether SFR will exist by the time GOD OF TAROT sees print?) but because I believe you will find that parts of it read more like REG's secret thoughts than any of your current material does. You once quit reading one of my stories after the first pages because you didn't like the style, thereby missing out on a story you would have enjoyed---"Hurdle"---about supersonic car racing. Take my word, though the first two chapters of GOD OF TAROT may turn you off, keep going; you will not regret it. If I win my upcoming battle with the censors, that is; this stuff is potent.'



ALLEN THOUGHTS CONTINUED FROM P. 55

9-15-77 It has been a while since I wrote a dated entry. Time to make a prediction, make some political comments...

But first, I've heard that I won the Best Fanzine Hugo and tied with Susan Wood for Best Fan Writer Hugo. Very nice. Very gratifying. I asked Bruce Pelz to accept for me at the worldcon if I won, and I presume he did. I have to presume a lot, since nobody ever tells me anything. An SFR reader called from Seattle to congratulate me on winning the fanzine Hugo---this days after the event---and THAT was the first word I got. He assumed I already knew. *Grump*. And then came a letter from George Flynn (from the Hotel Fontainebleau). He said,

'I presume you've already been notified of your latest 1-1/2 Hugoes.' You presume too much, George. Somehow I expect the convention committee to notify the non-attending winners, officially, on a letter-head.

And I have no idea who has the actual Hugoes...or when I'll get them.... *Grump*

Arthur F. Burns is currently head of the all-powerful Federal Reserve Board (which controls the currency, interest rates, bank reserves, etc.) and he is due to retire soon. So who will be his replacement?

I'll pick Robert V. Roosa, one of the men most often mentioned as Burns' successor. Why? Simply because he is a member of the Rockefeller's Council on Foreign Relations, and a member of David Rockefeller's Trilateral Commission. In case you're wondering, Burns is a member of the CFR, too. ALL the policy-making biggies in the Carter administration are CFR and/or members of the Trilateral Commission. Including Carter.

The Bert Lance affair is beginning to look like a Waterloo for Carter's cleaner-than-thou image. Either Lance lied to Jimmy and others about his financial antics in trying to run for governor, buy banks, and wheel and deal on borrowed money, or Carter and his close people are going down the shit tube with a cover-up and dirty-tricks.

(Jody Powell's call that Chicago newsman and attempt to smear Senator Percy was patently not 'impulse'. It had to have been okayed and known by Jimmy Carter, in advance. If Carter didn't know, then he would have fired Powell so fast--- But Powell simply said he admitted a

mistake to Carter and Carter agreed. Bullshit.]

Either way, Carter has lost his image and is now just another lying, coming, bought politician. And, worse, inept and clumsy.

HEADS I COVER MY ASS.
TAILS I COME CLEAN...



"IT IS SOCIETY, OF COURSE, THAT DEFINES WHAT CRIME IS, JUST AS IT DEFINES WHAT INSANITY IS. CRIME IS THE USE OF SOCIETY'S METHODS BY PEOPLE WHOM SOCIETY HAS NOT AUTHORIZED TO USE THOSE METHODS, WHEN THE GOVERNMENT CHARGES MONEY FOR UNWANTED 'DEFENSE' FORCES, THAT IS TAXATION; WHEN THE UNDERWORLD DOES THE SAME, THAT IS CALLED 'THE PROTECTION RACKET'. WHEN BANKS DEMAND THAT THEIR CUSTOMERS PAY BACK SUBSTANTIALLY MORE THAN THEY BORROWED, THAT IS INTEREST; WHEN THE UNDERWORLD DOES THE SAME, IT IS 'LOANSHARKING'. WHEN THE GOVERNMENT ENFORCES ITS DECISIONS BY COERCION, SUCH AS IMPRISONMENT OR EVEN EXECUTION, PEOPLE SPEAK PROUDLY OF THE RULE OF LAW; WHEN THE UNDERWORLD DOES THE SAME, THERE IS EXCITED TALK OF 'HOODS' CARRYING OUT 'HITS'. THE VERY WORD 'CONTRACT', WHICH HAS LONGER SINISTER CONNOTATIONS OF GANGSTER GUNPLAY, IS, OF COURSE, THE SAME WORD THAT DENOTES SOCIETY'S MOST FUNDAMENTAL LEGAL RELATIONSHIP."

—OTTO FRIEDRICH
GOING CRAZY

QUESTION: DO YOU DO PLAN TO CONTINUE WORKING AS A PROSTITUTE?

BABS: YES, AS LONG AS I'M SINGLE; IF I GO ON FOR ANOTHER YEAR-AND-A-HALF TO TWO YEARS, I COULD HAVE CLOSE TO A HUNDRED THOUSAND PUT AWAY. THERE'S CERTAINLY NO OTHER PROFESSION I'M QUALIFIED FOR THAT COULD EARN ME THAT; IT WOULD BE STUPID TO LEAVE AT THIS POINT.

THE AMERICAN WAY OF SEX
By Peter Whittaker

9-17-77 The TV version of LOGAN'S RUN is lousy. Even worse than SPACE: 1999.

Again and again and again the men who produce these sf TV series insist on treating the audience as 10 year olds.

As usual we adults are given a diet of unmotivated behavior, unexplained situations, and insults to intelligence.

As when Logan and his girl are attacked by helmeted horsemen with laser rifles. Logan and girl manage to open a presumably locked air raid shelter door and are "captured" by a community of people who have lived there for eight years in hiding from the same small band of all-male horsemen.

The shelter people somehow have lots of fruit and vegetables.

The helmeted horsemen are never unhelmeted: why do they always have to have those dark glass visors down? Where did they come from? How did they get the laser rifles? How do they keep them charged?

With ridiculous ease Logan overthrows the tyrant band and leaves with the girl to seek Sanctuary.

They then come to a mountain city inhabited by robots who worship their dead makers. The robots try to hold Logan & girl prisoner so they can be served till death do they part. (Remember WITH FOLDED HANDS?)

By crawling through conveniently large air ducts he and she reach a robot repair shop where they meet a superior class robot named Rem (the only character in the long 90 minute episode with any personality) who insists he is an android. But when wounded later he repairs his ruptured leg struts and wires and when puzzled utters the inevitable Spock line: "It does not compute."

Androids are man-made creatures in human form who have artificial flesh and bone, blood, brain, nerves. They are not the same as robots which are mechanical. But nobody in Hollywood ever can understand that, or give a shit.

And after days of trudging and travel, the girl's hair and makeup are immaculate, her dress as clean and neat as when she started the run, and through all his exertions Logan's uniform (and the uniforms of his pursuing Sandmen) are still clean, and no one ever needs a shave (nor do their pursuers ever get tired or hungry).

I could go on and on.... Fuck it. I won't watch LOGAN'S RUN again. I hope it's cancelled after four or five episodes.

ALIEN THOUGHTS CONTINUED ON PAGE 83

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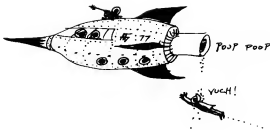
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OR DIE!



SMALL PRESS NOTES



Interesting article in THE SCIENCE FICTION COLLECTOR #4: "Science Fiction Pornography" by Kenneth R. Johnson. With a couple-hundred book listing by author (many of which are pseudonyms). Also, many of the books listed are fantasy or occult porno. I would, further, question the inclusion of the Beacon sexed-up sf novels as true porno. And including Jane Gallion's BIKER seems odd.

For the record, after Essex House bit the dust, Larry Shaw was given the mss. inventory to pick over for Brandon House use. He took only my THE ARENA WOMEN and, I presume, the rest were never published.

THE SCIENCE FICTION COLLECTOR is \$1.25 and available from:

J. Grant Thiessen
943 Maplecroft Road S.E.
Calgary, Alberta T2J 1W9
CANADA.

Terry L. Shorb, editor of CTHULHU CALLS, sent a form letter saying, alas, that the delayed July issue will be the last issue. He is leaving Northwest Community College and cannot, of course, afford to subsidize the magazine on his own. The academic-oriented magazine did not, of course, earn enough to pay for itself.

The #7/8 Summer, 1977 issue of TANGENT has arrived, a monster issue of 132 pages, offset, with interesting and valuable interviews with Frederik Pohl and William F. Nolan.

There is one amusing item that triggered my bemused comment button: the diatribe by Craig W. Anderson on page 30. He was outraged and aghast at Richard Brown's story, "Two of a Kind" in the March AMAZING which has a strong sexual and violence realism element, plus social/cultural liberal no-no's, and Craig is trying to rally support in his condemnation.

With all due respect to the p.a.i.d. "good taste" norms of current s-f, I think the genre needs a certain percentage of shock fiction and dogma-cracking themes. As things are there is a bland-leading-the-bland sameness to sf nowadays that I deplore. If you want a copy of TANGENT 7/8 send \$2.50 to David A. Truesdale, 611-A Division St., Oshkosh, WI 54901. David informs me that future issues are in limbo, pending solutions to some problems.

SMALL PRESS PUBLISHER'S SAYING:
"THAT'S THE WAY IT GOES--FIRST YOUR MONEY, THEN YOUR CLOTHES."

A good, up-to-date interview with Fritz Leiber is in the August 1977 issue of SF&F 36. Offset, 75¢, from Jim Purviance, 13 West Summit Drive, Redwood Clirt, CA 94062.

Buried in the letter column is a letter from Virginia Heinlein which announces in passing that Robert A. Heinlein is 'in the middle of a new novel.'

Those of you who want the full, sordid, tempest-in-a-teapot story of The Lem Affair in re S.F.W.A.: should get the #12 issue of SCIENCE FICTION STUDIES. It documents in near-exhausting detail how Lem was given an honorary membership in the Science Fiction Writers of America, how this was objected to, and how it was withdrawn, and how that was objected to. Who-what-when-where-why-how. It is all an illuminating exercise in masked motives.

SF STUDIES: English Dept., Indiana State University, Terre Haute, IN 47809. Costs \$4.

FANDOM UNLIMITED #2-3 have a two-part history of the Cthulhu Mythos by Loay Hall, Terry Dale and Randall Larson. Plus a chronology of the Cthulhu Mythos---1924-1976, plus a brief survey of the Cthulhu Mythos stories published in fan magazines, plus a listing of Cthulhu Mythos stories appearing in non-professional magazines.

There is also, in issue #3, an informal profile of L. Sprague de Camp, by Loay Hall.

Mphh! I note that issue #2 is sold out and not available.

Anyway, #3 is gettable from Randall Larson, 774 Vista Grande Av., Los Altos, CA 94022.

UNEARTH #4 (Fall, 1977) has switched to the completely professional, high class perfect-binding of such as ANALOG and most pocketbooks. It is a handsome package, now, and features interesting features by Harlan Ellison, Norman Spinrad and Hal Clement.

THE DIVERSIFIER has shifted emphasis and is now, with the May and

George Beahm announces the imminent publication of a complete TIM KIRK art index:

July 29, 1977

'I will, of course, send you a review copy when it is published. As it stands now, the book should be a beautiful little publication: 8-1/2 x 11 inches, saddle-stitched, with two full color covers, the front one by Tim, the back one by George Barr (a portrait of Tim). Plus an index with annotations by Tim, a Bill Rotsler article, a George Barr article, a Tim Kirk article, and a 15,000 word interview with Tim. Tom Reamy, Tim, & I went through stacks of material for possible inclusion, & Tom will be handling both the typesetting & designing; undoubtedly a challenge!

LATE NOTE: George isn't sure yet who will be publishing the Kirk book; several small presses are interested.

July issues, in the clammy grasp of the fantasy-weird-horror sub-genre, with material by E. Hoffman Price, Hannes Bok, Manly Wade Wellman, Fritz Leiber, Robert Bloch, Joseph Payne Brennan, Carl Jacobi, Emil Petaja... My best capsule description of the magazine: a sloppy copy of WHISPERS.

But the Clingan brothers, as editors and publishers, have a lot of interesting material and deserve a look. \$1.25 to C.C. Clingan, P.O. Box 1836, Oroville, CA 95965.

I neglected to credit THE DIVERSIFIER with credit, last issue, for having first published "An Evolution of Consciousness" by Marion Zimmer Bradley. Marion made some changes in the text for its SFR appearance.

THE NEW LIBERTARIAN NOTES #40 (Sept. 4, 1977) contains the interview with me conducted a few months ago by Jane Talisman and Eric Geislinger. Came out pretty good, I think. If you'd like to read it send 60¢ to New Libertarian Enterprises. Box 1748, Long Beach, CA 90801.

Editor Konklin continues to use awful, amateurish artwork which continues to give his magazine an

appearance of juvenility and a atmosphere of 12-year-olds at play. (How's that for biting the hand that feeds me egoboo, Sam?)

Ken Hahn writes: 'JEET has suspended publication due to personal problems of the editor. Material held for consideration is being returned, and all remaining subscription moneys are being returned.'

The superior personalzine, THE DIAGONAL RELATIONSHIP #2 is out, from Arthur D. Hlavaty, 250 Coligni Av., New Rochelle, NY 10801. Available for \$1. DR#1 is available for 50¢.

PARANOIA IS BETTER THAN NO IMAGINATION AT ALL.

---Arthur D. Hlavaty

NEUROLOG #3 is devoted to The Search For Higher Intelligence, and is a source of information/addresses on groups and organization interested in space colonization, enhanced perceptions/thinking, and other pseudo-scientific futuristic searches for God. \$1. from The Network, POB 317, Berkeley, CA 94701.

HOLLOW FACES, MERCILESS MOONS; fiction by William Scott Home, and art by Stephen E. Fabian. Published by Weirdbook, POB 35, Amherst Branch, Buffalo, NY 14226. 1200 copy edition, available in hardbound and softbound, \$15 hardbound, \$5 soft.

William Scott Home writes weird often bizarre, violent (yet curious-ly static) fiction. Vivid, often boring, often electrifying material. And Steve Fabian has done over a dozen drawings--evocative, in his most graphic style--some of them full-page.

The book is 8-1/2 x 11, offset, on white paper, heavy white cover stock, about 98 pages. Worth the money as entertainment and keeping value.

THE KNOWN AND THE UNKNOWN is a beautiful, large-size hardcover collection (128 pages, slick paper) of the fantasy and science fiction art of Edd Cartier.

In the 1940's and early 50's, Edd Cartier's illustrations in ASTOUNDING and UNKNOWN were the best in the business; he was a delight, and his work enhanced every story...and was as much an integral part of ASTOUNDING as Campbell's heavy hand. This collection, assembled and edited by Dean Cartier, is a tribute to Edd Cartier and a marvel for those who remember, for artists to wonder at, and for those who want his work in large size in a

permanent, bound volume. \$15 from Gerry de la Ree, 7 Cedarwood Lane, Saddle River, NJ 07458.

SELDON'S PLAN #41, a fanzine published by the Wayne Third Foundation of Wayne State University, has an impressive section titled "Sexism in Pandem". The most interesting and startling article is by Marion Zimmer Bradley titled "Who I Am, Where I Am & Where I Come From." This is absolutely must-read for anyone who wants to understand MZB and her work. What she reveals explains some things that have puzzled me till now. Send \$1. to Wayne Third Foundation, Box 102 SCB, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI 48202..

LETTER FROM RICHARD BERGERON

September, 1977

'The publication date for the Willis issue of Warhoon has been set at December 15, 1977 and it runs to some 550 pages. It includes all the Harps as well as "The Harp Stateside" "The Harp in England" (I) "The Harp in England" (II), "Willis Discovers America", "The Bright Land", "I Remember Me" (a 100 page autobiography and excavation of Walt's correspondence files), as well as many other items. No price has been set because I don't have a quote for the hardcover binding with gold stamping at this time.

'Also, Warhoon is being revived on a semi-regular basis (at least the covers for the 4 issues following the WASH have already been printed!) and #29 (the WASH is #28) has a publication date of December 1, 1977. Already lined up are columns by Tom Perry and Patrick Hayden. The direction of the magazine is definitely fanish and I'm not looking for sf criticism though the problems of aesthetics and the ways of creations remain a favorite preoccupation of yours truly.

'PS: Wrhn 29 is 50¢ and of course, reservations for the WASH are being accepted.'

Richard Bergeron
11 East 68th St.
New York, NY 10021

WHISPERS #10 (August 1977) is out now, with its usual impressive fiction and artwork, and important section of publishing news and reviews of fantasy/magazine books and publications. Very valuable.

Editor/publisher Stuart David Schiff has moved. Correspondence and subscription address: Box 1492-W,

Azalea St., Browns Mills, NJ 08015. Send Ms. to: Box 904, Chapel Hill, NC 27514. \$2. per single copy. Four issue sub is \$7. USA, \$7.50 in Canada and other foreign.

Linda Bushyager writes in her KARASS #33 (Sept. 77) that KARASS, too, is biting the dust, after three or four more issues. Lack of interest and enthusiasm is the reason given. Also, she has sold a sf novel to Dell, and is working on a prequel.

Linda intends to publish a fanzine of some kind after the death of KARASS, but one less hectic and frequent.

Keith Justice, editor and publisher of S-F BOOKLOG, an all-review zine, has folded it.

An awful lot of zines have bit the dust lately!

If you care enough about a given writer to want to read an approximately 30,000 word analysis of his work, the Borgo Press series by George Edgar Slusser will interest you. The most recent releases are: HARLAN ELLISON: UNREPENTANT HARLEQUIN, \$1.95

ROBERT A. HEINLEIN: STRANGER IN HIS OWN LAND, \$1.95

THE BRADBURY CHRONICLES, \$1.95.

Borgo Press, POB 2845, San Bernardino, CA 92406.

Robert Sheckley visited England recently and was interviewed extensively. Two of these were published almost simultaneously by different English fanzines:

ARENA #6, which has also "An Enquiry Into the Work of Robert Sheckley" by David Wingrove. ARENA is available for \$1. from Geoff Ripington, 15 Queens Ave., Canterbury, Kent CT2 8AY, England. (Send cash, since an American check is virtually impossible to cash at an English bank, from what I hear. And English banks will readily convert a \$ bill to English coinage at the current exchange rate.)

DURFED #2 has an interview with Robert Sheckley, an analysis titled "Notions Unlimited: The Fiction of Robert Sheckley" by Kevin Williams, and a "Postscript" by Sheckley in which he confronts what he said in the interview and has afterthoughts. DURFED is edited and published by Kevin Williams, 9 Whitton Place, Seaton Delaval, Northumberland NE25 0BJ, England. Send a dollar bill for a copy.

SMALL PRESS NOTES CONTINUED ON P. 80

THE ALTER-EGO VIEWPOINT

"Geis, I've just had a stupendous idea! The title for my first self-published novel will be---"

Alter, you've got to do reviews in this space, not rave on about your fantasy of writing and selling to the readers of SFR.

"Ah, Geis, you of little faith! All I need is about eight hundred dollars for the artwork and the first print run. You can dip into---"

I cannot 'dip into' the saving account! That's for property taxes, income taxes, medical emergencies, and security feelings. You'll have to raise the money some other way.

"But wait till you hear the title! It'll knock you out!"

Alright, what is this super title?

"Here it is. Are you ready?
STAR WHORES."

Urrrrck Alter---

"I knew you'd love it! We can subtitle it 'A Seething Story of the Oldest Profession in the Future!'"

Alter---

"It's the story that asks the question: can a girl from a small mining moon in the asteroid belt find happiness in the house of one of the solar system's most famous madams?"

Alter---

"And after it sells out in the private edition we can sell it to Harpers."

ALTER---

"Random House? Viking? Some publisher with class, anyway. Of course I'll have to clean it up a bit for the general public, I understand that! But---"

ALTER---

"What? Why are you so purple?"

I AM NOT PURPLE!! I AM--- I am calm... I am composed.... I will not let this creature infuriate me again. I am calm. I am---

"You keep saying that, Geis, but that artery in your temple keeps on throbbing. I guess you want me to review a couple books, huh?"

Yes. That would be the thing to do in this space.

"Okay, line them up and I'll knock them down."

The first is the long-awaited third (but not final) volume of the Riverworld series by Philip Jose Farmer. I noticed, Alter, that it took you weeks to finish the book. Howcum?

"Geis, you forgot to mention that the title of the third volume is THE DARK DESIGN."

Sorry. Your opinion of it?

"Oh, shit. Phil Farmer got self-indulgent and thought he should introduce a lot of new minor characters and follow three interwoven plots and make these characters 'deep'... especially a woman name of Jill Gulbirra."

Nothing wrong with characterization, Alter.

"Of course not. Except Phil is no great shakes at it and his attempts in this book only slow the pace to a crawl and are in the category of ho-hum and so-what. All his characters are virtually indistinguishable anyway. So much so that I couldn't keep Frigate and Mark Twain and Burton straight in my mind as he switched from plot-line to plot-line."

He also had to repeat himself a lot, reminding readers of past event.

"That's always a problem with writing saga novels like this. New readers have to be brought up to date and old readers reminded of what happened in the previous two books."

Look what has happened to Roger Zelazny in his Amber series. A disaster. At least Roger's Amber novels are short. This one of Phil's runs around 190,000 words and all it is is a setting of the stage for the final revelations/confrontations between humanity and the ethicalists who have set up and run the Riverworld planet."

That's your summing up?

"Yeah. At \$9.95 this volume is not what it is supposed to be, and is a disappointment. It is published now in hardback by Putnam's and will appear later in paperback by Berkley."

Your next victim, Alter, is AFTER UTOPIA by Mack Reynolds, an Ace original to be released November first, and priced at \$1.50.

"Yeah. An exploration---umm---a display of a possible utopia for mankind a couple hundred years from now, when we have unlimited power and everything is free."

How would people adjust to that kind of life? What kind of social and cultural trends would develop?

"Mack shows us. He brings a 20th century man to this future via a kind of hibernation which is forced on him by a group in the future. This is all gimmick to give the auth-



or a foil to play against."

You think it a wrong device?

"Hell, no! The first chapter is a winner as Tracy Cogswell, revolutionary, finds himself doing unthinkable things against his will as he is forced to prepare his own tomb. The picture of the underground revolutionary life and history of Tracy that Reynolds provides is so real and vivid that it makes the utopian future pale and limp in contrast."

Alter, why was Tracy Cogswell put into deepsleep by these people in the future? Why did they want him?

"They perceived that the human race was going soft, turning into vegetables in the dream-machines that were so popular. They wanted Tracy to figure out a way of revitalizing the species."

Did he?

"Ah. Read the book and find out. It's an old solution, and it is too easy a winner, but Mack needed to end the book, so... The main interest is the utopia so long sought and so deadly. The 'ownership' bag we are into now is unnecessary, and this affects every aspect of life, including sex."

He certainly didn't avoid looking at sex. Couldn't have written this book this way ten years ago.

"Right. But the realism goes beyond sex into every aspect of adjustment to unlimited energy and thus unlimited access to goods and services. A good speculative sf novel."

The Reynolds fans will not be disappointed?

"They'll be very happy. It wouldn't hurt if everybody read this one."

Would you recommend that everyone read THE GRAND WHEEL by Barrington J. Bayley? It's a new DAW book at \$1.50.

"This one starts out very well as an undercover agent for human government (the Legitimacy) makes his moves to infiltrate the crime

organization of the future (the Wheel).

"As usual *sigh* the fate of all mankind hangs in the balance at the end of the novel, as the Wheel boss gets into a situation where humanity is the stake in a betting game with the super-Mafia of the Galaxy.

"But, Geis, I weary of these fate-of-mankind sf thrillers which on close examination aren't all that thrilling. One would think that with the stakes that high... But I suppose we are all surfeited with this plot, and ennui sets in for anyone who has read a dozen of this type."

I note, also, that Bayley rang in a humanity vs. an alien race, and humanity is losing the war.

"Yeah...all throttles out and the book is still run-of-the-mill sf. Interesting extrapolation of the underworld/overworld governments/power structures...and a kind of unified field theory based on number/chance/lady luck."

I don't believe, Alter, that this next novel is quite your cup of tea.

"Which one? Oh, QUEEN'S WALK IN THE DUSK by Thomas Burnett Swann. You're right. I read it but it didn't turn me on."

Maybe because it was his final novel, finished while he knew he was dying of cancer?

"Maybe... It has a kind of downer ending. But mostly I don't like the classic setting (Greek mythology type---wanderers in the Mediterranean, swords, a retelling of the Dido-Aeneas legend with telepathic king elephant, and the coming-of-age of a boy...). But woe-hell, Geis, it's a quality package: eight tipped-in plates by Jeff Jones, text on lovely heavy, textured book stock."

Hardcover, Alter, by Heritage Press. Limited edition of 2000 copies. \$16.00. Address: Box 721, Forest Park, GA 30050.

"You know, I found more interesting the essay, 'Remembering Tom Swann' by Gerald Page, which describes Swann the man, the writer and the works; Page convinced me Swann was good, was important, and will be remembered and appreciated."

There is also a photo of Jeff Jones and a page about him and his work.

"Jeff Jones is a surprise; he looks like a medieval youth...some-one from a painting of the period. A striking young man."

Alter, are you ready to give your opinion of THE COLD CASH WAR by Robert Asprin? It's a St. Martin's Press novel, at \$7.95.

"Why not? It's a good, thought-provoking story about a possible future in which super-giant combines of multinational corporations take on the governments of the world---and beat them in both public relations and actual physical war. The multinationals use exquisitely trained mercenary soldiers and superb technology to make government forces appear ridiculous and (in fact) ineffectual."

He uses multiple viewpoints to show the events, and the ending...

"The ending, Geis, is the message: Power corrupts, and a dictator by any other name is still a dictator. A pox on both your houses is what Asprin is saying."

Ummm, Alter, I don't find any other books here for you to review. What have you been doing with all your time?

"At the moment I'm plowing through a long Jack Chalker book which is long on magic science and low on tension. And I may be able to get to another novel or two. Don't be pushy, Geis. I'm also plotting STAR WHORES, so---"

That is a dumb title, Alter, and if you insist on continuing that novel, change it!

"I will NOT change it! It fits. And when it's a sellout and I've sold it to Random House---"

HA-HA! Random wouldn't touch that title with a parsec-long pole.

"Maybe you're right. Ummm... How about...some small press? Yeah! It will be an underground bestseller and a major pocketbook publisher will pick it up in spite of the title, and---"

Alter, go read some more. You're hopeless.

"I am not! I have all the hope in the world."

You back so soon?

"Yes, Geis, I found a new book by George Zebrowski, ASHES & STARS by name, which I found I could read quickly, mainly because it is only 45,000 words long, and has big type to help fill up the 197 pages."

Why would Ace publish a 45,000 word novel in that large a page-count format?

"Obviously the editor was stuck, for various mechanical reasons, with a 210-page-with-covers package and so had to blatantly use fillers between chapters, blank pages between chapters, and the big

type. Personally, I prefer the larger type---it gives me a feeling of progress to turn a lot of pages and it's a hell of a lot easier to read."

Yes, yes, Alter, but was it a good sf novel?

"No, no, Geis, it was not a good sf novel. It is billed as 'The first book of the Omega Point Trilogy.' But the first half of this story is so full of Zebrowski's desire to write a pretentious (literary) space opera---full of internal dialogue check-a-block with metaphor and other pretty figures of speech---that it is a puzzlement as to who what when where and why. I did lean that in the far future when mankind has spread through a large part of the galaxy, a super-human race was created by mating with a humanoid race in the Hercules Globular Cluster. The long-lived, highly intelligent Herculeans expanded and came into conflict with the normal, highly technological humans and a terrible war resulted. Which the Herculeans lost. Their twenty worlds were wiped clean and only a handful of Herculeans survived---including the leader, Gorgias and his revenge-minded son. They were in stasis for a long time."

"Anyway, the son is hot for revenge, and the father is old and tired. Using a super-spaceship, a Whispership, the son does some raiding and killing and manages to push his dad to suicide."

Sounds exciting. "Your basic space opera plot, I guess. But the poetic thinking and the dumb dialogue and incredible behavior of these Herculeans makes it verry hard to swallow. And while I'm all for realisms, the psychopathic, insane behavior of Gorgias, Jr. is a turn-off, and the failure of the few remaining Herculeans and of his father to kill the sonofabitch when he was six years old is a flaw. But of course without this maniac loose there is no book, or Omega Point Trilogy...as a few Earth Empire people who care try to get him before he manages to wipe out more millions of people."

You have a summing up? "I think Zebrowski botched the first half of the novel and Ace let him get away without a rewrite. The story only gets interesting and involving when the late-appearing hero goes to New Mars to rethink his life after his wife's total death (immortality is the rule) just before Gorgias sends a small moon crashing into New Mars' ocean."

We're out of room, Alter.

"About time, Geis."

DESCANTS & BYPRODUCTS



PROZINE REVIEWS by STEVE BROWN

AMAZING, October '77

Two outright turkeys, a lengthy piece of competent mediocrity, a feet-wetting vignette, and a bizarre oddity don't do justice to Steve Fabian's interior illos. His cover is relatively minor, but for the beautiful coloration that makes the mag stand out nicely.

"A World of One's Own" by Dave Bischoff and Ted White is a predictable tale of marooned spacers encountering a (human) feudal matriarchy on a Forbidden Planet. Some of the scenery and the excellent pacing make it readable, but the reason for the story--an examination of the validity of the matriarchy--is undermined by a blatant Deus Ex. The society turns out to be a part of somebody's (off-stage, though the story is presented as being part of a series) sociology experiment, and is being continuously monitored and reinforced by some pretty clumsy conditioning. A cop-out. A set-up society like that can act like anything you want.

One of the turkeys is "Never So Lost"...by F.M. Busby. This is a continuation of "Nobody Home", and tells us nothing new at great length. We are subjected to interminable scenes of eating, bathing, and the laborious repair of a starship--the same kind of stuff that padded RISSA KERQUELEN from the 5,000 words of the story that's there to the 630 pages of the novel. The characters

all speak in the same voice, a sort of Heinlein Basic, and the minor characters are fools. The story is barely there; a pair of star-wanderers land on a colony planet full of helpful, pleasant and dull people. They relax for a while, then go back to Earth. End of story. Suspense is shamelessly forced by the introduction of a sick child at the last minute who can only be cured by the Wizards of Earth, with a convenient time limit that just happens to fit the length of the journey with a comfortable margin. Naturally they get delayed in transit, and reach Earth in the nick of...aw, forget it. As much as I've seen it done before, I did find the Drift Drive interesting, whereby one skips in and out of neighboring probability alternatives as you move at three hundred lights. Sometimes you return to the wrong one. I was unsettled by the unholy glee one of the characters meets herself (and off-stage, damn it!).

The other is "Far From Eve and Morning" by Thomas Monteleone. It is a highly overwritten and negligible story of a star-colonizer torn from his One True Love by that mean old time-dilation (but a hundred thousand relative years? Isn't that a bit far?). The characters speak in epigrams, and the plot was done to death before your mother was born.

And don't tell me that you have a building shaped like a tesseract unless you are willing to show it to me. Heinlein almost did it. Try.

Elinor Busby's "Time to Kill" is marginally better. This is her first published, and some of the descriptive passages and dialogue indicate that she will soon out-write her husband. Unfortunately the story is that old berry about going back to kill Jesus and make the world better.

After all that tedious space-filler, "Shadow of a Snowstorm" by John Shirley hits the reader like a thousand candle-power kaliedoscope. This is the story of a woman's initiation into the Humanequin Guild, people who take the place of department store dummies and fanatically hold awkward poses for hours. In an attempt to curb runaway unemployment the Federal Bureau of Mandatory Employment has assigned steep minimum hiring quotas, thus creating hundreds of new jobs. Go out onto the street, and you will encounter "...shoe-lace cappers, shoe polishers, cuff-reliners, collar-straighteners and spiritual comforters" gathering about you in a cloud, neatening up your clothes. Some of the actions and motives do ring true, some of the imagery is sophomoric, but the constant flow of nutty ideas and crazed metaphors justifies the effort of reading. A journey through Shirley's Looney Tunes mind. SF doesn't have enough true crazies, or at least not enough who are able to construct a coherent narrative, and we need to nurture the ones we do have.

The editorial has been bounced for a lengthy letter column full of Sturm und drang: Moscovitz and Rich Brown back to back, defending their respective opinions against all comers.



COSMOS #3 and COSMOS #4

If there's any justive, COSMOS should be the one that takes the SF prozine industry out of its cottage. If only they can surmount the inevitable distribution problems; I spotted it in one bookstore and one drug store in the entire Baltimore-Washington area. It has a lot going for it: spectacular art and layout (excuse me if I tend to slight the art in my review, but an entire column should be devoted to COSMOS art and I had to leave room for the stories) featuring full-page, full-

color interior work, a consistently excellent review column by Silverberg (note particularly his insightful Phil Dick essay in the Sept. issue), a handful of assorted columns--Ginjer Buchanan on fans and Harlan Ellison on media--and generally superior fiction, rather trendily biased toward Enigma. All it needs is thousands of happy readers. Two things I objected to were (A) three-sentence form letter rejection slips with the name of your story typed into a convenient blank space, and (B) some of the most God-awful blubs in all of publishing (sample: "A witty bit of fluff").

COSMOS #3 leads off with a competent piece of light entertainment by Joe Haldeman ("All the Universe in a Mason Jar") concerning backwoods humans, aliens and moonshine. Fun, but forgettable, it should sell magazines, though.

"Apocalypse" by Robert Borski is an ambitious story about elephants and Africa several decades from now (let's not mention the direct line from the orbiting power station to the Earth; the author is new and can be forgiven the unforgivable--just don't let it happen again). A good idea developed with detail and a rich texture, but marred by stereotyping, an unrealized global background and a vague plot that winds up in Enigma.

"The Wayward Flight of the Teety-Oh" by Sherwood Springer is the only stinker; a dull story of bookies and race track activities written in a dense, almost unreadable twenty-year-old slang. It should have appeared in a Post War pulp where it could have been mercifully buried.

Richard Lupoff's "A Child's Story" is so visionary that it took me two careful readings to figure out what was going on, but it was effort well-rewarded. It is an extremely far-future story of the beings that humanity has become revisiting their ancestral planet, and a decision that was made. One jarring note was Lupoff's use of two separate sets of clumsy pseudo-pronouns (one bunch for a neuter character and another for an androgyne). The florid style the story is written in makes Zelazny look like Hemingway and we don't need the tiny speed-bumps of those pronouns. I'll admit that something like that is necessary and that I can't think of a better way to do it, but this way didn't work. One of the crosses one must bear when writing in a ludicrous language like Enigma.

"Horsemens" by Brian Aldiss is a professional mood piece about kindly telepathic aliens confronting the spectres in the minds of voracious

human colonists. The whole story is told in the blurb (hey, Hartwell, fire that guy, will you?).

I had a lot of fun with "Black-out" by Norman Spinrad. Here we have the well-worn tale of the American Armed Forces vs. The Aliens, but Spinrad focuses a long way from the action, concentrating on the Little People--even as you and I--who observe strange phenomena in the sky and hear infuriatingly sketchy bits of the story on the media and never really know just what the Hell is happening. But their lives are totally disrupted as a result. A very good story; wish I'd thought of it.

The Big Story of the issue is "Sunday's Child" by Phyllis Gottlieb. It deals with a decaying future, autism and aliens (or rather, the concept of Aliens). The prose is beautiful with flashes of true brilliance. I wish I had the space to quote the entire middle paragraph on the central column on page 59. The characters breathe at you from between the commas. Unfortunately for me, the story dissolves into ambiguity toward the end--I still lie awake nights worrying about that last line. But I am more than ready to believe that this version of Enigma is my own imperfect perception.

The issue also has a hyper-informative article on current knowledge and conjecture about Gas Giants and what the Voyager probes might find out there--"Into the Abyss" by Terence Dickinson and miles and miles of great art by Bryant, Schomburg, Schelling, Gaughan and Freff.

There is an old fairy tale told a dozen times with many variations about the secret hill where the elves live (usually on the inside). If an unlucky human chances by, he will be invited in and spend the night in total luxury, only to be found years later dead of hunger and dehydration, with a contented expression on his face. The first story in the November COSMOS ("Bitterbloom" by George R.R. Martin) is a retelling of this legend in a science-fictional context. The story is a lengthy encounter between a young girl from a harsh feudal society and a decadent, sophisticated woman, lonely to the point of insanity. It is a beautiful story; Martin has refined his descriptive prose immeasurably lately and there is a minimum of a bad Martin habit--shoving two words together to make another (deepwinter, blackbark, longknife). One glaring flaw is that at one point we are told that the young girl was "...not yet a woman, and thus untouchable" and just a few paragraphs later she

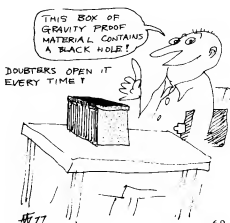
is reminiscing about the fact that "...when she finally reached her womanhood, Creg would not let her go". This sounds like a nit but it is not. The woman's puberty and emerging womanhood is a central theme and Martin has clouded the issue.

"The Alphabet System" by Mary Jean Tibbils is one of those home-life in the future stories full of gadgets and some superficial societal extrapolation. What story there is about children defying their parents. It reads like a low-key, heavily sanitized early Felix Gottschalk story.

Michael Bishop's "At the Dixie-Apple with the Shoofly-Pie Kid" is a fascinating and very funny story about urban guerilla warfare in an automated future supermarket. I especially like the alien (wonderfully painted by Wayne Barlow) sitting on an anti-grav-platform peddling toilet paper. When you're "...one of the six refugees from the Cygnus nova" I guess you don't have much choice in how you make a buck.

I swore I'd never again read another time travel story involving the incidents that gestated the Catholic Church, but I promised Geis... "O, Ye of Little Faith" by Robert Chilson is better than it should have been. It concerns a convention of ministers gathered to decide whether or not to publicly censure time travel, and concentrates on a small-town preacher wrestling with his conscience. Unfortunately, just as the protagonist is beginning to realize what it might mean to confront the distilled essence of Christianity, stripped of all of the comfortable compromises and rituals of the modern religion, the story ends. But if the story was resolved, we wouldn't have an Enigma.

"The Other Eye of Polyphemus" is formula Ellison. It has all the trade marks: an arresting title, impeccable but screwball syntax, painfully delineated characters and



a fantasy episode stretched into a ponderous allegory. This one is further hampered by a cop-out ending--how many times does the Right Person happen by just when we've reached an important life decision? When is Ellison going to realize that he has more insight in a single sentence of character description than in reams of top-heavy parables?

Felix Gottschalk is an acquired taste, one that I've acquired a long time ago (to the dismay of several friends). In "Sir Robert's Robots" he keeps his psychogargon and anal fetishes to a minimum and tells a great story about an English lord and a pair of robots dealing with a group of low-life inhabiting his mansion by government decree. In this story, everyone under forty is legally entitled to literally anything they can grab and hold onto. Gottschalk's humor is as vicious as ever. I only wish I had grown up in England so that I could laugh harder.

The Big Story for me is "Wheels Westward" by Robert Thurston who is a thoroughly dangerous man. This one doesn't quite measure up to his "Aliens" (P&SF, Dec. '76) or especially "The Mars Ship" (P&SF, June '77). It is about bikers, peculiar people, and a trek across a blasted landscape--an ultra-realistic DAMNATION ALLEY--a kind of story proliferating lately like spaghetti westerns. Very skillfully told with lots of nicely kinky sexual tension, but situationally unimaginative and too open-ended. Thurston manages to pull off two stylistic vagaries that usually leave me cold: present

tense and omitted quotation marks. In this story both work due to the highly tuned style. The lack of quotes in particular casts the story into a weird limbo past tense-halfway between anecdotal and real-time. It takes a very high calibre writer to get away with something like this, but Thurston uses these tricks to add a richness to the prose like the tones of brown in a daguerreotype.

It's too bad Star Wars made it so big. By now we are all groggy from one of the largest media love affairs in history. I don't think there's a journalist alive who has yet to make his/her pronouncement on Star Wars. I can't take it any more. Too bad, because Samuel Delany's essay on the film is cogent, provocative and all those other reviewer words, not to mention readable and entertaining. I wish I'd seen it a couple of months ago.

THE MAGAZINE OF FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION, October '77

This is the annual Fall Superstar issue and it's a pretty good one, though not spectacularly outstanding. In between yet another giddy Star Wars article, thoughtful and caring reviews by Delap (nice, but Bring Back Budrys!), and a genuinely weird Asimov essay (in which we have Dr. A. burrowing away in his pragmatic manner at no less a topic than Life, Death and Spirituality), we have stories by lots of interesting people including two rare wonders.

The rarest of avis's is new short fiction by Samuel Delany. "Prismatica" is his first piece of published fiction since TRITON and it reads as easy as those sunny pre-Dhalgren days of yesteryear. A colorful, simply-told fantasy with more than a touch of weird. Sheer fun; give it to your kid sister and drive her crazy.



"What You See is What You Get" is standard Bloch, chilling fun involving a dope dealer and a supernatural camera.

"The First Stroke" is another rarest of the rare, a new Zenna Henderson story, told with delicate grace and a keen eye. It is about an old man, a heart attack and some distinctly unsettling members of an ant colony.

As one who has had a close two and a half year acquaintanceship with eighteen gentle elephants, the kindest and smartest of land animals, "The Man Who Could Provide us with Elephants" by John Brunner instilled real horror in me. This is about a group of westerners trying to build their Tower of Babel (a jungle air-strip), ancient magic, jungles, and, of course, elephants. I can't look at this one objectively; I didn't want to believe in those elephants but Brunner forced me to.

"Brother" is a quiet pastoral Simak story about a land-bound old man and his stellar yearnings. I found it slow and lacking in rough-

age, but touching. Maybe I just can't help reading it against the background of Simak's body of work. I get the impression that he isn't aging so much as slowly merging into the ground.

"Caretaker" is a moody Manly Wade Wellman piece straight from the ominous hills of North Carolina. A standard tale of a thief and his inevitably just desserts.

Michael Bishop manages to make a story about a pest-control man into a transcendental exploration of one man's mental confusion and ultimate disintegration. "Leaps of Faith" (fleas as a metaphor for mental quantum mechanics) Only Bishop could pull it off) isn't F or SF by anyone's definition, but it is an outstanding story nonetheless.

"Time-Sharing Angel" by James Tiptree, Jr. is a story that she is careful to label 'entertainment' in the blurb. It is about one of the most interesting and most unworkable solutions to overpopulation possible, all it would need is a little magic (or in this case, 'alien technology'). It is as finely crafted as we have come to expect of stories from Tiptree's typewriter. Read it carefully, linger over it. The walls tell me that due to overzealous exposure earlier this year (and other reasons) Tiptree stories are becoming an endangered species.

GALAXY, August '77

First off I had better explain that it is a firm rule with me to never read magazine serializations (yes, Mom, I know, the first SF I remember reading was Bester's THE STARS MY DESTINATION--serialized in GALAXY). For one reason it is easy to lose perspective over the three or four months it takes to read it all, and I am too weak to let the segments pile up, but more important, there hasn't been a serial in recent memory that hasn't shown up later in book form reworked and expanded (well maybe a few). I refuse to read something as long-awaited and as potentially worthy as, say, the new Budrys novel only to find out later that the book is so much more so. So I haven't read Herbert's THE DO-SADI EXPERIMENT and won't until the book comes out or unless Alard kidnaps my family. It does look interesting, a sequel to WHIPPING STAR.

The Freas cover of this issue is shameless. To the artist's credit, it wasn't done on assignment, but is

labeled as being 'from his portfolio' ("Hey, Kelly, we're short a cover, got anything looser?"). "Let's see"--rummage, rummage--"Here's something, I don't know what it is but ...". "Say no more, they won't know the difference. Thanks, your check is in the mail"). But we do have plenty of very fine Fabian interiors to look at and some oddball pieces, a good artist I am happy to see getting published.

"...And Earth So Far Away" by H.C. Petley starts out nicely with a disaster on an asteroid mining platform, complete with daring rescue. Then the story degenerates rapidly into Stalwart Pioneer propaganda. Petley seems to have written the story backwards. You're supposed to put the exciting stuff toward the end and build up to it. The entire last half of the story consists of paper-doll people discussing in interminable detail how they too are going to carve a homestead out of the Martian wilderness. There is some nice detail work, the author shows talent, but should be cured (and soon) of his/her tendency to proselytize at any excuse. Also I am curious as to how pirates could manage to either build or otherwise acquire the billions of tons of precision equipment that is a mining platform.

Next we have a literary artifact by Fred Pohl that should be of interest to anyone wondering how authors work. There is an essay on the creation of GATEWAY and a deleted (very short) final chapter to the novel. The justification for this is apparently that Pohl has read too many reviews complaining about his ending. As far as I can tell, it doesn't add much to the novel; Broadhead learns to cope and time passes.

"Perfectly Safe, Nothing to Worry About" is minor Charles Sheffield but fun. It is about some amusing lawyers involved in a slapstick situation (the most disgusting explosion on Mars).

The Pournelle essay is a summary of his opinion of the major hard-science advances in 1976 and a pitch for increased scientific funding.

Arsen Darnay's "The Phenomenal Fountain" is a spy story featuring a robot as the first-person narrator. There isn't much to it (the big clue is in the title), but told with unique and very dense imaginering.

I can't say much about "The All-Soul is Calling Quinlan" by Jay Brandon, it's just another one of those feisty-hedonist-confronting-God stories that freshman fantasists love to play with. A mild diversion, nothing more.

Spider Robinson's review column is one that I tend to disagree violently with (particularly in his identification of Heinlein and his casual dismissal of Phillip Dick). But he is entertaining and has some nice things to say here about one of my minor deities--Kornbluth--and some significant thoughts on the sorry state of modern anthologies, original and otherwise. The East Coast readers will probably be amused at the datedness of his TK Graphics plug, though I believe the column was written last February or March.

I suppose that it would be 'ahem' impolitic to comment on Alter's column. Ethics are one reason, but more important, Alter is just a few pages away, close enough that I can see the muscles writhing ominously in the suction cups on his tentacles.



ISAAC ASIMOV'S SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE, FALL '77

Flipping hastily past The Face on the Cover, we come to Dr. Asimov's editorial; the usual display of mildly witty self-congratulation, and some curious comments on the nature of love that seem to be an introduction to this issue's major story: "Joelle" by Poul Anderson, illustrated by a trivial piece of Freas hack work.

"Joelle" is an excellent Romeo & Julietish story about lovers from different future city-states and their confrontation with something more important and significant (on a personal level) than their love. The background is rich and highly detailed and contains some fascinating material on direct brain/computer interfacing. But is hampered by

two serious flaws. The first is a very trite and clumsy rationale for the society. It seems that there are these Enigmatic Aliens who have been hanging around for the past century or so, doing nothing at all. Their mere presence has so demoralized humanity that all of the major governments have broken down into the afore-mentioned city-states. Okay. But how can these decentralized societies manage to produce computer networks that make the NASA telemetry machines look like abacus-es? The other, and most serious flaw, is the length. This story should have been a novel. There is so much expository baggage that the all-important lovers have no room for adequate development. The exposition takes up fully two-thirds of the story, and often pretty clumsily (a character telling another after several lengthy speeches: "...Whoa, you've got me doing it. Repeating what we both know."). A fascinating and worthwhile failure.

"Minister West" by William E. Cochrane is decorated by a decent piece of Schomburg line-work that it doesn't deserve. It is a monotonous action story about a completely automated freeway network that is dependent on coincidence and ends just as the real story is beginning.

I enjoyed "Is Physics Finished?" by Milton Rothman, an essay on the current turmoil in particle physics that puts across an astonishing amount of data digestibly, brings us lay people up to date, though I was hunting for a description of the properties of 'truth' and 'beauty' --companion properties to 'strangeness' and 'charm'.

The blurb on Stephen Goldin's "When There's No Man Around" tells us that his wife "disapproves of this story". She must be inhumanly tolerant. This is the worst SF story I've read in recent memory. It is about a self-styled "pretty girl" dealing with a recalcitrant tractor on Mars. Every conceivable literary and sociological sin is perpetrated. The title tells it all. There is no excuse for crap like this.

Isaac Asimov has a story of his own included--"Good Taste", accompanied by some mediocre Freas illios. It is the story of a sort of Pillsbury Bake-Off on an old and inbred 15 colony. Elaborate background, more interesting than most of his recent stuff.

Jack C. Haldeman II's "Home Team Advantage" is a nutty story about the aftermath of an Arcturian-Human baseball game. The Arcturians have won and earned the right to eat the human team. It could have been a

lot funnier than my description implies, had he not opted for the obvious ending.

"In Darkness Waiting" by Stephen Leigh is the grim tale of an ethical choice in an Assassin's Guild on a rough back-water planet. Well-told, but hampered by a sketchy and unrealistic background (if you have electronic knives that return to their owner, then why do you have to have torches "guttering on the wall?"). I would have liked it better but I have a hard time empathizing with the ethics of purchased murder.

A couple of Feghoots, some very forgettable "poetry", and we, come to:

"A Many Splendored Thing" by Linda Isaacs, which I found to be a beautiful, poignant story of a young child's perceptions. I don't know how it got into IASFM, but I'm glad I read it. Lovely surreal images halfway between metaphor and day-dream, that vividly evoke the joys and fears of the very young.

"Omit Flowers" by Dean McLaughlin is a one-punch single-page about medical ethics. It's all been done before.

A Bertram Chandler's "No Room at the Stable" is another quickie about the end of the world and the prevalence of cats. Even though I am a cat-lover, I thought this was a lot of fun.

By the way, the last few stories were illustrated by some minor Stern bach spot illos except for the Leigh story which had two nice painterly Di Fate's that expertly captured the mood.

Freff's faces are improving. His full-page illo for "Lorelei at Storyville West" by Sherwood Springer has five different faces, all interesting, and four of them recognizable. The story is yet another Springer-archaicism (see COSMOS review) about a mysterious jazz singer and the people under her spell. How can anyone write a phrase like "strung out on reeffers" (yes, that last word is plural) in the late Seventies? The rest of the story is similar.

Charles Brown's book review column (wittily titled ON BOOKS) is okay in a methodical and conservative way. I envy him his ability to cover 23 books in 2,000 words.

ANALOG, October '77

It opens with a sabre-rattling Boveditorial about Us and Them, ending with: "Remember Sputnik? Remember Pearl Harbor!". Then we have the beginning of a Mack Reynolds serial called "Of Future Fears". I read the first chapter and skimmed the rest. It seems to involve terrorists, sophisticated weaponry and whole-sale carnage. Then there are two lengthy fact articles on War Lasers full of subtle shades of doom. By now, 3/5 of the way through the magazine, I am wearing a helmet and staring suspiciously at my neighbors through a slit in my armor-plated shutters, my Kalashnikov AK 47 assault rifle cradled in my lap.

At last on page 106 we have a respite from death, the final half of a Keith Laumer serial: "The Wonderful Secret". I was sucked in by a great gadget, thus violating my rule about serials. I found it typical Laumer; fascinating gadgets, abominable dialogue and no plot. It is hung with a pedestrian Schelling illo.

"Dog Day Evening" by Spider Robinson is a Callahan's Bar story, i.e., a string of bad-to-fair puns and little else. Not even Jack Gaughan could be inspired to come up with anything better than the illo he turned in.

"The Ultimate Arbiter" by Eric Vinhoff and Marcia Martin is an exploration of cloning ethics handled with skill and respect. It deserves the outstanding Mike Hinge illustration (I can't call something like that an 'illo'). I disagree with the authors' conclusions, but they state their case very well. There is some childish and clumsy Oval Office dialogue, but after the events of the middle Seventies, who am I to call anything said in that room unrealistic?

Barry Malzberg is at the helm of The Reference Library, and is a relief from Del Rey's garrulous crustiness. He puts forth a highly readable and perceptive essay on the increasing proliferation of academic SF books and other analytical works on the field.

The cover is pretty good, but not the best Di Fate I've seen; he appears to be working to formula lately.

RECEIVED: COSMIC TRIGGER: THE FINAL SECRET OF THE ILLUMINATI BY ROBERT ANTON WILSON, FROM AND/OR PRESS. A FASCINATING, HIGHLY READABLE BOOK. REVIEW NEXT ISSUE. ---REG

LETTER FROM TIM KIRK

August, 1977

'Thanks for #22; looks good.

The interview with John Varley was timely, since I'm in the midst of illustrating his story for THE LAST DANGEROUS VISIONS.

'Mike Glicksohn definitely has a point concerning myself and the fan artist Hugo. I was halfway considering removing my name from consideration this year, but I just couldn't believe that I'd be nominated again, in view of the distinctly paltry amount of fan work I did in 1976! I very much appreciate this honour, but I do wish to remove my name from future fan artist ballots; it simply isn't deserved. I hope eventually to graduate to the pro artist category; I'll be thirty this year, Dick! My sunset years are just around the corner! I would dearly love to at least appear on the pro artist ballot once, before I shrivel up like a salted snail...My personal choice for the fan artist Hugo this year is Grant Canfield, long overdue, though Bill would certainly be no disappointment.

'Things plug along here as usual. I finished a hardback version of RIME ISLE by Fritz Leiber, am in progress on what promises to be a fairly lavish edition of a book of poetry by de Camp and have two more stories to illustrate for LDV, better known as the Gutenberg Bible. And Hallmark greeting cards, natch.

'P.S. Hope SFR wins!'

"THE WORST CRISIS OF ALL WAS THE PROLONGED ILLNESS AND DEATH OF HIS FRAGILE WIFE, VIRGINIA, THE COUSIN IN WHOM HE HAD MARRIED WHEN SHE WAS THIRTEEN, EACH TIME (SHE HEMORRHAGED)", POE WROTE TO A FRIENDS, "I FELT ALL THE AGONIES OF HER DEATH, AND AT EACH ACCESSION OF THE DISORDER I LOVED HER MORE DEARLY & CLUNG TO HER WITH EVER MORE DESPERATE PERTINACITY. BUT I AM CONSTITUTIONALLY SENSITIVE--NERVOUS IN A VERY UNUSUAL DEGREE. I BECAME INSANE, WITH LONG INTERVALS OF HORRIBLE SANITY. DURING THESE FITS OF ABSOLUTE UNCONSCIOUSNESS I DRANK, GOD ONLY KNOWS HOW OFTEN OR HOW MUCH. AS A MATTER OF COURSE, MY ENEMIES REFERRED THE INSANITY TO THE DRINK RATHER THAN THE DRINK TO THE INSANITY."

---OTTO FRIEDRICH
GOING CRAZY

THE HUMAN HOTLINE

S-F NEWS BY ELTON T. ELLIOTT

Poul Anderson has completed a new novel, *THE AVATAR*, for Putnam. Ace Books will be reissuing many of his older titles (with the original titles and texts restored) in 1978

John Varley's first story collection will be titled *PERSISTENCE OF VISION*. It's due from Dial/Jamess Wade early in 1978.

Jack Vance has sold the Star King series to Daw for a reported \$30,000 advance. Included in the deal are the three published books in the series: *THE STAR KING*, *THE KILLING MACHINE*, and *THE PALACE OF LOVE*. The final two new novels will probably be completed by the time you read this.

Jack Chalker's 4th novel, *WORLDS OF MIST AND SHADOW*, has sold to Del Rey. He also has a short story coming out in *STELLAR* #3

Ray Palmer, long-time controversial figure in SF, editor of *AMAZING* and *FANTASTIC* during most of their fat pulp days of the Shaver Mystery period when the circulation of *AMAZING* reached a reported 250,000 copies, died at age 67 recently. Since the *AMAZING/FANTASTIC* days he has edited and published *FATE* magazine.

A.E. van Vogt has sold his first movie script, entitled *COMPUTERWORLD*.

F.M. Busby is working on a suspense novel.

Vonda N. McIntyre has sold her second novel for a five-figure advance. It's an enlargement of her Nebula Award winning short story, "Of Mist and Sand and Grass."

Frank Herbert, contrary to published reports, is not going to sue George Lucas over *STAR WARS*.

The federal government is prosecuting 20th Century Fox for attempting blackbooking *STAR WARS* with *THE OTHER SIDE OF MIDNIGHT*. Several threats in New England were forced to show *THE OTHER SIDE OF MIDNIGHT*, a turkey, in order to get *STAR WARS*.

Confluence Press will publish *THE EGGPLANT AND OTHER ABSURDITIES*: Prose Poems by Duane Ackerson.



THE FANTASY FAIRE, a movie/Perry Rhodan convention, attracted 400 fans. Held in Los Angeles, Forrest & Wendayne Ackerman were guests of honor. Also present were Robert Bloch, C.L. Moore, Fritz Leiber, Marion Zimmer Bradley, A. E. van Vogt, and Ann Robinson of *WAR OF THE WORLDS* fame.

John Norman, author of the controversial *Gor* series of counter-Earth novels, is really John Lange, Professor of Philosophy at the City University of New York.

DAW Books is now publishing six titles a month: four originals and two reprints.

Alex Schomberg will have an *ANALOG* cover early in 1978.

James H. Schmitz is not out of the SF field; after a five year hiatus he is writing again.

Jerry Pournelle's new novel, *EXILES TO GLORY*, starting in the Sept. *GALAXY* (it's about asteroid mining), will be published by Ace next year.

Ace will also bring out an expanded version of *BIND YOUR SONS TO EXILE* (the original, badly butchered version appeared in *ODYSSEY* #1). It'll be about 36,000 words with 40 illos by a major artist.

Coming from Ace in December: *THE LAVELITE WORLD* (fifth in the Tiers series) by Philip Jose Farmer.

Jack Chalker's next novel, *WEB OF THE CHOSEN*, is due in February from Ballantine.

NEWS WANTED. IF YOU ARE AN AUTHOR, EDITOR, PUBLISHER, BIG NAME FAN OR RUMORMONGER AND YOU HAVE NEWS--WRITE TO:

ELTON T. ELLIOTT
1899 WIESSNER DR. NE
SALEM, OR 97303

LATE NEWS REPORTS-----

The British prozine, *VORTEX*, has folded. Printing costs were too high in relation to sales.

Stephen King, author of *SALEM'S LOT*, *CARRIE*, and *THE SHINING*, with his agent Kirby McCauley has completed a deal with Futura (England) of \$330,000 for his next three novels.

20th Century Fox has withheld distribution in England of Ralph Bakshi's *WIZARDS*.

Peter Weston's original anthology series, *ANDROMEDA*, has apparently been suspended indefinitely by the publisher.

Tanih Lee's new book, *EAST OF MIDNIGHT*, due from Macmillan in September. It is described as a sword & sorcery juvenile.

PULSAR, a new British prozine, is reportedly due out in February.

Gene Wolfe's new novel, *THE DEVIL IN A FOREST* (marketed in hardcover as a Juvenile Fantasy) will be published by Ace in November.

Mack Reynolds' new novel, *PERCHANCE TO DREAM*, will be published by Ace in December.

ASIMOV'S SF MAGAZINE is going bi-monthly with #5. Now buying for #6, needs strong novels.

Owlswick Press will publish *THE GHOSTS OF THE HEAVISIDE LAYER*--uncollected Dunsany.

BY REG

THE VIVISECTOR

A Column By Darrell Schweitzer

WHISPERS

Stuart David Schiff, Editor
Doubleday, 226 pp, 1977, \$7.95

There has been a veritable renaissance in the supernatural horror field of late, especially in anthologies. First *FRIGHTS* last year, then Ramsey Campbell's *SUPERHORROR* (which I haven't seen—St. Martin's Press, please note), and now this. Three books in two years. I assure you, considering the unstable condition of the genre, that's a veritable renaissance. And *WHISPERS* is an important event in another respect: it's the first recognition by a major publisher of the importance of the "semi-prozine" phenomenon.

A semi-prozine, as I define it, is a magazine which pays rates comparable to the newstand magazines, publishes fiction of a similar quality (or better, in the case of *WHISPERS*), but which is distributed only through the mails and some bookstores, and has a circulation under the SFWA limit of 10,000. (Usually under 3,000.) It is analogous to the mainstream "little magazine" and not to be confused with the fanzine putting on airs by paying token sums for amateur work. (I draw the line at 1/2¢ a word—*WHISPERS* pays 1¢ minimum—this being the lowest paid by newstand prozines in recent memory. *MAG OF HORROR* and *WITCHCRAFT & SORCERY* paid 1/2¢, and *VOID* still does.) There have been isolated attempts over the years, like *MARVEL TALES*, *THE ARKHAM SAMPLER*, *MACABRE* and some others, but semi-prozines didn't begin paying competing rates or appearing in quantity until the spring of 1973, from which time *WHISPERS* has been the clear leader. The significance of all this is that much of the best fantasy fiction, both by newcomers and major names, appears in small magazines which are not seen by the general readership at all. There's a tremendous reprint potential there, which Doubleday is just beginning to tap. So far there aren't enough original anthologies to draw away the best material and none of the newstand magazines offer serious competition. Why else is there a new Pusadian novelet by Sprague deCamp

in the current *WEIRDBOOK*, along with a novelet by H. Warner Munn, author of *MERLIN'S RING* in the same issue? These guys aren't amateurs. And why would a story like Karl Edward Wagner's "Sticks" (reprinted in the present anthology) have appeared in a magazine with a circulation under 2,000? It's a splendid piece of work, taking a real-life experience of Lee Brown Coye (ever wonder what those sticks in his later drawings are? Dare you ask?) and turning it into one of those rarest of rare treasures, a Cthulhu Mythos story which can be read with a straight face, without yawns or chuckles. It won the British Fantasy Society's award for best short fiction of the year, and should have won in Providence the same year, but it seems likely that without a magazine like *WHISPERS* it would never have been printed at all. Stuart is justly proud of it, and has used it to lead off his anthology.

He's also reprinted "The Barrow Troll" by David Drake, which is also of award quality. Drake is, for practical purposes, a *WHISPERS* discovery. He had two stories published previously in August Derleth's last two Arkham anthologies, but these gave no hint of what he was capable of. Then came *WHISPERS* and "The Song of the Bone" and "The Shortest Way" which demonstrated a brilliant grasp of historical detail, if a less than brilliant grasp of plotting. With "The Barrow Troll"

however, he is in complete control, and not a word rings false. It's a whole story, and very, very good.

The other reprints are: "The Glove" by Fritz Leiber, strong on character, weak on plot. Not one of the author's best stories and painfully heavy-handed (or gloved really) with the criminal's glove taking the inevitable stroll at night. "Dark Winner" by William F. Nolan is about a guy done in by his childhood self and not very memorable either. "Ladies in Waiting" by Hugh B. Cave (a *WEIRD TALES* veteran, recently returned to the fold) seems better on a second reading. I'd completely forgotten it from its original appearance, but now I find it an above average haunted house tale, strengthened by the overtly sexual nature of the Alluring Things. The only serious drawback, all but universal in this type, is the contrived method used to get the victims to stay overnight in that godawful place. "The House of Cthulhu" by Brian Lumley is a genuine addition to the Cthulhu Mythos—it explains how sunken R'lyeh got sunk—but it's also a very hokey sword & sorcery effort written in a style I can only call Archaic Redundant:

"...you may kill me—aye, even take my life with that very blade..." (p.108)

Which sounds much too close to Adrian Cole's Longbone the Barbarian and similar parodies. (Again chuckles & smirks—the great trap of eldritch & fantastic writing is that when it's done badly it becomes funny, hilariously, if inadvertently.)

"A Weather Report from the Top of the Stairs" by James Sallis and David Lundie is a real surprise, one of the three or four genuine stories I've seen from these two most uncommunicative of writers. (I'm talking about Sallis' whole output. I've never seen a solo Lundie but alone or with company Sallis tends to write



NEW WORLDS style non-functional word patterns, which is no doubt why most of you have never heard of him. I once conducted an informal poll and was very hard pressed to find anyone who could remember anything by Sallis, even though they'd read books in which he had appeared.) There are even characters, a plot and a theme to make it all mean something, not to mention two endings, because Schiff and the authors had a disagreement and never could make up their minds. The story is based on a Gahan Wilson cartoon about discarded toys which plan to get the little boy who junked them. The ending published in the magazine makes it clear they will, but the original ending, first published in this book carries the implication that they're too rusty and broken to do so. I think I prefer it that way for the added pathos. Much of the point is that there is no justice in this world, and otherwise the impact is blunted by a simplistic horror story revenge format.

"The Inglorious Rise of the Cat-meat Man" is black humor about a meatshop owner who may have taken a tip from Burke and Hare. I'm not nearly as fond of this as the editor appears to be, but at least it's quite competent and more interesting than Joseph Payne Brennan's "The Willow Platform", which reruns the familiar formula of the man who finds the forbidden book, dabbles in the Unknown and is gobbled up by Things, without any variation whatever. "Goat" by David Campton is much better, about a convincingly evil and repugnant little man who knows too much about everyone. As the blurb says, an exemplary horror story.

In addition to the reprints, a treat--half the book is made up of new stories, about the equivalent of three issues of WHISPERS. Two of them are "reprinted" from issue 10/11 which hasn't appeared and must be considered originals along with the rest. These two are "Graduation" by Richard Christian Matheson (son of the famous writer) and "Le Mirror" by Robert Aickman. The former is slight in content--a college student causes misfortune to those around him--but it's written with a great deal of wit and polish, and may signal the start of a noteworthy career. Aickman is a writer who ranges from brilliant to unreadably awful, and "Le Mirror" falls somewhere in the middle with a deliberately (verbose) Victorian treatment of a young girl's premature aging brought on by a mirror she picked up in one of those mysterious shops people always find in stories like this. Not exactly outstanding stuff, but it does create a convincing mood of helplessness and decay.

Another mirror turns up in Ray Russell's "Mirror, Mirror", but this time the content is fully as trite as the title. A deal with the devil, of the sort fantasy editors dread and receive by the hundreds, with the inevitable twist and no real redeeming features. I could have done without it. Charles Fritch does considerably better with "The Pawnshop", in which His Satanic Majesty gives you a receipt for your soul, to be redeemed in bad deeds.

"Antiquities" by John Crowley I barely remember. Let me take a look--completely unbelievable bit about umpteen thousand mummified Egyptian cats imported into England, as one character puts it, "for no conceivable reason". The spirit of Bast comes with the deal, and seems to be causing a rash of unfaithfulness among English husbands. The telling is through retrospective dialogue, in the manner of Jorkens, and Crowley understands the technique. If this is the start of a series it could be interesting, if the content gets better.

"The Scallion Stone" by Basil A. Smith is a more definite promise of good things to come. Smith (now deceased) was an English clergyman who wrote for his own amusement, ghostly tales in the M.R. James tradition, without making any attempt to publish them. Miraculously his manuscripts found their way into the hands of someone who can not only appreciate them but has the resources to publish them. Schiff intends to issue a book of Smith's writings, and offers the present story as a foretaste. I'd say that the conclusion is nearly bungled, but on the way the author maintains atmosphere with the best and is a delight to read. I'm looking forward to the book.

"The Closer of the Way" by Robert Bloch isn't a sequel to his "The Opener of the Way", but an elaborate gag which runs into the ground all attempts to psychoanalyze the author through his work. One step ahead of the Freudian critics, he explains he really is a fiend of the most unsavory sort, which is what you'd expect from someone who has the heart of a little boy--in a jar on his desk.

"White Moon Rising" by Dennis Etchison contains some good writing, but in quest of great subtleties or else outright murkiness, the author lost me at the end. Either that or when I understood the ending it was revealed to be a pointless exercise in paranoia. So, university guards are Out To Get You...why not little old ladies, and the Boy Scouts who just seem to be helping them across the street?



"The Dakwa" is another of Manly Wade Wellman's stories wherein a critter out of American folklore is proven to be real and is then dispatched in short order by equally traditional methods. In this case credibility is stretched too far. After making himself partially immune to the Thing with magic ointments, our hero pins the beastie to an underwater log with a hunting knife. Since the Dakwa isn't allergic to knives the way vampires are to stakes, and since it has not been seriously injured and is very powerful, it should be able to work itself free in about five minutes.

"The Chimney" by Ramsey Campbell may be a joke. I'm not sure. It's about a neurotic kid with a morbid fear that Santa Claus or something like him really will slide down the chimney into his room some Christmas Eve. Handled tongue-in-cheek it's a notion worthy of Gahan Wilson, but the ending has real pain and death in it and I'm not sure how much of the humor is accidental.

Afterthoughts: Even if all these stories aren't to my taste, at least not one of them is so bad it couldn't be read. A formidable accomplishment for an anthologyist, in these days of rampant Elwoodism. The book is certainly worth getting for those stories that are outstanding and all the rest are never less than pleasant time-killers. Another point: Last year at the second World Con I remarked to Stuart that it is a shame Doubleday is the publisher of this book. I don't think he understood, but what I meant is that a book this good deserves a permanent edition, and while this is the most elaborate Doubleday product in several years (color wraparound jacket by Kirk, interior illps by Kirk, Barr, Utpatel, Coye, Fabian, Garcia) the physical production of the thing is absolutely rock bottom. The boards are plastic and cardboard, the paper is of low quality and the binding is glued just well enough to keep the pages from falling out before the book is sold. Needless to

say no sewn signatures or even a strip of cloth down the inside. In libraries where a book like this will be frequently read, I predict it'll last about a month. For collectors, well, ten or so years from now it'll be very rare since most copies will have disintegrated and remaining ones will be so fragile you'll be afraid to touch them.

I'm not asking miracles, but I think Doubleday (and other offending companies) should make some effort to upgrade the quality of their editions, getting them at least to the level of a book club edition of five years ago. Is that too much to ask? The other alternative is for someone like Gregg Press to do "first hard-covers" for the good ones.



THE BEST OF EDMOND HAMILTON

Leigh Brackett, Editor
Ballentine/Del Rey
381 pp., 1977, \$1.95

The del Rey line continues to justify its existence with the Best series. This latest one is a real bargain, both at pages per price and on account of some of the stories included herein. Between these covers we get a capsule history of Edmond Hamilton's career and of modern science fiction as a field, because at virtually every stage of the game from the Gernsback era to the present, he was involved. His reputation is not as great as it should be because he was often a formula writer. He had three basic plots in the early days--the space opera, the invasion of the turtle men (or spider men or bird men) from Out There (or another dimension or whatever), and the lost race with the magical secret. (Invisibility, immortality, non-wilting comfakes, etc.) Gradually, since he'd written these stories so many times, he produced definitive versions of at least two of them, THE STAR KINGS and THE VALLEY OF CREATION. (The poor turtle men never made it.) His later space operas, like the STARWOLF books for Ace in the 1960s are among the best ever of the type next to which E.E. Smith is a weak joke. Hamilton, even in interstellar adventure stories, could handle character and write decent prose and he knew better than to substitute action for plot a la STAR WARS. (If only Lucas had filmed Hamilton!)

But, alas, the stigma of Captain Future never did wear off, and I imagine Hamilton would be even less remembered today--on about the same

level as Edwin K. Sloat or John Russell Fearn--if he had not every once in a while written a story out of type, just to show complacent readers he could do it. And since he was one of the most prolific science fiction writers ever, there got to be quite a lot of these after a while, enough to comprise several books, including this one.

His first published story, "The Monster-God of Mamurth", is well-written, orthodox WEIRD TALES stuff, the old bit about the guy who finds a ruined city in a remote place wherein has dwelt a Thing since time immemorial. One look, a few hairs raised and the hero escapes to have shudders ever after. Lovecraft's "The Nameless City" is one of these, and some neo-Moskowitzian will no doubt try and show influence one way or the other (ignoring the fact that HPL's tale was written first and published--professionally at least--later) but I won't, even though I could make a good case for a connection with "In the Walls of the Eryx". Hamilton's Thing, you see, is a gigantic invisible spider, and much of the lost city is also invisible (which is why it was lost?) and the potential for the place turning into a fiendishly infuriating death trap is obvious, though not fully exploited. (Influence, I think, and have learned from my own experience, frequently consists of picking up gems the other guy thoughtlessly discarded.)

"The Man who Evolved", one of the early attempts to break out of type (1931--he was hooked on the turtle men then to the exclusion of virtually all else) holds up quite well today even if the prose does slip into Tottering Hysterical Giberish spots. It shows a perfectly good grasp of the structure of a short story and manages to focus on a single wondrous idea without turning into a crude lecture like so many stories of the period. The ending is a bit of a shocker--the gentleman of the title, having gone through the most advanced evolutionary stages, becomes a lump of mindless protoplasm. Evolution is circular, human progress meaningless. For all his interstellar romanticism from the very beginning there was an underlying streak of pessimism in Hamilton.

"The Conquest of Two Worlds" should not have been included. The author's reputation would have been helped far more by alluding to this story, then leaving it to rot in the pages of WONDER STORIES. Its content is advanced for its time, but as a piece of storytelling it is a total failure. I'd guess that Ham-

ilton chose to ignore, and Gernsback was ignorant of the difference between a story and a synopsis of a story. This is the latter, a summary of events with only vestigial attempts at character, plot or even division into scenes. There's a genuine story or two buried in the material, but by today's standards it's rank amateur slushpile stuff, completely unpublishable. (If written in 1977 and submitted to, say, ANALOG.) The only noteworthy thing about it is its protest against the blithe assumptions made by other authors (and much of the world) that it is the role of mankind (white, Anglo-American mankind at least) to rule lesser races "for their own good". Hamilton's characters come to the startling conclusion that there might be something wrong with wiping out 75% of the Martians and enslaving the rest, because Earth wants their resources.

Some of the other entries are remarkably mature science fiction from the 1930s, mostly from WEIRD TALES, which had far higher standards than any pre-Campbell science fiction magazine. "In the World's Dusk" might have become a classic if Campbell's "Twilight" hadn't come first. It's the same brooding view of the utmost future, this time with a determined last man who goes to amazing lengths to renew life on this planet. "Child of the Winds" has a bit of the lost race cliché in it, a beautiful white girl living alone on an Asian plateau with sentient winds. The love at first sight business is ridiculous, but the story has fine moments anyway. "The Seeds from Outside" would presumably have slowly and horribly devoured the hapless protagonist if Clark Ashton Smith had been in charge, but again Hamilton broke away from the conventional. The seeds sprout two plant people. The hero is attracted to the female, but the male kills her out of almost inexplicable jealousy.

After that, a couple of stories from the 1940s and then a sampling of Hamilton's mature period. All the crudities are gone--the overwriting, redundancies, occasional lapses in grammar. In "What's It Like Out There?" he resembles the author of the Captain Future stories about as much as Ray Bradbury resembles Clark Ashton. The story is brilliant and justifiably famous. It's scientifically dated because space travel didn't turn out to be as grueling as Hamilton imagined it (and Mars doesn't have a breathable atmosphere), but as a story about brave men sent to die wretched deaths to keep the folks back home in luxuries, and about a survivor who is unable to tell the truth about what he has experienced, it is still valid and

always will be. (The analogy to war is deliberate and obvious, especially of the Korea/Vietnam variety.)

An earlier version of this was actually written about 1933, but rejected by all the magazines as too mature for the audience. This may have prolonged the babyhood of the genre, but in the long run I think posterity benefitted. The Hamilton of 1952 was a much better writer.

"Requiem" is a fine mood piece about the end of the Earth. Not of mankind, but merely of the deserted Earth, which scarcely anyone seems to notice. "The Pro" is probably a personal statement--it's about an old time science fiction writer who finds he's not at all prepared for the reality of spaceflight. In "After a Judgment Day" the pessimism is back. The last two humans, on a lunar base, program robots to carry the history of mankind to the stars, but neither they nor the readers are convinced this will mean anything. "Castaway" is an elaborate gag from Sam Moskowitz's *THE MAN WHO CALLED HIMSELF POE* which would have us believe Poe wrote what he did because there was a mind from the future stranded in his subconscious.

A good introduction to one of the greatest pioneers of SF. Of thou and buy.

SWORD OF THE DEMON

By Richard A. Lupoff
Harper & Row
174 pp., 1976, \$7.95

Two issues back your editor and mine dismissed this book with a snort, but I think it deserves closer attention. I'm not satisfied with it, but why I'm not satisfied may be important. (Not because it's my reaction, but because of what it might tell us about the nature of fantasy fiction.) It's certainly an intelligent and creative effort--of itself very welcome in such a moribund field as heroic fantasy--and yet in many ways it's a textbook case of How Not To Do It.

The problem is distancing. LeQuin discusses this in *FROM ERLAND TO POUKEEPIESIE* (surely the standard text on the subject--a must) and points out that heroic and imaginary world fantasy fiction, quite unlike realistic fiction (including science fiction) requires a distancing from the ordinary to be convincing. If it's a tale of long ago and far away, and epic deeds of the princes of Faery, it can't sound like an anecdote told by Uncle Sid from New

Joisey. Most authors counter this with archaicism and usually they do it ineptly. LeQuin herself manages through outstanding eloquence and an ability to assume the viewpoint of her world, keeping her narrative clear of anachronisms. Lupoff uses present tense and a fragmentary style which distances like crazy, but fails at storytelling because never for an instant are we allowed to ignore the writing and pay undivided attention to what is being written. The best prose is invisible. This stuff is lit up like a barrage of neon signs. And the language is appropriate some of the time. Modern scientific vocabulary has no place in a Japanese mythological epic, but there it is.

Distancing is a two-edged sword. The story must be removed from the ordinary, but at the same time there must be recognizable human motivations and emotions in it. Sooner or later the reader has to feel at home in the exotic setting. This transportation wholly out of the real world is much of the appeal of this kind of writing. To make it work the people have to be real people, just for contrast, so the supernatural beings will seem supernatural and fantastic and the fantastic setting will be fantastic also. Poul Anderson handles this well in "The Broken Sword" and Tolkien is quite adept at it. Love, hate, lust, envy, etc., all have to be there, to make the story interesting in human terms.

Unfortunately Lupoff's characters are supernatural beings whose motivations are obscure, whose reasoning is obscurer and whose abilities are never stated. There are dozens of rabbits out of hats, unexpected character changes (a meek frightened girl into an Amazon in the space of a paragraph), and hitherto unaccounted for magic tricks, and the result is fantastic people doing fantastic things in a fantastic setting. If anything can happen, the reader doesn't care what does. There is no connection with human reality at all. Between this and the inappropriate style, the book has committed a thorough job of *hara-kiri*.

But it is interesting. The writing is at least clear. Lupoff knows how to use English, and comes as a tremendous relief after Patricia McKillip (see next review) and the novelty of his content carries the reader through. If a conventional fantasy novel with the two or three stock characters and the usual medieval/Hyborian setting were written this way, it would be a flat bore, but we have here what may be the

first serious attempt to use Oriental material in fantasy since the days of Hearn and Ernest Bramah. (We will tactfully ignore Frank Owen who couldn't write his way out of a rice paper bag.) Parts of it are quite good. The comic duel between Susano Wu and the hydra-critter is masterful. Lupoff has apparently done his mythological homework well and introduces a vast array of unfamiliar motifs, even if he isn't always convincing in his presentation. (I can't help but wonder how the inhabitants of the Land of Gloom can light a fire and make hot sake under water.) I think his nautical knowledge is a bit shaky--either he does not know a quarterdeck from a fore-castle or the Ofuna as described on page 34 is built backwards--but this is hardly important. Much more significant is his ability to handle a great number of Japanese terms without confusing the reader:

"He wears a scarlet-painted scabbard held by a *uwa-obi*, outer belt..."

As she takes the *obi* from the dead sailor there is a clatter, and a *yoroi-doshi*, an armor-piercing blade, falls from the *obi* to the ice-covered deck." (p. 57)

Maybe a little redundant, but it works.

This novel is worth a look, simply because so few things like it have been done. But, alas, I predict it'll sell about 12 copies, maybe less in paperback. The title is very, very wrong and makes it sound like a fur-jockstrap effort. In paperback it'll no doubt get an imitation Frazetta cover and be placed next to THUDBORE VS. THE LAMPRAY WOMEN. But the Thudbore fans will take one look at the overtly literary style and put it down. Any who last beyond the first page will be puzzled by the lack of familiar stereotypes, and meanwhile the readers of more sophisticated fantasies will pass by with upturned noses. Dick mentioned once that an alternate title kicked about was *THE MIRROR OF AMATERASU*, which to my mind would have been 1000% better.

THE RIDDLE-MASTER OF HED

By Patricia S. McKillip
Atheneum, 1976
229 pages, \$7.95

Patricia McKillip has apparently written four books, but the only one to attract any attention so far was *THE FORGOTTEN BEASTS OF ELD*, which,

you'll recall won the first World Fantasy Award ever presented, and in general created a sensation, even if Dick Lupoff did give it a bad review in ALGOL. I was quite taken with it--in essence, that rare creature, the fantasy novel of character, about an enchantress and I know few better--although I was willing to admit its faults. The writing tended toward deep purple and there was desperate need for someone armed with a blue pencil to declare open season on the words "forgotten", "legendary", and "fabled". The society the story took place in was sketchy at best. However, because of the close focus of the novel, it came off quite well.

I'm sorry to report that THE RIDDLE-MASTER OF HED tries for a broad sweep and fails utterly. It's a vast disappointment, nowhere near as good as THE FORGOTTEN BEASTS OF ELD. All the shortcomings of the previous work are here with none of the strengths. The writing is on a much lower level, extremely murky, imprecise and often with dubious grammar like:

"It was dark; the sea lay heaving, blue-green with unearthly lights on a moonless night; so close he could see the light from Danan's house lay Isig Mountain." (p. 178)

I have never figured out what the last part of that means. Either the light is screwing the mountain or "lay" is being used in a sense I'm unfamiliar with, or the verb was assassinated by the typesetter. But there are many cases of this and I tend to think it's the author's fault. Additionally, the above specimen is first rate Deep Purple, complete with terminal adjectivitis. Someone ought to tell Ms. McKillip that one does not make a scene "unearthly" merely by calling it so, any more than a horror story writer of the Eldritch Dread school can make something frightening by labeling it "a mind-wrenching horror of nameless, blasphemous, unspeakable abomination."

She seems to think there are such words as "surprisedly" and "bewilderedly" and in any case doesn't know not to use such appallingly clumsy said-bookisms.

On page 194 "the ceiling loomed at him". I don't think she knows what "loomed" means.

To be nice, before I proceed further, I must admit some of the nature descriptions, especially the hero's transformation into a tree near the end, are lovely. There are snatches of good writing scattered throughout.

Now then: As in the previous book, the author shows little flair for naming names, which is so important in fantasy. She has a woman named Tristan, a violation of rule #1 in imaginary names. Do not use names which carry associations irrelevant to your story. Tristan (sometimes Tristram) was a knight of the Round Table, the lover of Isolde. A male name, I've always assumed. Then there's a country named An which sounds just like Ann or Anne and is noted for horses raised there and thus smacks of Annwn from Welsh mythology without having anything to do with it or even being supernatural. An inhabitant of this place is named Mathom. A "mathom" in Tolkien is a useless thing that's so nice you can't bring yourself to throw it away. It's also the title of Lisa Tuttle's fanzine, which was published on that theory. Again, hardly right for a character's name, unless you can't bear to throw him away either. (I could.) In the tongue-twisting department there's Ylarcronth, which looks like an epileptic fit at the typewriter to me. Don't ask what it sounds like.

As far as murkiness goes, there are times when I'm not sure just what the hell is going on in a scene or what is being described, or even who is talking. Everybody talks alike anyway. A little bit of the confusion is intentional, since the hero seems to be frequently delirious, bonked on the head, or just plain not paying attention, but the experience of his confusion is not conveyed. More is created, which is not what's needed.

To make the going tedious, McKillip never really gets into the mind of her character and he's such a dolt anyway we could care less. He spends most of the book denying the obvious. Admittedly this could be a believable motivation (many people spend their lifetimes doing the same), and it is possible, as everybody from Dostoyevsky to Thomas Disch has proven, to write a good story about an utter nebbish, but this particular nincompoop is never the slightest bit convincing. If handled right, the reasons for the character's mistakes are obvious to the reader if not to the character himself, and he can become sympathetic--this is not the stuff of tragedy, though, since a tragic hero has to be a whole man to start with--but if he makes one blunder after another not because of some flaw within himself but because the author is blatantly pulling strings, then he's merely exasperating.

If there's any tragedy, it's the tragedy of a good story buried some-

where in all this gunk. I think there is one, but it hardly gets off the ground. I'm not asking it to unravel itself completely since this is the first part of a trilogy, but it should get moving. To make the inevitable comparison to Tolkien, you'll note that while Tolkien had enough sense to hold much of his story back, he got the essential plotline set up early in THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING. By chapter 2 we know something of the ring and what has to be done with it. Then later on, revelation follows revelation, and the picture gets bigger, more complicated, and things turn out differently from what was first expected. But rather than pull the camera back, McKillip has smeared vaseline on the lens. She gets nowhere. Her hero blunders through several societies as paper-thin as those in ELD (only there are more of them) without accomplishing anything. The story doesn't really start until four-fifths of the way through, by which time it's too late. Maybe we don't have a trilogy here at all, but a monstrosously padded one-volume novel.

The second part, HEIR OF SEA AND FIRE (Atheneum, 204 pp., \$7.95) just showed up. I can only hope it'll be better than the first.



THE WEIRD TALES STORY
Robert Weinberg, Author and Editor
FAX, 1977, 134 pp., \$17.50

This lavish, oversized book (a coffee-table book in general trade, but FAX is a specialty press) is not quite what it was supposed to be. Some of you may remember Weinberg's fiftieth anniversary WT tribute in 1973. (If you have one, hang onto it. Allegedly worth \$15 a copy these days.) Shortly thereafter it was announced that THE WEIRD TALES STORY would be an elaborate reprinting of WT 50 (minus fiction) with lots more artwork from the original magazine, and much new text.

Well, it is and it isn't. There is something of the original book left here, but it's been heavily rewritten. My own article on Dorothy McIlwraith is gone (I'd hoped this would be my first hardcover appearance), although admittedly Weinberg knows more about the subject and covers it better than I ever could. The memoirs of various authors are here, along with some new ones, notably one by Robert Barbour Johnson which raises a lot of questions. Why did Farnsworth Wright seem to do

everything possible to discourage Johnson, whose "Far Below" was one of the most popular tales the magazine ever ran? Eventually he succeeded, and Johnson stopped submitting.

In any case, this streamlined, deluxe version is certainly a much more complete history of WEIRD TALES than the previous one and he did well to cover the ground himself, rather than let others do it. For one thing, he has access to the incredibly rare 1920s issues of the magazine, which few of us ordinary mortals have ever seen. Thus he is one of the handful of people capable of intelligently commenting on the early years of the magazine.

I have a few objections: The layout, especially in the chapter on interior art, is a mess. The figure referred to is often pages ahead of the text and the text sometimes jumps a few pages, dropping a single paragraph in the middle somewhere, without so much as a "continued on p.-". At least one drawing is identified incorrectly. Figure 35 is not for del Rey's "Cross of Fire", Bob. It's really the Finlay poetry page from the May 1939 issue, page 129, for "Wine of Wizardry".

More seriously, Weinberg frequently fails to back up or follow up his statements. He mentions offhand that Ray Cummings' "The Girl in the Golden Atom" was inspired by a Quaker Oats sign, then doesn't bother to spare a line to say how. And more frequently he'll tell us that this or that story was effective or not effective or exceptionally gruesome without substantiating it in the least. This is hardly perceptive criticism. At one point (p. 40, discussing "The Tree of Life" by C.L. Moore) he uses the word "theme" when he clearly means plot, as if the two were interchangeable. He is at his best when relating history or anecdote, at his worst as a critic. Fortunately he does more of the former than the latter.

Sometimes I think enthusiasm clouds judgment. When we are told that "The Call of Cthulhu" was rejected in 1925 because the audience wouldn't have understood it, then bought in 1928 because they had been "educated" that far, I tend to suspect *ex post facto* rationalization.

For one thing, much of the readership of a magazine turns over in 3 years, so those "educated" thus wouldn't be around by the time the story appeared. For another, many commentators have suggested that Wright had a quirk whereby he would turn down anything really unusual, then sometimes buy it later because he'd seen it before and it was more familiar. It was the editor, not the

readers, who got educated!

Much of this is, of course, taste, but I think Weinberg goes overboard praising the dreadful artwork in the early WT. I have yet to encounter anyone who isn't a fevered WT fan who can say anything good about Margaret Brundage. Certainly her nudes are unrealistic, her execution pedestrian, and her situations unimaginative. Few but the hardest of hardcore enthusiasts can regard one with a straight face. "Beautiful" is not an adjective I would ever consider using in the same breath with one of them. Nor would I ever use "erotic". And Hugh Rankin's interiors are more embarrassing smudges than anything else.

Weinberg admits that because of low payment offered by WT, if an artist was any good he would get work elsewhere, unless he happened to be specially suited for the weird. These specialists didn't start showing up till late. Aside from a couple of J. Allen St. John pieces, I can see no competent art work in the magazine before the advent of Finlay and no competent covers before Bok. And I've seen few covers from the McIlwraith period that were aggressively bad, most of them well above the earlier level.

Ah, but this could go on for hours, couldn't it? As long as people still sit around and talk--for hours sometimes--about "The Unique Magazine", it lives up to its subtitle, and this is certainly the best book about it so far.

P.S. Two ideas occurred to me while reading this thing: 1) If Henry Whitehead's article on the technique of weird fiction is so great, someone ought to reprint it, and 2) If STRANGE STORIES, the only serious competitor WT ever had was so great, how about an anthology of stories from its pages? Bob? FAX?

BRIEFLY NOTED:

THE GALACTIC DREAMERS

Robert Silverberg, Editor
Random House, 1977, 276 pp., \$8.95

Books like this tend to be neglected by reviewers because their contents are familiar to veteran readers (I already have all these stories) but they shouldn't pass without any notice at all. This is an excellent collection, ideal for newer readers and for libraries trying to build an SF collection. (Librarians note: It's a properly bound book, in cloth with good paper and

sewn signatures. It'll last.) The contents speak for themselves: "Common Time" by James Blish (a great story in its own right, probably best known for Damon Knight's Freudianization of it in IN SEARCH OF WONDER), "The New Prime" by Jack Vance (from EIGHT PHANTASMS), "Incentive" by Brian Aldiss (GALAXIES LIKE GRAINS OF SAND), "The Waiting Grounds" by J.G. Ballard (the early, storytelling, surrealist Ballard, prior to the "condensed novels", back when his stories had such conventional elements as theme, character and thoughts conveyed from one paragraph to the next), "Sky" by R.A. Lafferty (Need I say more? From NEW DIMENSIONS 1), "Night" by John Campbell (sequel to "Twilight"), "The Dead Lady of Clown Town" by Cordwainer Smith (one of the longest Underpeople stories, seldom anthologized accordingly) and Silverberg's own "Breckenridge and the Continuum" (from his own period of greatness which he has sadly and abruptly ended--from THE FEAST OF ST. DIONYSUS).

The subtitle is "Science Fiction as Visionary Literature". Yes, indeed.

THE FUTURE NOW

Robert Hoskins, Editor
Fawcett, 1977, 286 pp., \$1.75

Once you've been in SF for ten years or so, reprint anthologies begin to look alike. Here's another one with familiar stories, but again if you weren't reading SF in the late 1960s and early 70s, you may have missed the first printings. The authors include Harlan Ellison, Poul Anderson, Virginia Kidd, Ed Bryant, Dean Koontz, etc.

But there's one thing of interest to all, which makes this book worth the price of admission even if you have all the stories--Ursula Le Guin's essay, "The Stalin in the Soul". This is based on a speech delivered at Clarion in 1973. It's copyrighted both for that year and 1977. This is apparently the first publication, of this version at least.

It's absolutely required reading for writers and for anyone with hopes of becoming a writer. Much of it seems obvious in retrospect--the hack writer sells himself, his audience and his art form short--but rarely has all this been said with comparable force or eloquence:

"We censor ourselves. We writers fail to write seriously, because we're afraid--for good cause--that it

won't sell. And as readers are fail to discriminate; we buy it, read it, forget it. We are mere "viewers" and consumers", not readers at all. Reading is not a passive reaction, but an action, involving the mind, the emotions, the will. To accept trashy books because they're "best sellers" is the same as accepting adulterated food, ill-made machines, corrupt government and military and corporative tyranny and praising them and calling them the American Way of Life or the American Dream. It is a betrayal of reality. Every betrayal, every lie accepted, leads to the next betrayal and the next lie." (p. 19)

To which I would add, don't accept a book merely because it is a "classic". See for yourself.

SMALL PRESS NOTES CONT. FROM PAGE 65

ALWAYS COMES EVENING is a handsome hardcover collection of Robert E. Howard's poetry, compiled by Glenn Lord and illustrated by Keiko Nelson. This volume contains all of Howard's poems from WEIRD TALES, as well as verse from the hard to find (and little heard of) THE PHANTOGRAPH, FANCIFUL TALES, and ORIENTAL STORIES. This is a 2500 copy edition at \$10. each. There is a 200 copy edition bound in leather at about triple the above price. Query Chuck Miller, 239 N. Fourth Street, Columbia, PA 17512.

The endleaves of the book have a reproduction of Howard's writing. Wow. To anyone who has even a rudimentary knowledge of handwriting analysis, REH was obviously a very neurotic individual...yet a reliable neurotic.

Donald Grant continues to publish very fine, quality books. The cream of the three recent releases received is, in my mind, THE DREAM OF X by William Hodgson, with a feast of full-color, full-page Stephen Fabian paintings. There are 14 really superb illustrations, plus full color endleaves, designs, etc. and a full-color dust jacket painting.

There is no price given in the d-j, but judging from the companion volume (described below) the price should be about \$20. But check with Grant to be sure.

THE MARCHERS OF VALHALLA consists of two relatively obscure novelettes by Robert E. Howard, "Marchers of Valhalla," "The Thund-

er Rider," plus a short story, "The Grey God Passes." In addition there are eleven full-color, full-page illustration by the well-known painter, Marcus Boas. The price for this volume is \$15.

The third book is THE PRIDE OF BEAR CREEK by Robert E. Howard. This is the second volume of tales involving the western hero Breckinridge Elkins. The first volume was A GENT FROM BEAR CREEK. This book has the dust wrapper and three interior illustrations by Tim Kirk. Price is \$7.

Address: Donald M. Grant, Publisher, West Kingston, RI 02892.

LETTER FROM GRETCHEN RIX

September, 1977

'George Warren's letter of comment about Star Wars in last issue's SFR was interesting, but I've got one (or two) comments for him.

Warren was sure James Earl Jones was playing (in voice, at least) Darth Vader. Actually, I was checking the closing credits to see if Sean Connery hadn't sneaked into the movie somehow for Vader's voice reminded me of his to a degree. But according to Newsweek Magazine, which does make errors, admittedly, Darth Vader was David Prowse.

I wouldn't think anyone would use an actor of James Earl Jones' stature in a movie without publicizing it.

'And CSPO was Anthony Daniels, not Roddy McDowell.

'I enjoyed Star Wars immensely the first time, and pretty well the second time I saw it. Twice was more than enough, though. But I'm glad everyone else is getting a kick out of it.'

(It keeps putting off going out to Beaverton to see STAR WARS because of horror stories of looming lines...hours of waiting.... And I keep hoping the film will shift to a nearer theater. But, one of these days....)

LETTER FROM BOB SHAW

September 20, 1977

'I'm feeling quite well at present, having just dispatched the latest novel off to the publisher. I've been going through a phase of writing jolly semi-space operas for the past two or three books, and now the feeling has come over me that I must write some serious adult social

writing of the sort that gets reviewed at length in the Sunday papers here. The responsibility seems too great just at present--I'm still recovering from the effects of having been at a convention in Belgium--so I think maybe I'll get drunk tonight instead. It's an odd feeling, this idea that one must try to live up to the highest standards. Last year I did a lightweight fun book called MEDUSA'S CHILDREN, knowing as I was that the critics would dislike it and that ordinary sf readers (as distinct from fans) would like it a lot. Since then the fan press critics have been tearing it to shreds, and a number of ordinary readers have contacted me out of the blue to say it was the best thing I had ever done. The latter statement is wrong, because I know it is not the best thing I have ever done --but who should I write for? Perhaps I won't even wait till tonight to start boozing...

'Anyway, I wish you luck with the development of ONE IMMORTAL MAN --I'd like to see that turned into a novel.

'Thanks again for keeping me on the mailing list for SFR. It's a truly great fanzine, and I feel like a swine for not sending you a six-page loc every time. Yes, I'll go out and have a swine right now...

'For some reason this afternoon I kept ending sentences with three little dots...'

LETTER FROM IAN WATSON

September 24, 1977

'What a load of grump from Ted Tubb. So the UK economy is in rags and tatters because of cynics, saboteurs and idiots? The facts are that the UK was well in the black last month on balance of payments and is going to be staying there for quite a few years to come because of oil (okay, only 15 years or so perhaps, but that's a pretty handsome breathing space by any reckoning); we've got the largest foreign currency reserves in a decade (and it isn't all borrowed money by any means); the pound is stable and has been for the last 12 months; inflation is under control, nowhere near 20%, because of sensible unvacillating government policy over the last 2 years and trade union cooperation; prices of raw materials to industry are falling; taxes, far from getting worse, were reduced by 1% a few months ago. Taxes still aren't amusing, mind; but the system isn't entirely run by sadists--when I visited my local Tax Collector recently

he advised me how I could pay a bit less tax. Local taxes (rates) are being held in check as far as possible by cutting back on public spending. You can argue the pros and cons of the Common Market all right but to link it to decimisation and metrication as similar 'disasters' is crackers, unless you simply like foxing foreigners by charging a dozen guineas a furlong for goods, or three-farthings a score. And on the subject of 'foreigners', we don't happen to have unlimited immigration. The notorious large families are declining year by year in a different society. You can at least (and at last) get a decent meal in any British town now. The problems of social adjustment can be dealt with and will be but not by grumbling about the racial problem, which merely helps to enforce it and make it one. Compulsory purchase doesn't happen, as Ted implies in his context, because you have become poor; if that happened you'd get assistance to maintain your house. It's caused by motorway mania. It certainly isn't against the law to defend your life and property; it's the law that you can crack a burglar's skull open with your poker--the advice is you don't sensibly attack a cornered beast of prey. And the fact that there are no guns at large, generally speaking means not that you're forbidden to sleep happy and secure with a revolver under your pillow but that you are very much less likely to get shot if somebody does break in or just casually shot at random.

'Oh, well, Ted's obviously reeling nostalgically under the blows of Future Shock, nostalgia being a condition of punch-drunkness from the demon Change; but he does rather flail about at random. And isn't it odd how past-oriented a lot of the heart of SF is? Now I know why Dumarest never finds his way back to Terra; it isn't here anymore.

'On the subject of the past, I'm surprised you can Dan Galouye a forgotten writer; DARK UNIVERSE, COUNTERFEIT WORLD and PROJECT BARRIER were all paperbacked here a few years ago with beautiful covers by Sphere Books and I think I've seen copies in shops till fairly recently.

'Thanks for including me as a 'fine critic' in your rundown on the Gregg Press Science Fiction Studies. Actually, I'd say that SF STUDIES has much more than academic value. It can be very useful and provoking to writers too-if you like to think about what you're doing and why you are doing it and what 'invisible' social and ideological concepts lie in back of your work and the genre you're writing in. The March 1977 issue you review on pp 58/9 certain-

ly has a stimulating piece in it of this sort, in Gerard Klein's 'Discontents in American Science Fiction'-more stimulating for writers than thesis-mongers, whether you end up agreeing or not agreeing. And Remington's 'Three Reservations of the Structural Road', under its forbidding title, asks some very pertinent questions about what the core of SF is-in opposition to what Ted calls pontificating on Godlike attributes of the new SF pantheon. It helps you be aware, SF STUDIES does its best; and being aware is what life's about or you end up blindly and resentfully grumbling.

'Ah, but the forbidding title. There is this language problem with SF STUDIES, which can lead to some funny episodes. The thing is that Darko Suvin and Mullen are aiming at



extreme precision rather than foggy impressionism. Well, in one of my pieces on Dick/Le Guin I used the word of a thousand faces, 'realism'; and Darko wrote back saying 'You do not actually mean 'realism' because it sets up x,y,z falso connotations in this context'. So we changed the word to 'verisimilitude', which is a bit sharper. But then we came to the adjective and to be consistent we had to change this to 'verisimilar', and Ye Gods, we then got to the adverb later on and a new word bloomed, 'verisimilarly'. Well, this is not a bit of Academicese; it's actually a bit of Suvinese-which is a more responsible language than Academicese because it isn't simply aiming at acceptance by some Academic hierarchy but at greater truth value, a sharpening of thought rather than sonorous obfuscation. At any rate, that is the idea...

'All the best and thanks for a fine issue which tided me through flu.

'P.S. Mandrake the Magician had Lothar as his sidekick.'

((There are a lot of writers, including me (and I suspect Poul Anderson, for one) who prefer not to know too much about their own particular fiction's content of symbolism, influences, and other unconscious or subconscious input, for fear that if they become too self-conscious in writing and in manipulating these elements they'll lose the "magic" that makes their fiction interesting and important, and will end up making fools of themselves. There's also an element of not-wanting-to-know because the furniture of their unconscious is embarrassing and sets up conflicts and writing blocks. Too, knowing the sources of inspiration and theme and choices of characters can make one feel like a machine and can make one feel out-of-control, a mere set of reflexes and literary conditioned responses.))

SCHIZOPHRENIA IS NEVER HAVING TO SAY YOU KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON.

'WHEN IN THE PAST INTELLECTUALS RAILED ON AGAINST THE MOVIES, IT WAS ALWAYS ON THE GROUNDS, THAT MOVIES WERE SOMEHOW "BENEATH" THE OTHER ARTS BECAUSE THEY MADE THEIR APPEAL TO BASIC EMOTIONS AND FEELINGS RATHER THAN THE CEREBRUM. THEY WOULD POINT OUT WITH SOME SUPERIORITY THAT THE GUNFIGHT AND THE CHASE WERE MORE POPULAR THAN THE METAPHYSICAL ARGUMENT, THEREBY PROVING THAT MOVIES COULD DO NOTHING IMPORTANT. THIS IDEA RESTS ON THE NOTION THAT THERE IS SOMETHING BASE ABOUT ANYTHING BASIC, AND THAT FEELINGS AND DRIVES ARE "BENEATH" THE INTELLECT. EVER SINCE THE GUN WAS FIRED AT THE AUDIENCE IN THE GREAT TRAIN ROBBERY, FILM HAS BEEN A MEDIUM WHERE MOOD AND SENSATION WERE MORE IMPORTANT THAN ANY IDEAS. IT IS A MATTER OF INTENSITY AND THE POWER TO HAUNT, NOT SIMPLY VISUALIZATION AND THE PRESENCE OF THE IMAGE. IT IS THE ADVANTAGE A SILLY FILM LIKE KING KONG HOLDS OVER A BRILLIANT FILM LIKE BEFORE THE REVOLUTION.

'THE EARLY DAYS OF THE AMERICAN MOTION PICTURE WERE FORTUNATE IN COINCIDING WITH AN AGE OF HEROIC COMEDY--A TIME WHEN COMEDY, WHICH HAD TRADITIONALLY LABORED UNDER ARISTOTLE'S DELUSION THAT GLORY WAS RESERVED FOR THE FIGURE OF TRAGEDY, CAME TO BE USED TO GLORIFY A PERSONALITY AT THE EXPENSE OF THE WHOLE WORLD. WHAT SET CHAPLIN, KEATON, FIELDS AND THE MARX BROTHERS APART FROM THEIR FOREBEARS WAS THAT THEY BECAME EPIC CHARACTERS, AND IT WAS THEIR SURROUNDINGS RATHER THAN THEIR PERSONS THAT WOUND UP BEING RIDICULED.

--GOING CRAZY
By Otto Friedrich
Avon 31567, \$1.95

AND THE WINNER IS...

THE HUGO AWARDS WERE PRESENTED AT THE 35TH WORLD SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION SEPTEMBER 2-5, 1977.

THE NOMINEES FOR BEST NOVEL WERE:

CHILDREN OF DUNE by Frank Herbert;
MAN PLUS by Frederik Pohl;
MINDBRIDGE by Joe Haldeman;
SHADRACH IN THE FURNACE by Robert Silverberg;
WHERE LATE THE SWEET BIRDS SANG by Kate Wilhelm.

AND THE WINNER IS WHERE LATE THE SWEET BIRDS SANG.

THE NOMINEES FOR BEST NOVELLA WERE:

"By Any Other Name" by Spider Robinson;
"Houston, Houston, Do You Read" by James Tiptree, Jr.;
"Piper At The Gates Of Dawn" by Richard Cowper;
"The Samurai And The Willows" by Michael Bishop.

AND THE WINNER IS A TIE: HOUSTON, HOUSTON, DO YOU READ? AND BY ANY OTHER NAME.

THE NOMINEES FOR BEST NOVELETTE WERE:

"The Bicentennial Man" by Isaac Asimov;
"The Diary of the Rose" by Ursula K. LeGuin;
"Gotta Sing, Gotta Dance" by John Varley;
"The Phantom of Kansas" by John Varley.

AND THE WINNER IS THE BICENTENNIAL MAN.

THE NOMINEES FOR BEST SHORT STORY WERE:

"A Crowd of Shadows" by Charles L. Grant;
"Custom Fitting" by James White;
"I See You" by Damon Knight;
"Tricentennial" by Joe Haldeman.

AND THE WINNER IS TRICENTENNIAL.

THE NOMINEES FOR BEST DRAMATIC PRESENTATION WERE:

CARRIE;
FUTUREWORLD;
LOGAN'S RUN;
THE MAN WHO FELL TO EARTH;
No Award.

AND THE WINNER IS NO AWARD.

WELL, MAYBE WE SHOULD RANK THE RUNNERS-UP.



THIRD RUNNER-UP ONE CREAM PIE, SECOND RUNNER-UP TWO CREAM PIES, FIRST RUNNER-UP THREE CREAM PIES, AND THE HUGO WINNER IS... ARE YOU SERIOUS?



THE NOMINEES FOR BEST EDITOR WERE:

BEN BOVA;
TERRY CARR;
ED FERMAN;
TED WHITE.

AND THE WINNER IS BEN BOVA.

THE NOMINEES FOR BEST PROFESSIONAL ARTIST WERE:

GEORGE BARR;
VINCENT DIFATE;
STEPHEN FABIAN;
RICK STERNBACH.

AND THE WINNER IS RICK STERNBACH.

THE NOMINEES FOR BEST FANZINE WERE:

LOCUS;
MYTHOLOGIES;
OUTWORLDS;
SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW;
THE SPANISH INQUISITION.

AND THE WINNER IS SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW.

THE NOMINEES FOR BEST FAN WRITER WERE:

DON D'AMASSA;
DICK GEIS;
DONALD C. THOMPSON;
SUSAN WOOD.

AND THE WINNER IS A TIE: DICK GEIS AND SUSAN WOOD.

THE NOMINEES FOR BEST FAN ARTIST WERE:

GRANT CANFIELD;
PHIL FOGLIO;
TIM KIRK;
BILL ROTSLER;
JIM SHULL.

AND THE WINNER IS PHIL FOGLIO.

NON-HUGO AWARDS ALSO PRESENTED:

THE J.R.R. TOLKIEN AWARD (GANDALF) FOR LIFE'S WORK IN FANTASY

THE NOMINEES WERE:

ANDRE NORTON;
C.S. LEWIS;
FRITZ LEIBER;
URSULA LEGUIN.

AND THE WINNER IS ANDRE NORTON.

THE JOHN W. CAMPBELL AWARD FOR BEST NEW WRITER

THE NOMINEES WERE:

JACK CHALKER;
C.J. CHERYH;
M.A. FOSTER;
CARTER SCHOLZ.

AND THE WINNER IS C. J. CHERYH.

SPECIAL AWARD FROM THE WORLD CON COMMITTEE TO GEORGE LUCAS FOR STAR WARS.

THE FIRST FANDOM AWARD: FRANK BELKNAP LONG.

THE BIG HEART AWARD: ELAINE MOUCIE-HOSKI.



AND THEN I READ...



By The Editor

THE SECOND DEADLY SIN

By Lawrence Sanders
Putnam, \$9.95

COMMENT: I presume this was sent because I liked Sanders' *THE TOMORROW FILE* so much. This novel is a detective murder mystery, with retired chief of New York detectives Edward X. Delaney as the sleuth, helped by an alcoholic police detective whom the force can spare. In a quasi-official investigation, Delaney pieces together clues to solve the knifing of Victor Maitland, an artistic genius who is also a sonof-a-bitch.

Delaney is old-fashioned, methodical and forgettable. The characterizations are deep and the background utterly realistic. The police slang and procedures are intriguing.

But. Did Sanders HAVE to telegraph the identity of the killer

with this title? The second deadly sin is covetousness, and the killer's name is slang for "moneymen". Then, too, the killer's death seemed too pat and his self-undoing, panic, and stupidity (after having been so smart up till the end) seemed to me more of plot necessity than character reality.

Still...it is a good, near-compulsive read.

MURDER AT THE ABA

By Isaac Asimov
Fawcett 2-3202-6, \$1.75

COMMENT: This is the best-written Asimov book I've read. He surprised the hell out of me. Excellent, malicious characterizations, good pacing, realism, a good murder puzzle, and no cheating (but a few lucky breaks). There is also sly by-play as Asimov inserts himself as a character in the book and argues with the central character in amusing asides and footnotes. He has a lot of fun. The reader does, too. Recommended.

THE FRANK FRAZZETTA CALENDAR - 1978
Peacock Press/Bantam Books, \$4.95
[12" x 12 5/8" size]

COMMENT: Really fine. Heavy, heavy card stock. First class. The paintings are: Bloodstone, Aros, Serpent, Nightstalker, Black Panther, Girl Bathing, Fire Demon (a double-page center-spread. God, to own the original!), Rogue Roman, Tanar of Pellucidar, Autumn People, Dracula Meets the Wolfman, Bran Mak Morn, Swords of Mars.

Full color poster size prints of the plates from this calendar are available from Frazzetta Prints
RD2, Box 257,
East Stroudsburg, PA
18301

The prints are \$3. plus \$1. postage and handling for each print. If you are a Frazzetta fan, get the calendar and then choose your posters.

ASCENSION

By Charles L. Grant
Berkley 425-03412-7, \$1.25

COMMENT: An unconvincing after-the-holocaust novel in which an implausible hero seeks revenge for his father's death, in the last great ruins city on Earth. Petty local dictators, insane, left-over androids and doubtful friends make the young hero's life a time of troubles. Rather pretentious rendering of a standard sf theme.

10-9-77 The final entry for this issue. Two items I'd better not forget:

THANK YOU, all of you Hugo voters who voted for me this year. I am humble...and sort of proud. (After all, a Hugo vote is a way of expressing love.) I hope that isn't vaguely obscene. We all hate vague-ness.

AND--I wish everyone a happy holiday season. Just think: another year shot to hell.

MARION ZIMMER BRADLEY (I quote from a letter in *FUTURE RESPECTIVE* #12) had this to say about the Hugos and one winner in particular:

'A Hugo of course is just a popularity contest among fans/readers who at least have bought and read the book. It doesn't mean much; but I would rather have it than a Nebula.'

'A case in point: James Tiptree's "Houston, Houston, Do You Read?" Now this may, in my personal opinion (which doesn't of course mean much) be one of the worst novellas to appear at any time in the past fifty years. I think it was printed because it happened to tie into the feminist politics of the last year. But try reversing the sexes in the plot and think of the screams we would have? Three female space travellers somehow go through time, and wind up in a world where women have been eliminated and the men are creating a wonderful Utopia, free of the female traits of whatever-men-hate-about-women. The men find them obnoxious, so they promptly kill off the women so that their wonderful womanless world won't be threatened by the possibility that some of the men might listen to or enjoy the company of the returnees. Could a nazi or fascist write a worse explication of their vicious hate propaganda? When I read it, I didn't have to wait for Tiptree's revelation of herself as a woman--- I said "No man wrote that story." It is a tragic commentary on the relations between the sexes that enough writers could vote for it, for any reason, to give it even the meaningless Nebula. I'd be shocked if it had won a fanzine award. Hate and bigotry are hate and bigotry, whoever writes them.'

Such a story would also be considered "sick" and "homosexual" and "too controversial" and likely not be published at all.

See you all next issue.

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FEATURED CONTRIBUTIONS

THE ALIEN CRITIC #5 Interview
with Fritz Leiber; "The Literary
Dreamers" by James Blisch; "Irvin
Binkin Meets H. P. Lovecraft" by
Jack Chalker.

THE ALIEN CRITIC #6 Interview
with R. A. Lafferty; "The Tren-
chant Bludgeon" by Ted White;
"Translations From the Editorial" by
Marion Z. Bradley.

THE / CRITIC #7 "The Shape
of Sc ... Come" by Fred-
erik ... John
SOLD OUT

THE ALIEN CRITIC #8 "Tomorrow's Libido: "Sex and Science Fiction" by Richard Delap; "The Trenchant Bludgeon" by Ted White; "Banquet Speech" by Robert Bloch; "Noise Level" by John Brunner.

THE ALIEN CRITIC #9 "Reading
Heinlein Subjectively" by Alexei and
Cory Panshin; "Written To a Pulp!"
by Sam Merwin, Jr.; "Noise Level"
by John Brunner; "The Shaver Papers"
by Richard S. Shaver.

THE ALIEN CRITIC #10 An Interview With Stanislaw Lem; "A Nest of Strange and Wonderful Birds" by Sam Merwin, Jr.; Robert Bloch's Guest of Honor Speech; The Heinlein Reaction.

THE ALIEN CRITIC #11 An Interview With Avram Davidson; "The Foundation on Sands" by John J. Alderson; "Footnotes to Fan History" by Larry Shaw.

"Smo -d Glass"--a non-fiction
fan
Harlan Ellison by
Richa. **SOLD** Can't Say

THAT!" by ~~_____~~ "Confessions of a Wage Slave" by David M. Harris; "Tuckered Out" by Barry Malzberg; "Uffish Thots" by Ted White.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #13 The
Elwood sit To a
Pulpy SOLD OUT F. Stev-
ens: 'THARLOWE' Home After

thoughts" by Harlan Ellison; "The Gimlet Eye" by Jon Gustafson.

An Interview With Philip Jose Farmer; "Dancing On the Titanic" by Charles W. Runyon; "Thoughts on Logan's Run" by William F. Nolan; "The Gimlet Eye" by Jon Gustafson

"Spec Fic and the Perry Rhodan Ghetto" by Donald C. Thompson; An Interview With L. Sprague de Camp by Darrell Schweitzer; "Uffish Thots" by Ted White; "The Gimlet Eye" by Jon Gustafson.

An Interview with Jerry Pournelle;
"The True and Terrible History of
Science Fiction" by Barry Malzberg;
"Noise Level" by John Brunner;
"The Literary Masochist" by Richard
Lupoff; "Whatever Happened to Fay
Wray?" by Michael G. Coney; "The
Gimlet Eye" by Jon Gustafson;
"Plugged In" by George Warren.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #17 An Interview with George R. R. Martin; An Interview with Robert Anton Wilson; "Philip K. Dick: A Parallax View" by Terrence M. Green; "Microcosmos" by R. Faraday Nelson; "Angel Fear" by Preff.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #18 An Interview with Lester del Rey; "Noise Level" by John Brunner; "A Short One for the Boys in the Back Room" by Barry Malzberg; An Interview with Alan Burt Akers; "The Gimlet Eye" by Jon Gustafson.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #19 An Interview with Philip K. Dick; "The Notebooks of Mack Sikes" by Larry Niven; "The Vivisector" by Darrell Schweitzer; "Angel Fear" by Freff; An Interview with Frank Kelly Freas.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #20 An
Interview with Theodore Sturgeon;
"Noise Level" by John Brunner;
An Interview With Joe Haldeman;
"The Vivisector" by Darrel Schweitzer;
"The Gimlet Eye" by Jon Gustafson.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #21 An interview with Leigh Brackett & Edmond Hamilton; An Interview with Tim Kirk; "The Dream Quarter" by Barry Malzberg; "Noise Level" by John Brunner.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #22 An Interview with John Varley; "S-F and S-E-X" by Sam Merwin, Jr.; "Afterthoughts On Logan's Run" by William F. Nolan; "An Evolution of Consciousness" by Marion Zimmer Bradley.

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