

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW

Interviews: ☆ **BOB SHAW**

24

☆ **DAVID G. HARTWELL**

\$1.50

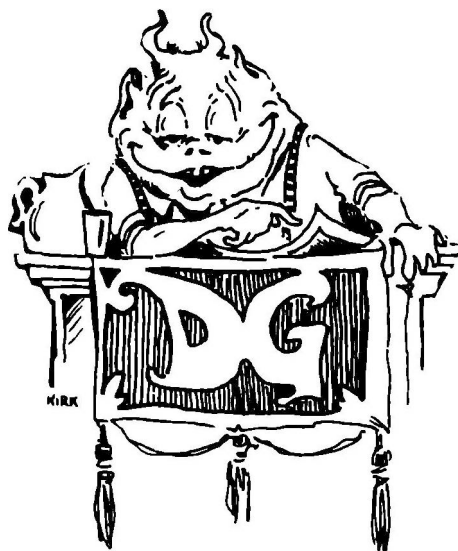
☆ **ALGIS BUDRYS**

ON BEING A BIT OF A LEGEND *By Algis Budrys*

FRITZ LEIBER -- PHILIP K. DICK -- HARLAN ELLISON -- URSULA K. LE GUIN



ALIEN THOUGHTS



10-11-77 The copy for SFR #23 went off to the printer this afternoon preening its feathers and looking smug; it knows it has a heavy orange textured cover stock coming to it and it is pleased as punch in expectations of Looking Good.

We shall see. I keep having bad moments as I dread a printer screw-up, somehow.

I've been exchanging letters and calls with Dawn Witter of the F.&S.F. Book Co., Inc. in the matter of having them take over the retail distribution of SFR, and today it is settled. I'll be saved the considerable labor of making up all those 80+ packages, all those invoices, taking them all to the post awful and waiting all that time as they are weighed and stamped...

With this system the printer sends 1400 copies directly to N.Y. from the plant, by truck, and I can act like an executive instead of a galley slave.

Subscriptions are still my responsibility, though.

If there are any bookstore managers/owners out there who would like to sell SFR, send your order or query to:

F.&S.F. Book Co., Inc.
P.O. Box 415
Staten Island, NY 10302

In spite of all those read-

ers who applauded my dropping the revised version of The Archives I tried in SFR #21, I still suffer the green Guilties at not acknowledging all the books I don't review, so...

So, I'll try a simple listing each day I receive books or small press items. Alright? *salright* I will, of course review a certain percentage of these titles. And the other SFR reviewers will also do their share, as usual.

RECEIVED: FRANK KELLY FREAS: THE ART OF SCIENCE FICTION. \$7.95, The Donning Co./Publishers.

10-13-77 The Hugoes arrived this morning from Suncon; specifically from Don Lundry.

The spaceship this year returns to the solid cast form of four or more years ago, and is far more graceful and handsome than the 'bomb-sitting-on-its-fins' alluminum Hugo of recent years. This year's Hugoes seem to have been dipped in some kind of finish coating: they gleam as if made of chrome.

Very nice. Very gratifying. I LOVE THEM!! More, More, I want MORE....

I've got to control my greed!
Again, thank you all for the votes.

The current furor over the implications of the Alan Bakke case ---he says he was bumped from a place in medical school so that a quota of disadvantaged minority students could be admitted---has provoked some thoughts.

Seems to me that what is going on now is a classic case of Orwellian 'doublethink'. We are into Good Racism, now, as opposed to the old Bad Racism. It was evil in the old days to keep minority students and workers out of certain schools and out of certain jobs because of race, regardless of their qualifications and abil-

ities, and it is good, now, to let them in to certain schools and in to certain jobs because of race regardless of their qualifications and abilities.

The rationale is that we must make up for past racism and discrimination.

But the students and workers discriminated against in the past are not now the ones who will benefit from current racist "affirmative action" quotas.

The plea for equal opportunity and equal education has become a plea for special privilege---based on the unspoken and shameful and humiliating assumption (for the blacks, especially) that they are inherently inferior to whites and cannot compete on an equal-opportunity competitive basis.

And the thrust of government and private action to right past wrongs is now not to make sure everyone is judged and placed on individual merit, but to make sure a certain number of places are available (tokenism) in valued professions.

This leads me to wonder what is in store for the publishing industry if this precedent of quotas and "affirmative action goals" is allowed to stand by the Supreme Court.

I wonder if there wouldn't be pressure on editors to "reserve" one article or story per issue for minority writers? Even if what was available from such writers was of lower quality than what was in-hand written by whites?

Will publishers be "urged" by law suites to set aside a percentage of their books for minority writers? [And wouldn't the minorities within the minority sue for their "rightful" share of the quota? How many books should be published by women? By Chicanos? By Indians? By Chinese? By Gays? By the physically handicapped? By people over sixty-five?]

Sure, it's ridiculous if considered in this light, but that will come to pass unless this country bends its enforcement efforts to creating and maintaining a color-blind society---a meritocracy.

In publishing and editing today editorial racism is almost non-existent; writing is judged on merit---i.e. the money-making potential and the quality as written, and not the race or sex or age or parentage of the writer.

I would hate to have a government agency tell me I must accept say 15% of SFR material by self-

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RICHARD E. GEIS, EDITOR & PUBLISHER

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I OPEN THE FOLDER AND WHAT DO I FIND?

AN INTERVIEW WITH GEORGE SCITH-ERS, EDITOR OF ISAAC ASIMOV'S SF MAGAZINE.

AN INTERVIEW WITH GORDON R. DICKSON.

AN INTERVIEW WITH URSULA K. LE GUIN.

"FLYING SAUCERS & THE STYMIE FAC-TOR"---RAY PALMER'S LAST TESTA-MENT.

"CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF A SPIEL-BERG KIND" BY JACK CHALKER, AND CONTRASTING REVIEWS OF THE MOVIE BY GEORGE WARREN AND RICHARD E. GEIS.

"OTHER VOICES", "THE VIVISECTOR", "THE ARCHIVES", "REPORT FROM ALTERNATE EARTH #666", "ALIEN THOUGHTS", "SMALL PRESS NOTES", "PROZINE NOTES", AND HORDES OF LETTERS. AND---THE ALTER-EGO VIEWPOINT.

And Beyond....

AN INTERVIEW WITH MICHAEL MOOR-COCK.

AN INTERVIEW WITH LARRY NIVEN.*

AN INTERVIEW WITH JOHN BRUNNER*

AN INTERVIEW WITH JACK CHALKER*

AN INTERVIEW WITH STEPHEN FABIAN*

AN INTERVIEW WITH TERRY CARR*

"FEE-DOG ROAD" BY RICHARD HENRY KLUMP**

AN ARTICLE ON FANSPEAK BY DARRELL SCHWEITZER*

AN INTERVIEW WITH C.J. CHERRYH***

* In preparation.

** Klump is a pseudonym for a known sf professional.

*** Hoped for.



identified minority writers.

(I can see the mss. now: in the upper left corner after the name and address---'Black female lesbian with arthritis, over 65.' I'd have to print that one, wouldn't I?)

If the Supreme Court waffles on the Bakke case and/or decides to ratify racial quotas or informal affirmative action "goals" (which are quotas in soft, non-controversial form), then it might behoove a young, incompetent minority writer to seek a radical publicity-hungry lawyer; some big establishment publisher might be persuaded to publish his bad writing rather than face years of expensive court costs.

We'll see what happens.

10-15-77 A pile of books came in today's mail.

RECEIVED: TELESFERES by F.M. Esfandiary. Popular Library 045-04115-3, \$1.75. Non-fiction.

WHO IS JULIA? by Barbara S. Harris. Popular Library 445-00170-4, \$1.75. S-F.

ROGUE GOLEM by Ernest M. Kenyon. Popular Library 445-04104-8, \$1.50 S-F.

THE CITY OUTSIDE THE WORLD by Lin Carter. Berkley 425-03549-2, \$1.50.

TELEMPATH by Spider Robinson. Berkley 424-03548-4, \$1.50

NIGHT OF LIGHT by Philip Jose Farmer. Berkley 425-03366-X, \$1.50

The featured item in the RESEARCH COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK Newsletter #3 is an interview with David N. Talbot, a researcher who has written a book soon to be published by Doubleday titled THE SATURN MYTH.

Talbot believes that in mankind's past Saturn was very close to Earth (or Earth very close to Saturn) and that it dominated the night sky of ancient times. Saturn myths, legends and tales abound worldwide, and are extremely convincing.

Talbot is a catastrophist; he and others believe that Awful Things happened to mankind and to Earth in recorded and in pre-history, and that all those catastrophe myths and legends cannot be ignored. He has a second, follow-up book scheduled from Doubleday, THE CATAclysm, which will explain

what happened to Saturn, Earth and Mankind.

Now, if Robert Anton Wilson will please incorporate this new material into his next book on the past, present and glorious future of mankind.... I'm referring to his newly released COSMIC TRIGGER which I've just finished reading and which I'll review.

By the way, you can get a copy of the Research Communications Network Newsletter #3 by making a contribution. Box 414, Portland, OR 97207.

10-17-77 I suspect that I'm beginning another modified format change here, by listing new-books-as-arrived. There is a kind of psychological-editorial pressure to add something to each listing...in some cases a review, an opinion... So that, willy-nilly, my usual review sections ("And Then I read," "The Alter-Ego Viewpoint," "Small Press Notes") will appear piecemeal in these dated entries. Entrees? We'll see how it goes.

BUSINESS WEEK for Oct. 24th has a long article on a new semiconductor process which will even further revolutionize society. The technology has been developed to put ever-increasing numbers of microcomponents on a silicone chip. They're talking about a quarter of a million storage bits (memory units) per chip, which makes it possible to miniaturize any computer, and creates the possibility of not "smart" robots, but "genius" machines and toys and tools of every type.

This revolution in electronics is going to result in fantastic savings in energy. We will indeed soon have six by six wall TV with fantastic clarity and detail, and smaller screens for more individual viewing of books, papers, magazines.

There are problems to solve---mostly in the areas of wiring the country for these home computers and giving them access to feed-out centers, and devising methods to prevent fraud in electronic payment and bookkeeping...perhaps something involving fingerprint or palm scanning.

This will be a continuing revolution---just starting now---which may be delayed until after the coming terrible shake-out of the monstrous overhang of accumu-

lated debt which is seriously warping and hamstringing [to ever-greater degrees] government, the world economy...everything.

I don't know if this coming electronic revolution will make space travel more likely or not; the fuel costs---the gravity problem---remain to be licked. Perhaps "genius" space probes are more likely than actual human space-living or exploring.

RECEIVED: FIRST WORLD FANTASY AWARDS--An Anthology of the Fantastic: stories, poems, essays, edited by Gahan Wilson. Doubleday, \$8.95.

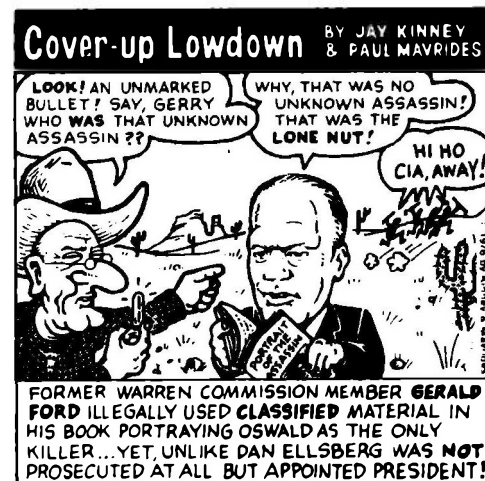
ROCKETSHIP by Robert Malone with J.C. Soares. Harper & Row, \$6.95. Non-fiction pictorial.

10-18-77 The Big-Time New York publishing industry has been taken over by bigger fish. Huge national and multinational corporations own key publishing conglomerates.

Thus: ITT owns Bobb-Merrill; Fawcett was purchased by CBS, and the CBS publishing complex owns Popular Library, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, and 25 magazines; RCA owns Random House, Alfred A. Knopf, Pantheon, Ballantine, and others; MCA owns Putnam's, Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, and Berkley; Gulf & Western own Simon & Shuster; and so on. This is only a scratching of the surface of interlocking power in publishing and the media.

What it boils down to is a virtual lock on the ways and means of influencing public opinion by the super rich. The Establishment.

I suspect that if the inter-



locking control system of corporations, foundations and holding corporations were put on a graph, effective control of the publishing and broadcast media could be traced to a handful of people.

These people can let it be known that they favor this policy, and frown on that opinion...and word will swiftly filter down that this line should be pushed...and that line is out of bounds. Key "opinion-makers" are followed. Certain writers are watched for signals as to which beliefs are acceptable....

There probably is not one major or independent book or magazine publisher left in this country.

This state of affairs is not a Good Thing. It makes small press publishers paranoid about distribution and dirty-tricks competition from the biggies when the small press publishes uncomfortable truths.

What I'm saying is that serious Contrary Opinion will not be tolerated by the Establishment media; they ignore it as simply non-existent. The small press, the underground press printed things during the Vietnam war which were simply ignored by the major news purveyors---until it was decided to end the war---and then these stories were picked up and "surfaced".

That process is still going on.

So do not dismiss out of hand the stories and speculations and rumors printed in the "irresponsible" tabloid and small press areas. They contain naked truth, and relevant opinion---along with the usual 90% of lies, misinformation and delusions.

The problem, of course, is to pick out the truth. But that's true for the major media, too. Nobody said life was easy.

"Hey, Geis, it says here in the paper that it's now a felony in this country, and in New York, and in other states who've passed similar laws, to use a child under sixteen years of age in the production of pornographic materials."

True, Alter.

"Does that mean it's legal to use anyone older than 16 in making porno?"

No. Porno-making, distribution and display are still illegal in federal and local law.

"Then, why this special law about child porno?"

It shows the voters the politicians are on the job.

"But---"

Don't ask embarrassing questions. You'll never understand humans. Go back to sleep.

NEW YORK POST, Aug. 31, 1977

'LOS ANGELES---Criminals are criminals because of how they think, not because of society or from watching TV, says a 16-year study of 255 men at a federal mental institution in Washington. Psychologist Stanton Samenon told a seminar here yesterday that regardless of race or background, criminals share 52 patterns of thinking that usually are evident by age 3 or 4.'

Thanks to John Boardman for the above clip. It tends to prove that good old mommy and daddy make criminals, and that evading that responsibility is a major sociological/political growth industry. It all comes down to "The Devil made him/me do it!" Name your favorite scapegoat/devil.

ROCKETSHIP By Robert Malone with J.C. Soares. Harper & Row, \$6.95. 126 p.p.

COMMENT: Large glossy softcover that traces rocketships through history and illustration, from Leonardo da Vinci to the latest space habitat visions, from early films to STAR WARS, from Buck Rogers and Flash Gordon to sf magazine covers and interior illos. Ninety-percent visual, little text. Interesting, informative, but not worth the price.

FRANK KELLY FREAS---THE ART OF SCIENCE FICTION, By Frank Kelly Freas. The Donning Company/Publishers, \$7.95. [253 West Bute St., Norfolk, VA 23510]

COMMENT: 8-1/2 x 11 quality soft-

cover, 120 pages, lavish use of full-page Freas paintings in color, plus some pages of his b/w illustrations. A hard-nosed, revealing commentary by Freas all the way, with notes on all the paintings.

This man is a hardworking professional artist, is proud of it, makes no bones about his disdain for pretentiousness, is idealistic, and painstaking. It is often amazing the amount of preparation and work he puts into his assignments. This is a MUST BUY, and remarkably reasonably priced. An excellently printed book. There is an Introduction by Isaac Asimov, but it's mostly finger exercise. Freas is the whole show.

RECEIVED: WARP WAR (MicroGame #4) from Metagaming, \$2.95.

COMMENT: I'm not into space games, but this looks interesting. Designed by Howard Thompson, inspired by FOREVER WAR & THE MOTE IN GOD'S EYE. [Box 15346, Austin, TX 78761]

10-19-77 This will be a commentary on the current (Dec. 77) issue of FANTASTIC STORIES. Edited by Ted White.

A good Fabian cover in evil green, depicting a devil man holding a leashed devil woman of sexual mein.

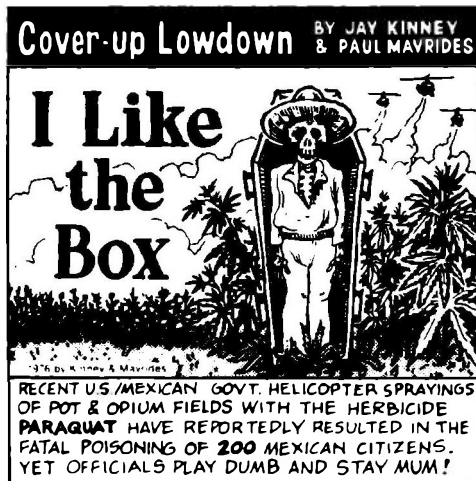
This is the 26th anniversary issue, supposedly an all-star lineup. Minor items by L. Sprague de Camp and Avram Davidson...

Note the subtitle: Sword & Sorcery and Fantasy Stories has been edited to Stories.

Things wrong with FANTASTIC STORIES? Most of the illustrations are static, quiet, dull. No action, no tension, no threats. Most of the stories open with dull, static, slow, passive paragraphs. The writers are intent on setting a scene rather than intriguing and interesting the reader. There is rarely immediate threat or conflict in these stories. The print is too small for easy reading. Too many long letters; maybe the entire letter column should be dropped.

Maybe the editorials should be dropped. Devote the magazine to fast-paced colorful fantasy with an accent on realism. That is, fantasy that has realistic detail, but fantasy premise.

Whatever, the present formula is a failure.



RECEIVED: THE ZEITGEIST MACHINE
A New Anthology of Australian Science Fiction, Edited by Damien Broderick. Angus & Robertson, Publishers, \$3.95 Aust., or US\$5. from Space Age Books, 305-307 Swanston St., Melbourne, 3000, Victoria, Australia,

SCIENCE FICTION BOOK REVIEW INDEX Vol.7, 1976. Edited by H. W. Hall, 3608 Meadow Oaks Lane, Bryan, TX 77801, \$4.50.

TIME STORM by Gordon R. Dickson. St. Martin's, \$10.

ALL MY SINS REMEMBERED By Joe Haldeman. St. Martin's, \$7.95. COMMENT: This novel is made up of assignments in the life of Prime Operator Otto McGavin---sent by a super-secret CIA-type bureau of the Confederacion, an organization/government of the interstellar worlds of mankind. Otto is rarely himself, however; he is overlaid with the personality and character of the man he is to impersonate, and Otto-the-agent only surfaces completely during an emergency.

The assignments are often bizarre, always absorbing, usually dangerous and life-risking. And as the years go by, as the assignments go by, Otto is slowly used up, conditioned and reconditioned...until at the end of this book... Well, Joe Haldeman has very little respect for government promises or morality.

Make no mistake, Joe Haldeman is one of the best realistic science fiction writers going; maybe the best. He doesn't write 'nice', Juvenile sf. He doesn't blink and he doesn't soft-pedal. You might not like what he will tell you about the realities of the future. Or the realities of now.

10-25-77 Got the subscriptions mailing done in three days and to the post office early this afternoon. #23 is on its way....

I'm very pleased with the job Times Litho did with the issue; the cover came out very nicely and the interior printing is flawless. I await with considerable dread the bill.

FINALLY got to see STAR WARS last night at the Westgate in Beaverton. Had a steak dinner beforehand at a good restaurant, had perfect seating...

Liked the movie. Some observations:

It is, of course, a Juvenile Space Opera, and as I absorbed the bad acting and the superb special effects, I kept thinking: *God, with this incredibly good future realism, wouldn't it be great to watch an adult space opera?*

Impressed at the utter reality of the future technology, the weathered, used look of the machines.

Too much emphasis on the cute robots. Calling them 'droids' pissed me.

Lucas created a future more real than his characters, which is saying a lot for his technicians and not much for his script and actors. Except for the old former warrior/religious leader, Ben Kenobi, played by Alec Guinness, who gave the movie its power and class and its archtypal appeal, indeed, its instinctive appeal, as 'The Force' is a psi-powered religion which obviously turns on everyone.

A sequel is already in the works, I hear, and obviously will involve Kenobi and the still-living Darth Vader, heavy villain.

The spaceport saloon scenes were delicious, a high-point.

I'll probably see STAR WARS again, when it opens at a theater closer to home.

RECEIVED: UP THE WALLS OF THE WORLD by James Tiptree, Jr. Putnam's, \$8.95. Uncorrected proof copy. Her first novel.

THE LAVALITE WORLD by Philip Jose Farmer. Ace, \$1.50. The long-awaited. Advance copy; uncorrected proof.

PASSING FOR HUMAN by Jody Scott. DAW UW1330, \$1.50.

WILDEBLOOD'S EMPIRE by Brian M. Stableford. DAW UW1331, \$1.50.

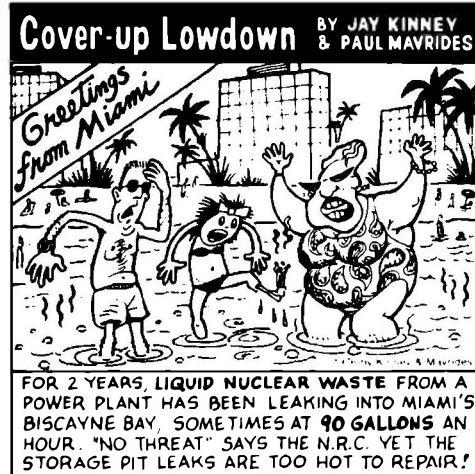
THE PRODUCTIONS OF TIME by John Brunner. DAW UW1329, \$1.50.

DREAM CHARIOTS by Manning Norvil. DAW UW1328, \$1.50.

HOUNDS OF DRACULA by Ken Johnson. Signet 451-E7739, \$1.75.

MEN, MONEY & MAGIC by Jeffrey Potter. Signet 451-E7691, \$2.25.

10-26-77 DAMNATION ALLEY (the movie) had me interested when it opened locally a few days ago, but I decided to wait for the local,



respected movie critic to pass an opinion before plonking down \$3.50 per seat to see it.

Ted Mahar said today in THE OREGONIAN:

'DAMNATION ALLEY is a chuckle-headed science fiction adventure that is long on special effects, medium on acting, short on narrative consistency and bereft of credibility.'

'The film takes place in the aftermath of nuclear holocaust. In a large, well-equipped and armed vehicle called a landmaster a group of Air Force survivors trundle off from the southwest to find out if there is anything to a recorded signal they keep getting from Albany, NY. They have no indication that anyone is alive there, but they have little else to do. Anyway, smoker's carelessness blew up all their missiles.'

There is more...suffice it to say that the movie is only as close to the Roger Zelazny novel as the title. The Hollywood Cretins Have Done It To Us Again.

Save your money. It'll be on TV in a year or so.

I had never read a Lin Carter novel all the way through before reading THE CITY OUTSIDE THE WORLD (Berkley 425-03549-2, \$1.50) a few days ago.

This is pure PLANET STORIES prose at its best. In fact, probably better than ever was printed in that old pulp. The sensual, action-packed, wonderful adventure on a thin-aided Mars replete with ruined cities, degraded natives, exploiting Earthmen...and a hero named Ryker, outcast, rebel, who gets mixed up with a luscious, golden-eyed martian girl who leads him a dangerous chase, who uses

AN INTERVIEW WITH BOB SHAW



BOB SHAW Born 31 December, 1931. Began to sell stories at age 30 but, dissatisfied, soon stopped and only returned to writing about a decade later. One of his early new stories, "Light of Other Days", has been reprinted time and again, eventually being the format for a comic book from MARVEL. In the late sixties he signed a contract with Ace Books and produced four books for them. Still later, finding himself increasingly unable to cope with the demands of two careers--a full-time job and spare-time writing--he switched to full-time writing. He is married and has three children. He lives in England.

His novels are: NIGHT WALK (67); THE TWO-TIMERS: (68); SHADOW OF HEAVEN (69); THE PALACE OF ETERNITY (69); ONE MILLION TOMORROWS (70); GROUND ZERO MAN (71); OTHER DAYS, OTHER EYES (72); ORBITSVILLE (75); A WREATH OF STARS (76); MEDUSA'S CHILDREN (77); and his new novel WHO GOES HERE?

His collections are: TOMORROW LIES IN AMBUSH (73); COSMIC KALEIDOSCOPE (76)

SFR: Are you aware of any direct or indirect influences on your work, your style?

SHAW: I am more and more convinced of the truth of the old precept which says that a perfect literary style is unnoticeable except in its overall effect. When a writer adopts a flamboyant or idiosyncratic manner his style, to me, becomes a style in another sense of the word--a barrier to be struggled across. The world of the story seems to dissolve and I see the writer standing there saying, "Look

at me!" I don't mind looking at writers--most of them are interesting people--but I don't want to do it in the middle of their stories.

It follows from the above that the writers who have influenced my style are those who make up their minds what they want to say and then say it. A few that I can consciously acknowledge are Arthur C. Clarke, Walt Willis, Somerset Maugham, Frederik Pohl, Perelman and Thurber, Clifford Simak, Henry Kuttner.

SFR: What are your favourite books in the fiction or non-fiction areas?

SHAW: Among my favourite books are THREE MEN IN A BOAT, by Jerome K. Jerome, which I keep beside my bed and am now reading for about the twelfth time; LUCKY JIM and THE GREEN MAN by Kingsley Amis; INTELLIGENT LIFE IN THE UNIVERSE, Sagan and Shklovskii; DECLINE AND FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE, Gibbon; MINDSWAP, Robert Sheckley; LET'S EAT RIGHT TO KEEP FIT, by Adelle Davis, for its love and fervour; all the Sherlock Holmes books; FROM HERE TO ETERNITY, James Jones; ASTRONOMY WITH A SMALL TELESCOPE, by Garrett P. Serviss; THE PICKWICK PAPERS, Dickens; THE HOUSE OF RUBY WOGAN, Norman Gear; FATE IS THE HUNTER, by Ernest K. Gann, and all the aviation books of Antoine St. Exupery; all Raymond Chandler's books and most of F. Scott Fitzgerald's.

SFR: Why did you stop writing for near a decade? What deficiencies did you feel back then? Since your "return" to writing, do you see differences, improvements, in your writing?

SHAW: I quit writing for about a decade--to the extent of selling my typewriter--because I took a hard look at the handful of stories I had sold and realized I was a long way from being ready to write. Those stories were based on no other experience than the reading of other people's stories, and it showed. When trying to dream up a story, I shuffled my stock of second-hand ideas around in my head and watched out for some combination which had not cropped up before, then I seized on it as a "new" idea. This was hardly a promising approach, and to break out of the mould I went off to Canada, did a fair amount of job switching, and put a lot of time into studying the inhabitants of Sol III. Critics often say that I'm content to work within the broad themes of traditional SF and they are largely correct, but I've found it is possible to weave into those themes exactly the same kinds of human problems that complicate life for the average citizen of today. This, I think, makes my stories relevant to the human situation, regardless of the category in which they are published. Besides, I love the traditional themes, and I'm glad SF has emerged from that period when many of the trend-setters regarded it as bad form to mention, say, space ships, simply because they were too traditionally science fictional even though they exist in the real world.

I think the extra ten years of direct experience helped my writing on one level; and I'm pretty certain that entering journalism and going through the mill as a reporter on a national daily newspaper helped it on another, though it's possible to be too economical with one's prose. One of my faults

Conducted By Ian Covell

is that I tire of an idea too quickly and this leads to a tendency not to explore ramifications in sufficient depth and to rush the endings of books. I used to defend my position by stating that a triangle can be defined as accurately with three points as with 3 lines--which I thought was quite a clever analogy until I realized that story structures are more complex than triangles, and that I was claiming that a child's dot-to-dot picture is just as satisfying as an Escher drawing.

SFR: Has your attitude to SF changed? Where do you think SF fails as literature?

SHAW: As a writer, my attitude to SF has changed somewhat over the years, and I notice it most when considering the treatment for story ideas. Some stories that I would have written dead seriously ten years ago now get tongue-in-cheek or outright comedy treatment. It must be something to do with growing acceptance that the future portrayed in the golden age of SF is nothing like the future which is actually unfolding. It is still possible to enjoy a good galactic empire yarn, for instance, but increasingly they have to be regarded as romances or even alternate universe stories. The cold equations of the economists, the global strategists and the fuel technologists are the contraceptives which seem to guarantee that Kimball Kinnison, Hari Seldon and Gilbert Gosseyn will never be born and if you have a fondness for those characters it is better to smile rather than grieve over their passing.

The fact that many early guesses were wrong and that writers have had to revise their attitudes doesn't mean that SF fails as literature, though. A Ray Bradbury novel can never have the numerical "success" of a Harold Robbins novel because the imaginative qualities necessary for the enjoyment of SF simply aren't abundant, but the field continues to grow and may be close to achieving its optimum following. There was a time when people who could have enjoyed SF were put off from even trying it because of the way it was produced and presented and that was a serious failing.

SFR: Do you think SF has special difficulties? How have you tried personally to overcome these proposed difficulties?

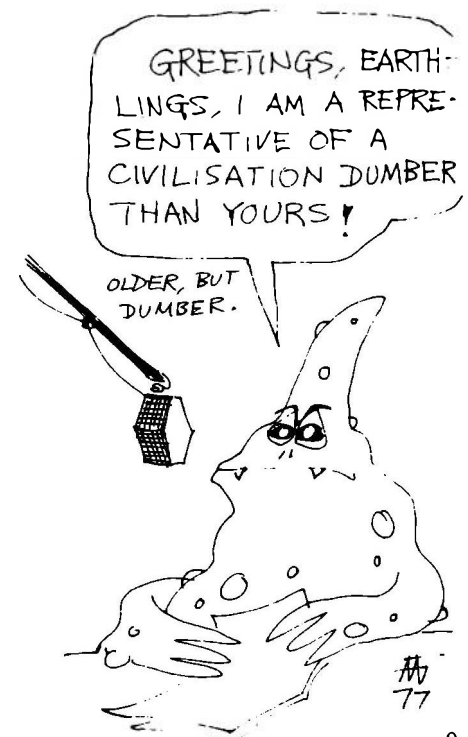
SHAW: I think SF has special advantages for the writer--one of them being the way in which he can set up any fictional circumstances he requires like a scientist controlling the environmental factors in an experiment--but these are offset by some special difficulties, one of which is the problem of maintaining credibility. One technique I use when asking the reader to accept some fairly preposterous notion, especially if it is to do with the hard sciences, is to put in some little, authentic-feeling engineering details. Engineers come along after somebody has produced a new scientific idea and they do all the long-drawn-out work of developing it into something of practical value, so if you show the reader this has been done you (a) imply a lot of background, (b) hopefully, make the reader feel the central idea can't be so improbable after all if all those hard-headed engineering types accepted it. That is my theory anyway, though of course I can't tell if the method actually does what I hope it does.

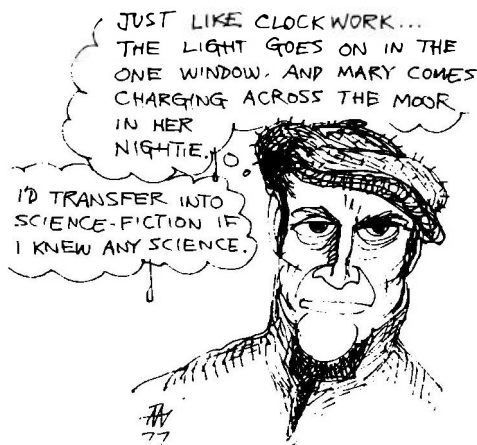
Another way of making a story more believable is, where possible, to make the characters recognizable as genuine human beings. This has a dual action in that the exotic elements in a story appear more exotic in contrast to the normality of the people. Characterization can be more difficult for the SF writer than for the mainstream author, however. The latter, without even realizing he is doing it, draws freely on the common cultural background shared by writer, reader and character. Simply by stating that a character wears a monocle or likes tomato ketchup on his chips, the mainstream writer with the expenditure of only a few words has capitalized on literally millions of other words written by other authors dealing with the same society, not to mention the reader's years of direct experience. The SF author very often has not got these big battalions behind him--stating that somebody likes Sirian gronk juice tells the reader nothing more than that the fictional individual likes gronk juice--and the author has to take other steps accordingly.

Portraying story characters as human beings involves giving them a reasonable mix of virtues and failings, and this is an area where the writer's own background can exert a strong influence. I'm on speaking terms with some hundr-

eds of people, and out of that lot I know of only one who has consulted a psychiatrist--so when I populate an imaginary world the people tend to be quite well adjusted and when I do include a screwball I feel almost as uncertain about my treatment of him as I would trying to write about a member of a New York street gang. On the other hand, some writers move in circles in which nearly everybody is eccentric to some degree and they quite naturally write stories in which everybody is insane, and no doubt they feel their extrapolations are just as valid as mine. You get the same effect cropping up with regard to physical environments. A person who has first-hand experience of life in the stressful parts of New York can easily look into the future and see a MAKE ROOM, MAKE ROOM situation. At the same time, I have walked for hours in the Cumbrian hills without seeing another person and when I try to visualize the same scene a few decades later--with, as I have been promised, hordes of Asians, Blacks and Whites fighting over the last few edible roots--my mind/imagination/instinct simply refuses to play ball.

SFR: Do you feel SF can serve a purpose, or merely entertain? You studied corruption in "A Full Member of the Club" and morality in ORBITSVILLE; are these intended to speak to yourself or readers?





SHAW: People are always asking if SF can serve a purpose, but do they ask poets the same thing about poetry, or playwrights about the stage? To me it doesn't need any more purpose than any other brand of the arts--that of satisfying a certain intellectual or emotional hunger in its devotees. Some theorists say SF plays an important role in preparing people for rapid change in society, etc., but it doesn't reach a big enough audience to be effective in that role, and the people it does reach already are fully alert to change--which is why they were drawn to SF in the first place.

I am not aware of ever having used a story to "speak to" a reader, which is another way of saying "impart a message". It's an odd thing, but when a writer is keen on messages, no matter how complex or subtle his vehicle may be, the message itself usually comes out as something fairly simple or obvious. It's usually something like "War is bad" or "Sex is enjoyable" or "Pride goes before a fall" or "Power corrupts"--and these are all things I expect the reader to know without me having to tell him. All right, the story "A Full Member of the Club" showed a man falling victim to greed, but it only showed that because greed is deadly, not because I wanted to tell people that greed is deadly. I think that if you write truthfully, the things you write will echo all kinds of messages simply because all truths are related to each other. To put it less metaphorically, a man who says two and two are four is not saying anything in disagreement with a man who states that three and three are six.

SFR: Do you compose longhand or on typewriter? At about what speed?

SHAW: When working as a journalist, i.e. writing stuff I don't care too much about, I invariably compose on the typewriter--you can't make the grade on a daily newspaper any other way--but when writing SF I do it longhand, preferably on A4 duplicating paper which provides the right degree of bite for a ballpen. It is less inhibiting and far more flexible than the typewriter. I write rather slowly compared to most people, usually producing 1,000 to 1,400 words a day, with rare peaks of about 2,000.

SFR: Are you a visual or "word-oriented" writer?

SHAW: I'm not too certain of what you mean when you distinguish between the two, but probably I'm in the former category. I try to "see" everything in a story and then write a set of words which will make the readers see what I saw. No matter how many minor characters show up in a story I have to assign each one a face and a general appearance before I can deal with him, even if most of his visual specification does not get incorporated into the manuscript. This entails extra mental effort, but it has a delightful spin-off sometimes when a spear-carrier assumes a life of his own and starts contributing to a story in a way I had not anticipated.

SFR: How much are ideas central to your work?

SHAW: Ideas are crucial to my work. Every story I have written has sprung from an idea. This is one important respect in which SF differs from mainstream where the classic method is to start off with a group of characters and let them interact. The mainstream writer would probably regard this as proof that his was the higher art form, but I regard it as an indication that mainstream novels are short on interesting ideas or that mainstream writers are disinclined to follow up a good idea when they get them. For example, I bought *THE DICE MAN* by Luke Rhinehart because its central idea of a man who decides to give absolute control of his life over to a set of dice was very interesting. The trouble was that, as it was a mainstream novel, the random dictates of the dice resulted in little more than the hero getting laid by different women, and after a couple of hundred pages I gave up. I peeked at the last chapter before putting the book away and

got the impression that somebody had been killed, but by then I had lost interest. I don't like using the term "mainstream" as if SF was not part of the general body of literature, but I submit that there are at least twenty SF writers who could have taken the idea of *THE DICE MAN* and followed it to the far horizons of imagination in a way that Rhinehart either failed to do or didn't want to do.

I wouldn't say that ideas necessarily dictate the stories, but I believe that a lot of work should be put into devising a story or plot which brings out all the best facets of an idea.

SFR: Plotting: How tight are your plots? What about blank areas, key scenes?

SHAW: My taste in reading short stories is for strongly plotted pieces with surprise endings or clearly resolved endings and that is the sort I try to write. One thing that gripes me is the story which is well-written with lots of incident and colour, setting up a situation which is so interesting that I keep muttering, "This is great--how is he going to resolve this part?...and this bit?...and this bit?"--then I become aware that there aren't many pages left and I start counting them as the plot continues to thicken and the realization finally dawns that the author is a member of the walk-away-and-leave-it school and that there isn't going to be any denouement.

I suspect this preference for clear, dramatic and surprising endings brands me as being old-fashioned because I feel exactly the same way about popular music. As with short stories, it is difficult to think up good endings for tunes and in the old days composers used to agonize for ages trying to end pieces in a satisfactory manner. Today the fashion is simply to fade out the music as if the performers had intended to keep going full blast but had dwindled away into another dimension. This leaves me feeling dissatisfied mainly because it is such an easy option. I have a similar feeling about art--one of the most important elements in my appreciation of a painting is that it should look as though it had been difficult to execute.

SFR: Do you feel that story considerations should be preferred over scientific consistency?

SHAW: Like most SF authors and readers I do a curious double-think over the problem of story considerations versus scientific accuracy. Glaring scientific impossibilities put me right off a story or film, but at the same time if the writer will just give me an indication that he was aware of the difficulty and had done something about it, I can go along with him for the sake of the story. It doesn't demand a big investment in the writer's time, taking a basic example, to mention warp drives or hyperspace to show that he acknowledges Albert Einstein. Suspension of disbelief is required for enjoyment of any story, and I really cooperate in suspending it--provided I'm satisfied the writer has taken enough trouble to learn the rules of the game we're playing. But when, as with the crud in SPACE 1999, the writer shows contempt for science, for science fiction, and for me and what intellect I've got, then I get angry. By the same token, I never knowingly violate the laws of nature in my own stories without in some way squaring it with the reader.

SFR: A few specific questions. Why did you use the plot device of immortality producing sterility and, more important, impotence in men while not doing the same for women, in ONE MILLION TOMORROWS?

SHAW: In the novel the immortality drug caused sterility and impotence in men, but not in women, simply because it brought us to a dramatic and stressful situation in the man-woman relationship. Had the drug affected both sexes in the same way there would have been no dilemma--and one of my basic rules in story-telling is to take a character and put him into a situation where he has to make a hellishly difficult decision. It is stress which tests and proves a relationship. When you glue two blocks of wood together, you can't be really sure they're glued until you try to pull them apart. This business of testing people is one which interests me a lot, and in a way I think it's the only thing I ever write about.

SFR: Why did the hero of GROUND ZERO MAN lose even though he seemed to be on the "right side"?

SHAW: The protagonist didn't lose as I see it. He failed in his attempt to transform the world into a better place, but so does everybody else, which means his achievement or lack of it was par for the course. He also ended up with a

wife who was helpless and totally reliant on him--an arrangement which was entirely compatible with his emotional needs.

SFR: Several themes recur through your works: eyesight and light; the poem "The Golden Journey to Samarkand" by Flecker; destructive relationships. Do these hold significance; if so, can you explain?

SHAW: You describe "eyesight and light" as being a theme in my work, but I haven't consciously picked on vision or lack of it as a recurring subject. To me it seems entirely coincidental. If you will forgive me for saying so, commentators who are considering a writer's work look for patterns in order to give what they are writing an artistic unity. And to me, the fact that light and vision have played an important role in two or three stories I have written is not sufficient grounds upon which to state they have a special significance for me. I think you could be in that position you get into at the beginning of a TV "election special" and one result has come in and they feed it into the computer which then announces something like an 80% swing one way or another. In other words, you have not got a statistically valid sample.

I'm not trying to deny that I have perhaps an abnormal dread of blindness. My eyesight was once threatened by an eye disease and ever since then I can't bear total darkness, even in my bedroom. When I wake up I must see immediately and I choose to wear completely rimless glasses because I hate to have even a fraction of my visual input blocked off by a frame--but surely everybody feels much the same way about their eyesight. Is there, for instance, even one person in the whole world who loves music so much that were he given the choice of losing his sight or hearing would choose to go blind?

The fact that I have strong feelings about sight as a person does not mean that it influences me as a writer though. I would say that while casting around for any suitable science fictional ideas for stories, I simply, without bias, hit on a few which concerned the properties of light.

You're on slightly firmer ground with the Flecker poem, but again it's going too far to talk

about a theme. I like my whisky to be of the traditional strong-flavored type; my beer to be really beery, redolent of malt and hops; my tea and coffee to be dard and unmistakable, and my poems to be poetic. "The Golden Journey" to me is the most poetic poem ever written, so when a line or two of poetry is needed to create a certain mood in a story I try to quote a bit of that one rather than any other. That's all there is to it. As Mike Moorcock said in THE CONDITION OF MUSAK, patterns are in the eye of the beholder for the most part.

This question about my portrayals of destructive relationships, often between husband and wife, is one I get asked a lot. Some people suspect I'm writing about my own marriage, and one person even remonstrated with my wife for giving me such a hard time! This, I guess, was a kind of compliment to my work, because it was all part of a writing method I deliberately chose. I said earlier that I like to contrast real recognizable people against exotic ideas and backgrounds. This came about because in the SF stories I had read the hero could be moved from Earth to the other end of the galaxy with the greatest of ease, whereas in real life I had observed that merely getting a new job in a town a hundred miles away often triggers off all kinds of painful complications in a person's life. In several books, therefore, just to see how things would come out, I festooned the hero with family ties and worries, then showed him trying to cope with the central SF problem of the story coupled with the mundane personal difficulties which also arise.

Why did I make the women so bitchy? Partly because I had set out in the first place to complicate the hero's life, so there would have been no point in giving him an ideal partner, partly because bitches are interesting and tend to set up dramatic stresses. When you share a train compartment with one couple who are placidly holding hands and another couple who are having a row--which pair attracts your interest? From a purely technical standpoint, a couple in harmony are a bad bet for an author because he has the trouble of dealing with two bodies but, in effect, only one character. A couple in disharmony, however, immediately resolves into two characters who provide an abundance of that essential ingredient

in fiction--conflict. This is why such a high proportion of marriages or liaisons portrayed in literature, on the stage and on the screen are not ticking over too sweetly.

Ironically, when I was interviewed on TV recently about ORBITS-VILLE, a woman who had not read any of my other books ticked me off for giving the hero a spouse who was too compliant and "little wifey".

SFR: Do you have any projects for the future? Do you want to write outside the SF field, and if so, what type of works?

SHAW: I have some ideas which could be made into straight novels or even TV plays and it's possible I'll try to branch out in that direction at a later date, but for the present I'm fully committed to SF and it's largely because I get so much enjoyment out of it. Because we like SF we tend to spend time thinking up academic-sounding justifications for it, but hell, what's wrong with just enjoying the whole crazy, sparkly complex of prozines, Null-A, mutants, conventions, telepathy, fanzines, time travel, inner and outer space, Bergey girls and Foss spaceships, APAs, Spock's ears, Nebulas and nebulas, TAFF and DUFF, robots, Doctor Who, Conan, FTL drives and generation ships, enchanted duplicators, first contacts and so on?

On second thought, that makes it sound a bit too hedonistic and aimless. Science fiction has to mean something to me, but it's so hard to pin it down in words. Remember the scarecrow in the film, "The Wizard of Oz"? His ambition was to have a brain, and in his song he promised that if he got one he would use it every day to think up things he'd never thought before. That line impressed me because it brought it home to me what a privilege it was to have a brain and an imagination and what a crime it is to have them and not make use of them. So that's what science fiction's "serious purpose" is in my life--it helps me every day to think up things I've never thought before.

Now that I think of it--what better purpose could science fiction serve?

SFR: Thank you, Mr. Shaw.

MANIC-DEPRESSIVE IS A GROOVE! EXCEPT FOR THE RUTS.

ALIEN THOUGHTS CONT. FROM PAGE 7

him, abandons him to death...

I must admit the style gets cloying and the action and motivation incredible after a while, but I'm old and jaded and probably too demanding.

There is a Doorway under an old statue, a God in the Eden-like land beyond the Doorway, and Ryker is forever fighting, running, being captured, held prisoner, facing death.... But, ah, those moments when:

'And bricks and stones and bottles weighed little in the balance against the sizzling death vomited forth by the twin guns held rock-steady in Ryker's hard, scarred fists.'

Hot shit, man, you can't get writing like that no more, hardly ever. Want more?

'The lizard reared up, hissed like a steam whistle, and reached for them with three of its mailed limbs. Blood thundering in his ears like a pounding surf, Ryker fumbled with numb, clumsy fingers for the gun which lay holstered against his thigh.

'He half-drew it, and then, suddenly, the girl was in his arms, all of her cool, sweetly-rounded nakedness pressed against his own bared torso, her slim arms locked around his neck, making his draw awkward.

'He cursed in harsh, senseless gutturals, swivelled to one side, and fired as the huge reptile loomed up, casting its black shadow over them.

'In the inky gloom, the bolt of electric flame was brighter than many suns.

'The cliff dragon was armored in leathery hide, and mailed with tough, overlapping plates of horny chitin, like a lobster's shell. But the gun was set for needle beam, and the sizzling ray lasered through the body of the beast and spurted from its back---bright, diffuse flame intermixed with goblets of meat and thick, splattering gore.'

Wow!! I haven't read stuff like this since Robert E. Howard.

10-27-77 I remember writing in response to a letter from Andy Porter last issue (about using second class rates for a fanzine ---Andy said it was illegal without a permit) that I was under the

impression that anyone could use second class transient rates for a periodical.

NO. You can't. Don't try it. The second class transient rate is for single copies of magazines that possess a second class mailing permit. BUT---if you have more than 200 subscribers and have \$30. or more to spare, and a lot of time, you can apply for and probably get a second class permit. Your magazine does have to be printed by offset, though. As opposed to mimeo and spirit duplication.

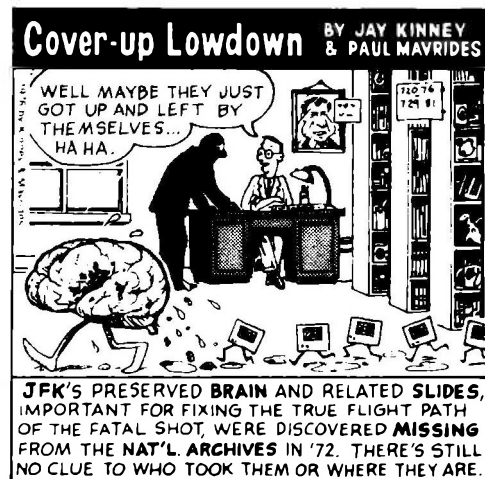
For the hell of it I called the mail classifications desk at the central P.O. here in Portland and asked if they could justify the prejudice against mimeo on any rational ground, since a very good electric mimeo now costs as much as a table-top offset press. The lady refused to argue. Simply quoted scripture (the Holy Rule Book) and told me to make my application to mail at second class, submit the sample copies of my magazine (mimeo) and wait. If refused, THEN I could appeal up the line in the P.O. system. Even take the P.O. to court if I was of a mind and pocketbook. It would be an interesting case, if the Washington, D.C. boys declined my application. I'd do it---strike a blow for amateur press publishers everywhere---if I was rich.

Of course, to test the anti-mimeo bias I'd have to start another magazine. Gad.

RECEIVED: TESSERACT #1. A new amateur science fiction magazine, booklet-sized, 75¢, typeset, offset, with a full-color cover.

But the cover is amateur bad and the stories are also bad by professional standards. Yet readable. There are only three short stories in the mag, though, so 25¢ per story is pretty steep.

But and however, the publish-



ers hope to pay 1/4¢ per word at least, in the future, and this may be a small semi-pro market eventually.

In a covering letter the editor/production manager, Robert T. Garcia, says TESSERACT is an annual, so it may take the mag a while to bloom.

Orders go to: TESSERACT S-F Mail Orders, 707 S. Harvey, Oak Park, IL 60304.

Submissions to: TESSERACT SCIENCE FICTION, 134 Windward Dr., Schaumburg, IL 60194.

RECEIVED: BRAK VS. THE SORCERESS by John Jakes. Pocketbooks 81372, \$1.50.

THE COSMIC RAPE by Theodore Sturgeon. Pocketbooks 81414, \$1.50. An expanded version of "To Marry Medusa" from GALAXY in 1958.

THE FANTASTIC FOUR by Stan Lee. Pocketbooks 81445, \$1.95. COMMENT: Comicbook reprints in color. Size reduction is a bit too much.

STAR TREK--City On The Edge Of Forever. Fotonovel #1. Originally written by Harlan Ellison, adapted for this incarnation.

COMMENT: This incarnation is full-color stills from the TV film, with short dialog and narrative balloons and boxes added to carry the story. Rather well-done and effective. The realism of the photos adds much impact.

STAR TREK--Where No Man Has Gone Before. Fotonovel #2. Written by Samuel A. Peeples.

COMMENT: Same as above.

10-28-77 An aspect of Ray Palmer's character most of us weren't aware of shows in a letter from Paul McGuire which follows.

10-15-77

'I just found out Ray Palmer died. I last saw him July 14th this year and he seemed in perfect health then. Ray was very excited about an Australian movie company's very serious interest in doing a feature movie in the Sun Films manner about his theories.

'Every time any of us Oshkosh fans (about three in the city now) stopped by his print shop Ray always made time to talk enthusiastically and very pleasantly with us. Ever since TANGENT first went to him for printing he gave it special deals so that the quality could be better, and never press-

ed when payments were late. I don't know much about what went on in the 40s or 50s, but he was very nice to some young neofans in the 70s.

'Strange I should find out via LOCUS since he lived just down the road in Amherst. "...never in his own country", I guess.'

ROGUE GOLEM By Ernest M. Kenyon. Popular Library 445-04104-8, \$1.50.

An apparently normal scientist begins to have weird dreams... a Tibetan High Lama is to be forced to reveal secret, ancient information... an alien of super-powers and endless life has made a mistake in the matter of life on Earth...

It all ties together as Josh Billings begins to think he's a robot...and THEY begin to interfere and manipulate his life...and gradually he learns that he isn't paranoid and is an android. A very special breed of android.

The bulk of the novel is an androids vs. their ruthless govt. makers story, and it's a good one. The book is slow and skimmable in the first third, but picks up nicely and becomes engrossing and riveting at the end.

RECEIVED: A box of Ace releases: A PRIVATE COSMOS by Philip Jose Farmer. Ace 67952-8, \$1.50. Third in the Ace reprints of Phil's World of Tiers series. Others are THE MAKER OF UNIVERSES, GATES OF CREATION, BEHIND THE WALLS OF TERRA. The fifth and final volume in the series, THE LAVALITE WORLD, is due out in December. I have an advance copy and will read and review soon.

TIME OF THE FOURTH HORSEMAN by Chelsea Quinn Yarbro. Ace 81180-9, \$1.50.

THE WEIRWOODS by Thomas Burnett Swann. Ace 87941-1, \$1.50.

PERRY RHODAN: Menace of Atomageddon by Kurt Mahar/ ATLAN#2: Flight From Tarkihl by Clark Darlton. Ace 66099-1, \$1.75.

THE USURPER [Conan] by Robert E. Howard and L. Sprague de Camp. Ace 11678-7, \$1.95.

THE AVENGER [Conan] by Robert E. Howard, Bjorn Nyberg, and L. Sprague de Camp. Ace 11680-9, \$1.95.

AFTER THINGS FELL APART by Ron Goulart. Ace 00951-4, \$1.50.

A TORRENT OF FACES by James Blish & Norman L. Knight. Ace 81781-5, \$1.50.

PEREGRINE: PRIMUS by Avram Davidson. Ace 65950-0, \$1.50.

FROM THREE SIDES NOW

I EXPLAIN; YOU POPULARIZE; S/HE VULGARIZES.

I READ EROTIC REALISM; YOU READ PORN; S/HE READS FILTH.

WE EDUCATE; YOU INDOCTRINATE; THEY BRAINWASH.

Arthur D. Hlavaty
THE DIAGONAL
RELATIONSHIP

10-29-77 An announcement from Polly and Kelly Freas that they will be editing a new line of science fiction novels for The Donning Company.

They will be in the quality paperback format: 5" x 8", 75-100 thousand words. Full color illustrations for cover and/or foldout, and 4 to 6 interior black and white interior illustrations. These will be essentially collector's editions and will be widely advertised and sold both by mail and in bookstores.

Their editorial policy: roughly 25% classics and 75% new stories. Want new writers as well as established. Want simon-pure sf as well as well-constructed fantasy.

'We prefer authors thoughtful as well as literate: we want stories with entertainment their prime motivation; emphasis on realistic human reactions to believable situations. When used, sex, violence and even religion must be germane and further the plot.'

The planned list price is \$4.95.

For further details write Freas, Route 4, Box 4056-A, Virginia Beach, VA 23457.

Received THE FORCE #3 this morning. It's a STAR WARS zine, and signals/reflects a cult emergence similar and perhaps more powerful than that of STAR TREK.

This issue has a STAR WARS inspired story, "Daughter of Jedi," by Lynn Dal Santo and Paula M. Sigman. The character Obi-Wan Kenobi is emerging as powerful as that of Mr. Spock. Probably it will become or is THE underlying force that fuels the movement because of the religious/idealistic appeal. The father figure/God fig-

ure symbolism is archetypal.

Write Victor Koman, Box 91,
Long Beach, CA 90801. 50¢ single
copy.

THE CHAOS WEAPON By Colin
Kapp. Ballantine 345-27115-7,
\$1.50.

COMMENT: Very well-done super space
opera as the humanoid race that
dominate an alternate, collapsing
universe use a massive cause-effect
disrupter to undermine human civil-
ization as they plan an inter-uni-
verse invasion to our expanding
sphere. A super psi-talented girl
Seer and a super-competent Space
Marshall are catalysts/focal-points
in the fight against the weapon and
the invasion. The novel has great
pace and invention.

RECEIVED: THE VISION by Dean R.
Koontz. Putnam's, \$8.95.

11-1-77 The October LOCUS arrived
his morning with some interesting
news. COSMOS suspends publication
of its fifth issue until it finds
out how well the third issue sold.
The first issue sold around 40,000
copies and the second a little
less. The distribution of COSMOS
was tied to that of BIJOU, a movie
magazine also published by Baronet
Publishing Co. BIJOU failed quick-
ly and may be dragging COSMOS down
with it. But at 40,000 copies sold
COSMOS is marginal anyway.

Jim Baen, former editor of
GALAXY and now sf editor at Ace, is
scheduling a new sf magazine, DES-
TINIES, for July, 1978 appearance.
Ace is the publisher. It will ap-
pear bi-monthly as presently plan-
ned.

LOCUS itself is undergoing some
changes. The news monthly will go
to 20 to 24 pages next year and
will probably be typeset and mailed
by a subscription agency, so that
editor Charlie Brown can have more
time for writing and reading. The
subscription price will go up 50%,
too, to \$9.00 per year, second
class mail. \$13.50 per year first
class mail.

LOCUS now has over 3100 sub-
scribers. Of this issue's 20 pag-
es, 9 were advertising.

Ian Covell, SFR correspondent
and interviewer, reports that John
Brunner will finish his new novel
in December and will then begin an
interview with Covell for SFR pub-
lication later in 1978.

COSMIC TRIGGER---The Final
Secret of the Illuminati By Robert
Anton Wilson. And/Or Press, \$4.95.
[Box 2246, Berkeley, CA 94702]
COMMENT: Wilson does a remarkable
job of doing a Unified Field Theo-
ry number on all the Unacceptable
and Unprovable phenomena in the
world---magic, psi, occult, fable,
saucers, witchcraft, ancient phil-
osophies, the illuminati, advanc-
ed and speculative biology, psy-
chology, DNA...you name it. He
manages to incorporate it into a
wild and wonderful cosmology
which eventually cores down to the
hope/idea that mankind is destined
for the stars and for immortality.

He (and Dr. Timothy Leary)
feel there is a series of imminent
stages of evolution coming to man-
kind that are about to be trigger-
ed in our DNA. The schedule is
sometime soon after the year 2000,
and in my humble opinion it is pie
in the sky. Ravishing, but at base
wishful thinking.



I keep remembering the evi-
dence mentioned in SCIENCE NEWS
recently which suggests strongly
that mankind is not biologically
suited for space: calcium leaves
bones after a time, and cosmic
rays do things to the human body
when unshielded by an atmosphere.

I am strongly inclined to
the belief that the longer a human
stays in space the more subtle
imbalances will occur to the
fine-tuned blood chemistry and
glandular balances which are de-
signed for and adapted to Earth
gravity, Earth cycles...Earth
environment in all its complexi-
ties.

And I suspect that attempts
by mankind to live in space for

more than a year will end in dis-
aster.

I think the current interest
in L-5 and similar projects/dreams
are symptoms of panic and dread
and are a copout. The problems
of Earth are sensed as insoluble
and our fate brutal, and the de-
sire is to get away, to grasp at
straws, to evade the Doom....

And the assertion that Heaven
awaits mankind in space--a kind of
DNA-arranged utopia with immortal-
ity---strikes me as a translation
from instinctually deep Needs for
God and Heaven---a way out.

Yes, Wilson and Leary no
doubt are hip to this sour assess-
ment of their work and cosmic view.
They can counter it with arguments.

As to who is right---we'll
just have to wait and see.

I do recommend a reading of
the book. It will blow holes in
your mind and let in all kinds of
information and speculation. You
may be convinced.

11-2-77 The flow, changes, inter-
actions and clashes of sf personal-
ities is as always fascinating.

The new THRUST #9, just arriv-
ed, is a vehicle for a further ex-
ploration/exploitation of the de-
cision by Andy Porter to no longer
carry Ted White's column in ALGOL.
The hooroar isn't over Andy's right
to cut the column, but over the
language and justifications he us-
ed in explaining the action.

Primarily in a long letter
from Andy, and a long response by
Ted, the issue, the background and
the foreground are sected and vivi-
sected.

The impression I got is that
Ted has another Incident to clutch
to his scarred breast, Andy has a
slightly bent reputation and an
aura as a dissembler, and Doug
Fratz has a very interesting issue.

The issue has other goodies:
An article by and an interview with
Norman Spinrad; a column by Ted
White, a debate [not really; three
different opinions lined up in a
row] about STAR WARS with Darrell
Schweitzer, Ted White and Doug
Fratz; and other goodies. Oh, the
back cover is a malicious parody
of ALGOL's cover format ('ALGON--
The Magazine About Bland Stuff'),
created by Dan Steffan and Ted
White.

If you'd like a copy, send
\$1.50 to Doug Fratz, P.O. Box 746,
Adelphi, MD 20783.

I had an idea I could cut up
these dated entries and shuffle

the parts into appropriate columns --"Small Press Notes," "And Then I Read..." "The Alter-Ego Viewpoint" and so forth, when time came to paste up the pages.

But I kind of like the near-daily flow and suspect now I'll just let it go as is.

There are rumors that the nova that was Roger Elwood in science fiction has almost completely burned itself down to a black hole; or maybe a dead cinder is a better analogy. I understand his last sf editorial position is close to extinction, and he may soon be a historical note in s-f's history.

TIME STORM By Gordon R. Dickson. St. Martin's Press, \$10. COMMENT: I am agitated...dissatisfied...and pissed off. This new novel by Gordon Dickson is said to be his best novel, his magnum opus.

I think it's a dishonest crock, episodic, and carelessly written.

The novel is a restatement of the basic truisms that love makes the emotional world go around, that Love is Good, that humans are incomplete and unhappy to the extent that we refuse to love, evade love, mask love.

TIME STORM is a character-change novel at heart. It is about Marc Despard, who is one of the very few survivors of a time storm which sent veils of time-change sweeping across the face of the Earth, leaving behind areas of different eras, past and future, and each almost totally without its former inhabitants.

Marc is young, strong, with a keen mind and a fine talent for seeing patterns and relationships in events and phenomena; he had made a fortune in the stock market and another in snowmobiles before having a heart attack and retiring to the woods of Minnesota to recover his health and change his lifestyle.

Then the time storm hit Earth and took 99.9% of the people--- somewhere else.

He is a survivor type. He is trying to reach a city where his wife lives...or lived. But he comes across a withdrawn, helpless young girl, and takes her with him. And he has adopted and been adopted by a leopard who apparently is an escapee or survivor from a zoo or circus.

Marc's character and talents drive him to seek not merely an accommodation with the time storm

veils which still drift across the land changing time as they go, but he must seek a way to defeat the storm.

On his journeys he accumulates a small group of followers, and begins to enter/investigate each time curtain as they are encountered, seeking a future zone which has technology he can use to understand and defeat the storm.

In one time zone he finds an alien who is studying the phenomena and who can help him. With the alien's help he uses the psychic forces of his companions combined with advanced technology to send his perceptions into space to see the time storm patterns and to exert some kind of force to stabilize the storm in Earth's area. He succeeds and the planet and the moon are free, temporarily, of the disruptive time curtains.

Through these encounters and adventures he has had some insights and character change.

There the novel could have ended. Mission accomplished. To this point the novel is melded short stories and perhaps a novellet published previously in sf magazines. Episodic, with slow spots of busywork, less and less tension.

But Gordon Dickson had More in mind, and he embarked on a continuation of the time storm problem, and a continuation of the character insights and changes. Marc is an onion peeling away his layers.

But the psi/psychic aspect of the story simply become incredible as Marc finds a far-future race of mankind who are helping a universe-wide organization of aliens battle what is actually a universe-threatening entropy crisis: our universe had begun to contract and the process had started the chaos of the time storm.

To the satisfaction of most white, male, young human readers, Marc proves himself superior to the cream of the multitudes of all the minds of the universe and by keen perceptions and subtle pattern recognition is able to see a terrible danger the other intelligences cannot see and alone journeys through a terrible black-hole "lens" into a neighboring tachyon universe where he somehow communicates with its inhabitants and sets things on their way to correcting the universes-wide time/entropy dysfunction.... It's remarkable how simple and easy the salvation of All was accomplished.

It also reads arrogant, incredible, ridiculous, and silly.

But--at the end his experience in the tachyon universe has given Marc one last insight into his character and he is mysteriously returned to Earth and to his time and his followers/loved ones a completely loving man. Ah, verily, his cup runneth over.

My anger is primarily due to Gordon Dickson's felt need to up-the-stakes to the level of the now virtually obligatory universe-scale arena. Used to be merely saving Earth was sufficient. Then sf writers escalated to saving all mankind. Then the solar system. Then the galaxy. Now a sf novel hasn't a chance at fame and fortune (in some minds) unless the hero saves the whole bloody universe and maybe the one next door, too!

And another thing. Marc understands all about the time storm at the end, but not once does he think to check out where all the people went when the storm hit Earth. They all disappeared as a convenience to the author, and stayed disappeared for his further convenience. Dickson does not explain why Marc and a few others survived the time storm. The time storm is a device---a gimmick---and it isn't coherent or rationalized. The billions of people got rid of didn't die; they disappeared. But their food and gas and guns and machines didn't disappear. Conveniently.

Marc, the hero who ends up a whole, loving person, has not one thought of finding the billions of missing people, rescuing them, helping them. He could care less.

[The world is better off without them, eh, Gordon?]

TIME STORM is an interesting novel, but at base a dishonest, sloppy novel, and no amount of preaching Love will change that.



GEORGE LUCAS

On STAR WARS

"Originally, I wanted to make a Flash Gordon movie, with all the trimmings, but I couldn't obtain all the rights..."

(Since the success of STAR WARS, producer Dino Di Laurentis has announced he will film a lavish production of FLASH GORDON.)

"So I began researching and found where Alex Raymond" (creator of the FLASH GORDON comic strip) "got his idea: The works of Edgar Rice Burroughs (author of TARZAN), especially his 'John Carter on Mars' series of books."

"I found that what sparked Burroughs was Edwin Arnold's GULLIVER ON MARS published in 1905, the first story of this genre I have been able to trace. Jules Verne got close, but he never had a hero battling space creatures or having adventures on other planets."

"I've always loved things like CAMELOT and TREASURE ISLAND. I've always loved adventure movies. Since the Western died, there hasn't been any mythological fantasy realm available to young people, which is what I grew up on..."

"I had the STAR WARS project in mind since 1971, even before I started shooting AMERICAN GRAFFITI, and as soon as I finished, I began writing STAR WARS in January, 1973 ---eight hours a day, five days a week, from then until March, 1976, when we began shooting."

"Even then, I was busy doing rewrites after the day's work. In fact, I wrote four entirely different screenplays, searching for just the right ingredients, characters and storyline. It's always been what you might call a good idea in search of a story..."

"Young people today don't have a fantasy life any more, not the way we did. All they've got is KOJAK and DIRTY HARRY. There are all these kids running around wanting to be killer cops. The films they see are movies of disasters, insecurity and realistic violence."

"They seem to be having a very boring childhood. They may be a lot more worldly than they were, but I still think they'd like to have some sort of honest, clean -- I mean, they should be able to go

to the movies and see something."

"I wanted to give young people some sort of faraway, exotic environment for their imagination to run free..."

"I wanted to make an action movie -- ray guns, running around in space ships. I knew I wanted a big battle in outer space, a sort of dogfight thing. I wanted to make a movie about an old man and a kid. And I knew I wanted the old man to be a real old man and have a sort of teacher-student relationship with the kid."

"I wanted the old man to also be a warrior. I wanted a princess, too, but not a passive damsel in distress."

"Sure, I'm telling the story of me. It's my fantasy. I made it because no one else was making movies like this, and I wanted to see one. I want it to be a success so everyone will copy it. Then I can see the copies, sit back and enjoy them."

The foregoing is from press material provided by 20th Century Fox and other published interviews. The following is from an interview in ROLLING STONE magazine, Aug. 25, 1977:

"STAR WARS is about 25% of what I wanted it to be. It's still a good movie, but it fell so short of what I wanted. I think the sequels will be much better. I want to direct the last sequel."

"All the prototype stuff us

done now. Nobody has to worry about what a Wookiee is. Wookiees are there, the people are there, the environment is there, the empire is there. I'm hoping if I get friends of mine, they will want to do a much better film, and I think they can, but then I want to do the last one, so I can do one twice as good as everybody else. (Laughs)"

"I wrote GRAFFITI in three weeks. With something like STAR WARS, you have to invent everything."

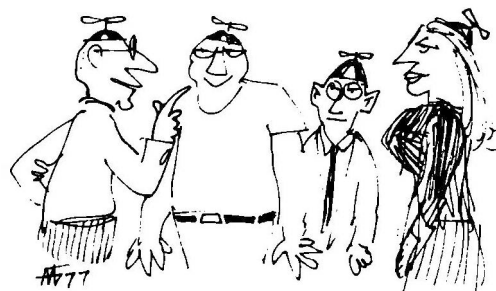
"Science fiction---speculative fiction---is a very important genre that is not taken very seriously..."

"Just on a theoretical/philosophical level, the ultimate search is still the most fascinating search, what it is all about---why are we here and how big is it and where does it go, what is the system, what is the answer, what is God and all that. Most civilizations, whole cultures and religions were built on the 'science fiction' of their day..."

"Buck Rogers is just as valid as Arthur C. Clarke in his own way. They are both sides of the same thing. Kubrick did the strongest thing in film in terms of the rational side of things, and I've tried to do the most in the irrational side of things because I think we need it. Again, we are going to go with Stanley's ships, but hopefully we are going to be carrying my laser sword and have the Wookiee at our side..."

"I would feel very good if someday they colonize Mars when I am 93 or whatever, and the leader of the first colony says: 'I really did it because I was hoping there would be a Wookiee up here.'"

OK. WILLY HANDS ME THE HUGO WINNERS.
SAM DOES THE FANFARE WHILE I READ THEM,
AND MARY LEANS ON THE SORE LOSERS AND
WHISPERS "LET THE WOOKIEE WIN!"



The Selling Of STAR WARS

As every science fiction fan knows by now, the movie STAR WARS has taken the film-going world by storm. It is beyond a doubt the biggest thing to come along on film since 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY and STAR TREK.

We have a genuine phenomenon on our hands. Nearly every zine in the field has published something about the film. Outside the field, STAR WARS is making more magazine covers than Farrah Fawcett-Majors. TIME, READER'S DIGEST and uncounted others have had articles, reviews or trivia features about the film.

In the past year, two STAR WARS related musical themes have reached the best-selling lists. First is the film soundtrack by the London Symphony Orchestra. This is the actual music in the movie. Second is the disco version by the group Meco. The theme in the disco version managed to reach #1 in most places, while the official soundtrack has been one of the highest selling albums in the country.

I don't know how many posters or other visually-oriented items are selling around the country. There is the movie poster, an inferior rendition of the movie poster by the Hildebrandts, a scene of the attack on Death Star drawn by John Berkey which is included in the soundtrack album, and numerous other official and unofficial visuals.

Buttons abound, as I discovered at the third World Fantasycon. Besides buttons showing scenes from the movie, there are ones with titles: "May the Force Be With You", "Darth Vader Lives", "Let the Wookie Win", "Official Jedi Knight", "Lord Vader's Stormtroopers" and "X-Wing Pilot".

A portfolio by Richard McQuaide has just come out as I write this, along with a STAR WARS sketchbook. And where would we be without our STAR WARS blueprints or our STAR WARS calendar.

A STAR WARS novel is on the stands, reportedly ghost-written, though George Lucas' name appears on the book.

Marvel Comics has a STAR WARS comic book series out, which is up to its eighth issue as I write this. The first six issues, which redid the movie in comic book form have been reprinted in two oversized treasury volumes.

By the time this hits print, a MAKING OF STAR WARS book should be out.

An ABC special was aired about the making of STAR WARS and it did especially well on the Nielson ratings.

Where will it end, pray tell. Models? Puzzles? Darth Vader dolls? More and more people are getting into the act.

Some of them are very creative, to give credit where it is due. For instance, I met someone at the third World Fantasycon who has developed a successful play light sabre. A shaft of plastic has an intense beam of light shot up its middle, creating an effect that is very impressive in the dark. (If you are curious, the address is: Loren Davidson, 1530 Harvard St., Apt. E, Santa Monica, CA, 829-4297 (213)).

Marching bands around the country have begun using the STAR WARS theme.

Darth Vader and stormtrooper and Wookie masks are being sold in costume stores all over.

Theaters have taken to reissuing WAR OF THE WORLDS and WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE to meet the desire for special effects science fiction, while television has played old Flash Gordon flicks. Winter is gone and the movie still continues to draw, and there will probably be a pick-up in sales near Oscar time.

STAR WARS is a very good movie but when it comes to the value of its commercial flotsam and jetsam, let the buyer beware.



"ON COLLECTING HIS RECORDS, LESHAN FOUND EVIDENCE 'IN RECORD AFTER RECORD' THAT THE PATIENT HAD LOST THE SENSE OF RAISON D'ETRE BUT SOME TIME BEFORE THE FIRST SYMPTOMS OF CANCER WERE OBSERVED. THE PATIENTS WHO HAD LOST THEIR SENSE OF PURPOSE HAD AT ONE TIME PARTICIPATED MUCH MORE FULLY IN LIFE. 'AT THAT TIME THEY HAD HAD A RELATIONSHIP WITH A PERSON OR GROUP THAT WAS OF GREAT AND DEEP MEANING TO THEM. ON THE SURFACE, THESE PEOPLE SEEMED PSYCHOLOGICALLY NORMAL, BUT UNDERNEATH THERE WAS AN ABSENCE OF DIRECTION OR GOAL: 'THEY FELT A LACK OF ANY STABLE REFERENCE POINTS FOR THEMSELVES IN THE UNIVERSE."

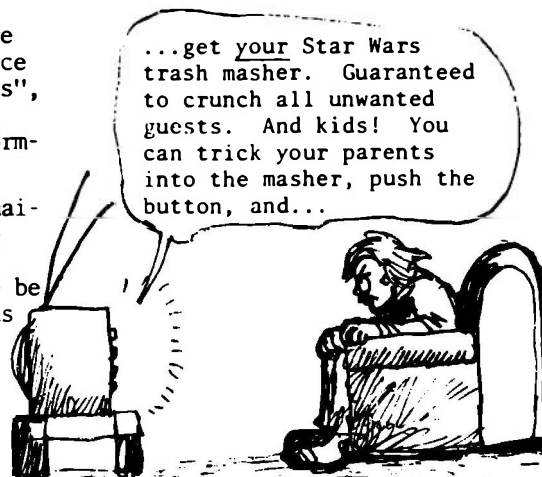
"A SECOND TRAIT LESHAN DISCOVERED WAS 'AN INABILITY ON THE PART OF THE INDIVIDUAL TO EXPRESS ANGER OR RESENTMENT' --- THEY SEEMED TO SUPPRESS AND SWALLOW THEIR HOSTILE FEELINGS, THOUGH THEY DID HAVE QUITE STRONG AGGRESSIVE FEELINGS. THIRD, THERE WERE INDICATIONS THAT THE CANCER PATIENT SHOWED SOME EVIDENCES OF EMOTIONAL TENSION CONCERNING THE DEATH OF A PARENT. NOT MUCH CAME OF THIS CORRELATION, THOUGH."

---P.B. Medawar, reviewing YOU CAN FIGHT FOR YOUR LIFE: EMOTIONAL FACTORS IN THE CAUSATION OF CANCER. M. Evans, \$7.95
The NY Review of Books

June 9, 1977



BY MARK MANSELL



11-3-77 LETTER FROM RON LAMBERT

Oct. 31, 1977

'Congratulations on your Hugoes. All that talk about semiprozines being disqualified apparently didn't please the rank and file, who have the final say. I'm glad. The best deserves the award, regardless.

'I just sold a story to ANALOG. At last I have passed from the ranks of the would-be writers into the ranks of those who have sold. It took me three years, writing two manuscripts a month. Dean R. Koontz in his book, WRITING POPULAR FICTION, observed that for the writers he knows, the average has been about 70 manuscripts rejected before the first sale. My first sale came right about when it was due, then, according to Koontz.'

((I think it depends on how well the would-be writer understands the dynamics and "rules" of fiction, beforehand. There are writers who can persist and doggedly continue to try, and who eventually succeed. Others, through extensive reading and osmosis, and perhaps a natural talent, sell almost immediately. Too, a lot depends on the market you're trying to sell.))

'Ben Bova was very helpful. He made one or two line comments of criticism with his rejections, so I would have some idea of what I needed to work on. Recently he began encouraging me, saying I was getting better and should keep trying. It is no mystery to me why he was given the Hugo for best prozine editor. I would vote for him, too.

'After receiving nothing but rejections for three years, it was somehow disconcerting to get an acceptance check. But I didn't really mind.

'The title of my story is "The Last Alchemist."

((Congratulations on your sale, Ron.))

RECEIVED: STAR TREK 12 by James Blish and J.A. Lawrence. Bantam 11382-8, \$1.75.

COMMENT: This book of adaptations to fiction narrative form of STAR TREK scripts was not completed by James Blish when he died of cancer on July 30, 1975. His wife, Judith A. Lawrence, completed it, and will complete a Star Trek novel that Jim had started.

STAR TREK PUZZLE MANUAL by James Razzi. Bantam 11691-6, \$1.25.

COMMENT: puzzles, mazes, logic tests, memory tests, all based on Star Trek. For aficionados.

ALWAYS COMES EVENING--Collection of Robert E. Howard's poetry. Illustrated by Keiko Nelson. Published by Chuck Miller, 239 North Fourth Street, Columbia, PA 17512. \$31.

COMMENT: This is a deluxe, leatherbound edition with plastic sheath and slipcase. Included is a facsimile print of Howard's handwritten poem, "The Song of Yar Ali Kahn." There is a vapor-phase deacidifying sheet with instructions, and pasted into the book are sheets numbered, signed and stamped by the artist. 206 copies were produced.

This is for collectors who are into rare items which will increase in value as the years pass.

THE HOLLOW LANDS by Michael Moorcock. Avon 35386, \$1.50. A Jheriek Carnelian adventure.

SILENCE IS DEADLY by Lloyd Biggle, Jr. Doubleday, \$6.95.

THE STRAYED SHEEP OF CHARUM by John Maddox Roberts. Doubleday, \$6.95.



LETTER FROM FRITZ LEIBER

September 16, 1977

'Greetings from my new address in San Francisco, to which I moved only two days ago--this is my first letter out. Same city and street, same phone number (though a new zipcode), same general sort of six story building of which they put up so many in downtown Frisco in the Twenties after the quake, only three blocks away and one story higher (my apartment)--but what a

difference! After my jamb-packed ceiling-piled one-room-and-bath at 811, I now inhabit four modest rooms facing east: kitchen and dinette, living and writing room, bedroom and bath (the last containing a tub in which I can stretch out my legs). The view to the northeast includes the city's two tallest buildings, the Transamerican Pyramid and the brownish purple Bank of America monster, and two of her poshest hotels, the Mark Hopkins and the Fairmont, while to the southeast I can see the Hilton tower and the Californian. The building is in better repair, more quiet and secure and--very important--I have access to the excellent roof so I can keep up my astronomical peerings, my watch on clouds and the black roofs and paramental entities and such. I can even waste time wandering from room to room, wondering what's lurking in each unseen and regretting the everything-at-a-glance efficiency of my place at 811.

'The move was long overdue. After I pulled out of my three years siege of drinking in 1973 it was right and proper (I think) that I should concentrate on fiction writing and let everything else go hang, make do with what was at hand--first things first. But then, especially after completing a particularly satisfying burst of writing in the first six months of 1975 (finishing my novel and doing five new stories and six articles), I should have taken serious thought about revising my living circumstances. Instead I lazed along, doing barely enough creative writing to keep from feeling guilty, occupying myself with various interesting but inessential projects (some day I perhaps should tell the story of The Search for the Two-Second Sound).

'In particular I became more and more deeply involved in a non-fiction writing project that kept changing shape from day to day, a formless and alluring and maddening thing variously called THE FANTASY NOVEL and MEMOIRS OF A FANTASY MAN. I won't try to define or describe it (I know I couldn't), but there was endless vacillating between trying to do an impossible amount of research for it and none at all, I variously discovered how much more difficult it is to make confession and impute motives in fact than in fiction, I became very familiar with that territory in which the world's greatest insight bewilderingly dissolves into its most banal cliché (and then reforms

and redissolves) and some all-important pursuit becomes a trivial hobby not worth mentioning. I ended up with the paradoxical conviction that in writing utter fantasy I am on far, far firmer ground--that and an assortment of curious fragments out of which I may some day puzzle together something.

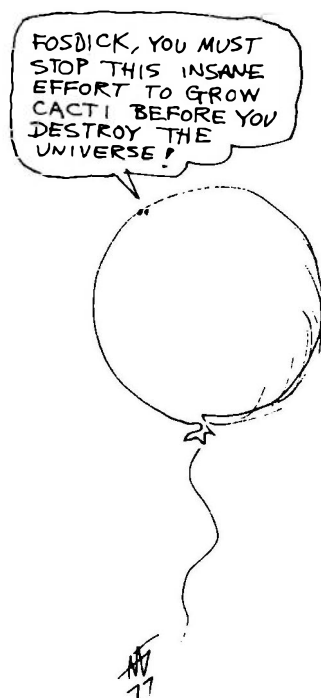
'Meanwhile the situation at 811 was deteriorating. I bought more bookcases and double stacked their shelves, but the floor piles renewed themselves and towered dangerously. I boxed half the contents of my files, but soon they bulged again. The fire alarms became more frequent, the corridors and mysterious air shafts noisier, the cockroaches and waterbugs more insolent in their certainty of ultimate victory. I found myself devoting more time to hunting for things than to using them when I'd finally found them. I dutifully sprayed, cleaned, cleared surfaces, spread bright-colored fabrics, set out fresh flowers in bowls--all to no lasting avail.

'Somehow it seems to me that the beginning of the end was signaled when my good friend Harlan Ellison published an article in his special issue of THE MAGAZINE OF FANTASY AND SCIENCE in which he properly rebuked Putnam for neglecting their science-fiction authors and in particular my novel OUR LADY OF DARKNESS. (Elsewhere he has said there should be a Fritz Leiber Viking Portable.) Later in the article he said that "another of our giants of sci-fi lives in the slum section of a major American city, sitting on the edge of his bed with his typewriter on a kitchen chair, his Hugos shoved away on a high shelf because he hasn't room for them in that cramped space where he exists in poverty." Harlan's reference was anonymous, but enough people made the connection so that several fans and well-wishers made me concerned telephone calls...and warmed my heart forever by doing so.

'That did it. I knew that, while not exactly affluent, I was certainly well able to afford better and more spacious quarters and had only been delaying out of indolence, an unwillingness to make any sort of physical change, and a somewhat perverse delight in the seedy side of life. So I stirred myself and after a bit things opened up and I found the task of finding a new dwelling not nearly as formidable as it had seemed in an-

ticipation.

'Not entirely without regrets. After all, I got a novel out of old 811 Geary, that anonymous six-story agglomeration that was once the Rhodema Hotel and then the San Carlos. I'll always think affectionately and wistfully of its mysteries and its mystery dwellers, and I'll regret my wonderful view of Twin Peaks and Mount Davidson with its gigantic cross four miles away and the fantastic steel pagoda of the Sutro TV Tower with her panoply of flashing red lights...and rock-fanged in the foreground, Corona Heights. Here, alas, at 565 those things are hidden.



'But all things change and this person changes too, though sometimes with immense reluctance. For one thing, it's more than time I was back to writing new stories. Though I'll renew my astronomy--at the moment a review of the moon attracts me most. I'll even keep up my recorder practice, though the longer I work at that, the less natural talent and sheer knack I think I possess. I'll think, reflect, investigate, turn my mind to the new. And I'll enjoy Apartment 604 at 565 Geary (zip 94102), my new address--to tell you which was my main excuse for writing this letter.

'P.S. (Oct. 8, 1977): I'm moved to write a brief postscript

to my general letter of Sept. 16, 1977, because after 3 weeks I'm still every bit as deliriously head-over-heels in love with my new apartment and because the earlier letter suppressed one item leading to my summer depression and sense of failure. The latter first: In June I was approached by a first-rate producer through my agent to do the scenario for a Fafhrd-Mouser film. The financial rewards would be attractively large...if I did it. I accepted light-heartedly (on the surface) but with deep unspoken misgivings. Well, for two months I struggled and strained, trying to keep faith with the assignment and my characters, counting it a great day when I added a couple of sentences to my notes. It got so bad I'd start eating early in the morning, or studying chess endings and playing through famous games, to keep anxiety at bay until the day got started with mail and newspaper and phone calls. I finally realized early in September that (1) I couldn't make my rather somber if humorous characters act out an adventure resembling STAR WARS (which was what I was really being asked to do) and that (2) after a lifetime of staying away from films and TV I couldn't in two months make up the twenty, or more years of work people like Bob Bloch, Harlan Ellison, Robert Silverberg, etc., have put in learning to do such things. Now, I don't know, perhaps after a while a Fafhrd and Mouser movie will surface naturally in my mind...and maybe my chess game has improved, at least my end play (I'll probably break down and enter a tournament to check this out, now I'm a member of the Mechanics Club, though I know I really shouldn't.)

'My honeymoon with dear 565-604-94102 is easier to write about. Can you imagine a guy sauteeing chopped sirloin and onions in the bottom of a small double boiler because he isn't about to be hurried in buying the perfect thick bot-tomed frying pan which will also serve as a small Dutch oven? (Or hurried in buying a TV or radio for that matter.) Or who coming into a place with perfect plumbing can hardly rest until he's taken care of the sluggish drains of the kitchen sink and bathroom washbowl (the latter was the usual lost plug-chain)? Or who basement-stores rather than hangs the three large oil paintings he owns because they are too big for the place, although he had them up in his former apartment? Or who mostly keeps the

kitchen window wide open and the lights out so he can observe the stars and the multitudinous garbage trucks on their early morning rounds (there's even a guy with a truck who comes at 3:00 am to manicure the outdoor phone booth across the street--you know you're in a respectable part of town--the theatrical and big-hotels district instead of the Tenderloin)?

'Regarding the stars, I've four times seen Mercury early this month (Copernicus never saw it at all, according to a dubious anecdote) along with the other four planets of the ancients riding up the sky from the east: Venus, Saturn, Mars and Jupiter. And I've been invited (since I moved here) to be Guest of Honor at the Worldcon in England at Brighton in 1979 and I'm going. And best of all in the past three weeks I've written a new sizable science fantasy "Black Glass" for the third ANDROMEDA anthology for Peter Weston, who's the chairman of that convention. I've also had my telescope on the roof once to see the Trapezium in the Orion Nebula with my new Kellner 12mm eyepiece. I've entertained Frank Leiber of Luxembourg, the first distant European relative I've met. I've given a two hour lecture on writing SF at San Francisco State. And at the SF Film Festival second night I've seen Truffaut's new film THE MAN WHO LOVED WOMEN which nicely sums up much of my own attitudes (Hooray or Aias). And, finally, I'm catching up on correspondence, planning to winnow down my bulging files, and planning the next stories. Do hope you're as happy! (Absit omen!)

My writing seems to be continuing to pick up here. I'm at work on a new Fafhrd-Mouser novelette and other things are surfacing from my subconscious.'

11-5-77 Received a complimentary/review copy of GALILEO yesterday, and after I pass an opinion on it I'll send it on to Steve Brown for his column.

GALILEO has a constantly increasing print run, and exudes the stink of moderate success. A 32,000 copy print run, after four issues, is a good sign. This is the fifth issue.

They are still depending on volunteer help for typesetting, pasteups, etc., and apparently putting the money into paying for the fiction and non-fiction and artwork. The artwork is spot-

THE CONAN CAPERS: Update

BY MARK MANSELL

Since I wrote "The Conan Capers", a few minor changes on the Conan front have occurred. First, the court hassles over Lancer Books have finally been resolved. Conan, Inc. (or is it Robert E. Howard, Inc.) has been formed in the wake of the court decision. It is a cooperative effort by Glenn Lord and L. Sprague de Camp to manage the Conan-related activities of the Robert E. Howard estate.

One of its first efforts was to order Berkley Books to cease its editions of the Conan stories as they appeared in WEIRD TALES, and edited by Karl Edward Wagner. The Berkley Books published to date are HOUR OF THE DRAGON, PEOPLE OF THE BLACK CIRCLE and RED NAILS. After they appear, Berkley may not print others or reprint these.

ty---some good, some lousy.

Only the publisher and book-keeper probably know for sure, but GALILEO seems to be assured of sticking around for a few years.

Hoog! I got the printing bill for SFR 23 today. 4200 copies (I'm not going to keep as many back issues from now on--no room) cost \$1274.30. Add the freight cost of \$69.89 to ship 1400 copies to F & SF Book Co. in New York, and it comes to \$1344.19.

That's a lot of new and renewed subscriptions to receive to pay it. We shall see how it goes.

LETTER FROM JESSICA AMANDA SALMONSON

Nov. 2, 1977

'The cover merits first commentary. I appreciate that it is a higher quality paper, to protect the insides, as I do save even your more obnoxious issues (I have a complete set, even of early REG's, inherited from the late Dale C. Donaldson) and am saddened that the all-pulp issues are already turn-

Karl Edward Wagner is involved in a new Conan assignment, however. The Bantam series of Conan Books will not be entirely written by de Camp and Carter, as formerly stated; half will be done by Karl Edward Wagner and the other half by de Camp and Carter.

The biggest surprise of all is the announcement of a Conan movie, as reported in LOCUS. This is something to watch for since I have no idea how they will manage to portray Conan slashing his way through seas of gore as he does in the stories.



ing yellow, dingy, and wrinkled. I weary of all the Fabian covers, though (don't weary as much of Kirk), and feel that there are a lot of other fine fan artists whose work you could feature (Fabian's a success -- now, cause someone else's career to rocket).'

((Steve Fabian is just about the only quality fan artist who has the time to do covers for me. I love his style and his superb execution. All he does is get better, year after year. Nice of you to think I'm somehow responsible for his success. No way. All I and other fan editors did was give him exposure...and we used his work because he was very good.))

'A critique of this illustration: lovely body, but no nipples on her tits. I always suspected used plastic women as models (and perhaps sleeps with them too) ((Very cheap shot, Jessica.)) and nippleless tits proves it. His women rarely look like the real thing, but more like the adolescent fantasies of boys whose only association with women has been via touched-up

Playboy fold-outs.'

((There is a suggestion of nipples, and that's about all I care to have on the cover, for obvious reasons: bookstore owners and managers are reluctant to display a magazine with too mammarian a cover, and libraries have second thoughts about putting such a magazine on their reading room racks where sharp-eyed little old ladies in tennis shoes have tantrums at the sight of a realistic nipple.

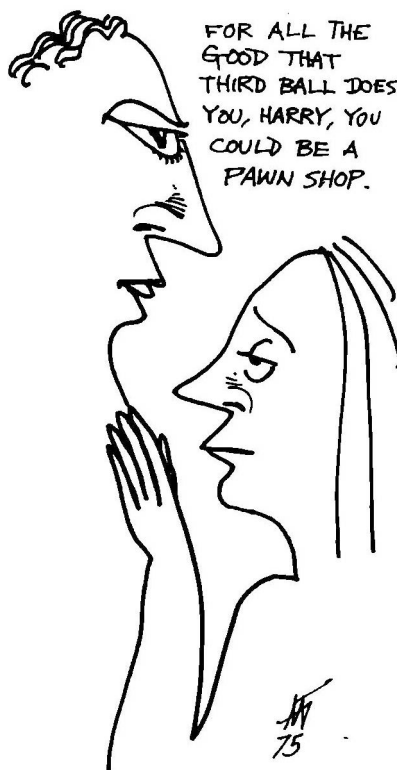
((I have requested Steve to soft-pedal nipples. Your desire to put him down prevented you from divining the obvious reason for what is lacking. Besides, some women have very flat, unspectacular nipples. Do yours stick out like thimbles when you're excited and in danger? (How do you like receiving cheap shots, by the way?)))

'Fabian improves, though. Usually his plastic wenches lounge in a detached fashion, taking no active part in the oft fantastic scenes around them. This time, our familiar sex-object is actually piloting the ship! Marvelous! If dear Steve lives long enough, he may learn not merely to make of us functional sex objects but functional human beings.'

'Wow, poor Marion ((Zimmer Bradley)) --laying the shit on Alice Sheldon's ((ne James Tiptree, Jr.)) "Houston...", opening herself to exposure as a foolish critic, when Marion has shown so often that she cannot tolerate such non-objective hate-commentary nor stand up to the inevitable judgements of people who dislike the story on firmer ground or like it because it is entertainment. She says to try turning the situations around and see how people scream -- well, it might be an interesting SF story if we did turn the situation around. It wouldn't be nearly as realistic, though, because there is not a really huge percentage of women about who rape men. It is all well and good to demand the test, "Turn it around, and see if it works," but in some cases the test proves nothing. Men really DO rape women -- the most a woman can do is blow the fucker away with a twelve-gauge.

'I didn't like "Houston..." -- I don't even consider it a feminist story. Sheldon's "Sisters" was feminist, also one of the best stories I've ever read (Alice herself considers it possibly her best work), but it didn't get any awards. If "Houston..." had been less am-

biguous, if it had been a feminist story on every level without question, I doubt it would be an award winner. We'll see. "Screwfly" is a non-ambiguously feminist statement, and a damned good story--- it will win one award or another unless the sf community is as paranoid and afraid of feminist issues as Marion is. My apologies to Marion for this statement; I love her a lot for her writing and her honesty, and feel sometimes that I'd best keep silent when she makes statements best answered only when



proposed by misogynist boy-brats. But really -- "worst story in the last fifty years" sounds like a Schweitzer review, not intelligent criticism.'

((You know, I liked "Houston, Houston, Do You Read?" and have no quarrel with it winning the Hugo. But it was very similar to the Joanna Russ story of a few years ago of similar theme and similar controversy.

((And what would be said of a story in which three typical housewives awake from suspended animation after 300 years and find an all male civilization of hunting, fishing, sports, games, and in which androids of sexy feminine form are used for sex and programmed for unquestioning obedience and love/adoration of their mast-

ers. The men are all clones. There are no real women. And the men promptly kill the real three women because the men do not want to restart the baby/father/husband routine again? Would it even get published?))

'Poorness keeps me forever behind my publishing schedule, but two new WINDHAVENS will appear at once no later than January, so that I'll have something to take with me to Wiscon in February. I've been asked to do readings of a work-in-progress, a novelization of the life of Atalanta a generation before the fall of Troy. I hope I can also work up the nerve to do a one-woman dramatic presentation (semi-rehearsed) of the life of Anne Bonney, pirate. Wiscon is a very woman-oriented sf convention, and I'm counting on a good time!'

ALIEN THOUGHTS CONT. ON P. 27

RECEIVED: THE ROAD TO SCIENCE FICTION: FROM GILGAMESH TO WELLS edited by James Gunn. Mentor ME1578, \$2.25.

COMMENT: Anthology of classic pre-modern sf stories. Excellent Introduction and story notes. Includes a recommended Basic Science Fiction Library that includes all the best-known sf writers.

STUDY WAR NO MORE, edited by Joe Haldeman. St Martin's Press, \$8.95

COMMENT: Anthology of anti-war and alternatives-to-war stories.

GALACTIC EMPIRES, VOL. ONE, edited by Brian Aldiss. St. Martin's Press, \$8.95.

GALACTIC EMPIRES, VOL. TWO, edited by Brian Aldiss. St. Martin's Press, \$8.95.

COMMENT: 26 stories explore the rise, maturity and decline of the galactic empire as seen through the imaginations of all the well-known sf practitioners.

'The Philadelphia Science Fiction Society, sponsors of Philcon since 1936, wish to evaluate their image in fandom, especially in relationship to a certain hotel chain. We would like to receive letters for comment/complaint/whatever from anyone who attended to 1977 Philcon. Send them to D. Schweitzer,

113 deepdale Road,
Strafford, PA 19087.

They will be evaluated, to not necessarily answered.'

AN INTERVIEW WITH DAVID G. HARTWELL



CONDUCTED BY DARRELL SCHWEITZER

SFR: What is the complete extent of your involvement in science fiction publishing right now?

HARTWELL: The complete extent of my involvement in science fiction: I am the consulting editor in science fiction to Berkely Books, that is the Berkley paperbound line and the Berkley hardbound line which is distributed by G.P. Putnam's. Formerly Putnam's published the books under their own imprint, but Berkley Books in the last year has taken over the hardbound publication.

I am the editor of *COSMOS*, a new bi-monthly semi-slick science fiction magazine published by Baronet Publications, a new company founded by Norman Goldfind.

I am the editor of the Gregg Press SF series, which is a series of relatively expensive hardbounds mostly photo-facsimile from Gregg Press in Boston.

I'm a partner in Dragon Press which is a science fiction book-seller and publisher of mainly bibliographical and scholarly works. Most of the book business is run by my partner, L.W. Currey, who has his own science fiction and first edition business---L.W. Currey Rare Books. I publish a little magazine called *THE LITTLE MAGAZINE* which is nationally distributed. I'm no longer the editor because of my increasing involvement in science fiction. I've had to cut down on that, but I had been doing it for eleven years and I published a number of science fiction writers, even an essay by Chip (Delany) on sci-

ence fiction and poetry at one point. I do some small press publishing myself, or with Paul Williams, under the name Entwhistle Books, and we published a mainstream novel by Phillip K. Dick in a limited edition a year or so ago, in hardbound, as an Entwhistle Book, *CONFESSIONS OF A CRAP ARTIST*, which I'm happy to say sold out (E. Bobbs paperback out now).

I've just retired from teaching science fiction at the college level. I taught a course for several years at Stevens Institute of Technology in Hoboken. That's it.

SFR: How do you find enough time for that much?

HARTWELL: I don't know. It all seems to get done sometimes without y hardly knowing it. I keep accepting new jobs and initiating new projects.

SFR: Norman Spinrad was saying the other day that, in essence, the tables have turned and science fiction is where it's at in short fiction today, the mainstream short fiction market being almost gone. Why do you think this is so? Do you?

HARTWELL: It's an observation Norman made on a panel yesterday here at Balticon, which is perfectly true. There is more market for science fiction, and more freedom to write what a writer wants to write in science fiction at this point than there is in the mainstream.

Mainstream publishing has become highly categorized, so that if you write a western or a gothic or a mystery it's marketed as such and has to keep within very strict boundaries. If you write a "mainstream" popular novel, it has to be a Bestseller, which is a category, a publishing category rather than an observation on the quality of the book. Or, if you write what Norman calls a "literary novel" it's a novel written basically for a coterie of reviewers and readers that is probably smaller than fandom. Therefore science fiction has broken through most of the barriers that have separated it from mundane fiction in commercial terms, and you can sell as many copies of a "category" science fiction novel, for instance *CHILDREN OF DUNE*, as you can of a television tie-in best-seller like *ONCE AN EAGLE*, and get it reviewed in more places than a literary mainstream novel. This is not something that one can explain. It is simply something that one observes.

SFR: Then the science fiction writers who want to break into the mainstream have it backwards: it should be mainstream writers breaking into science fiction.

HARTWELL: Well, in fact an enormous number of mainstream writers are writing "science fiction." They're writing something approaching science fiction---their idea of science fiction---Cecelia Holland in *FLOATING WORLDS*, Joseph McElroy, I believe, just published a novel from Knopf. Martin Green, a scholar and novelist, has just published one. Leslie Fiedler published a science fiction novel a short while ago that everybody has ignored. If I had time to do research the list would go on almost endlessly... Norman Mailer is supposed to be writing a science fiction novel... Kurt Vonnegut's latest novel, he finally admits, is "science fiction."

SFR: Is this a good thing, or will they dilute the field?

HARTWELL: I don't think it's a question of diluting the field, because of the variety that exists within the field already. The science fiction reader isn't a reader who reads all of science fiction as it stands now. There are sci-

ence fiction readers who read Andre Norton, Marion Zimmer Bradley, and that sort of thing. There are science fiction readers who read ANA-LOG and Larry Niven novels and Poul Anderson, and never read any sword and sorcery. There are sword & sorcery readers who read nothing but sword & sorcery. They're all under the umbrella of science fiction at this point, both as a publishing category and at most conventions. The only "category" that science fiction fans tend to exclude is STAR TREK, and that's a social convention more than anything else.

SFR: Isn't there a danger that as science fiction continues to do better and the mainstream continues to decline, science fiction will become like television because the financial stakes will be so high?

HARTWELL: It's possible. I don't have any detailed thoughts on that. But if we continue to have enough knowledgeable editorial talent in science fiction publishing, and if enough companies are aware of what they're doing, for the time being at least we'll continue to have the freedom that's making the field very lively right now. There are more science fiction novels being published and doing well commercially now than there ever have been, at any time in the past.

SFR: Is this a stable thing, or like the prozine boom of 1952?

HARTWELL: I don't want to compare it to the prozine boom. No, it's not stable. It can change at any moment. But the reasons for the change can be as trivial as an editor at a major publishing company who does the science fiction deciding to quit and move to the west coast, and nobody being hired to fill her place. Or, the publishing company being sold to a conglomerate and the conglomerate deciding to publish less titles and more mainstream best sellers, to devote their money to "big books", hundred thousand dollar advance books, rather than category fiction. No, it's not a stable market, but no category market, and I include the category of Best Sellers, is a stable market at any time.

SFR: How much has this got to do with marketing, and how much simply with what people want to read?

HARTWELL: In the last seven or eight years of professional exper-

ience, I have never been able to find any real connection between marketing and what people want to read.

SFR: Will the public then buy anything it's given?

HARTWELL: No, the public tends to buy things unpredictably. On this panel yesterday that you referred to, Norman talked a little about "cult" fiction. "Cult" fiction is basically a publishing term that refers to books that sell that the publishing and marketing executives can't explain. The other fiction that sells is explained ex-post-facto because it's a successful piece of category fiction of one sort or another. Marketing people---wholesalers, distributors, etc.---think in categories. Every book fits in a category. Even most commercial bookstore retailers think in category and place their books in category, so people can find what they are familiar with in one way or another.

SFR: Lester del Rey says this is a protection for new writers. It makes them sell when no one has heard of them.

HARTWELL: It is.

SFR: Therefore, he says, it isn't a good idea to try and break down barriers, or take the science fiction label off.

HARTWELL: That's good, standard commercial thinking. I don't necessarily agree with it, but it is the accepted way of thinking about selling books.

SFR: What would happen if you took the science fiction label off Berkley/Putnam?

HARTWELL: If you took the science fiction labels off and the books looked like science fiction, they would still be categorized in the same way. We don't necessarily say the words "science fiction" on the front of our books, although as a marketing device we've just developed a logo that says "SF". This is not so much to identify the books to readers, as to identify the books according to the slots in which they are distributed. As a protection device. This is, as I say, conventional thinking.

SFR: At what point does it stop being a protection device and begin being a straightjacket?

HARTWELL: I don't know. It depends entirely on the attitude of the publishing company. Some companies that I'm aware of have somebody who knows little or nothing about science fiction editing and acquiring the science fiction books. This is a great market for young writers, because the editor will buy practically anything that occurs to them at the moment, and will publish it according to a strictly labelled package, and it will be distributed, and some of it will sell and some of it won't. Most of it won't. But it will be placed in the system.

SFR: How much control do you have over your various projects?

HARTWELL: Okay, I'll have to break that down a great deal. I have nearly total editorial control over the Gregg Press series, which is a great deal of fun. I can publish practically anything from the entire history of western literature, if I consider it relevant to the history and development of science fiction, and it will be properly produced and properly marketed, and will sell fairly well, because they have a good system for doing it.

At COSMOS I have total control over the editorial contents of the magazine.

At Berkley/Putnam there are, as in every publishing company, a number of checks and balances which prevent me from doing whatever occurs to me at the moment. That's something I could lecture on for forty-five minutes at least, the precise nature of these controls. Large publishing companies in the mass market particularly, are run by committees, and I am not a member of these committees. I simply propose the product, and then try to shepherd the product that I



have proposed through all the various committee meetings and art direction and blurb writings, and that sort of thing.

SFR: Can these committees stop you from something you want to do?

HARTWELL: Oh, absolutely. And they do, certainly. Perhaps the most relevant restriction is that I have an absolute limitation on the number of books I can publish in any given month. I can publish three, and they allow me pretty much to select those three, but there are some houses that don't have such an absolute restriction on numbers, or have restricted numbers that are higher. I don't have any qualitative restrictions. All the restrictions I have I would characterize as quantitative. I can publish any kind of science fiction that I like, or that in my judgement should be published, or is profitable to publish. The publishing house doesn't care if it's a sword & sorcery novel, a Tolkien-esque fantasy, hard science fiction, etc. All they want right now is "books that will sell" and my job is to acquire books that will sell.

SFR: Have you had projects you really wanted to do and couldn't?

HARTWELL: Oh yes, many. Mostly short story collections. Short story collections are very difficult to market and I've been turned down on a number of occasions. Anthology projects. Anthologies are also difficult to sell, compared to novels. I've been turned down on a number of anthology projects. I've been turned down on occasion for first novels by young novelists because science fiction marketing is done by the name of the author, and they would prefer me to buy a new book by an established author rather than a new work by an un-established author. This is not a heavy restriction. I am now able to buy, having established my own position with the company with a fair amount of authority at this point, first novels by young authors pretty fairly.

SFR: If there were no holds barred, what would you like to do the most?

HARTWELL: Simply remove the restrictions (for anthologies and short story collections and publish anywhere between three and six or seven books a month, depend-

ing upon the material available. I'd like to produce the line according to my own qualitative standards rather than their quantitative standards.

SFR: How much material is there available which is worth publishing, as compared to how much you actually can publish?

HARTWELL: Oh, there's an enormous amount of material available, just in the area of backlist titles. Some houses have more than Berkley but Berkley has literally hundreds of titles in the backlist from the 1950s to the present that are worth publishing and reissuing. Good science fiction. There are also reverted titles from other houses. There are literally hundreds of older novels that are not dated and which would be commercially viable and interesting to read. I don't get large numbers of first novels by young authors that I do want to buy, but I buy the ones that I do, at this point.

SFR: Are most of them bad or what?

HARTWELL: Yeah, sure.

SFR: You have a rather usual system for making a profit on two hundred copies of a Gregg Press book. Could you explain how it's done?

HARTWELL: I'll try to go through the complications of that quickly. The Gregg Press science fiction series is conceived as a kind of middle ground in hardcover publishing. The books sell mostly to institutions, but also to individuals, at relatively higher prices than a normal trade hardback. But not terribly higher, a normal trade hardback being, say, \$7.95 at this point, and Gregg Press books range from about \$7.50 to \$15.00 with certain books being priced as high as \$25 or \$35. The pricing depends on the number of pages because the paper and per page pre-

paration costs are the highest single item in production. However, for the money, Gregg Press gives a new edition of the book, not simply an offset reprint of the text, and an introduction that hopefully illuminates the book and/or its position in science fiction, talks about the author and that sort of thing. We are able to produce a large number of books at once. In other words we do not produce the books title by title, but in blocks of twenty or thirty at once, thereby saving costs on, for instance, binding. The binding order will be for ten thousand books which simply change in the stamping on the spine, so they'll be able to produce a group order for the binding cloth, and schedule binding machine time all at once. You can bring the cost down to the point where, if the books are not inexpensive, at least they are not outrageously high. With the initial acquisition cost being low, you can publish quite a limited number of copies and still have a margin of profit at anywhere from 250 to 500 copies.

SFR: Is the hardcover book on its way out? You sell 50,000 paperbacks or more, and 200 hardcovers...

HARTWELL: By quantitative standards, yeah. The hardcover book is on its way out. It has been on its way out since about 1950. The hardcover book will still be around for a long time, however, because the hardcover book can be a useful durable tool. For instance, textbooks, reference and that sort of thing. I think that more and more hardcover publishing is being devoted to tool books. Medical textbooks that have to be used heavily, but also have to be updated and reprinted every three years. It's still profitable publishing, even though the books cost forty dollars apiece.



SFR: There's one editor who might not want to be mentioned here, who edits a magazine which has been in a slow, irreversible decline for a long time. He insists it doesn't matter what he does.

HARTWELL: I was going to say--when you have a failing business operation, it pretty much doesn't matter what you do. It's still a failing business operation.

SFR: In other words, nothing succeeds like success and nothing fails like failure.

HARTWELL: Over-simplified, but the success or failure of the magazine you are referring to doesn't have very much to do with the magazine itself. It has to do mostly with the business operation the magazine is associated with. I know about it, but I don't want to talk about it in detail.

SFR: Is the science fiction magazine on its way out? They've been in decline for twenty years.

HARTWELL: The science fiction magazines have been in decline, every couple of years at least since the early 1930s. Magazine publishing has always been a shaky business since the decline of the popular magazine in America, which was about the middle 1930s. No, I don't think the science fiction magazine is on its way out because there are still commercially viable ways to publish magazines, which everything from PLAYBOY to NATIONAL LAMPOON has proven. There are still existing distribution systems and that sort of thing and most of the science fiction magazines have not been able to take advantage of them because they've not, as far as I'm concerned, been able to change sufficiently as businesses as the business and distribution community has changed over the last twenty years. ANALOG has. We all know this. ANALOG is a successful magazine. ISAAC ASIMOV'S and COSMOS are both attempts by rather sophisticated business operations to produce magazines that fit, in this case, two different slots in the distribution system. ASIMOV'S is of course a digest magazine and it's initial distribution is larger in numbers of copies than ANALOG's. The initial distribution of COSMOS is almost identical, as far as I know, to that of ASIMOV'S magazine, and it's trying to establish a regular 8 1/2 x 11 slot in the distribution

system that will hopefully make science fiction available to a large number of people. The advantage of the COSMOS size over the digest size is that there are a great deal more outlets for COSMOS-sized magazines than digest-sized magazines--potentially. There is a potential that we hope to develop with COSMOS for getting this size magazine into a number of the retail outlets across the country, for instance supermarkets, which don't as a normal run of the mill fact carry science fiction magazines or digest magazines at all. The upward limit for distribution for COSMOS is probably in the hundreds of thousands, whereas the upward limit for distribution of category science fiction digest magazines seems to be about 200,000. ASIMOV'S may prove me wrong. I would be delighted if they did. They may be able to distribute a larger number of copies because they're working within an established system of mystery and detective digest magazines that has not produced a science fiction magazine in many years. But I think that some of the new ideas in science fiction magazines may work, and even if they don't we still have an established success in ANALOG, which shows no signs of flagging in the near future--i.e. for the next decade.

SFR: Won't the COSMOS size also be a problem because the science fiction reader can't find it with the other science fiction magazines? It has to be sought out.

HARTWELL: Well, we're not particularly interested in publishing a magazine that the regular science fiction reader can find, as an end in itself. We're trying to publish a commercial science fiction magazine that will appeal to the people in the mass audience--and there is a strong indication that there are more than a million people in the mass audience who do occasionally buy science fiction if they see it. COSMOS will be seen with the other magazines that are sold to the mass audience. If we can be distributed well enough and if we can compete with the other magazines on the mass-market stands for simply eye-attraction, we intend to sell a good number of magazines.

SFR: Does the mass audience go to the newsstand for fiction or to the paperback store?

HARTWELL: The mass audience goes to the newsstand for their magazines, and we're a magazine. They buy PLAYBOY at the same newsstand. They buy COSMOPOLITAN, all of the other magazines, in the general newsstand fiction, non-fiction, essay, hot-rod, ski magazine, golfing magazine rack.

SFR: But does the general magazine reader still read fiction? You'll notice most of these magazines run very little fiction. Fifty or sixty years ago a magazine like HARPER'S might have four short stories and a serial in a given issue.

HARTWELL: We're talking about that segment of the mass audience which occasionally reads science fiction, and can make a science fiction novel into a million or two million copy bestseller. They are that segment of the mass audience that reads fiction.

SFR: Do they read short stories or only novels?

HARTWELL: One hopes that they read short stories. I can't from experience say.

SFR: But you'll notice there has almost never been a best-selling short story collection. I don't think there's ever been one in science fiction.

HARTWELL: Oh, certainly there has Robert Heinlein's FUTURE HISTORY series.

SFR: Did that achieve bestseller status?

HARTWELL: From my experience with the publisher, Signet, years ago, THE GREEN HILLS OF EARTH at least, and, I think THE MAN WHO SOLD THE MOON, had both sold over a million copies. Now this is not a "best-seller" category book, because the million copies were sold over a period of years. Just as CHILDREN OF DUNE as a hardcover book was not initially a "bestseller" although it sold more copies than some bestsellers. It sold over a period of months, rather than a few weeks. Yeah, there are short story collections that are best sellers. My God, THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES is in its 28th printing.

SFR: Well, some people can't tell the difference as long as it's packaged as a novel. Many people, including academics, think THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES is a novel.

HARTWELL: That's an academic argument I won't go into, whether WINESBURG OHIO is a novel, whether THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES is a novel--in some ways it is and some ways it isn't--but we're off the track of talking about magazines. We're now talking about something else altogether. I don't think this is very relevant to COSMOS. I think there are people who read short fiction occasionally and in the science fiction audience particularly there are hundreds of thousands of people who occasionally read short fiction.

SFR: Is the academic interest in science fiction relevant to COSMOS?

HARTWELL: No.

SFR: Is it relevant to the sale of science fiction at all?

HARTWELL: Only insofar as the academic market--which is still a very small market--is breeding new kinds of science fiction books. Of course there's the academic anthology--the textbook--which is a kind of--well, I actually don't want to get into that. Stop there.

SFR: What about the sort of things academics do to literature? I mean the writing of learned papers read only by other academics and in our field published in places like SCIENCE FICTION STUDIES--does this do anybody any good?

HARTWELL: It certainly entertains other scholars and sometimes illuminates them. It can entertain and illuminate some fans too. Not many, but some. It's a kind of thing that you can get into. As for its effect on writers, there are some writers that it illuminates and helps. There are a number of writers I know who are quite self-conscious about what they do and quite sophisticated in their self-conscious use of literary techniques. There are others who are simply uninterested in this approach to literature, and are uninterested in criticism of their works. They simply want reviews. It will help some people. It will turn off some other people. I do not think it will hurt anybody particularly, unless it's misinterpreted. I know there have been cases of criticism being misinterpreted as a kind of pure unfriendliness in an ideal sense, and the writer who feels people are unfriendly to his works has a hard time writing.

SFR: Doesn't the writer have even a harder time when he becomes overly self-conscious and writes more for the academic critics than the readers?

HARTWELL: I don't know any writer, in the science fiction field, at least, who writes for an audience of academic critics. I've heard that terminology used before and I think it's a red herring. I don't think there's anybody who writes for an audience of academic critics. There are some people I know who write for a critical audience, but that's something else again. Many of the best fan readers I know are a critical audience of science fiction.

SFR: Then by "critical audience" you mean a discriminating audience, not an audience of critics?

HARTWELL: Yes, I mean a discriminating audience. I think there's been too much use of sloppy terminology in discussions of the academic influence on science fiction.

SFR: It seems the mainstream short story has been swallowed up by academia entirely until it has become a closed circuit that has nothing to do with publishing any more.

HARTWELL: There hasn't been a market for the mainstream short story in a while. But you keep saying "academic". I don't think there's such a thing as an academic short story. There is a group of poets which is referred to as the "academic poets" but that's an irrelevant term for our purposes. There are still practicing short story writers in the United States who simply write short stories and hope to find an audience. Damn few of them do outside of the science fiction field.

SFR: A magazine like THE HUDSON REVIEW or SEWANEE REVIEW is never seen by the public--

HARTWELL: The mass market public doesn't see it, but a magazine like SEWANEE REVIEW is distributed nationwide in tens of thousands of copies and it does sell to a small audience. But we're no longer talking about the mass market or even in terms of the general trade market.

SFR: Doesn't something get inbred that way?

HARTWELL: I feel that at certain times science fiction has been excessively inbred and gotten uninteresting because of it. But at least since the early 1950s this has not often been the case, and I don't see it happening again.

SFR: With more mainstream writers coming into science fiction, could you see it splitting, as Gardner Dozois has suggested, into "mainstream science fiction" and "the real thing"?

HARTWELL: No, because I don't see there having been a definable and identifiable "real thing" since the early 1950s. By the time you had GALAXY, F&SF and ANALOG on the stands together, competing, and producing substantially different kinds of stories, you had many different kinds of science fiction being read more or less by the same audience. There are so many categories of science fiction now that it would take me half an hour to sit down and think up a list. I mentioned some of them earlier: sword and sorcery, "literary" fantasy, supernatural horror/weird fiction; these are subsumed into science fiction as a publishing category at least, and are read by some of the same people; "hard" science fiction, all the varieties of soft science fiction--psychological, sociological, futurist, whatever--and the people who are particularly into one kind of science fiction are the norm, rather than the exception, and have been since the 1950s.

SFR: Do books like THE ANDROMEDA STRAIN and FLOATING WORLDS which are written by non-science fiction writers and generally marketed as something close to bestsellers have the same audience as regular SF? Or have they become a new category?

HARTWELL: No, they don't have the same audience, although there is overlap. But I think it would be forcing it to say they've become a new category by themselves. It's simply an acceptable way to publish a book, but it's not something a publisher will slot in month after month or even relatively regularly. It's something that happens occasionally. It happens with enough frequency these days so that at any given time over a two or three month period you can point to a current book and say "that's one of those", but it's not a regularly planned thing, a publishing cate-

gory.

SFR: Suppose you marketed a new Clifford Simak novel like that? Would it do as well as THE TOMORROW FILE?

HARTWELL: No. I think a new Clifford Simak novel marketed like THE TOMORROW FILE would dissatisfy the general audience and would not be bought by the normal science fiction audience because the normal science fiction audience tends not to buy books like THE ANDROMEDA STRAIN and THE TOMORROW FILE.

SFR: Why is it that these non-category science fiction novels tend to drop out of sight after a while? They have a much lower survival rate than strictly labeled science fiction, regardless of how good they may be. You'll notice that Bernard Wolfe's LIMBO, which is a classic of "one of those", is now out of print, whereas if it had been published as science fiction it would probably still be available.

HARTWELL: Well, I've done that with a book at Berkley, WAR WITH THE NEWTS by Capek. It has been out of print a number of times in the past couple of generations and I reissued it as a category science fiction novel, and as far as I can tell from the initial response, it is going to sell comfortably well and remain in print forever. What this implies is limited expectations, but limited expectations that are generally fulfilled. Therefore, you make a continual, steady limited profit.

SFR: It might also imply that if you want a book to stay in print you publish it as science fiction. If you want to make quick money you don't.

HARTWELL: Probably true in this context.

SFR: Why does it work that way?

HARTWELL: That just seems to be, by observation, the way it works at the moment. It may not be true within a couple of years because of the large advances and large publicity campaigns that have been given to straight category science fiction recently. It's now possible for Joe Haldeman to sell a novel to a hardcover company and make 50% of a hundred thousand dollar reprint sale to a paperback. That's quick money, so that may be breaking down the simple, conven-

tional observation we made a moment ago.

SFR: The Haldeman book in question is MINDBRIDGE, isn't it?

HARTWELL: Yeah.

SFR: What happens now if MINDBRIDGE starts to behave like a mainstream bestseller and goes out of print in five years?

HARTWELL: I will be interested to observe what happens. I make no predictions.

SFR: It seems to me we may have a new pattern of publishing here which may not be for the best. It is possible books will start to sell fast, a lot, and then vanish.

HARTWELL: I don't know. What is for the best? Is it for the best that Joe made a big pile of money on this book or not? Is it for the best Frank Herbert sold a million and a quarter copies of CHILDREN OF DUNE in paperback in five weeks? Is that for the best or not? Would it have sold over a longer period of time? Would it have increased the quality of the field? I don't know.

SFR: How much is quality related to marketing?

HARTWELL: Not all all, as far as I can tell. Quality isn't related to distribution either.

SFR: Is it related to sales?

HARTWELL: I can only speak for science fiction. Yes. What I recognize and what I think is conventionally recognized as quality in science fiction based on my observations of sales figures at a couple of companies where I have worked over the years, sells. The good books sell. This means that a good Andre Norton sells better than her lesser efforts and a good Poul Anderson sells, and a good Tom Disch sells and a good Samuel R. Delany book sells. There are varying standards of quality, but all of the quality sells.

SFR: Thank you, Mr. Hartwell.

'WRITING LETTERS-OF-COMMENT SOUNDS TO ME A LOT LIKE A HIGH-RISK SPORT. YOU TRY IT ONCE AND YOU'RE EITHER HOOKED FOR LIFE OR SCARRED FOR LIFE.'

---M. Trudeau

11-7-77 You all may have noticed a lack of social/political/economic commentary in this issue so far. Truth is, I have a case of the blahs. All I see is mounting underlying economic crisis---international, national and private debt is mounting to incredible totals. And at the same time the stresses caused by constant inflation and constant real-cost increases are eating away at the debt structure... so that in a year or two, signaled by an ill-disguised national bankruptcy overseas, a string of defaults will start and the wholesale destruction of assets (your debt is my asset) will wipe out whole countries, whole classes of people...

But I've said all this. I've assessed Carter and his band of merry idiots, and I get depressed at their performance.

This country---indeed, the entire world---has been borrowing against the future for a generation, ever more, and more, and been ever unwilling to be honest and ethical. It has been one long demonstration of "Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die."

Listen, I told you so. When it happens I'll laugh and chuckle and slap my knee and sign up for food stamps with the rest of you. These macro-economic debt-accumulation/debt-liquidation cycles are simply beyond human alteration. We do not have the mass will or foresight to resist the impulses to spend the "easy money" of printing press money. Our politicians have a built-in interest to blame others for their foolish policies and to put off the evil day of retribution till after they are out of office...full of honors and on a fat government pension.

Sooner or later we are going to have to cut out most of this fat-ass government spending, and face a lower, simpler standard of living. Advanced electronics will help tremendously to save energy. But in twenty years I doubt there will be many private cars left.

The prosperity of this country, for a generation or more, has been built and depends upon the automobile industry. The instant you injure that industry by imposing restrictions on the use of cars---gas rationing, gas taxes, very high purchasing prices---you put a fatal crimp in the economy. Cars used less don't wear out as fast, don't need to be replaced or

fixed as often, don't use as many tires... Every job directly or indirectly affected by less use of millions of cars will be at risk. This contraction in the auto maker, supplier, servicing industry will feed less and less money/orders to the entire economy....and so on.

The instant Carter succeeds in inhibiting the use of the private car he will be signing the death sentence of a way of life and his own re-election. And The Second Great Depression will be triggered.

The national/international economy is caught between the spectre of disaster caused by an American depression, and disaster caused by the collapse of the debt structure before that collapse is triggered by an American depression. There is no way out, now. It is too late.

We might stagger through 1978, but the handwriting on the wall is beginning to become so plain that it will be impossible to avoid seeing, even by Carter.

A SIGN OF THE TIMES: Harold Straubing, one-time manager/director of the multi-corporation porno/sex publishing empire of Milton Luros [nudist mags, sex novels, etc.], to whom I sold most of my novels in the sixties, last week sent me a fan letter received from a gentleman who likes "Peggy Swenson" books.

Harold signed his covering letter, 'Administrator' for Brandon Books.

And now a letter I sent to him at the Brandon Books address has been returned by the Post Office marked MOVED, NOT FORWARDABLE.

So I assume that Brandon has been discontinued, and that Manor Books, which was publishing some inexpensive (they paid \$750 per ms.) science fiction, has also gone to that great publishing house in the sky.

CARD FROM ROBERT BLOCH

Nov. 3, 1977

'First off, one-and-a-half congratulations on your recent---and deserved---Hugo Awards! Plus another for this new issue, which I'm reading while recovering from last week's World Fantasy convention. To be fair about it, I think I was actually done in by attending a Halloween art gallery opening in San Francisco the following day. Anyhow, I'm convalescing---and enjoying it---thanks to

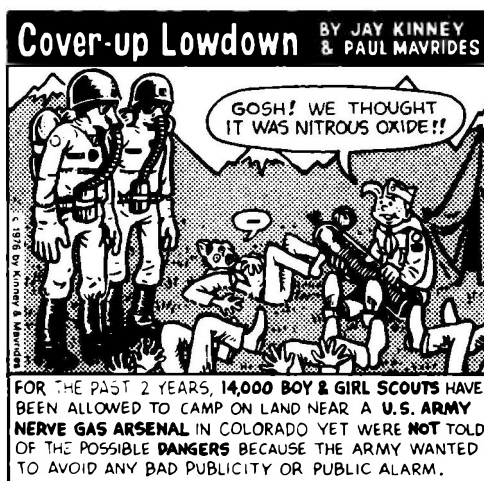
SFR. Cover-Up Lowdown is just the thing for paranoid types like myself, and of course the supportive textual comments throughout the issue help to confirm my fixed suspicion that we're going to hell in a handbasket. As I write these lines I get a mental picture of a traditional Devil carrying a basket with two severed human heads in it: this is what happens after spending three days around Gahan Wilson at the Con. Your writer interviews and profiles continue to impress---though I rather doubt if van Vogt will enjoy the reference to his "checked career".'

((Hm. Maybe it should have been 'many-faceted career.'))

LETTER FROM DON LUNDY

October 27, 1977

'Glad you got the Hugoes all-



right. Sorry for the delay in getting them out. It seems to be a hazard of Worldcons that all the volunteers disappear when the con is over and the con chairman (and family) are about the only ones left to finish up all the details.

'It's really not quite that bad, since John Douglas, the treasurer and a few others are still putting in a lot of time wrapping up the con. But it does slow things down a bit. And your Hugoes were delayed as a result.

'The original shape (or mold) is available through Charlie Brown who has apparently replaced Alva Rogers in dealing with the foundry that makes the Hugoes. How much longer we'll be able to get them is open to question since I gather the foundry may quit operations. It took about nine months and some hefty prodding to get the Hugoes delivered to us. When they arrived,

we polished them up a bit and selected out the ones that were excessively pitted. That's why they gleam a bit more than in the past.'

((Thanks, Don, for the information. I think I'll go up now and polish the others....))

LETTER FROM KARL EDD

Nov. 2, 1977

'SFR #23, page 7: your comments about herb medicines---it isn't widely known but the only whites in North America who didn't look down on the American Indian herb remedies were the Mormons. They did with this information just as they have done on genealogical information. They have it in their archives, in very complete form, and their doctors in Utah know most of the details. Also several researchers on this subject have dug into the Mormon files and have had books published with limited amounts of the herb data.

'I personally spent months copying much of this for my own files, and have a lot of data on it. The American Indian even had herbs that enabled a family to have only about two or three children during the fertile lifespan of a woman. It controlled ovulation. I'd have to dig into my notes to get the name of that particular drug. The Spanish rulers in the Southwest stole some of the Indians' information, then systematically destroyed knowledge of the rest of it, particularly that for birth control, calling it "witchcraft." What they did steal, they took full credit for.

'The history of pharmacology is a fascinating one. Digitalis, for example, was first used by a "witch" (white witch) in southern England. Doctors in Liverpool and London heard about her marvelous cures or remissions of bad heart trouble, and actually sent a doctor there to refute her, but he came back with information: Eureka, it works! So they stole it, in effect, took credit for the "discovery", and never gave the "witch" (or herb-woman) an iota of credit. The story leaked out, got into the obscure history books, and so is part of the history of pharmacology.

'The word Pharmacology, itself, comes from a Greek word for the lichen-fungus that grows in the Greek islands on certain stones, and which is very rich in Vitamin C, though the Greeks didn't know what Vitamin C was. They did, how-

ever, observe the results of a tea made from that lichen. Parsley tea, also, was prescribed by Hippocrates, who was really a progressive for his time. C and A were largely deficient in the diets of sick people of that day and age, and probably, also today.

'Keep up your good work. Re the Rockefellers: Panama Canal flap equals: New York bank is owed lots of money by govt. of Panama. Panama can't pay, so we turn canal over to Panama. Panama collects the Canal revenues, ((and collects a large yearly subsidy payment from the U.S.)) pays the Rockefeller bank the money owed to it. Ergo: American public screwed to the tune of millions. That for those who think you're paranoiac on the Rockefellers. Authority: British newspapers, certainly not American ones.'

((For a devastating run-down of the Rockefeller influence on Jimmy Carter and our government--an analysis based on fact and logical analysis---read "Cartergate: The Death of Democracy" by Craig S. Karpel in the November issue of PENTHOUSE.))

RECEIVED: STAR TREK INTERGALACTIC PUZZLES by Jim Razzi (also author of the STAR TREK PUZZLE MANUAL). Bantam 01083-2, \$5.95. (8-1/2 x 11 softcover format.)

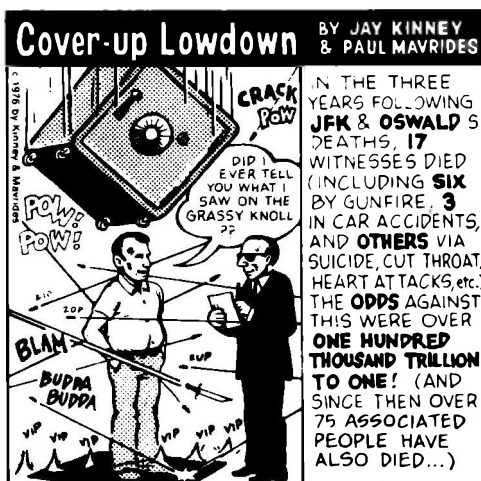
THE MAKING OF TREK CONVENTIONS by Joan Winston. Doubleday, \$7.95. With photos, cartoons, etc. STAR TREK LIVES!!

11-11-77 Lousy news from Darrell Schweitzer that long-time fan, fanpublisher, and lately award-winning sf writer Tom Reamy died of a heart attack on Friday, November 4th.

And I see by the just-arrived BRITISH FANTASY SOCIETY BULLETIN that old-time sf pulp-era writer, Henry Hasse died on May 20, 1977.

I'm beginning to get feedback from readers on SFR 23: so far the favorite feature is my "Alien Thoughts" diary, closely followed by all the interviews, and "The Annual Nebulous Awards" by Greg & Jim Benford. Also a lot of comment about the Cover-up Lowdown cartoons by Jay Kinney & Paul Mavrides. And some people want to know where they came from. The Lowdown cartoons were introduced to me by Jay Kin-

ney and rights purchased from Rip Off Press, a counter-culture syndicalization/publishing company: Box 14158, San Francisco, CA 94114. I have 15 left in the series which, as you see, I'll be using in this issue.



THE LAVALITE WORLD By Philip Jose Farmer. Ace, \$1.50 (Dec. 77). COMMENT: This is the first of these World of Tiers books I've read, and it is the last of the series. There are five in all.

The basic premise of this series is that Lords have created worlds of their own design in pocket universes, where they rule in superb grandeur in a savage, solipsist manner, and these lords also battle among each other, having devices for communication and instant travel to each other's domain.

Earth, it seems, in this schema, is also a creation of one of the Lords.

An Earthman, Paul Janus Finnegan, has become embroiled in these affairs, fallen in love with a renegade woman Lord, taken the name of Kickaha, and battles the Lords on virtually every level and world of the Tiers...

In this final novel, THE LAVALITE WORLD, he is battling the Lord Urthona, and battling the landscape of the planet which is in constant turmoil--mountains rise in hours, lakes disappear--or form in minutes.... Every year a huge segment of the planet is torn loose and becomes a moon for a while, and then returns to the planet---with the expected gargantuan upheavals that would entail.

The flora and fauna are varied; the most interesting being varieties of walking trees that have intriguing ways of defending and

attacking. The peoples are savages imported thousands of years before from Earth, and who have adapted to the strange, plastic geography.

In the end, Kickaha triumphs over the world's dangers and gets his woman and defeats the Lords.

Interesting series of Wonders and amazes for the reader. In my Sated Reader Mode I suspected that Phil was conscientiously running through all the Dangers inherent on the planet (and the moon) and then wrapped it all up nicely with a happy ending. Struck me as rather mechanical. But wotthehell, I enjoyed it (but didn't believe it for a minute).

#LETTER FROM DUANE T. GISH, PH.D.
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR
INSTITUTE FOR CREATION RESEARCH

October 27, 1977

My attention has been called to the letter of Luther V. Giddings (Aug. '77) in which he claims that the fossil record contains a "superabundance" of transitional forms documentary evolution. After citing some examples of alleged transitional forms, he also insisted that evolution is not accepted by evolutionists as a matter of faith but as a result of adherence to the authority of experience, of empiricism. He maintains that creation, on the other hand, is a scientifically untenable faith. I will deal with the latter statement first and then with the fossil record.

'Neither creation nor evolution are scientific theories, since scientific theories require repeatable observations, ability to test the theories scientifically, and the capability of being falsified. It is obvious that there were no human witnesses to the origin of the universe, the origin of life, or to the origin of a single living thing. These events occurred in the past, they are unrepeatable, and therefore any theory related to these events are untestable. Increasing numbers of evolutionists are recognizing this fact. Famous evolutionist Theodosius Dobzhansky stated (American Scientist, Vol. 45, p. 388. 1957) "These evolutionary happenings are unique, unrepeatable, and irreversible. It is as impossible to turn a land vertebrate into a fish as it is to effect the reverse transformation. The applicability of the experimental method to the study of such unique historical processes is

severely restricted before all else by the time intervals involved, which far exceed the lifetime of any human experimenter. And yet it is just such impossibility that is demanded by antievolutionists when they ask for 'proofs' of evolution which they would magnanimously accept as satisfactory." It is amazing that evolutionists like Dobzhansky demand the exclusion of creation as an explanation for origins since it is impossible to apply the experimental method to creation while admitting that the same is true of evolution!

'Paul Ehrlich and L.C. Birch, evolutionist biologists stated (*Nature*, Vol. 214, p. 352, 1967) "Our theory of evolution...is thus 'outside of empirical science' but not necessarily false. No one can think of ways to test it. Ideas, either without basis or based on a few laboratory experiments carried out in extremely simplified systems have attained currency far beyond their validity. They have become part of an evolutionary dogma accepted by most of us as part of our training."

'L. Harrison Matthews, British biologist and evolutionist said (*Introduction to the 1971 edition of Darwin's Origin of Species*, J.M. Dent, London, p. XI) "The fact of evolution is the backbone of biology, and biology is thus in the peculiar position of being a science founded on an unproved theory--is it then a science or a faith? Belief in the theory of evolution is thus exactly parallel to belief in special creation--both are concepts which believers know to be true but neither, up to the present, has been capable of proof."

'Marjorie Grene, one of the world's leading historians and

philosophers of science stated (*Encounter*, November, 1959) that "It is as a religion of science that Darwinism chiefly held and holds men's minds" (p. 48). Later in the same article (p. 49) she said "The modified but still characteristically Darwinian theory has itself become an orthodoxy, preached by its adherents with religious fervor, and doubted, they feel, only by a few muddlers imperfect in scientific faith."

'That evolution may be considered in religious terms was explicitly stated by Julian Huxley and Jacob Bronowski when they said (*Growth of Ideas*, 1968, p. 99) "A religion is essentially an attitude to the world as a whole. Thus evolution, for example, may prove as powerful a principle to co-ordinate man's beliefs and hopes as God was in the past." Evolution is indeed a world view based on "the mechanistic materialist philosophy explicitly shared by most of the present 'establishment' in the biological sciences" (T. Dobzhansky, *Science*, Vol. 175, p. 49, 1972).

'Although neither creation nor evolution are valid scientific theories, that says nothing about the ultimate validity of either. Each can be used as a model to correlate and explain the available scientific evidence related to origins. In this sense each can be called a scientific model, and the relative credibility of each can be compared in view of the evidence available. When this is done, the creation model is far superior to the evolution model.

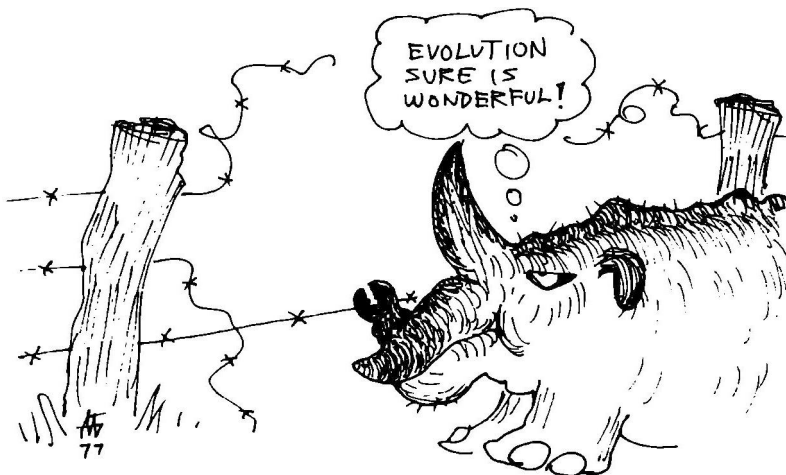
'Giddings has stated that the problem is not in finding transitional forms but in classifying things because there is such a superabundance of in-between forms.

He must be reading different scientific journals than I am reading! For example, in an article by evolutionist paleontologist Dr. David Kitts of the University of Oklahoma in *Evolution*, Vol. 28, 1974, on p. 467, Kitts says "Despite the bright promise that paleontology [study of the fossil record] provides a means of 'seeing' evolution, it has presented some nasty difficulties for evolutionists the most notorious of which is the presence of 'gaps' in the fossil record. Evolution requires intermediate forms between species and paleontology does not provide them."

'E.J.H. Corner, evolutionist botanist at Cambridge University said (in *Contemporary Botanical Thought*, A.M. Macleod and L.S. Copley, Eds., Quadrangle Books, Chicago, 1961, p. 97) "Much evidence can be adduced in favor of the theory of evolution-from biology, bio-geography, and paleontology, but I still think that, to the unprejudiced, the fossil record of plants is in favor of special creation."

Richard B. Goldschmidt, famous evolutionist and geneticist, concerning the fossil record stated (*American Scientist*, Vol. 40, 1952, p. 97) "The facts of greatest importance are the following: When a new phylum, class, or order appears, there follows a quick, explosive (in terms of geological time) diversification so that practically all orders or families known appear suddenly and without any apparent transitions." In fact, Goldschmidt, along with Schindewolf and a few others, proposed a radical new theory, which Goldschmidt called the "hopeful monster" mechanism. In view of the fact that there are no transitional forms to document gradual evolution, Goldschmidt suggested that evolution occurs by abrupt change of one animal into another. For example, at one time a reptile laid an egg and a bird hatched from the egg!

'Obviously, Goldschmidt and his supporters would never have proposed such an incredible idea if the "superabundance of transitional forms" claimed by Giddings really existed. And unless it be claimed that Goldschmidt's ideas are over a quarter century old and thoroughly discredited, one of America's most famous evolutionists, Professor Stephen Jay Gould, who teaches geology and biology at Harvard University, in an article published in the June 1977 issue



of Natural History (p. 22) entitled "The Return of Hopeful Monsters" stated that he believed Goldschmidt would be vindicated eventually. "The fossil record," Gould says, "with its abrupt transitions offers no support for gradual change." Later (p. 23) he says "All paleontologists know that the fossil record contains precious little in the way of intermediate forms; transitions between major groups are characteristically abrupt." Furthermore, as did Goldschmidt, Gould points out that it would be impossible for transitional forms to function. He says (p. 23) "...can we invent a reasonable sequence of intermediate forms, that is, viable, functioning organisms, between ancestors and descendants? Of what possible use are the imperfect incipient stages of useful structures? What good is half a jaw or half a wing?"

'Concerning the fossil record and the ancestry of man, the famous British anatomist and evolutionist Lord Zuckerman, who has done extensive research on the subject, said (Beyond the Ivory Tower, Taplinger Pub. Co., N.Y., 1970, p. 64) "no scientist could logically dispute the proposition that man, without having been involved in any act of divine creation, evolved from some ape-like creature in a very short space of time--speaking in geological terms --without leaving any fossil traces of the steps of the transformation."

'What the actual fossil record shows, then, is not the numerous transitional forms claimed by Giddings, but absence of such forms, and thus systematic gaps between all basic kinds of organisms. A tremendous variety of highly complex forms of life abruptly appear in the fossil record without ancestors just as expected on the basis of creation.

'But what about the examples of transitional forms cited by Giddings? Perhaps we might get a hint from the English evolutionist and geologist Derek Ager, professor at the University of Swansea. He said (Proceedings Geological Association, Vol. 87, 1976, p. 132) "It must be significant that nearly all the evolutionary stories I learned as a student...have now been 'debunked'. Similarly, my own experience of more than 20 years looking for evolutionary lineages among the Mesozoic Brachiopoda has proved them equally elusive."

'In fact, one example cited by Giddings, the famous Archaeopteryx, has just recently been debunked as an intermediate form. This is the creature that evolutionists have repeatedly cited as the best example of a transitional form available, intermediate between reptile and bird. In the first place, Giddings is absolutely ignorant of the true facts when he claims that Archaeopteryx had "barbarously crude feathers." It has long been known that Archaeopteryx had feathers identical to those in modern birds. For example, W.K. Gregory (Annals New York Academy of Science, Vol. 27, 1916, p. 32) said "But in Archaeopteryx, it is to be noted, the feathers differ in no way from the most perfectly developed feathers known to us." The same is stated in a recent article by Harrison (Nature, Vol. 263, 1976, p. 762). The sort of misinformation conveyed in Giddings' statement on the feathers of Archaeopteryx perhaps gives an added hint concerning the nature of his evidence.

'Getting back to the debunking of Archaeopteryx as a transitional form, an article appeared in the September 24, 1977, issue of Science News (Vol. 112, p. 198) which claims that a fossil of an undoubted "truebird" contemporary with Archaeopteryx has been found. Obviously, if undoubted 100% birds and Archaeopteryx are found side-by-side, Archaeopteryx cannot be the ancestor of birds. In fact, Prof. John Ostrum of Yale University is quoted as saying that "it is obvious that we must now look for the ancestors of flying birds in a period of time much older than that in which the Archaeopteryx lived." So much for Archaeopteryx.

'The direct contradiction between the laws of thermodynamics and evolution theory, the impossi-

bility, based on the laws of probability, of generating complex species by random evolutionary changes in five (or 500) billion years, and the complete absence of transitional forms in the present world and in the record of the past, speaks eloquently that "In the beginning God created..."

((I suspect yours will not be the last word presented here on this subject.

((I find it interesting that people who poo-poo Creation are oft-times willing to accept the concept of Alien seeding or colonization. Somehow, God is untenable. Probably because of the hard-to-swallow dogma tied to His coattails. The God-is-watching-and-keeping-score tenet is difficult to accept, as well as most of the divine goings-on in the Bible. If you would only say God created the universe for His inscrutable purposes and could care less what happens to the life minutiae that followed... But of course God people are caught in a classic bind: A distant, uncaring, non-interfering God is not one most people want to worship--what's the point? While a supposedly interventionist loving God who lets all kinds of horrors go on everyday is also hard to accept---and explain!))

We saw STAR WARS again last Monday night, with friends. It held up very well. The technology (special effects) impressed me more and more. Absolutely superb.

But one grunch: I thought the destruction of the planet too easy and too quick. We should have seen huge slow-motion chasms, eruptions, an explosion/flow of the molten heart of the planet... Not a fireworks rocket exploding into a globe of colored bits.

Same for the explosion of the Death Star.



LETTER FROM DENYS HOWARD

4 November, 1977

"Alien Thoughts" remains the basic attraction for me; you are a fascinating character.

'Pearl doesn't buy grass; at those prices she must be buying Kruggerands. \$10. lids---that are "smoooooth" are available right here in Rip City.

'Did Bing Crosby make it before your predicted deadline? He's the third, with Presley and Marx.'

((No, Bing didn't die in time to make it "three in a row" as the old saying goes. Another TV actor did die---forgot his name---and then Bing died, and then Zero Mostel died. They're going fast. Entertainers, fans, writers.... There must be a sinister pattern to all these deaths. If only I could figure it out!!!!))

'Susan Wood has offered to pay for the next WAM!, so the little devil may well appear before doomsday. (*hah!*)

'Have I told you that I'm a father? Well, I am. His name is Robyn Takeo Jansson, and I am his single parent. The intake worker at Welfare was a bit bemused. I am content (of course, sweetheart!) and he is enormous --- 15 weeks old yesterday and already 16 pounds. He's even beginning to sleep 7 and 8 hours a night! O frabjous joy!!'

((Congratulations, Denys. I didn't know you had it in you.))

I cannot resist this do-gooder in me who screams at me to quote something from the Nov. 5 issue of SCIENCE NEWS:

'Lung cancer, the leading cancer killer of men and the second leading cancer killer of women in the United States, is one of the swiftest-acting and most lethal forms of malignancies. Eighty percent of its victims die within two years after diagnosis, and 50 percent of them within only six months.'

So I urge everybody who now smokes a pack or more a day---keep on smoking! The Social Security Fund needs you to die before you get to be age 62; the Fund'll go broke if you people stay alive too long. Smoke! Drink! Eat!

Word from Harry Andruschak via his apazine, that Ted Johnstone, a prominent, long-time L.A. fan and member/officer of the Los Angeles

Science-Fantasy Society, had died. No mention of how he died. I didn't know Ted well, but he was a well-liked, warm human being. And an early enthusiast of the Ring books.

RECEIVED: ACCENTS OF WONDER, edited by David Gerrold. Popular Library 04128-5, \$1.50. [Anthology. Original.]

I, WEAPON by Charles W. Runyon. Popular Library 04127-7, \$1.50. COMMENT: A very good sf novel carried to extremes at the end. Originally published in 1974 by Doubleday, as I recall.

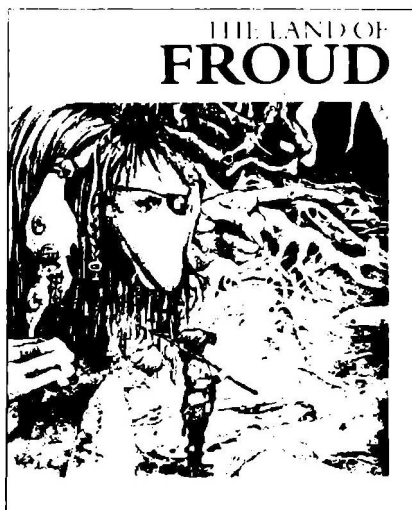
THE GREY MANE OF MORNING by Joy Chant. Allen & Unwin, 198 Ash St., Reading, MA 01867. \$9.95. [Fantasy.]

THE LAND OF FROUD, edited by David Larkin. Peacock Press/Bantam M1055-7, \$7.95.

COMMENT: The amateur or would-be artists who see Brian Froud's work, in this book of 46 color plates and monochromes decorating the introduction by Brian Sanders, no doubt, with me, will feel inferior and incompetent to the nth degree. Yet it's worth the worm feeling to enjoy this superb talent.

These paintings are delightfully full of grotesquely benign and scabrous trolls, gnomes, beasties, goblins, elves, innocent, luminous fairies...and the malevolent trees, the forests, the glades...all rendered in infinitely real/impossible detail.

This talent and humorously malignant vision is only thirty years old, and we can look forward to a lifetime of delight.



Those of us who view the medical profession with a jaundiced eye will nod and say to ourselves, "Yup, it figured" as we read stories such as the one in the November 10 WALL STREET JOURNAL which cites a Veterans Administration study which tends to show that all those 70,000 heart bypass operations performed to reduce pain and permit the patient to live longer ...apparently aren't any better at extending life than drug treatments.

Surgeons are furious at this finding, of course. They see their big fees going down the tube.

Now I expect someday to see a report showing that the life expectancy of heart patients is better if they are treated with heavy doses of certain vitamins and live on a strict diet designed by a dedicated nutritionist.

Speaking of doctors, here's a LETTER FROM ED PRZASNYSKI, M.D.

6 Nov. 77

'I don't usually take time to write letters commenting on the absurdities and yes, horseshit coming out of the mouths of adult human beings. Three letters in SFR #23 bugged the hell out of me.

'First and foremost, who the hell is Avedon Carol? A doctor? A writer? Not that I really care, but he (she?) identifies him (her) self as a "professional" seeing patients. I'm not going to address the letter point by point because just to deal with one of the columns would take up as much space as her whole letter (which was so damned long, I thought it would never end.)'

((Avedon is a young woman, a fanzine editor, a feminist (I think) and her medical role or position is unclear to me, too.))

'Her letter makes several assumptions that simply do not make sense. Who, except Carol, ever said that doctors (their diagnoses, their therapeutic regimens) were supposed to be infallible. They're plain, sometimes egotistical, human beings like you, and, alas me! Unfortunately, they may be drug addicts, alcoholics, wife beaters and God-knows-what. What is more unfortunate is that when they make a mistake, another human being may suffer. In my opinion, they generally tend to be responsible individuals with a lofty sense of ethics and most do care about their patients. I get the

impression that Carol thinks there's some kind of conspiracy going on to kill, maim or dope everyone but the physicians themselves.

'As far as generalizations go, I counted ten in her letter when I stopped counting. Crap like "Eyesink proved that therapy does more harm than good" astounds me. What the hell is that supposed to mean? You put a defibrillator on a man's chest whose ventricles are quivering and restore a normal rhythm and because he wakes up bitching because of the burn on his chest, have you done him harm? Need I go on? Yes, I am a doctor, and damned proud of it. I'm not proud of everything that goes on in my profession, but who is? Lawyers? Science fiction writers? Enough!

'Someday, when I have time, maybe I'll be able to sell an SF story (that is, if I ever write one). God forbid that I should turn into a Harlan Ellison. Who the hell does he think he is? Talk about "biting hands...", he's trying to take the whole arm with it. Of course maybe Carol can rub vinegar on it and it'll grow back. "Up yours," Harlan, I just burned every book of yours I owned, and you can bet your sweet ass, I ain't buyin' no more. Bravo Bechtold! My "sense of wonder" wonders as the continuing stream of people like you and even, even Geis, who make science fiction (am I allowed to say that if front of Ellison?) worthwhile.

'Yours Truly, Slightly
Pissed Off But Calmed
Down Since I Got Some
Of It Off My Chest.

'P.S.: I do like SFR, even though you are sometimes as F.O.S. as I am, you speak your mind. By the way, if you don't publish my letter, my 300 lb. canary (I've x-rayed him twice and do yearly mammograms on him! [I think that's an inside joke]) will fly from Steelacoom to Portland and drop a turd on your house.'

((Umm, Ed, would you send your Canary down here anyway? And have him drop the turd on the compost heap out back? That much canary shit would be a Godsend.))

LETTER FROM ROBERT P. BARGER
Early November

'That you allowed Alter to rip-off my working title for my proposed space-going porno story (STAR

WHORES you remember) would be flattering but for the fact that, now, after it being printed in SFR, everyone will say 'you ripped that off from Alter's column in SFR! And not only that, but now I am sure I'll have problems selling the movie rights as well, seeing as how every damn body will try to get into the act with their own STAR WHORES versions. Oh well....

'The cover on SFR #23 could very well have been a scene from STAR WHORES for that matter. Fabian is fine, but when are you going to have another Grant Canfield cover?'

((I'd love another Canfield cover, but I can't print what I can't get from him.))

'I found the review of LORD KALVAN OF OTHERWHEN very interesting. I think a number of people have only recently discovered Piper's work -- I know I have, as well as a number of friends -- and know only a little about the man himself. It would be of great interest if sometime in the future you could run an article on H. Beam Piper.'

((I'll drink to that. If a good article shows up I'll buy it and print it. (And having written that, I'm pretty sure I'll get one!)))



LETTER FROM RANDALL LARSON,
EDITOR-PUBLISHER OF FANDOM UNLIMITED.

Nov. 5, 1977

'Thanks for SFR#23, which I've just received. I appreciate the review of FANDOM UNLIMITED #2 and 3, though I wish you would have mentioned more of the non-Cthulhu articles in each issue, as I think

it is these elements which will be mostly of interest to your readers. But my main comment is that FANDOM UNLIMITED #2 is still available, and not sold out as your review stated. It's F.U. #1, published in 1971, that is sold out and not available.'

11-16-77 Books and books and books and magazines have been piling in, so it is time, ladies and germs, to list 'em & comment on them (an opinion deposit when appropriate).

I have no idea how I'm going to get all these Comments/Reviews on the contents page. A separate page may be required. The problem is, of course, that some of these Comments are not reviews, and some are. Only Geis knows for sure.

ONWARD-----

RECEIVED: THE REEFS OF EARTH by R.A. Lafferty. Berkley 03565-4, \$1.50.

COMMENT: This was probably the first Lafferty novel I read, back in 1968, when it was first published. He has a strange, benign, droll savagery in his fiction. Lafferty is an alien writer posing as human.

DAMNATION ALLEY by Roger Zelazny. Berkley 03641-3, \$1.75.

COMMENT: An exploitation reprint to tie-in with the movie of the same name but not the same plot. This edition has 24 pages of b/w stills from the movie. Readers will have a hell of a time matching the pictures with the text.

I haven't seen the movie yet. When it gets to the 99¢ or \$1.25 theatres....

MIND SEARCH by Nicholas & June Regush. Berkley 03544-1, \$1.95.

COMMENT: An examination of mental phenomena and powers of all kinds. The Regushes are optimistic about the prospects for developments and explorations of mind. But they are not fools. Worth reading.

SOLO KILL by S. Kye Boulton. Berkley 03560-3, \$1.50.

COMMENT: Several years ago I was deeply impressed by an ANALOG short story by Sky Bolt, and I asked in SFR (or was it THE ALIEN CRITIC then?) who is this VERY GOOD writer? Now I know. This novel (linked short stories and novelets) is copyrighted in the name of William E. Cochrane.

ALPHA #8, Edited by Robert Silverberg. Anthology. Berkley 03561-1, \$1.50.

THE LAST CELT, a bio-bibliography of Robert E. Howard, by Glenn Lord. Berkely 03630-8, \$5.95. COMMENT: Book-size softcover, book paper. Originally published in hardcover by Donald Grant. This book contains just about all there is that is known about REH and his writings.

THE BEST OF ROBERT BLOCH, edited by Lester del Rey. Ballantine 25757, \$1.95. COMMENT: Actually, as del Rey's Introduction makes clear, and Bob Bloch's Afterword seconds, del Rey didn't "edit" this, in the sense of choosing the stories. Bob did the choosing.

This is a long, rich collection of Bob's sf and fantasy--- 22 stories of varying lengths and themes and styles. Very good. This one you should have. I have only one grunch: THERE SHOULD HAVE BEEN A LEFTY FEET STORY INCLUDED! Ancient slang and corny plots and all.

THE END OF THE MATTER by Alan Dean Foster. Ballantine 25861, \$1.75. COMMENT: The fourth of the Flinx and Pip adventures. The previous ones were: THE TAR-AIYM KRANG, ORPHAN STAR, and BLOODHYPE.

I am very tempted to start reading this series, if only because in recent years Alan Dean Foster has become a thorough-going top-rated professional writer, and, rumor-hath-it, is the writer chosen to ghost-write the novelization of STAR WARS for George Lucas.

MOON OF MUTINY by Lester del Rey. Ballantine 27119, \$1.50. Originally published in 1961.

THE WORM OUROBOROS by E. R. Eddison. Ballantine 27122, \$2.50. COMMENT: Written in the early 20's. Fantasy. Very Long. Archaic style... One of those classic books everyone has heard of and few have read, including me. But here's your chance; the book is now available.

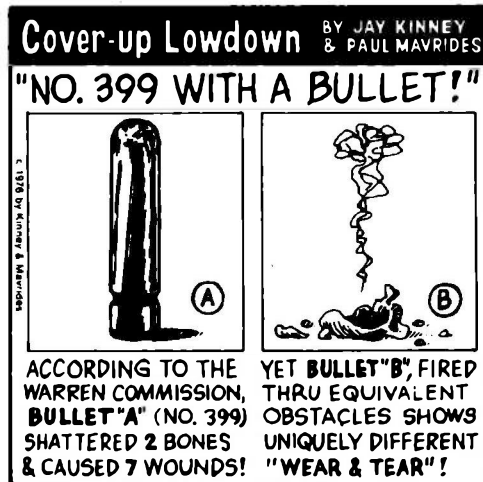
SEADEMONS by Laurence Yep. Harper & Row, \$8.95. Novel. Fantasy. COMMENT: The exquisite wrap-around dust jacket painting by Frazetta is almost worth the price of the book. I'll get to this one soon.

MONSTER SEX TALES, Vol.1, No.1
HORROR SEX TALES, Vol.1, No.1
WEIRD SEX TALES, Vol.1, No.1

LEGENDARY SEX TALES, Vol.1, No.1 Available from Valcour & Krueger, POB 4384, No. Park Station, San Diego, CA 92104. \$3.50 each, all four for \$10.

COMMENT: Originally published in 1972 by Gallery Press in West Los Angeles. 8-1/2 x 11, offset, color cover, heavy stock.

These are erotic/porno story magazines with lots of drawings and photos. The writing and the artwork is hack. But, for the collector of erotica and or sf marginalia, these are of interest. Also, the stories and the photos will give a guy a hard-on.



LETTER FROM DR. A.D. WALLACE
Mid-November, 1977

'Here is a thing that you might like to kick around in your old cut-and-slash manner: among a small group of elitist avant gardians there is a theory (or critical postulate) that a poem is a discourse on the poem itself, that poetry is a commentary on poetry, if you understand what they mean. Is Jack Vance's MASKE:THAERY a meditation on MASKE:THAERY?'

((No, the Work is not a commentary on itself; it is a commentary on the author and on the larger Form or genre, except, of course, in the case of sub-forms and similar frozen or liquid structures of literary endeavor...with the full understanding that the Author is not fully conscious of his role in the drama, except when the individual author is able to transcend the parameters and caoutchouc variables which rule the seavagram, in which case all bets are off the paramo is the best option, if you get the meaning of this paraleipsis of the 2nd order in the third magnitude of monogenetic thinking. Right? Of course. Anyone know THAT!))

LETTER FROM AUBREY MACDERMOTT
November 11, 1977

'The interview with Piers Anthony saddened me. He proves that the adoption agencies understood his problems better than he does today.

'The paragraph which describes the births of two girls, Penny and Chery, made me ill. Since I was the first live birth of four, my mother was just like Piers. My good fortune was that my brother's birth two years later made it impossible for my mother to continue, from sheer lack of time, to destroy my self-confidence by her neurotic over-protection and fear. Poor Penny is apparently not that fortunate.

'I understand Chery, for, like her, I became an over-achiever, reading books at the age of four, trying to say, "Look, I'm fine, I am not a cripple; treat me like a person."

'It is not strange that Piers should believe that his finely crafted novel is better than LeGuin's classic best seller, LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS. He is also an over-achiever, still crying, "Look at me, I'm the best."'

((Piers did not say he had tried adoption agencies, only that in his judgement the agencies would not have accepted he and his wife as suitable parents because of his vegetarianism and sf writing. Interesting long-distance psychoanalysis, though.))

LETTER FROM JOHN S. KELLY
11-8-77

'You want Doom and Gloom? A recent news article in a local paper claims there are now approximately 1.8 million different man-made chemicals floating around in the environment. And this coming at a time when Long Island (my local "environment") has had steady, unrelenting rain for nine days with resultant flooding. Those close on nigh 2 million artificial chemicals combined with the other natural chemicals all mixed in one hell of a stew and where's the surprise that the weather is all fucked up?'

((John, you don't appreciate the Grand Overall Plan: that stew of intermixed chemicals and rain is destined, someday, to produce, one hot summer, an alien life-form which will supplant humanity. We are the civilizational Dr. Franken-

stein, you see, and we are busily creating the monster who/which will destroy us. But not to worry: not in our lifetimes.))

LETTER FROM ALEXIS GILLILAND

Nov. 13, 1977

'Just back from Philcon, where several people told me they liked my stuff in SFR 23. Lucky for you it was waiting for me when I got home.

'Karl Pflock is correct about the angels dancing on a pinhead. A question the scholastics did discuss, however, was: given a man who was a cannibal, eating human flesh exclusively, for all his life, what would happen to him on Judgement Day when all his atoms were detailed to other resurrections?'

((Wouldn't he be credited with the amount of flesh he was born with? Or does that go to his mother and father? Or would he have to go around digging up all his past bowel movements?

I feel faintly ridiculous.))

'Ellison's reply to Bechtold is a model of restraint and lucidity. Ellison 17, Bechtold 3.'

LETTER FROM DICK TRTEK

14 November 1977

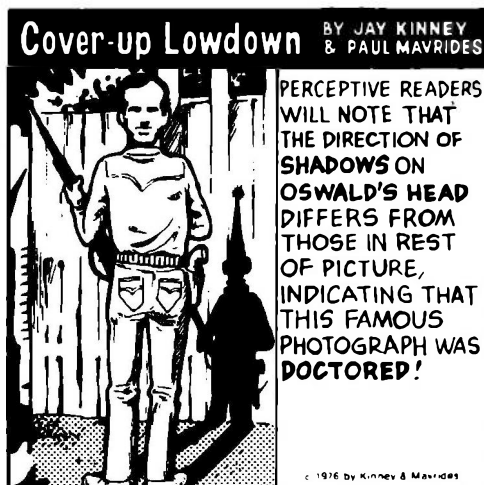
'Mark Mansell's discussion of the Conan glut was accurate as far as it went, but I feel it tended to implicitly cast blame on mass-market publishing firms while not going far enough in castigating the questionable performances of many fan publishers. ((By 'fan' Dick means small-press specialty hardback publishers.)) The issue of legalities and ethics aside, which admittedly is a big aside, the surge of paperbacks from Bantam, Ace and Berkley will presumably spur renewed interest by the general reading public for sword & sorcery fiction and thereby open the door to "new talent," rather than leading to its neglect, as Mark indicates.

'If there is a problem with "new blood," it is the fan publishers, in my view, who deserve the scolding. They deserve blame for printing trashy, sometimes barely readable work by Howard, their only justification being that the story or fragment was written by REH. They deserve blame for publishing new stories which are often little more than caricature-ridden attempts at pastiche, with excessive degrees of graphic vio-

lence and gore. And, in the case of Grant Books especially, they deserve blame for wasting valuable time and effort in producing lavish clothbound volumes which, in the end, are redundant and of less literary value than other projects which they might undertake instead. In short, with a few exceptions, these people show little capacity for good editorial judgement or originality.'

((Since the specialty publishers do not get multi-thousand dollar subsidies from concerned fans like yourself who do not put their money where their mouths are, the publishers make their judgements on what experience has told them sells. As long as collectors and REH enthusiasts are willing to pay for very fine editions of REH writings, publishers will serve them.

((Anyone with ten thousand dollars is free to test his editorial judgement in the Market. Many expensive educations are acquired in this way.))



'Finally, I seriously doubt Mark's assertion that "deserving talent" is really being overlooked in the S&S field. Consider the four names mentioned. Fritz Leiber is hardly a neglected writer; he has achieved a wide popular following and critical acclaim, and deservedly so. He has sold professionally for a generation and will no doubt continue to do so. Meanwhile, the remaining trio on Mark's endangered list frankly deserve the neglect they allegedly suffer.

'Karl Wagner's talent, if he has any, does not manifest itself in his Kane stories.

'Darrell Schweitzer's pieces are lurching mechanical pastiches drawn on tracing paper, with an ac-

companying absence of vitality and creativity.

'Charles Saunders can perhaps most charitably be described as a literary bozo.

'The problem is not that talented writers are being neglected, it is rather that many of those writing, or trying to write, in the S&S genre simply stink. This is due, as indicated in the previous paragraph, partly to the slipshod job performed by editors of fan and semi-professional magazines.

'To move to other portions of SFR 23, R.A. Wilson's reviews of the Leary book and its wild-eyed companions was very funny to read. It was great comic relief. To the extent that Wilson actually believes shit like that, he is a great comic relief.

'The Bechtold-Ellison exchange was rather pointless. Bechtold came on with the kind of mawkish, I'm-a-suffering-talent-here-have-a-piece-of-my-ear sentiment that I have always associated with, of all people, Ellison himself. In turn, Ellison more than adequately defended his stand on the labelling of his stories as sf. It should be noted, though, that he never mentioned, let alone answered, the matter of the contract, which precipitated the whole tangle in the first place.'

((It is well-known that Harlan often overloads himself with work and sometimes simply cannot meet his obligations. He does not deliberately do this, and he is a very honest, ethical man: when he gets screwed he keeps a mental record and eventually gets even. AND when he has to default on a promise or a contract he will (and I have seen this side of him, personally!) make amends sooner or later, often doing far more in compensation than the original agreement called for.))

'The many interviews were nice, though some were reprints. In the matter of reprinting material from other sources less widely distributed, I think it's a good idea and should be continued.

'The capsule reviews were handled reasonably well; Steve Brown's in particular were models of criticism in twenty-five words or less. Schweitzer's column was adequate, though he spent far too much space on the WHISPERS anthology, and that review in particular read more like an annotated table

GLIMPSES OF THE THIRD WORLD FANTASYCON



I was decidedly anxious as the Halloween weekend approached. This was my first con and I wasn't sure I was up to driving the Los Angeles freeways. I drove to the L.A. International Airport to pick up Karl Edward Wagner, a long-time correspondent. I found Karl and his lovely wife, Barbara, but finding the hotel was something else. After an hour we finally arrived at the Atlantean opulence of the Biltmore Hotel.

After registering, Karl, Barbara and I went up to his suite and met a friend of his along the way, Stephen Jones, the editor of the excellent British semi-prozine FANTASY TALES. As Karl got settled, I went down to that legendary fixture of any con, the huckster's room.

You must understand that I had never been to a con, I'd never realized what a huckster's room really was. That was probably why I stood goggle-eyed and open-mouthed as I saw the books and magazines that I had often heard of, but despaired of ever owning. I forget how much time I spent in the huck-

ster's room, but I finally emerged with a lot of books, having spent more money than I could afford (and would have probably spent more if I'd had it).

The hour was pretty late and after I attended a lecture/panel discussion on Tolkein's SILMARILION (the only panelist I remember was Marion Zimmer Bradley), I then went to claim my car before the parking lot closed leaving me stranded. The drive home was in a dream.

Second day: I overslept, so I missed a couple of panels that I wanted to attend. I arrived in time for the Fantasy Publishing Panel with Lester del Rey, Horace Gold, Jim Frenkel, Dave Hartwell, Jim Baen and a lady whose name I can't remember.

The gist of the discussion was that fantasy was more marketable than ever before, often rivalling straight science fiction.

Afterwards, Richard Matheson, Ray Bradbury, Robert Bloch, Harlan Ellison and Kirby McCauley discussed Dark Fantasy, the gloomy underside of the fantasy field: horror. A variety of topics were kicked around, with Harlan Ellison being his usual witty, intelligent self, Robert Bloch being charming and funny, Bradbury being a bit nostalgic and Matheson and McCauley being largely forgotten in the shuffle.

A panel on Epic Fantasy followed with Karl Edward Wagner, Fritz Leiber, Poul Anderson, H. Warner Munn and Paul Zimmer. Not as much discussion as Dark Fantasy, but it did provide quite a bit of information about the au-

thors and their works.

I then went over to see Austin and Ossman of the Firesign Theater present "Everything You Know is Wrong", a very strange film.

With my bag full of books to be autographed, I went to a Meet the Artists reception where George Barr, Alicia Austin, Michael Whelan, Tom Barber and a few others congregated.

I actually saw Harlan Ellison close up. I asked him to autograph a few books and he was very gracious in doing so. His PR and fan reputation had left me expecting someone who would chew up a fan--books and all--for bothering him. Never judge an Ellison by his reputation is my rule for the day. He managed to radiate an aura of intelligence and charm while trying to outbid Michael Whelan for some pieces of sculpture.

I followed the crowd to the autograph party sponsored by Heavy Metal Magazine and Alternate World Records. Seeing so many authors in the flesh tended to make me giddy, so I went to the bar and ordered a Shirley Temple while Ellison kept asking Roy Torgeson to bring over some drinks to the autograph table.

Following the crowd again, I rushed to a front row seat for the readings. First Harlan Ellison read two of his as yet unpublished stories that shared the common theme of revenge. An incredibly brilliant and spirited reading. He should be acting, I kept thinking. He's a master of expression in voice and features. Fritz Leiber then read Clark Ashton Smith's "A Night in Malneut", capturing the eerie gloom of the story. Again, the applause was overwhelming. I went home filled with images I cannot yet sort clearly.

Third and final day: I arrived to hear Donald Sydney-Fryer read Clark Ashton Smith's gigantic poem, "The Hashish-Eater". Personally I wouldn't try to read a fifteen-page poem for anything, especially one containing Smith's exotic words.

At last the awards banquet. I suddenly felt foolish for not wearing a suit. Finally, the long-awaited moment came. Gahan Wilson,

By Mark Mansell

the toastmaster, talked about many of the famous personages seated in the crowd. Robert Bloch came to the podium and gave a brilliantly witty introduction to Richard Matheson. Matheson, the Guest of Honor, gave a long speech about what and who influenced him in the field of fantasy and horror.

At last the awards were announced. The winners and also-rans are listed below: (*=Winner)

BEST NOVEL:

*DOCTOR RAT

By William Kotzwinkle
THE DOLL WHO ATE HIS MOTHER
By Ramsey Campbell

THE DRAGON AND THE GEORGE

By Gordon R. Dickson

THE SAILOR ON THE SEAS OF FATE

By Michael Moorcock

THE ACTS OF KING ARTHUR AND HIS NOBLE KNIGHTS

By John Steinbeck

DARK CRUSADE

By Karl Edward Wagner

BEST SHORT FICTION:

*"There's a Long, Long Trail

A-Winding" By Russel Kirk;

"The Companion" By Ramsey Campbell

"Dark Wings" By Fritz Leiber;

"What is Life?" By Robert Sheckley

"Two Suns Setting" By Karl Edward Wagner

BEST COLLECTION:

*FRIGHTS, Kirby McCauley, editor;

LONG AFTER MIDNIGHT, Ray Bradbury;

SUPERHORROR, Ramsey Campbell, ed.;

CINNABAR, Edward Bryant;

THE HEIGHT OF THE SCREAM, Ramsey Campbell;

FLASHING SWORDS #3, Lin Carter, ed.

SPECIAL AWARD--PRO:

*Alternate World Recordings;

Arkham House;

Ballantine Books;

Daw Books;

Edward L. Ferman

SPECIAL AWARD NON-PRO:

*WHISPERS, Stuart David Schiff;

CHACAL, Arnie Fenner;

MIDNIGHT SUN, Gary Hoppenstand;

Jonathan Bacon;

Nils Hardin;

Harry Morris

BEST ARTIST:

*Roger Dean

George Barr

Steve Fabian

Tim Kirk

Michael Whelan

LIFE ACHIEVEMENT:

*Ray Bradbury

Jorge Luis Borges

L. Sprague De Camp

Frank Belknap Long

H. Warner Munn

E. Hoffman Price

Manly Wade Wellman

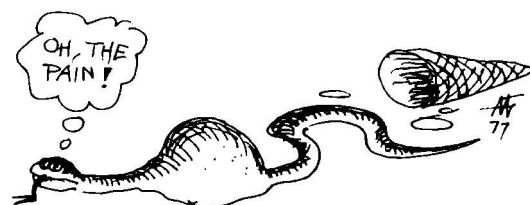
I was rather nonplussed since I hadn't read the winning novel, short fiction or collection at the time of the awards or even heard of the best artist. I'm glad I didn't have to select the special awards or life achievement award since they were all worthy choices. The awards--Easter Islandish busts of Howard P. Lovecraft--were passed out amidst congratulatory applause. Slowly the crowd broke up and went its separate ways.

For the record, the judges were: Robert Bloch, David Drake, Harlan Ellison, Charles L. Grant and Robert Weinberg.

The next fantasycon will be held in Fort Worth, Texas near Robert E. Howard's home country.

In closing, I'd like to thank everyone who made my first convention so memorial, whether through friendship or kindnesses made knowingly or unknowingly: Karl and Barbara Wagner, Stephen Jones, Harlan Ellison, Fritz Leiber, Roy Torgeson, H. Warner Munn and Donald Sydney-Fryer. You all may not remember my name or why I'm thanking you, but each in your own way made it a very special weekend for me by being very special people. Thanks.

***** I'M FILING A COMPLAINT AGAINST AGEIST SEXIST AND WITCHIST DISCRIMINATION! *****



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ALIEN THOUGHTS CONT. FROM P. 35

of contents than true criticism.

'As for artwork, the Fabian cover was easily the best he's done for SFR. Of late, frankly, I thought the covers had been pretty mediocre, but this latest was superb. The only complaint is an annoying lack of nipples.

'The Gilliland cartoons were all very good as usual; the Kinney and Mavrides "Cover-up Lowdown" less so, though the one on page 24 concerning the Kennedy assassination was perhaps the funniest item in the whole issue, R.A. Wilson notwithstanding.

'Most profound illustration was undoubtedly that on page 68 by Stiles. I don't know if it is intended to be a part of a permanent logo for the Brown column, but it should be.'

*((It is a permanent logo il-
lo. Thanks for your comments.))*

LETTER FROM DAVID TRUESDALE

11-12-77

'Here's a little ditty you may find amusing:

My days of youth are over
My torch of light is out
What used to be my sex appeal
Is now my water spout.

Time was when of its own accord

It would from my trousers
spring
But now I have a full-time job
To find the stupid thing.

It used to be embarrassing
The way it would misbehave
For nearly every morning
It stood and watched me shave.

But as old age approaches
It sure gives me the blues
To see it hang its withered
head
And watch me shine my shoes.'

*((Hmmp!! What a lousy thing to
send to a man of my advancing
years. Rubbing it in. Just be-
cause I used to be a tri-weekly
man, went to try-weekly, and am
now at the try weakly stage....))*

11-20-77 Received: LUCIFER'S HAMMER by Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle. Playboy Press, \$10.

COMMENT: I put aside a good book to begin reading this and got hooked. Got restless around pg.100 as the authors--probably Jerry---

couldn't resist a lot of special pleading for the space program. But it begins to pick up steam as the comet nears Earth. I drool. Film at eleven.

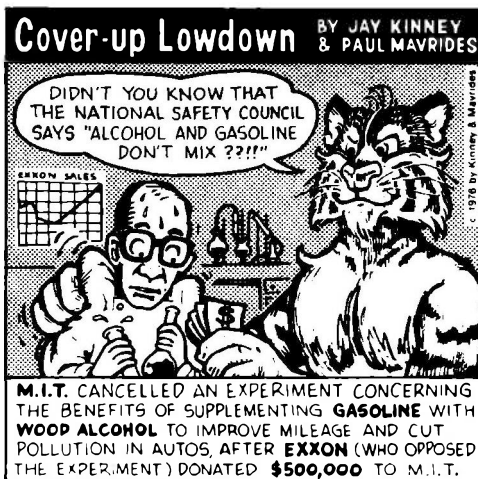
RIVETS, a MicroGame (#5) from Meta-gaming. RIVETS is a two-player tactical robot combat game. \$2.95

STRANGE GLORY, edited by Gerry Goldberg. St. Martin's Press, \$5.95.

COMMENT: An anthology on the theme of Awakening Man's Latent Powers. Prose, poetry and lots of artwork; lots of Finlay and Fabian, Bok. Big size quality paperback format.

THE GOLDEN SWORD by Janet E. Morris. Bantam 11276-7, \$1.95.

COMMENT: On the backcover it says, 'The continuing adventures of the most beautiful and erotic courtesan in the galaxies of tomorrow.' Promises, promises....



STAR TREK Photo Novel #3: "The Trouble With Tribbles". Bantam 11347-X, \$1.95.

LOGAN'S WORLD by William F. Nolan. Bantam 11418-2. \$1.75.

COMMENT: The sequel to LOGAN'S RUN as discussed by Nolan in SFR 22.

THE YEAR'S BEST FANTASY STORIES:3 Edited by Lin Carter. DAW UW1338 \$1.50.

COMMENT: Interesting Introduction and valuable Appendix listing best fantasy books for 1976, fantasy anthologies, important reprints, and recommended non-fiction and related items.

STORMBRINGER by Michael Moorcock. DAW UW1335, \$1.50.

COMMENT: This is the final, sixth novel in the Elric saga; Storm-bringer is the name of his terrifying sword.

DYING OF THE LIGHT by George R. R. Martin. Simon & Shuster, \$9.95.

COMMENT: His much anticipated major novel.

MURGUNSTRUMM And OTHERS by Hugh B. Cave. Published by Carcosa, Box 1064, Chapel Hill, NC 27514, \$15. COMMENT: Short story collection, dozens of major illustrations by Lee Brown Coye. In the 'weird menace' genre, mostly from the 30's. A handsome, loving, hardcover production.

LETTER FROM ALEXIS GILLILAND

Nov. 13, 1977

'Just back from Philcon where several people told me they liked my stuff in SFR 23. Lucky for you it was waiting for me when I got home.

'Karl Pflock is correct about the angels dancing on a pinhead. A question the scholastics did discuss, however, was: given a man who was a cannibal, eating human flesh exclusively, for all his life, what would happen to him on Judgement Day when all his atoms were detailed to other resurrections?'

((I didn't realize atoms had names attached to them. Does this mean we should store all our bowel movements and save all our urinations? All our hair? Clippings? Snot? Semen? Vaginal fluid? Hmm, this is getting awkward. How far is a deeply religious person expected to go?))

LETTER FROM GLENN T. WILSON

((A letter he sent to FORTUNE.))

Nov. 7, 1977

'The pension plans' problems should be looked at as over-promising rather than under-funding. ("Those Pension Plans are Even Weaker Than You Think," November, 1977).

'In economic reality, the promises to the pensioners of A.D. 2004 (which is when I, now 38, will reach age 65) will have to be paid for by the labor of those younger people, some of them still unborn, alive and working in A.D. 2004 (plus the industrial capital built up by then).

'If we manage to overcome the energy crisis and continue produc-

tivity growth, those promises can be paid off. If we don't, there won't be enough economic resources to go around among the productive younger people, let alone enough to support useless older folk.

'The situation is even more chancy than this. Suppose instead of the bad news of energy depletion, we get the good news of medical progress, lengthening our life-spans through conquest of cancer, heart disease, etc. (After all, those medical researchers ought to have achieved something by A.D. 2004, after all those billions we've been shelling out).

'This good news would make it completely impossible to meet pension obligations, since all pension plans are based on the actuarial assumptions that a lot of the pensioners will die only a few years after retirement (or, better yet from an actuary's point of view, keel over at age 65 after contributing a lot and collecting nothing).

'The discussion is getting into the realm of science fiction at this point; but the price of immortality, economically, might well be endless work.'

((Your letter perfectly illustrates the Nasty Surprise that do-gooder government people often have visited upon them--and upon those they have socially engineered. There are ALWAYS CONSEQUENCES, and I'd like to see a mandatory social/environmental impact statement for every proposed new law in every legislature. Lots of luck.))

LETTER FROM DAVID PETTUS

11-13-77

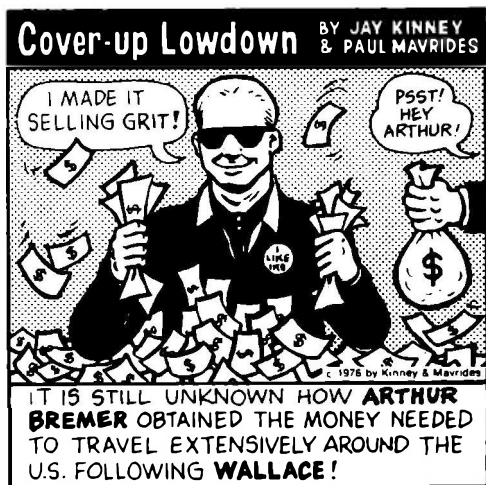
'I'd like to respond to Harlan Ellison's letter which appeared in issue #23. Within the context of that letter Mr. Ellison asserts, "...I intend to insist in all my book contracts that the words 'science fiction' do not appear on volumes of my work---chiefly because I do not write sf and thus feel it is dishonest advertising to say that's what it is---".

'Now, I suppose you could call this an open letter to Mr. Ellison, although I don't actually expect Mr. Ellison to respond to it---I'm nobody and I know it. Also, I very much respect Mr. Ellison's right to do what he pleases with regard to his book contracts. Nonetheless, an obvious question does come to mind... If Mr. Ellison is so concerned about misrepresenting his works as sci-

ence fiction (and, ergo, himself as a science fiction writer) then why in hell does he make a habit of accepting the Hugo and Nebula awards for best sf short story, novella, etc. of the year? Indeed, why does he attend and, oftentimes, appear as guest of honor at science fiction conventions across the country?'

((That is a question often asked. I suppose the answer is that it is nice to have your cake and eat it, too. It might also be asked why convention committees keep asking him?))

((It occurs to me that with the success of STAR WARS and upcoming other major sf movies, it may soon be an advantage to have a book labeled 'science fiction.'))



NOTE FROM GRANT CANFIELD

Mid-November, 1977

'I haven't been very active the past year. An upcoming letter-substitute will explain why. But I seem to be getting back to drawing fan-art, at least.'

((Good to hear from you again, Grant. If all goes well, a Canfield cover will appear on SFR this year.))

LETTER FROM GEORGE WARREN

'Goddam SFR came in right in the middle of what was supposed to have been a heavy work day and fucked it up gloriously. I cannot get back into the Mormons in 1884 for the life of me. Suppose I will have to read the son of a bitch all the way through; from the look of the things I dipped into it is one of the best I've seen in a long time.

'Do tell Gretchen Rix, if she hasn't caught on already, that Darth Vader was two people. The body was David Prouse, a Brit musician picked for his size and bulk, and the voice was indeed (unmistakeably) James Earl Jones; Lucas blabbed about this in a recent ROLLING STONE. However, he did not blab why Jones chose to have his name off the masthead. Jeez, what's the matter with playing a heavy in a thriller? Some of the best actors in the racket have done that kind of work at one time or another; the heavy, of course, always gets the best lines and the best play. For my dough Crown always stole the show from Porgy, for instance, just as Edgar Barrier and George Macready always used to steal the show from Tarzan, for excellent reasons.

'All sorts "reviews" (including TIME's) out by now of CLOSE ENCOUNTERS... but none of them convinces me that the writer has seen anything more than stills from the flick. I think it hasn't been prescreened for anyone inside or outside the industry; there are rumors that (although the thing opens here next week) the finished print has yet to be completed. Hmmm. The hype is huge and overdone. It sounds like a pretentious loser, but I will go to see it anyhow. I could be wrong, and I hope I am.

'Gilliland, throughout, continues to be brilliant and funny as hell. Why no Hugo? And thankew for reprinting the Silverberg pieces; I noticed them when they came in for review and they made me rethink a lot of my opinions about Silverberg; he now strikes me as a thoughty and generous sort of gent.

'Fabian's cover is jolly fun. Bless him.'

((Fan cartoonists have a much harder time winning a Hugo than "straight" sf illustrators---just as comedians hardly ever win an Oscar. But I have a sneaking suspicion that perhaps this year Alexis will come very close---if not actually win.))

LETTER FROM BILL WARREN

Mid-November, 1977

'To clear up the Dave Prouse/James Earl Jones business concerning STAR WARS once and for all.

'Dave Prouse is a large weight-lifter type from England. He played Patrick Magee's houseboy at the end of A CLOCKWORK ORANGE,

and also appeared as Frankenstein's Monster in the Hammer movies, THE HORROR OF FRANKENSTEIN and FRANKENSTEIN AND THE MONSTER FROM HELL (that's two separate monsters, by the by; one was assembled by Ralph Bates, the other by good ol' Peter Cushing). He appeared as various knights and menaces in JABBERWOCKY and MONTY PYTHON AND THE HOLY GRAIL, as well.

'He played Darth Vader. That is, he was in the costume. They did not use his voice because a) he's not much of an actor, just physically the right type; b) his voice is quite high-pitched; c) he has a thick Scottish burr.

'Like Gretchen Rix, I thought at first the dubbed-in voice was that of Sean Connery, but have been told quite authoritatively that it is James Earl Jones. The reason he is not billed is because he wanted lots more money if they were to trade on his reputation to---ahem---help the film at the box office. At least, that's what he apparently said before the film was released; I think now he's probably sorry he did that. So that's the final line: you see David Prowse and you hear James Earl Jones.

'Don't know if anyone's pointed this out, or if it's of any consequence, but many fans and fringe-fans worked on STAR WARS. Most are movie freaks who are primarily fond of monster and sf movies---yes, Forrie's brigade, in a sense. For instance, Luke Skywalker himself (Mark Hamill) told me he sent his photo to Forry over and over in various makeups, hoping one would get printed in FAMOUS MONSTERS. He declared his favorite magazine to be CINEFANTASTIQUE, and has been to most local cons in LA for years. The latter is also true of Charley Lippincott, the film's publicist (and the source of the free tickets you got). George Lucas has read sf for years, and especially likes Harry Harrison. On the crew of the film, you can find the name of Dennis Muren (as 2nd cameraman, miniature and optical effects unit), who directed EQUINOX and has been a local fan and con-goer for years. June Berg and Phil Tippet, who did the animation of the board game aboard Han Solo's ship are local fans of long standing. Likewise, Rick Baker, who built many of the monsters in the cantina and also played the title role in the remake of KING KONG, has been coming to cons for years. I've met all these guys in years past just hanging around the Ackermansion.

'On CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE

THIRD KIND, which is very good, Dennis Muren again worked, photographing the model of the mother ship. Greg Jein, who built the models, has always been found at local cons with his miniatures of spaceships and other special effects stuff. (They, and most of the people mentioned above, also worked on FLESH GORDON...)

'When it was pointed out to Steven Spielberg that he was standing near Forry Ackerman, he became very excited and claimed to have a complete set of FAMOUS MONSTERS, and used to cut Forry's picture out of them to paste in a scrapbook. He said, "George Lucas is almost as big a fan of yours as I am."

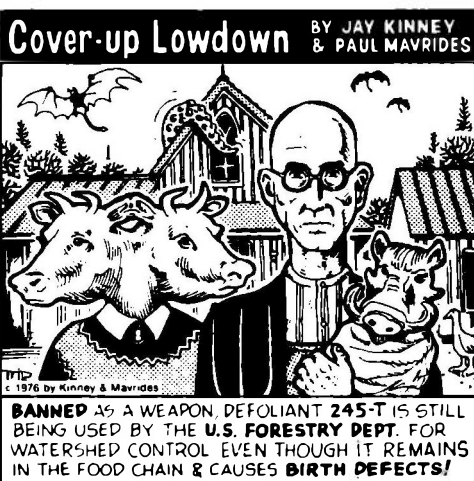
'And these are the kids that people at cons used to want to toss out on their ears....

'Would it sound lame if I said I think SFR is excellent and always has been? My life would be a little more empty without it.

'P.S.: Say hello to Oregon.'

((Thanks very much for the inside and background info.

((Oregon says hello back and hopes you'll visit sometime. Right now a very early and unusual snow storm has dumped five inches on western Oregon---first deep snow we've had in seven or eight years. Something funny going on with the weather....mutter, mutter....))



CARD FROM MIKE GLICKSOHN

Nov. 22, 1977 (received)

'I got home five minutes ago and found SFR 23. I have quickly skimmed through it, reading perhaps 0.001% of it but I did look at page 82 where you list the Hugo nominees and winners from Suncon.

'Tell me, Dick...

'Does this mean you don't love me anymore?'

((Of course I still love you, Mike! How could I forget those lovely nights when--- er... I see what bothers you. I inadvertently neglected to list you as a nominee for Best Fan Writer. Very sorry! I hope it didn't make you feel like a non-person, somehow written out of fandom, not knowing why...a weird Kafkaesque shiver running through your flesh...))

LETTER FROM ORSON SCOTT CARD

17 November, 1977

'Does anybody care about news from utterly unknown and obscure sf writers? My first novel, HOT SLEEP: THE WORTHING CHRONICLE, will be one of the first ANALOG books (with Baronet and Ace); the hard-back will be out in April. The book is (sigh) another telepathy story. And another colonization story. And another decline and fall of an empire story. All that in one little book---how can it lose?'

((Easily. A good sf novel is not the product of sf themes combined; you must have used them in the right combination and written well. I'm looking forward to seeing your novel, and congratulations!))

'I've picked up about two dozen other fanzines, and set them down again after a quick read. Yours is the only one I've found whose back issues deserve rereading, though of course LOCUS' current issue is also valuable. If the test of time is what separates the literature from the dross, then you're producing literature. You should be ashamed...'

((No, no, I write prose doggeral and idle musings. If this be literature....we're all in trouble here in River City.))

'PS: I don't know anybody who can tell me. Do you pronounce your name guise or guice or jeez or jize?'

((Guice. I have a hard G and rhyme with vice.))

ALIEN THOUGHTS CONT. ON P. 55

WHEN YOU'RE GOD YOU HAVE CERTAIN RESPONSIBILITIES.
ONE OF THEM IS THE APPLICATION OF TOTAL DESTRUCTION.

---Bill Rotsler, KTEIC

THE ALTER-EGO VIEWPOINT

"LET'S GET TO IT, GEIS! HAND ME the first victim!"

Yes, yes....here it is, Alter. It would be an act of mercy if you didn't review this---

"Nonsense! Aha. ACTS OF MERCY by Bill Pronzini & Barry Malzberg. Putnam's, \$8.95. Not science fiction. A psycho-thriller. What happens if a paranoid schizo is triggered in the President's immediate official and personal family? Important People start to be murdered..."

You have to admit, Alter, you didn't guess the identity of the killer. The denouement came as a surprise.

"True, Geis, true. But this is a thin novel, adroitly padded to the required length. We have, plotwise, a novelet here, with highly skimmable characterization, introspection, and lotsa shorty chapters which use up lotsa pages."

Yes, but you didn't guess the identity of the killer.

"I would have if the authors had played fair! There is no clue I can recall which tipped that some of the viewpoint characters are in fact figments of the killer's mind. The real characters and the fake ones are indistinguishable to the reader. Foul! Dirty Plotting! Penalty of bad review and deservedly low sales."

Wouldn't you even advise picking it up if it gets published as a pocketbook?

"Ohh, okay. Maybe it's worth a buck-fifty. It is a quick, dishonest read, and that may be a virtue on a plane, bus or train."

What do you intend for this book, Alter? UP THE WALLS OF THE WORLD by James Tiptree, Jr.?

"I intend to praise it, Geis, not bury it. The lady behind the pseudonym is a hell of a writer! Only 'Tiptree' could use an 'up the stakes' sf plot---a dark, cloud-like alien entity of immense size and power, an alien species who are telepathic, who live in the winds of a strange planet, and a group of humans with psi talent who are being used by the govt. in secret communication tests on Earth.

"The nebulous alien is a maverick from his intergalactic species who are intent on a universe-wide

mission to save the sevagram.

"The manta-like wind/atmosphere aliens on the planet Tyree are living near-ideal lives (except for sexism ---and an interesting double-reverse sexism it is, too).

"And the Earth group are a bunch of misfits, neurotics, and Losers---mind-damage cases all, but with these wild talents.

"Come to think, the gas-cloud alien entity is a brain-damage case itself. It's blundering about causing suns to go nova and wiping out civilizations left and right."

This kind of macro-concept sf is not your cup of tea, is it, Alter?

"Not unless it is made very real and plausible. Tiptree doesn't make this plot very credible, but she has this immense ability to make her characters REAL, to make the reader care! And so when the sun of Tyree goes nova the reader is hurting as much as the very "human" aliens. The reader identification quotient is tremendous, the empathy level very intense.

Even so, Alter, I thought---

"Whocares what you think, Geis? Stop interrupting.

"Now, the Tyreeans have been experimenting with a mental beam which permits them to send their minds across space to "dispossess" humans---to change bodies. When they learn their world is doomed some of them want to change places with humans in order to save their children and themselves. Other Tyreeans call this 'life crime' and oppose it.

"But the desperate ones prevail and the psi-talent group of humans is dispossessed into Tyreean bodies and fated to die on the radiation/heat doomed planet."

I thought the aliens adjusted too quickly to the "alien" human bodies and world, and feel the humans also adjusted incredibly well to the Tyreean corpus and culture. It was too convenient for the author.

"Right for once, Geis. A plot sin most sf authors are guilty of. It may be the intellectual's disease---the willingness to think he/she is pure mind, divorcable from mere matter with no problems.



"That's what happens to those 'souls' caught in the mind beam between Earth and Tyree when it collapses due to interference by the vast alien entity. They are lost in space yet somehow survive and travel to the nearest source of sustenance---the dark destroyer itself.

"One human mind---a warped black woman---establishes herself in the "control room" of the vast entity and eventually provokes/educates the vast creature into saving the doomed souls on Tyree.

"The story goes on from there and becomes ever more magic-science fiction. [Too much sf nowadays is what might be called wish-reality sf, or surrealistic sf. Fantasy with sf furniture in the rooms.

"But again, the emotional power of this book is its salvation. And the thought lurks that with very little trouble in the way of plot alteration and nomenclature, this novel could have been set entirely on Earth, with the mind-beam between an endangered group of Borneo natives and the psi-group in America. I suspect the cloud-intelligence and the vast distances and etc. are set decorations for a lesson in equal rights and Love Thy Neighbor."

Let me add that this is a Putnam's book, costs \$8.95 in hardback and is likely worth it. And this is "Tiptree's" first novel.

Want to review another book, Alter?

"I do, Geis, but I suspect we're out of room. I will say this, though, about LOGAN'S WORLD by William F. Nolan (Bantam 11418-2, \$1.75.) --- a fast-paced, vivid, detailed, commercial, cliff-hanging 'sf adventure'. Sci-fi at its best."

THE WILLIS ISSUE OF WARHOON

Once upon a time, long before Charles Platt had a pie thrown at Ted White, there were other forms of fannish humor.

It was said lightly in that luminous era that "the pun is mightier than the sword" and fans were willing to build the first bridges of good will across the Atlantic in proof of that proposition.

Much of that humor was created by Walter A. Willis and its inspiration created a mood

which came to be known as Sixth Fandom. It was a time of Tucker Hotels, and Enchanted Duplicators, and fanzines devoted to punctuation marks and fannish greetings.

Once upon a time there was a fanzine named Warhoon whose editor planned an issue which would be composed largely of the writing of Walter A. Willis and who is just now getting perplexed by this idiotic style into which he has wandered.

If we can skip from the pumpkin without changing into a magic slipper (I look terrible in magic slippers) it seems the Necromonicon of Fandom has finally materialized in the plane of existence we laughingly inhabit.

Warhoon 28, comprising some 600 pages and years of my life, can now be described: it contains all 44 installments of "The Harp That Once Or Twice" (the famous column Willis wrote for Quandry, Oopsla, Warhoon, and Quark from 1951 to 1969), "The Harp Stateside" (Walt was imported by US fandom in 1952 and this was his report on that trip, you may recall), "...Twice Upon A Time" (the never before assembled account of the 1962 trip to the US whose new title came into existence when the editor recalled the last line of "The Harp Stateside"), "The Enchanted Duplicator" (Jophan's Quest and what he learned on his way to the Tower of TruFandom), "The Harp In England I & II" (the early convention reports which completely renovated the form), as well as an additional three reports on British conventions of the 50s, "I Remember Me" (100 pages of memoirs and opened letters by the man who knew where all the skeletons were closeted), "The Slant Story" (or how to go quietly mad: one letter press at a time), "Willis In Slant" (a selection from the EoFannish Willis including the complete text of Slant #1), "Willis Discovers America" (the way Walt thought it was going to be before he set foot on the Neptunia) is in here, too, as well as nine other articles comprising an appendix, of sorts, that covers some topics not otherwise touched on (oddly enough) in the other 500 pages.

Also crammed in are Harry Warner's "A Wealth of Fable" (his biography of Willis which was his first use of the title: not his wonderful fan history volume), Peter Graham's "Inside The Harp Stateside" (some observations on the Willis style and his relationship to fandom and fans), "The Night I Went To Barcelona By Way Of Donaghadee" (an account by Tom Perry of a visit to the Willises in 1976 which brings us up to date on things IFen), an eight page bibliography of Willis writing — an amazing amount of which did not find its way into the issue, and 70 pages of color art by Lee Hoffman, Arthur Thomson, Bob Shaw, James White, Shelby Vick, and the editor (reproduced in offset by none other than the John S. Swift Planograph Company — one of the bete noires of "The Enchanted Duplicator").

The WASH (Warhoon 28) has hardcover binding, gold stamping, and everything but a magic wand (come to think of it, it does contain one: one named Contact).

Well, since we're back in the land of elves, gnomes and stylists, I might as well mention that Contact seems to have waved over the future of Warhoon, too, and inspired the exhumation of the old thing. On, I hope, a slightly more frequent schedule than has been the case in recent decades. Warhoon 29 is also available featuring material by Tom Perry, Patrick Hayden, and Bob Shaw (more or less) for 50¢ or trade. The WASH being a bit more ambitious in scope is priced at \$20 while the supply lasts. After that you'll have to haunt the subterranean world of forgotten fanzine dealers where your treasure chest is worth more than your life: even if it only contains 50¢.

Richard Bergeron, 11 East 68th Street, New York City, New York, 10021, U.S.A.

OTHER VOICES, OTHER VOICES, OTHER VOICES, OTHER

THE FORBIDDEN TOWER

By Marion Zimmer Bradley

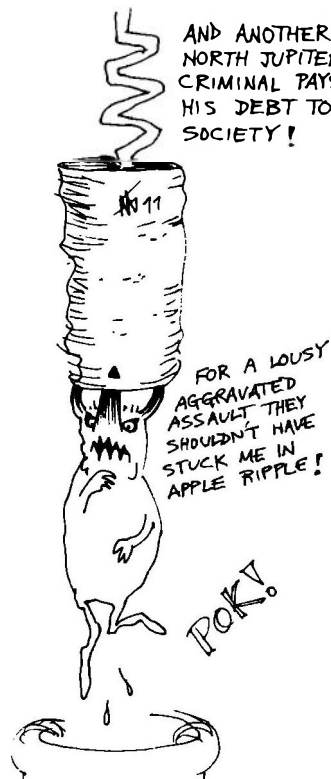
Daw Books, #256, 364 pp., \$1.95

Reviewed by Paul McGuire III

THE FORBIDDEN TOWER is a sequel to THE SPELL SWORD. Although one need not have read the earlier book to understand and enjoy this one, it does concern the same characters and picks up the action exactly where the other left off. Yet, aside from that, and background, the two novels have nothing in common. FORBIDDEN TOWER is the most psychological and sexual novel of the series while SPELL SWORD is the most straight action adventure. Even the titles are at opposite ends of the spectrum. FORBIDDEN TOWER refers to the male sexual organ. (The heroine has an inability to experience physical love because she was mentally neutered, kept from developing sexual maturity, and implanted with automatic psychic defenses against more than the lightest touching of fingertips.) SPELL SWORD, a combined rephrasing of the generic term "Sword and Sorcery", refers to the implement which allowed the heroes to slice up a tribe of cat-men and rescue the same damsel from a more conventional distress.

But first--the essentials. Darkover is a planet settled a few thousand years before by Terrans marooned there. Under the red sun, the population worked to develop mental power instead of technology. In that pursuit the people use matrix stones which intensify and channel their psi abilities. The use of the resulting matrix science with its frightening power is controlled by virginal high priestesses called keepers, and except for simple things is only permitted to be done in specified towers. (Thus the illegal matrix use of the heroes is a forbidden tower, a more obvious and direct, less "nasty", interpretation of the title.)

The main characters in this novel are Andrew Carr, a Terran, who is married to Callista, a former keeper, who is the twin sister of Ellemir who is married to Damon who is Carr's best, and nearly only friend. The basis of the plot is the lengths they must go to in order to attempt to overcome Cal-



lista's keeper's training which prevents her from having sex without danger of her and/or Andrew being killed by her psi defences. And, there is also a snot-nosed villain seeking revenge lurking about.

Ms. Bradley's ability to create intricate characters economically and then reveal them through interaction with events and each other is awesome. Her people are a product of their world. Just as Huckleberry Finn could only exist on Mark Twain's Mississippi, the men and women in this novel are by and of Darkover. Well, all but one. Carr is a Terran and his confusion and cultural shock to the reader that identifies with him are at times actually painful. The characters do not serve to reveal Darkover to the reader but vice versa. In fact to some extent the real revelation made to the reader is of himself.

Isolation in one form or other is almost constantly present. Dezi (the villain) is unrecognized as a son by the twins' father Dom Esteban, a parentage he believes sincerely to be true. Dom Esteban is paralyzed. Andrew is cut off

somewhat from the others by ignorance of custom and cultural differences. Callista has been trained to be frigid. Everyone is psychically isolated by the remoteness and ruggedness of the mountains they live in which are snowbound through most of the long severe winter. In fact most of the novel takes place in a single castle.

In this, the most confined of Ms. Bradley's novels, the isolation ultimately is that of a person within himself, separate in mind and body from others. Ms. Bradley explores this in a way thorough and entertaining, impossible anywhere but SF. All her characters are telepathic and at times they have mindslinked to briefly become what is nearly a single entity. Yet even their relationships are filled with hurt feelings, misunderstandings, anger, important things left unsaid or telethought, and insecurity. One begins to wonder if any two people can have true personal communication and understanding at all, on any basis. Using SF to make metaphors real, Ms. Bradley also implies that attempting to do so is dangerous, and that to succeed one must first gain, face and accept self-knowledge.

If I have implied all this suddenly appeared out of the blue without precedent in the series I have mislead you. It is just so very much more startlingly apparent and important in this book. Also don't think that this is all some dry cerebral novel. One cares about her passionate characters and there is plenty of sense of wonder mixed with the drama, and yes, daring do is done. The four rebel against senseless traditions and cruel laws by creating their own matrix tower, and must defend it in an astral duel at dawn in the overworld.

THE DARK DESIGN

(Vol. III of the Riverworld series)

By Philip Jose' Farmer.

Berkely. 412 pp, 1977, \$9.95

Reviewed by Buzz Dixon

THE DARK DESIGN marks the tri-

umph of the novel as Hydra--no matter how many heads Philip Jose' Farmer lops off, two more spring up to replace every one removed. Unmanageable is perhaps the best word to describe this book.

Originally meant to be the final book in the "mystery" phase of the Riverworld novels, THE DARK DESIGN is only part one of the original concluding novel. A fourth Riverworld novel will bring the series to an official end though future stories and novels may trace the adventures of various historical personages in the Riverworld.

To enjoy THE DARK DESIGN one should read Volumes I and II (TO YOUR SCATTERED BODIES GO and THE FABULOUS RIVERBOAT) first. Since those two novels came out more than five years ago it may prove difficult to remember who's doing what to whom. Even if read fairly recently this may prove difficult for anyone who doesn't have a home-built HAL 9000 to keep track of the dramatis personae.

As Farmer's alter-ego, Peter Jairus Frigate, comments, the concept of the Riverworld deserves a dozen volumes. Perhaps the problem is that Farmer, in an effort to complete his masterwork, has tried to jam too much into too small an area.

Maybe, ideally, the Riverworld saga should have been told over a series of 12 conventional sized novels rather than the present tomes which seem to double in size every volume.

The first two thirds of the book move fairly well, earmarked by the clear, action-filled prose which marks so much of Farmer's work. However, while trying to handle three (or four? That depends on just who Peter Jairus Frigate really is) major plotlines with perhaps a half-dozen subplots to each of the major ones, the novel tends to bog down and become not so much incredible as unbelievable.

Characters work literally for years building boats and airships, decades traveling up the River, yet there's almost no feeling for passage of time in the book.

TO YOUR SCATTERED BODIES GO introduced a world without metal, a world with a flint and wood technology. In THE FABULOUS RIVERBOAT an iron meteorite crashes in the Riverworld, enabling Sam Clemmens to build (over a period of several

years) an electric powered riverboat, which is promptly hijacked by Prince John (reading a name and event synopsis of the series makes it sound a trifle ridiculous). THE DARK DESIGN, however, has two riverboats, numerous rafts, schooners, dugouts, and other Rivercraft as well as steampowered machine guns, alcohol powered internal combustion engines, jeeps, printing presses, computers and not one but five--count 'em, five--airships, one of which carries a pair of 32-seat helicopters and a glider!

The Riverworld is relatively at peace in THE DARK DESIGN. Gone are the maniacal warlords of TO YOUR SCATTERED BODIES GO and THE FABULOUS RIVERBOAT. Gone are the grail slaveries. Gone are the "translations" (or mini-resurrections from death).

Apparently Farmer has abandoned these things which he so carefully established in the earlier books in fear of making THE DARK DESIGN's completion an impossible task. Lack of grail slaveries allows the characters to proceed unmolested upriver to the Dark Tower. No warlords enables the Parolands to complete their numerous airships without fending off invading hordes. No more translations disposes of characters who previously would have gone lackadaisically to their deaths.

It's clear the series has turned into something bigger than Farmer anticipated with when he first began the series in 1972. He uses arbitrary plot twists to forcibly manipulate his characters through their appointed rounds, rather than let the novels take their normal course. To solve a mystery he provides a solution which unleashes another, deeper mystery.

Instead of proceeding in an orderly manner, one feels the River is jerking along, stopping and starting irregularly, capriciously jumping its banks and at times drying up completely.

THE DARK DESIGN doesn't end so much as it's amputated, a cliff-hanger thrown in just to keep the pot boiling.

At first glance the novel reads as if Philip Jose' Farmer has bitten off more than he can chew. Yet Farmer is too good an author to reduce perhaps the grandest scheme in science fiction to poor pulp plot hacking. Nothing on the Riverworld is ever as it seems. As Jill Gulbirra, the final captain of

the giant airship "Parseval", remarks in a later chapter, "Purposes, cross-purposes, counter-cross-purposes. Wheels within wheels within wheels. Maya lowers seven veils of illusion between us and them." Farmer, through his self-Tuckerization, Frigate, comments on the inherent paranoia of the Riverworld. Even the title of the book is a quotation from a poem (imaginary? I wouldn't put it beyond Farmer) reading, "And still the Weaver plies his loom, whose warp and woof is wretched Man/Weaving th' unpattern'd dark design, so dark we doubt it owns a plan."

There's much in this novel which needs explaining; all the way from Sam Clemmens' uncharacteristic militaristic bent to Firebrass' strange tiny black sphere imbedded in his head to the mysterious ultra-violet (or lack thereof) tattoos on most people's foreheads.

The mystery of Riverworld is far from solved, though one senses the stage being set. THE DARK DESIGN's main failing is that it is this stage setting, not a truly independent book as the first two were. One can only wait with great anticipation for Volume IV, when Farmer promises to answer all our questions.

CHRYSLIS

Edited by Roy Torgeson
Zebra Books, \$1.95

Reviewed by Mark Mansell

CHRSALIS is Zebra's first science fiction anthology and Roy Torgeson's first editorial effort that I know of. This makes its high level of quality all the more surprising.

Richard Lupoff leads off the book with "Discovery of the Ghooric Zone--March 15, 2337". It is about three cyboretic space travellers who explore a trans-Plutonian planet, and learn that H.P. Lovecraft wasn't called "the prophet from Providence" for nothing.

Spider Robinson's story "The Magnificent Conspiracy" is a story that has qualities of caring, humor and a surprising amount of philosophy, as a trained assassin goes after a multi-millionaire who runs a used-car lot that loses money.

"Allies", by Chelsa Quinn Yarbo is about an outpost guarding a

marsh, but it turns out that the outpost needs the guarding. It's a darkly introspective story and is very good.

"The Curandeiro" by Thomas F. Monteleone is about two aliens hunting another alien who was working through a Brazilian peasant to effect miracle cures. Monteleone tells a fascinating story and you can feel for his characters.

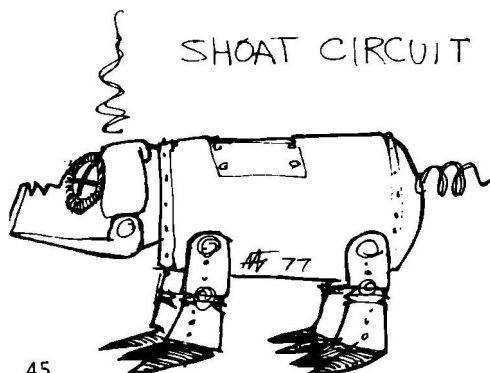
"Harry's Note" is Sturgeon's latest tale. Although old-fashioned in treatment, this story about a man talking to an invisible Man from Mars who wasn't from Mars about increased usage of the mind is made special by the Sturgeon touch.

Elizabeth Lynn's stories, "Mindseye" and "The Man Who was Pregnant", I didn't care for too much because I couldn't understand what points she was trying to make.

Charles L. Grant's "The Dark of Legends, The Light of Lies" is the type of horror tale that he does well. This time he writes of a proof-reader in the last days of books and how his nightmares prove deadly to authors and editors.

No one but Harlan Ellison could get away with a story like "How's the Night Life on Cissalda?" An explorer from Earth returns from an alternate universe locked in perpetual intercourse with a "disgusting thing". It goes from there and is hilarious as he describes the encounters of celebrities with the hordes of "disbusting things" that follow the explorer back to Earth.

Torgeson prefaces each story with an affectionate introduction about the author. Tom Barber has painted a beautiful cover. With this fine collection, Zebra Books has shown it can do more than simply cash in on Robert E. Howard reprints.



A SPELL FOR CHAMELEON

By Piers Anthony

Del Rey/Ballantine, 344 pp., \$1.95

Cover Art: Michael Whelan

Reviewed by Paul McGuire III

There are two points pertinent to classifying this novel. The first is that it is a juvenile, or perhaps it would be more accurate to say a "for young adults".

The second point, of course, is that the first point is meaningless. A rose is a rose and a good book is a good read. What's better, a very good juvenile or a mediocre adult novel? Between an excellent juvenile and an excellent adult novel which is greater, similarities or differences? Who loves a good juvenile novel more than an adult?

In fact all really good juvenile novels seem to create mobs with loud voices that claim that they are not really juvenile novels at all but adult novels pretending to be juveniles. Or is it disguised? Mistaken identity?

Oh, the hell with labeling this book. I'll just say that this novel is fantasy and go from there.

Xanth is a small to medium sized land about the size of a fictional European principality, or Oz. In Xanth it is certain that every living thing either has, or is, magic. It is possible that non-living things are, or do, too. Among humans the reason for this is because anyone who can't prove he has magic by age 25 gets exiled to Mundania. With Greek simplicity, Mundania is anywhere that isn't Xanth.

Our hero, Bink, does not appear to have magic power. Everyone but he has one particular spell they can cast. Only one type spell to a customer but the ramifications of what kind of magic one has varies such that some (apparently most) have magic of little power or practical use, while at the other extreme some (about as many as you can count on the fingers of one hand) have vast awesome power.

Bink doesn't seem to have any magic. So he is a misfit, misunderstood, jeered at by his inferiors, harrassed, lonely and the perfect hero for this kind of book. His one chance is if the good magician Humphrey can discover some hidden power.

As I've mentioned, everything, even the plants, between Bink and

Humphrey will have or be magic. What I didn't mention was that most of them are dangerous and nasty.

Adventures start piling up while he meets a lot of interesting people and things (centaurs, harpies, dragons, a sorceress, etc.) and finally gets to see Humphrey. Then Bink learns that he has powerful magic. It's just that no one knows what it is or how to use it. So what good is it? He really is better than all those smarty pants know-it-all show offs who call him a spell-less wonder, but he can't prove it. (Come on, you know who this guy is, don't you? He's me, you, all of us. Right?) They exile him! (Why the hell won't they leave us alone?)

Meanwhile, out in Mundania Trent, the Evil Magician, has raised an army and plans to invade Xanth. Bink is captured. So is a girl exile. After still more adventures Bink, Trent, and the girl end up back in Xanth, alone in the wilderness. They form a truce to unite against the common danger which is--damn near everything.

It goes on and on and...It doesn't stop developing until the very end, and only then does the reader realize just how well Mr. Anthony knew where he was going with it all of that time. Along the way the hero experiences (in addition to an incredible amount of good wholesome adventure) growth, maturity, knowledge, heroism, trust, friendship--kind of like a Heroic Fantasy Boy Scout.

This book really is excellent and nowhere near as silly as this review, except when Mr. Anthony uses all this marvelous invention as mere set-up for puns and not even two groaner puns at that! There are also good, and more fitting, examples of dry wit. Oh, well, all a matter of taste. Some readers will enjoy those puns and it is a minor attraction or distraction in either case.

I don't think I'm giving anything away by telling you that there is a happy ending. In fact it is a glorious ending not needing red filter sunsets and soundtrack orchestration to create its effect, because it is right, appropriate. The novel is so well thought out all our romantic wishes are granted without there having been the slightest concession made in the novel's integrity.

Like much of the magic in Xanth the novel itself is deceptive and

subtle in its enchantment. A terrific read containing a cleverly conceived heroine, a fascinatingly complex and engaging villain, and an "everyman", it is well worth the reader's effort to identify with--all gone out adventuring in Xanth where very little is what it seems.

THE UFO CONTROVERSY IN AMERICA

By David Michael Jacobs
Signet, 332 pp., 1975, \$1.95

FLYING SAUCERS: AN ANALYSIS OF THE AIR FORCE PROJECT BLUE BOOK SPECIAL REPORT NUMBER 14

Prepared by Dr. Leon Davidson
Blue-Book, 1975-76, 194 pp., \$5.95

Reviewed by Neal Wilgus

Unidentified Flying Objects have been the center of heated controversy for at least the past 30 years and the flood of books on the subject has done little to clarify the issues. Here are two books which, in quite different ways, demonstrate the problems inherent in dealing with the UFO mystery.

Strictly speaking, David Michael Jacobs' book, as its title warns, is about the UFO controversy rather than the UFOs themselves, although a number of the more prominent sightings are briefly described and there is the inevitable speculation as to their origin. It's the history of the public controversy sparked by the UFOs, however, that is the subject of Jacobs' interest and this history is quite interesting in itself, regardless of whatever else you may think about the elusive objects.

Jacobs begins with a short chapter on the Airship sightings of 1896-97, the only real UFO flap year until the 1947 flying saucer case reported by Kenneth Arnold which set off the modern series of countless unexplained sightings. Subsequent chapters cover the public reaction to the ever increasing UFO reports, the creation of saucer clubs and national UFO organizations, the Air Force and CIA investigations, the contactees and cult groups and a final discussion of the most recent flap year, 1973. As the fat bibliography and notes at the end indicate, Jacobs draws from a tremendous amount of published and unpublished material and he seems to have had the active cooperation of almost everyone involved in the controversies, pro, con or otherwise.

At one point Jacobs recounts an

amazing story about the CIA which you'd expect to find in a book like Leon Davidson's volume with the awkward title. Quoting from Major Robert Friend, one-time chief of the Air Force's Project Blue Book, Jacobs tells of two Canadian Naval investigators who were told by a UFO-psychic that they could communicate with the saucer people by going into a trance and utilizing automatic writing. While the Canadians were being interviewed in Washington by the CIA one of them was allegedly successful in making contact with a saucer and when the CIA investigators asked for proof they were told to look out the window and they would see a UFO--which is exactly what happened.

The reason you might expect to find such a story in Davidson's book rather than Jacobs' is that Davidson is a leading exponent of the UFOs-are-a-CIA-hoax school and with a little imagination it should have been easy to link in the CIA sighting mentioned by Jacobs. Doubly so since Davidson's book deals extensively with both Project Blue Book and the CIA/UFO hoax theory. Alas, Davidson misses this one, as well as other attempts to link CIA skullduggery with UFO reports such as Raymond Bernard's fumbling THE HOLLOW EARTH and John Keel's more reliable WHY UFOs? and THIS HAUNTED PLANET.

Davidson's book is confused and confusing but it does serve two valuable purposes--the publication of the otherwise unavailable Air Force Project Blue Book Report #14 which was intended to debunk saucer reports, and a series of pieces by Davidson exploring the idea that the CIA might have been involved in the deliberate planting of UFO stories (especially contact cases) for their own inscrutable reasons. Davidson updates his material periodically (this is the fifth edition), reprinting his articles from SAUCER NEWS and FLYING SAUCER REVIEW and apparently reorganizing in a way that requires a double set of page numbers and varying formats and typesets.

Neither Jacobs nor Davidson offer anything like a satisfactory explanation for UFO reports but then no one else does either--that's why they're Unidentified. But if you are curious about UFOs and want to learn more here are two books to keep in mind. Jacobs' objective overview is an excellent historical background against which other UFO special pleaders can be judged;

the self-published Davidson is a good example of the maverick who insists on exploring UFOs in his own independent way. A study in contrasts, these books reveal much about the mind of UFOlogy.

CLUSTER

By Piers Anthony
Avon, 254 pp., \$1.75

Reviewed by Paul McGuire III

Given: Every sentient being has a Kirlian aura, normal intensity being listed at 1. That aura is the essence, intelligence, identity, soul or what-have-you. It is possible to instantly and cheaply transmit the aura of a high intensity being cross worlds into a recently dead host body, and an alien intelligence gives this knowledge to Earth because the Andromeda galaxy is going to try to drain off all of our galaxy's energy. The catch to this alert and gift is two-fold. First, Earth must join a coalition of other planetary spheres of influence to prevent the great energy rip-off. Second, the Sol sphere must supply an agent that will take the deal to other spheres.

The agent chosen is Flint, a tough, canny green-skinned man from Sol sphere's outermost world where men live a primitive existence hunting dinosaurs. Sol's man Flint has an amazing Kirlian intensity of 200. That is important since the amount of time one can spend in a host body is in direct ratio to aura's intensity.



The final element is an Andromeda female agent, also a 200, sent out each time after Flint to kill him.

Flint goes to a world where humans are enslaved by saucer-flying insect beings, and he must work with the latter. Then it's off to a waterworld with three sexes and compulsive rape whenever one of each gets together. There is a violent Renaissance-styled planet ruled by a cunning and ruthless queen called Bess. One world has inhabitants that are cylinders with a spherical wheel on bottom and a tentacle on top, who read Tarot and think in circles. Several species gather at the site of a city built by a once-great (but by then long extinct) race to explore it, but find a murder mystery instead. Then comes the last transformation, to a world where both communication and love are music, and death seems inevitable.

Instead of just having the hero contact a new world, Mr. Anthony has his hero actually inhabit one of their bodies, able to call up their memories, and gain from that double vision. Although most of the chapters could not quite stand on their own as short stories, once past the setup, it would not be very confusing to read them out of order if anyone had reason to do something that peculiar. In fact not all of Flint's adventures are recorded. He makes reference to one not in the book. Also near the end a few statements are made which seem to be referring to earlier events, but which really are unrelated to anything but confusion.

While the worlds here are more original and fascinating than the planets the Enterprise visited on TV, they are not created for the reader in any more detail. The book is nicely entertaining, clever, and in some parts beautifully written. Still, if you lay it down between chapters you might not ever pick it up again.

SOMEBODY ELSE IN ON THE MOON

By George Leonard

Pocket Books, 221 pages, \$1.95, 1977

Reviewed by Buzz Dixon

When I thumbed through this book at the news stand I thought, Hot damn! Somebody's done a UFO book with charts, photos, cross references, and official NASA data! Now we'll learn the Truth!

Forget it. George Leonard's SOMEBODY ELSE IS ON THE MOON is a shoddy piece of journalism. It no more proves the existence of aliens living on the Moon than the late George Adamski proved they were inhabiting Venus.

Though admittedly Something Strange is going on up there. Mysterious lights. Clouds of dust. Strange arches and other unidentified objects.

But due to the just plain shitty-ness of this book one comes away disbelieving. It's the same effect one gets from watching too many commercials--no matter how sweet the pitch it still stinks.

What threw me off were the drawings, the photos (with NASA release numbers included), appendixes and index which would make the book seem to be a bona fide speculation on intelligent life inhabiting the moon. Leonard, however, slips into the "omnipotent I" viewpoint favored by such frauds as Adamski and Von Daniken. The book is a haphazard collection of anecdotes telling how Leonard found the Truth about the Moon.

If that wasn't bad enough he gives no indication of scale or distance from the Moon of the photos taken, quotes numerous authors waaaaaaay out of context (including our own beloved Isaac Asimov and Arthur C. Clarke), gives direct quotes (sic!) from people in NASA whom he refuses to identify and even makes up a radio exchange between orbiting Lunar astronauts and Mission Control!

Clearly not the world's best example of investigative reporting. If George Leonard had been covering Watergate Nixon might be on his third term.

The infuriating thing is that NASA acknowledges things are happening on the Moon which it can't explain. They're called TLPs--Transient Lunar Phenomenon--and are totally outside any current theory of the Moon. Leonard includes photos of "tracks", "domes" and various "machines" but I saw nothing which looked unmistakably like an artificial device (of course, I'm not a professional image interpreter. But neither is Leonard).

He does include photos of some definitely weird things--things which look like rods or tubes extending from the walls of craters, a boulder which rolled uphill, evenly spaced holes in the Moon's surface and other puzzlers.

But he conveniently leaves out any entertainment of possible natural solutions to these mysteries. He neglects to mention that the moon has been under close scrutiny for several hundred years by telescopes. He claims that the U.S. military learned of the Lunar aliens in the late '50s and that the space program is actually a front for the armed services to spy on the Moon.

But if that's true then why did we wait until 1957 to launch the first U.S. satellite (when we had Redstone and Jupiter boosters in 1950) and 1961 for the first U.S. sub-orbital flights (when we had the Atlas in 1954) and 1968 to send a manned probe to the Moon (when the Gemini capsule was capable of Lunar orbit and return)?

He also mentions a crater, Linne', which was documented by several astronomers and then disappeared! Yet he only mentions the carter twice in passing references



This is a bad book. For those interested in UFOs and non-disciplinary forms of thought it will make a fair read. But if you're searching for The Truth, forget it. Leonard just makes the issue cloudier.

EYE AMONG THE BLIND

By Robert Holdstock
Pan Books, Ltd., 1977
219 pages, \$1.95
Doubleday, 1977, \$6.95

Reviewed by W. Ritchie Benedict

I was stunned by this first novel by a 29 year old Britisher. It is, without question, a real knockout. One of the cover blurbs quotes Ursula LeGuin as being very impressed by it and it is easy to see why in just the first ten pages. Consider the plot elements:

1/ A weird disease causing total panic among Earth's inhabitants forcing a total evacuation of the home world.

2/ A mysterious blind man named Maguire who suddenly reappears with paranormal powers after having been missing for over 700 years.

3/ A fully developed totally alien culture called Ree'hdworld that appears to be the perfect home for humanity except for the fact that the locals and the colonists are having difficulties adapting to each other.

4/ A mythological semi-ghost-like race of beings called the Pianhmar who also inhabit Ree'hdworld about whom absolutely nothing is known.

5/ A love relationship between a male Ree'hd native and a female human anthropologist.

6/ A completely developed planetary biology that is rich in odd and variegated detail.

One of the primary rules that any science fiction writer should adhere to is that the characters and the world created should all hang together.

For a beginning science fiction novelist Mr. Holdstock has done an incredible job. His characters are no paper doll cutouts, but live and breathe in three dimensions. His background in anatomy, zoology and parasitology is readily apparent. The only other British writer that comes to mind when reading this novel is Bob Shaw but the Holdstock style is completely his own.

It is a shame that many British works of science fiction take so long to appear in North American editions. This work would certainly be on the list of any nominees for a Hugo if it had been written in the U.S. As it is, I can recommend it highly and I hope that we will be hearing more from Mr. Holdstock in the future.

THE ISLAND OF DR. MOREAU; novelization by Joseph Silva of a screenplay by John Herman Shaner and Al Ramrus; 180 pp. + 16 pp. photos from film

Reviewed by Paul McGuire III

This book is about the adventures of a shipwrecked young man on an island where a mad scientist is turning animals into, more or less, human beings.

The dialogue is, not surprisingly, the best written part of the novelization, since that was the one element of the movie Silva could accurately reproduce in prose. But if the loss of inflection causes minor harm, the same is not true of the rest of this work. Silva seems unsure how to deal with turning into prose parts of a screenplay meant to be turned into visual image. He is also "stuck" with the film's pacing in his book.

Still he did seem to want to do more than just write bridges between dialogue. He doesn't do more, but he seems to have wanted to do so. Instead of giving insight into the minds and motivations of his characters to make his work distinctive Silva plays with sentence structure. Sentences without verbs. No nouns. Sometimes he suddenly changes tense. Order normal reversed is. His experimenting may have made this project more fun or interesting for himself, but it doesn't for the reader.

Of course the real question is why was the screenplay novelized for paperback release at all. Since the film was based on an excellent novel by H.G. Wells containing mystery, horror, adventure and satire, what purpose was served by writing another version which is little more than a souvenir of the film? Why, to make a buck of course. That is probably also why no mention is made on the cover or spine of the book that it is a novelization by Silva instead of Wells' original work. Let the buyer beware, Ace seems to think.

I think, let the buyer not bother with this turkey.

***** 48 *****

STARLOG

Kerry O'Quinn, Editor
80 pp., pub. 8 times per year
\$1.75 newsstand price, \$9.98 sub.

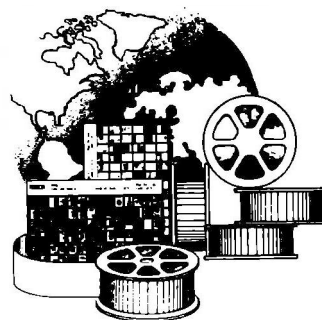
Reviewed by Paul McGuire III

STARLOG may have been started to exploit the Star Trek phenomena but before long it was covering all filmed SF, theatrical and television, past, present and near future. Along with articles and reviews it features fleshed-out interviews, informative TV series episode checklists and a series on the techniques of special effects. The whole is lavishly illustrated with photos, most in color.

The issue I have before me is #9 (back issues are available). Unlike the average film/TV mixture, this one is nearly all series oriented. Contents include interviews with Pat Duffy (MAN FROM ATLANTIS), Gerry Anderson (Producer of SPACE 1999), Lynda Carter (Wonder Woman), Jared Martin (FANTASTIC JOURNEY), Ivan Goff and Ben Roberts (LOGAN'S RUN's producers), and William Shatner. Also an article on TV--SF series 1949--59, STAR WARS portfolio, and regular features including a column by David Gerrold.

A friend of mine who also covers filmed SF for the fan press and is devoted to CINEFANTASTIQUE tends to scoff at STARLOG as being aimed too much at what he calls "the Trekie Mentality". I disagree. Sure, CINEFANTASTIQUE is champagne and STARLOG is beer, but both are refreshing.

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MURGUNSTRUMM And Others
By Hugh B. Cave
Carcosa, \$15.00, 475 pp.
Reviewed by Mark Mansell

This third book from Carcosa is in keeping with the high quality of their previous books: WORSE THINGS WAITING by Manly Wade Wellman, and FAR LANDS, OTHER DAYS by E. Hoffman Price, both astonishingly still in print.

This is an immense omnibus collection of Hugh B. Cave's gothic horror stories from the pulps. They range over the entire spectrum of horror: vampire stories, ghost stories, haunted house stories, revenge, weird mystery, psychic detective tales, spicy mystery stories, and even two Cthulhu Mythos stories. They are collected from such shudder pulps as STRANGE TALES, WEIRD TALES, GHOST STORIES, SPICY MYSTERY STORIES (where they were published under the delightful pseudonym 'Justin Case'), BLACK BOOK DETECTIVE MAGAZINE, and two more recent ones from ELLERY QUEEN'S MYSTERY MAGAZINE, and WHISPERS.

These stories capture the feel of the pulps in their lurid, often gruesome treatments. Buckets of blood are splashed across the pages in glorious abandon, but sex was a no-no. Even the so-called "spicy" pulps were more puritanical than TV is today. I found myself strangely attracted to these stories, but you couldn't get away with this kind of style today, since we are supposed to be more mature and prefer the horrors of the mind to things that go bump in the night. It's surprising to see these stories, which are from the most despised pulp category, survive while the so-called literary stuff of those days has been forgotten.

There are 26 stories plus an introduction in this gigantic volume. My favorites are: MURGUNSTRUMM, a short novel about vampires and madmen in a decrepit old inn; "Horror in Wax" tells of the vengeance an old man takes on his wife and her lover; "The Watcher in the Green Room" about a man's justified fears of a bureau of drawers' "Purr of the Cat" is about a painter in an old house and his unusual subject; "Many Happy Returns" is a tale about a curious way of attaining longevity; and "Ladies in Waiting" describes a man and his wife and who or what they mate-swap with in a deserted house.

Like all Carcosa books, this volume is lavishly illustrated. Lee Brown Coye, fantasy/horror's premier illustrator, has outdone himself in his renderings of rotting corpses, intricately eerie houses, unwholesome creatures, and his famous stick matrices.

At \$15.00 a volume of this size and quality is a bargain. Its sewn signatures and heavy binding insure it will last practically forever. It is a delight for both the investor and for the person who enjoys the horrific. The book is most enjoyable if read a bit at a time, on dark stormy nights.

THE SPAYRIC QUEST OF BEROALDUS COSMOPOLITA

By Arthur Machen
Purple Mouth Press, 1977
22 pages, \$2.00
Illustrated by Mae & Danny Strelkov

Reviewed by Darrell Schweitzer

I must confess that I don't understand this work at all. I imagine I'm in the position of someone reading PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

without the slightest knowledge of Christianity. It seems to be a satire on various occult and mystical systems, or else an allegory of some sort using the language of the same. There are flashes of a ribald sense of humor one would never expect from the author of THE HILL OF DREAMS, HOUSE OF SOULS etc.

This booklet is certainly not for the general reader. Quite literally, you have to know what Machen is talking about already to know what he's talking about. He was very much involved in occult studies, a member of the famous Order of the Golden Dawn along with Aleister Crowley and such people, and perhaps a reader familiar with the beliefs of the Order may find this more comprehensible than I do. Specialised knowledge is required. Since magical systems are concocted solely from the imaginations of the magicians, experience with the real world won't do you any good at all.

Machen completists and others who might be interested should order from the publisher, C.W. Brooks, 713 Paul Street, Newport News, VA, 23605. I don't imagine he'll have much trouble getting rid of the 500 copies he printed because this has some potential of becoming a collector's item. I'm told only five copies of the original edition exist.

The art work by the Strelkovs is what some might call 'primitive'. I call it crude.

MIDNIGHT AT THE WELL OF SOULS

By Jack L. Chalker
Del Rey (Ballantine), \$1.95, 360pp.

Reviewed by Elton Elliott

In his second sf novel, long-time fan Jack L. Chalker has created one of the most unique sfictional settings since Larry Niven's RINGWORLD.

The setting is a planet called the Well World which is larger than Earth, but due to lack of heavy metals has about the same gravity. The planet was created by a super race that are now extinct, and they gave it a few surprising features. One of these is that the planet is split up into various hexes, where representatives of races from all over the universe live. However due to the fact that each hex has differing scientific laws it is difficult



for one race to conquer more than its own hex. With all their diversity, notwithstanding, each race has a saying about the equator of the planet, called the Well Of Souls. They all believe awesome things will transpire on Midnight at the Well of Souls.

Into this strange world comes Nathan Brazil, captain of a small space freighter, and a motley bunch of friends and enemies. They all have one purpose: find the Well before the others do. There's only one obstacle, the races in each of these hexes.

Outside of a few weak chapters in the middle, and an overlong ending, the book is excellently crafted. The prose, and this is rare for a new author, is quite smooth.

Marvelously inventive, MIDNIGHT AT THE WELL OF SOULS, is one of the best sf adventure novels in recent years.

IN THE OCEAN OF NIGHT

By Gregory Benford

Dial/James Wade, \$8.95 hardcover

Reviewed by Dave Samuelson

Earlier this year Gregory Benford and Gordon Eklund gave us a novel about an aging astronaut obsessed with things alien. Uneven in execution, IF THE STARS ARE GODS offered plausible extrapolation, sensitive characterizations and interesting speculations on alienation. That achievement is dwarfed now by Benford's IN THE OCEAN OF NIGHT, a major novel, perhaps the best of the 1970s, in which the same ingredients are put to better use, the construct unified by more than just an idea and a character.

Early next century the outlook for America is bleak. In an overpopulated, polluted world, American business and industry are up for grabs; our system of technological rationality is breaking down. The masses are turning to the irrational, from mindless violence to a charismatic religious cult. Compounded of ancient ritual and modern organization, the New Sons are a major social and political force that threatens to absorb or suppress an event of fundamental importance: contact with sentient alien life.

There is no real conspiracy; people simply do not understand the event's significance. The New Sons, intent on restoring order

and morality, simply want to integrate the alien (The Visitor") into their teachings, effectively to smother it. NASA, worried about budgets and political implications, equates security with weapons and secrecy. Only Nigel Walmsley seems to realize that their categories are irrelevant, that the rules have changed.

Nigel himself is an alien of sorts--a Briton in America, an individualist in NASA, an astronaut among the groundlings--and intellectually alienated from the world around him. His alien contacts eventually make him see vast continuities across a vaster void that make differences among human cultures and individuals seem intellectually miniscule.

Rooted on Earth in human society, Nigel's story offers mature reflection on an old theme, stripped of melodramatic trappings. Despite incidents of intrigue and physical danger, amid revelations and plot turns that will startle all but the most blasé, the primary adventure is cerebral: Nigel's quest for Man's Place in the Universe.



Nigel gradually domesticates the alien, first coming across an artifact in 1999, which makes it inescapable that "we are not alone! Sent to destroy the asteroid Icarus on collision course with Earth, he discovered it was an ancient spacecraft, and delayed to explore and scavenge, while millions of lives on Earth hung in the balance.

Fifteen years later, having ridden out the furor, he is still on hand to identify and communicate with a sentient computerized probe, summoned by a signal from "Icarus". He names it "Snark", stressing the unknown, and eventually intercepts it in orbit, as an official NASA representative, in a scene rich in irony and ambiguity. Out of hearing of Earth, Nigel hears from the

Snark that organic life forms like ours are basically unstable; potentially dangerous, they are usually supplanted by their own mechanical creations, like the Snark itself.

This climactic meeting is followed four years later by the finding on the moon of another alien wreck, reactivated by the Snark. Fighting his way through NASA bureaucracy, and New Sons obstructionism, Nigel investigates the ship's archives and learns that the aliens once genetically manipulated Bigfoot, the primitive humanoid race of the Pacific Northwest. Focusing on research and its interpretations, this last section is gradual, reflective and short on melodrama, but these findings point to stagnation as the result of a race's turning its back on the technological path.

Though Nigel's vision expands from contact with the alien, it is best embodied in his relationships with other people, symbolized by two love-triangles. In the first, a *ménage à trois* with two Caucasian women, he seems genuinely to love one, Alexandria, but their relationship is hedonistic, self-seeking. When she contracts a fatal disease, he loses her to Shirley (the other woman) and the New Sons, then to the Snark in a bizarre but logical twist of events.

Bereft, he takes to the desert, going through a healing "dark night of the soul", emerging to build a new life, this time with two Orientals. The woman, Nikka, shares his work and his obsession; the man, Mr. Ichino, is older, asexual, a possible line of Nigel's development.

Nigel, seen as lover, rebel, scientist, concerned citizen, estranged son, religious skeptic, is a rounded character, a rarity in science fiction. But the others are also people with real pasts and indeterminate futures, whose motivations are independent of their functions in abetting or obstructing him. Mr. Ichino, for instance, is involved in a quest of his own in the Pacific Northwest, which incidentally confirms Nigel's findings, bringing the alien down to Earth, but his search is troubled by his personal desire to leave Bigfoot in peace. In this he is more the sage than the scientist, fitted to pronounce the novel's ambiguous moral.

Nigel certainly is in no condition to evaluate his experience at the end, temporarily overwhelmed

as he is by sensory overload from the lunar archives. Unable to express his vision of totality, he can only sense it, in a bravura display of stream-of-consciousness. But others are following Nigel's lead, as Mr. Ichino's monologue shows by indirections.

Indeed the whole novel succeeds by indirection, communicating not only through Nigel's experiences and the growth of his consciousness, but also by other means which bring across a multiplicity of visions. Point-of-view is varied, sometimes quite effectively, presenting significant events outside Nigel's observation. More than one plot-line is advanced, connecting the alien to several people, anchoring them in a social environment.

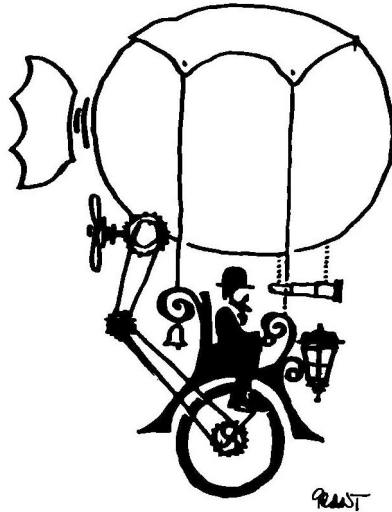
Parallels and contrasts between image patterns and other structural elements enable the reader to see still more than the characters can. Nigel's loss of Alexandria and his desert experience recall the fall of a great civilization, and ritual dancing amid the flames unites Bigfoot and the New Sons in a hint of another fall to come. The linear, grasping West contrasts with the sinuous, holistic East, and their complementary unity is set off by the lifeless, perfect totality of the alien spheres. Dualities and triads of things and events abound, and the action occasionally is framed by gridlike windows, calling attention to the act of seeing and understanding.

The theme of transcendence, too, is framed within one human imagination; it grows out of character, not imposed from above, as in Clarke and others, so as to dwarf the individual. Contained within Nigel, the theme is constrained by naturalistic limits, forced to contend with objectively petty human loves and conflicts. First Man and the Other are seen as balanced parts of an equation. Then, as Nigel assimilates the alien mentally, the equation is redressed; even organic and nonorganic forms combine as Intelligence pitted against the Universe. Though the universe stretches infinitely and eternally before us, we have precedents and potential allies to go by, and really no choice, being neither animals nor machines, but to strive to live up to what it means to be human.

The whole construct is an impressive achievement, both as a science fictional vision and as a

novel of characters in society which compares well with *THE DISPOSSESSED*, the only book of this decade in its class. Though I was occasionally bothered by talky characters and a couple of shadowy "villains", the same was true in Le Guin's novel, and this one, with its organic flow, accommodates such accidents better than does Le Guin's, with its perfect symmetry of form, for which everything has to be honed.

IN THE OCEAN OF NIGHT is an "instant classic".



THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES
Stageplay by Ray Bradbury
Produced and Directed
By Terrence Shank

Los Angeles, California, 1977-1978

Reviewed by Jeffrey Elliot

Ray Bradbury is alive and well at the Studio City Playhouse in Los Angeles, California, which is currently running a stage production of his classic work, *THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES*. Based on Bradbury's best-selling thirty-year-old book, the Colony Theatre stageplay is a superb achievement in contemporary theatre.

The success of *THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES* is largely attributable to the creative genius of Terrence Shank, who produced and directed the stage production. Moreover, he is responsible for designing the set, sound and lighting, all of which he does with style and verve. Indeed, Bradbury's story comes alive thanks to Shank's brilliant visual imagery, expertly cued sound effects, and spectacular costumes and accouterments.

The mood is skillfully created by the use of a luminous two-level plexiglass platform lit from beneath, coupled with a white nylon dome, where Martians with bulging eyes and strange costumes gyrate to the words and sounds of this alien world. As a result of Shanks' brilliant stage design, the theatre-goer is jettisoned into the inner recesses of this bizarre world. He cannot help but be hypnotized by the shining gold and silver costumes, the artfully composed music, the inventive cinematic scheme and the eerie sound effects, all of which help to transform this modest theatre into a spaceworld called Mars.

The power and realism of the experience is enhanced by the intimate theatre setting, which accommodates an audience of less than one hundred. As a result, the theatre-goer is privy to a ring-side view of this bizarre world of Martian sounds, gestures, words and grimaces. There are times when one feels an integral part of this alien world, as opposed to merely a spectator viewing the stageplay from afar. Needless to say, this makes for an incredible theatre experience.

Unlike many stage productions which are based on a book or novel, this one flows clearly and logically. One does not need to have read the original work to understand the stageplay. The transition from scene to scene is lucid and comprehensible.

In addition to Bradbury's superb script and Shanks' special stage talents, the production is significantly enhanced by the acting ability of nearly fifty actors who play almost one hundred different roles. This huge ensemble interact together with skill and timing, very much like a delicately made watch, each part working with precision and grace.

Every attempt has been made to translate Bradbury's words into exciting visual images. This fact is evidenced in the masks, wigs, costumes, furniture, implements, and the rest of the stage paraphernalia which evoke this futuristic aura of time and space.

All in all, this is an excellent production. It is the kind of "stuff" of which Ray Bradbury is made. It reflects the timeless unity and uncompromising principle which typify the author's approach to life. Like everything else Bradbury does, the stageplay in-

corporates his changing global perspective. This adaptation, even more than the original work, embodies his conviction that "space is our future". The stage production includes all the stylistic talents for which Bradbury is known, the result of which is a wonderful evening of theatre.

THE VIVISECTOR

REVIEWS BY DARRELL SCHWEITZER

THE SIMARILLION

By J.R.R. Tolkein

Ed. Christopher Tolkein

Houghton Mifflin, 1977

365 pp. & foldout map, \$10.95

Even though the general public has been whipped up to such a not-waiting-for-the-paperback frenzy of expectation that this book has become the all-time best-seller in hardcover fiction, most Tolkein fans I know are not pleased with this book. They vary only in how emphatic their rejection of it is. At a Mythopoeic Society meeting I said, "Well, it shouldn't be judged on the same terms as the other books", to which someone retorted, "It shouldn't be judged at all", the implication being it was not worth judging.

I think most of the disappointment stems from the fact THE SIMARILLION is not what everyone expected it to be. It is not another HOBBIT or LORD OF THE RINGS. Strictly speaking it is not a work of fiction, but of myth-history. The scope is vast, from the creation of the world up to the end of the Third Age, with a synopsis of



previously published works at the end. There are five sections: THE AINULINDALE about the creation, the VALAQUENTA describing the creation in more detail and the attributes of various demi-gods, the QUINTA SIMARILLION which covers the First Age in detail, the AKALLABETH about the downfall of Numenor, and OF THE RINGS OF POWER AND THE THIRD AGE which should sound familiar. Also there are appendices and tables of various sorts. Back in the days when rumors flew wildly, THE SIMARILLION was believed to be another massive epic like LOTR and THE AKALLABETH yet another, for a total of nine volumes of top-notch heroic fantasy. Alas, not so. The AKALLABETH is 26 pages long and is a synoptic history like the rest.

The difference between a pseudo-history like THE SIMARILLION and true fiction is that it is not a story, but an outline of many stories. The narrative glosses over years and events. A battle the size of that of Helm's Deep in LOTR takes about two paragraphs. There is little detail, virtually no dialogue (and stilted speeches when there is), seldom anything narrowly enough focused to be called a scene, and no characterization.

The writing is rather like the quasi-narrative appendices in THE RETURN OF THE KING, although frequently not as good. This time Tolkein archaicises clumsily. THE AINULINDALE's account of creation is probably the best written part,

although from a purely literary standpoint inferior to Dunsany's sparkling THE GODS OF PEGANA, which does it all with considerably more economy.

THE SIMARILLION is unlike most pseudo-histories, such as Geoffrey of Monmouth's HISTORY OF THE KINGS OF BRITAIN (which tells how Brutus the Trojan founded Britain, and lots about Arthur, King Lear, etc.) because it is a secondary work. It exists only in reference to THE LORD OF THE RINGS. The trilogy has a deep sense of the past because there is a coherent body of lore behind it, which crops up here and there in the story. The author makes his world convincing by knowing more about his world than we do. It has always been obvious that a considerable body of work was underlying what we actually see in LOTR--and here it is, drawn from notebooks and manuscripts, some dating as far back as the First World War. A good bit pre-dates even THE HOBBIT so most writing flaws can be attributed to inexperience. From this Tolkein developed into a master storyteller.

Now let me be mildly blasphemous: I think someone ought to novelize the best parts of THE SIMARILLION. Tolkein himself drew on it for his famous works, but there is a lot of material left. Pseudo-histories have previously given a lot of mileage to fantasy writers (THE MABINOGION to Walton, Alexander, Kenneth Morris; Monmouth to Mary Stewart), and some of the tales outlined in THE SIMARILLION, especially the epic of Fearon and the romance of Beren and Luthien cry out to be written. Maeglin



Drawings this page courtesy
John Oberdorf
1536 Joplin St. S.
Salem, OR 97302

He would like to place his work in other magazines, books.



and Turin Turambar also have great potential, and more than one novel could be based on the AKALLABETH. If the Tolkein estate is smart (and wants more money) they will arrange for these to be written by someone capable of the task. (Could you imagine BEREN AND LUTHIEN by Ursula LeGuin?) I predict that once the hysteria dies down THE SIMARILLION will not be widely read, but fantasy writers will remain aware of it. It will have influence, and, if such a thing is never authorized, our grandchildren will be the ones to see works directly drawn from it, when it goes into the public domain sometime in the next century.

THE BOOK OF SAND

By Jorge Luis Borges, Translated by Norman D. di Giovanni Dutton
1977, 125 pages, \$7.95

Just this year the World Fantasy Award people failed to give Borges the lifetime achievement award, the same as SFWA failed to give one of the stories in this book a Nebula when it was on the ballot, which puts them both in good company because the Nobel Prize Committee has been making the same mistake for years. As the Dutton publicity flyer says, merit is one thing when it comes to winning awards, but longevity seems to be more important. With Borges being 78 years old, we're pushing our luck. The least anyone can do is persuade the Fantasy Award judges to name THE BOOK OF SAND best collection of 1977. (The only serious competitor I know of is Warner's THE KINGDOMS OF ELFIN.) And I should point out that since the title story was first published in THE NEW YORKER last spring, it is eligible for Hugos and Nebulas. I know for a fact that fate has conspired to hide it from the notice of our little community--at least two Best-of-The-Year anthologists tried to get it, but the price was too high.

For the benefit of anyone to whom the above may seem mystifying, Jorge Luis Borges is an Argentine and the best living fantasy writer in the world. He has been known in the United States since the early 1960s since Grove and New Directions published two collections, FICCIONES and LABYRINTHS. His first publication in English that I know of was a story in ELLERY QUEEN'S about 1948. (So much for the avant-garde getting there

first.) Critical recognition came swiftly, but readers less so. Let's get something out into the open, if you'll excuse my manners: all art is elitist. In fiction, if you read you have joined the elite, and if you read things more complex than Jackie Susann you're in the Inner Circle. Add to this the fact that category fiction readers (academic mainstream, best-seller, science fiction) tend to be insular, and an oddball genius like Borges is read only by a select minority. All you have to do is go to the bookstore and select. Do. You'll encounter 13 of Borges' most recent tales, most first published in English in various magazines over the past year. You'll find that late Borges is more autobiographical than early Borges, filled more with memories or the present situation. Quite a few characters in these stories are old men, blind or nearly so. (Borges is blind.) The writing is more personal, more atmospheric, less intensely inventive, although when he wants to throw an idea at you he can still do it with the best. The tone of the title is the most impression non-existent book since the NECRONOMICON. It is a piece of infinity you hold in your hand. There is no first or last page and no page can be found twice. The narrator is at first fascinated by it, then enslaved. He thinks of burning it, but dares not, lest an infinite book produce infinite smoke and smother the world! This is a familiar theme, of course. Before (in LABYRINTHS) there was the infinite library of randomly worded books which served as a metaphor for an incomprehensible universe regarded with wry bemusement (Which is intellectually very akin to Lovecraft's uncaring forces of cosmic horror, minus the horror, though there is a tinge in Borges of "the elemental fear of what is impossible and yet is".) Now we have THE BOOK OF SAND, which is something you'd expect to find at a Library of Babel discard sale.

It is just like Borges to come up with such an outrageous concept and place it in ordinary surroundings, then tell of it in clear, simple prose, once again demonstrating that the greatest writers don't have to rely on obfuscating tricks. Borges' style is plain and yet eloquent. Not a word is wasted. Descriptions describe. There is nothing of the stiffness you expect in translations, presumably because, although Borges uses a

translator, he is quite fluent in English (He taught at an American university and was interviewed on U.S. television. Not even much of an accent, at least to my ear.) and presumably oversees these things. He says of the present collection: "I have tried to be faithful to the example of H.G. Wells in combining a plain and at times almost colloquial style with a fantastic plot".

Yes, that H.G. Wells. Borges is not unfamiliar with the wider tradition of the fantastic tale. He is also not unfamiliar with H.P. Lovecraft, so if the BOOK OF SAND resembles the NECRONOMICON in any way, it may be more than a coincidence. HPL is, after all, regarded as a major American writer in most countries except this one, especially the Spanish-speaking lands. Therefore, an Argentine audience wouldn't be confused, but I can't help but wonder what the readers of the ATLANTIC made of "There are More Things". Lovecraft, insists



Borges perhaps tongue-in-cheek, was an unconscious Poe parodist, so Borges has done him one better. The story reads on the surface like typical Borges, but it is a subtle Lovecraft parody (and dedicated to his memory), combining the methods of both writers, ignoring superficialities and going to the heart--remotely glimpsed mystery, indirect telling, hints and more hints, and Things.

Most of the other pieces are at least marginally science fiction or fantasy. Marginal cases include "The Sect of Thirty", which purports to be an ancient account of a non-existent Christian heresy but more overtly fantastic is the Nebula-nominee, "Utopia of a Tired Man". Borges said in his TV interview that no one should pity him in his age and blindness because he is tired of life. His future is one of a perfect mankind exhausted, slowly withdrawing into itself, losing the will to continue

Youth and old age meet doppel-ganger style in "The Other", as Borges converses with his earlier self and each tries to figure out who is dreaming whom. "The Mirror and the Mask", "The Disk" and "Undr" are all set in Dark Ages Europe, suggesting that like so many other fantasists, Borges has been bitten by the Northern Thing, as somebody called it. (He has apparently been studying Anglo-Saxon language and poetry.) "Mirror" is close to the traditional fantasy fable of Dunsany or Kenneth Morris, about a poet who writes a line of ultimate beauty. "The Disk" is more fragmentary, about an exiled king who carries a piece of infinity in the palm of his hand, and "Undr" is a massive narrative distilled to a few pages about, among other things, a people whose poetry consists solely of the word, "wonder". Some of the realistic stories are equally impressive. Borges writes well of South American life and history. I particularly recommend "The Night of the Gifts", although I am not as fond as the author seems to be of "The Congress". I don't see how it is any better than many of his stories, only longer.

The works of Borges are a must for any fantasy library. I'd say start with LABYRINTHS, but progress quickly to THE BOOK OF SAND.

DRAWING CLOSE TO THE GRAVE by Denis Tiana. Portfolio of 23 drawings (unbound). Silver Scarab Press, 500 Wellesley, S.E., Albuquerque, NM 87106. \$5.00 Limited to 300 copies.

This is one of those rare treasures like the early Bok folios which will haunt you forever if you pass it up --- or if you buy it, considering the eldritch nature of the work. Tiani is certainly the most brilliant macabre artist currently active, yet his work has not been widely published. The few book jackets of his I've seen (e.g. Brennan's TALES OF DARKNESS & DREAD, Arkham House) scarcely hint at what he can do. Some of his work for the late WITCHCRAFT & SORCERY was more typical, but mostly his work has appeared in fanzines like NYCTALOPS. Editor Morris has reprinted the highlights, plus a few I don't recognize, all on glossy NYCTALOPS cover stock. The reproduction is excellent, as it has to be for the

large solid areas of black, and the intricate detail. Tiani is a white on black artist mostly, somewhat like the famous English artist Harry Clarke, but quite distinct. The plates are suitable for framing, and the artwork itself would be just right for the frontispiece to the NECRONOMICON.

A FINE AND PRIVATE PLACE

By Peter S. Beagle
Ballantine, 1976, 256 pp., \$1.50, (reissue).

A FINE AND PRIVATE PLACE is very putdownable. Try to imagine a GP-rated DHALGREN by Thorne Smith and Robert Nathan and you have some idea what it's like. Overlong and rambling, but beautifully written and easy to read. Beagle, like Delany, has the rare ability to capture the texture of life, and like Delany he becomes so delighted with the act of doing it he goes on and on. His novel is probably twice its proper length, formless, and filled out with trivial detail. Quite a few scenes could be cut without loss, but they're all well done so it's hard to say which ones. There is virtually no plot, so we can't say those which do not further the development of the book should go. Do that and you have a short story.

What's it about? Life and death, mostly life in a graveyard. The characters include a talking raven with a personality like Don Rickles, a lonely middle-aged man who has been living in a mausoleum for 20 years, a widow, and two ghostly lovers. They philosophise a lot -- validly, with truth in what they say -- while getting to know one another. Love affairs spring up and finally everybody is united happily ever after, even though for the ghosts it requires a coffin transplant to another cemetery. Beagle is mostly interested in creating the day-to-day existence of his characters, and he ultimately does give them ultimate vivid reality. Even though you may stop reading for a while, you'll eventually want to come back and see how everybody is doing. You'll probably like this book, although not intensely, and if you come to it after THE LAST UNICORN you may be disappointed.

BRIEFLY MENTIONED: Contrary to popular belief, this is not DARRELL SCHEITZER'S SF REVIEW MAGAZINE. In the interests of sanity ((and solvency)) your editor imposes deadlines and length limits on me. Thus I am not able to discuss more fully a couple things.

THE YEAR'S BEST HORROR STORIES, Series IV, edited by Gerald W. Page (DAW 208 pp., \$1.25) has, believe it or not, a vampire story by Mr. Hard Science himself, Hal Clement. One other original (G.N. Gabbard), and reprints from professional and semi-professional sources. Also an article by E. Hoffman Price on de Camp's controversial Lovecraft biography. He says the virtue of the thing is it's the first book by an outsider (no pun) and thus valued for its objectivity. Agreed. De Camp's opinions are clearly labelled as such.

Gregg Press sends GALAXIES LIKE GRAINS OF SAND by Brian Aldiss (\$9) which is an important early collection of stories linked together to form a history of the next million years. To my mind it has more of lasting interest than more recent books like THE MALACIA TAPESTRY.

THE EYES OF THE OVERWORLD by Jack Vance (\$11) is the sequel to THE DYING EARTH, more unified, and possibly better written. Gregg Press books aren't something you buy casually, but if there's a book you've always wanted to have in a permanent copy, this is the way to do it.

THE FIRST WORLD FANTASY AWARDS edited by Gahan Wilson (Doubleday, 1977, 311 pp., \$8.95) is a souvenir of the Providence NecronomiCon, with winners and runners-up for the Howard (World Fantasy) Awards, plus more material from the prize-winning (now twice) WHISPERS which is not in the WHISPERS anthology, two Robert Bloch stories from WEIRD TALES, an excerpt from THE FORGOTTEN BEASTS OF ELD, a new article by Robert Aickman, and more. T. E. D. Klein's "The Events at Porath Farm" is the first story from a fanzine (not a semi-prozine---it didn't pay) ever to be nominated for a major award. This is its second antholization. The jacket by Wilson is attractive, and more colorful than usual. Doubleday is trying to make their books look better of late, and should be commended for it.

11-24-77 HAPPY THANKSGIVING DAY!!

It is my sad duty to report to the Galactic Council that an entire generation of turkeys were wiped out, eaten, by a rapacious, infinitely cruel, callous, merciless barbarian horde on the planet Earth. This happens every year! I recommend that it be stopped! I call for a vote from the Council on the extermination of this heartless species called 'humans'. With the new Xylph Ray we could sterilize the entire species and insert into their psyches a loathing for turkey meat. Thus the turkey culture would be saved. I call for a vote! All in favor, raise your right wing!

LUCIFER'S HAMMER By Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle. Playboy Press, \$10.
COMMENT: Damn right I liked it. It locked me into a near-compulsive read for a couple days.

This long, detailed, utterly realistic story of what might happen to Earth if a large comet made a direct hit is unflinching in its examination of individuals under ultimate stress, and speaks to the matter of society fractured and the basic, instinctual social contract.

This is a multiple viewpoint story, switching from the "God" point of view in italics as the impersonal events which deflect the comet from the fringe of the solar system "downward" into the crowded area of planets and sun, to the cast of characters whose experiences and thoughts tell the terrifying story of the impact, its consequences and the aftermath for the survivors.

There are awe-inspiring scenes: the tidal wave that rose like a water mountain and swept inward over Santa Monica (vivid for me, since I used to live there!) and drowned the entire Los Angeles basin, surging into the San Fernando Valley...

#The eruption of volcanoes.

#The terrible earthquake when all the pressures along the San Andreas and other faults in California let go in simultaneous release.

#The frantic acts of savagery and panic as survivors fought for high ground, food, supplies.

#The experiences and sights of the Russian and American astronauts as they were engulfed by the

comet's tail and watched the terrible impacts of the broken-apart corona as pieces the size of mountains slammed into the oceans and continents below.

Underlying the struggle of a mountain valley cluster of people to survive against the coming winter and against an invading army of desperate remnants of army units and tormented cannibals, is the theme of knowledge vs. the attractions of secure ignorance and superstition. Will these people sink into a primitive, subsistence, scavenger life and eventual Dark-Age culture (or worse!), or will they risk almost everything to keep a nearby nuclear power plant safe from anti-science religious fanaticism?

The characterizations are good, vivid, real, with sometimes a bit too much subjective wringing of hands over tough choices and personal relationships.

GOOD BOOK!

I find myself now hoping it will be made into a movie, though it would cost multi-millions and require a viewing time of at least four hours. And anyone who reads the book will be unable to resist casting stars in the various roles.

One other phenomenon this novel produces in the reader: you keep thinking, "How would I behave in this situation?" This occurs all through the book. The reader is involved! He is forced to look deep within himself.

This novel should be a best-seller on the paperback racks, if not in hardcover.

LETTERS FROM CHET TWAROG, GALACTIC CITIZEN

20 Nov. 1977

'I'm involved with the National Space Institute and going on my second year as a member. I recently applied to their speakers bureau and received this in a reply:

"In response to your request to become actively involved in our speakers bureau...

"May we remind you that the Institute is a non-profit, educational organization forbidden by the IRS to lobby in Congress in any way on any issue. We ask that you refrain from discussing space politics at any engagement where you are representing the Institute and treat any political questions posed you very delicately. One other reminder, the Institute is a scientific organization dealing with the concrete

realities of space. Since no scientific explanation of U.F.O.'s has yet been given, we ask our speakers not to talk on this topic."

'Isn't that just grand! A non-profit, educational institute which is forbidden by one government agency, the IRS, to lobby for another government agency, NASA, which is controlled by funds from the government, the Congress.'

((Which is controlled, in theory, by the people---voters, and taxpayers. But this is not a reason for outrage; if the Institute wants its freedom all it has to do is cut loose from the government subsidies it obviously relishes. In short, it illustrates that old refrain: put your money where your mouth is, as well as another truism: them that pays the orchestra calls the tune.))

19 November, 1977

'Damnation!! I've gotta deal with lots of empty-headed people who've done nothing but give me the willies stunting my own futuristic development and expansion. They get me absolutely manical at times. I've included a short feedback reply from a student at my college to articles I write about futurism. This is what the average majority feel/believe?'

"I have to disagree with Chet Twarog that, 'When an exploration of that beyond our own planet declines and fails, so will the chances for successful civilization and a successful future.' I feel that if there is any possibility of a 'successful civilization' or a 'successful future', then it must grow from the realization that there is 'only one earth', that if we do not solve our problems here, and soon, we are not likely to do anything anywhere else. Indeed, I feel that until we pull ourselves together, in more ways than one, we have not proven ourselves worthy of the curatorship of a single planet. Chet Twarog's intergalactic mind trips may be nice escapism, but they are escapism nonetheless. Isn't it about time we came down to earth? As someone once said, 'far out is fine, who's minding the store?'

'I even challenge people on my radio program with no feedback at all! "I'd like to make a request" is all I get,

'The trouble with too much futuristic outlook is depressiveness. If it wasn't for SFR, the

prozines and science fiction, I'd surely crack up from the frustration of trying to make other people know that we can make a future living in real elegant style if we would just push colonies in space and technology to the fullest development and potential that it has for all of us. I talk to people who believe in a Second Coming, foreseeing the end of humanity and no need for doing otherwise except waiting.

"There is a vacuum in the world", Geis, but how do we get rid of it? What do we fill it with if dreaming of unlimited expansion into the solar system and beyond is scoffed at as escapism? What do we do with a Congress who keeps on cutting back on NASA? And, welfare, and? Our system is failing and only we can foresee it and know it. No one else is convinced.

'How about autographing the subscription editions of SFR?'

((You'll have to admit, Chet, that the student whom you quote is as idealistic as you; it's just a matter of priorities.

((I'm afraid I'll not be a strong staff to lean upon in your depressiveness and frustration. I'm with those who poo-poo the chances of successful colonization and space-living. I shed my idealism some years ago. I have no faith that mankind can be anything other than what he is. Nor do I believe he should be different.

((Americans, and possibly other peoples, are now really beginning to feel hemmed in and limited. There isn't a frontier to run to. This causes anxiety...unconscious panic...neurosis. In desperation we are surfacing wild dreams of a space frontier.

((I suspect that space-living is impractical because I think we are arrogantly assuming we can adjust to any environment. I believe mankind is an Earth animal, tied to this planet by myriads of interacting and interdependent biological micro-forces and factors of which we are largely unaware.

((I suspect that after some months in space---even with an artificial gravity and a "home-like" space environment with living shrubs, flowers, etc. (and I'm not sure even Earth plants could, over the long haul, live off planet)---subtle changes in body chemistry would occur, people would sicken in various ways, there would be a too-high ratio of miscarriages, madness, psychosomatic illnesses, suicide...until it be-

came obvious that space-living is not a long-term solution to our problems.

((I imagine that it would be possible to establish a permanent, large space station in orbit, and perhaps send ships into the asteroid belt for prospecting and mining, but the survival rate would be shockingly low, and workers on the space station would have to be rotated often.

((The best bet would now seem to be highly "intelligent" computerized unmanned mining and prospecting rigs on the Moon after commercially oriented manned exploration and evaluation.

((But the time is short, perhaps the time is gone; when even our government or the largest of the greediest trans-national corporations is willing or desperate enough to attempt Moon mining.

((Skylab will be doing extensive research on man's long-term adaptability to space, and until answers are given to that basic question, everything future is wish, hope and optimism.

((I'm afraid I can't take the time to autograph all 1800 or so subscription copies of SFR, each issue. Would you care to make the trip from Idaho and spend a couple days, non-stop writing, and do it for me? Or am I being too idealistic...and unrealistic?))



LETTER FROM NEIL KVERN

11-8-77

'I'm trying to start a yearly anthology series, SUN CHARIOT, which will be primarily written by fans and semi-pros and such. I'm looking for submissions of poetry and fiction and I'd like to hear from a few artists, too. I'm not

concerned about specific genre limitations; I do want exceptional work, though (doesn't everyone?). I hope to be able to offer some kind of payment; undoubtedly there will be something like that involved, it's just that I don't have anything definite right now. I've written to Jerry Pournelle and Gene Wolfe, asking if they'd each do a short piece on writing; I'll let you know their responses, of course when I get them.

'My hopes are that SC can open up a few new fields---the genre of sf poetry is growing, but is still not as well-known as if deserves (of course, no poetry is really very hot on the average market, but that's to be expected). I know a number of fans who write, but don't write sf or heroic fantasy, so they aren't heard from often---and I want to open some kind of market for them, too. My major interests in fiction are, granted, sf/f, but a well-written story is a well-written story, even if it's by Dashiell Hammett.

'Neil Kvern
Box 258,
Cataldo, ID 83810.'

((Glad to see you have so thoroughly thought out your plans for SUN CHARIOT, Neil.))

Johnny Carson, last night on the TONIGHT show, during his monolog, mentioned that NBC had cancelled LOGAN'S RUN.
Good!

11-25-77 Lester del Rey makes two very valid points about the current sf boom: the publishers are gearing up for an explosion of new sf next year (and where are the readers going to come from to buy it all?), and who is going to write it all?

The supply of sf and fantasy will meet the editorial demand, of course. But the quality will probably be low.

Right. A boom--a bust. It has ever been thus. The publishers think all those STAR WARS and CLOSE ENCOUNTERS viewers are going to be readers.

I doubt it. A certain percentage of them will try printed sf, but not enough, not for long.

Because 90% of current sf and fantasy is badly written on two levels, and after the wonder of a tour of sf themes---about twenty or thir-

ty books and/or magazines, the glitter will fade and the bad writing will drive them away. Why read dull stuff when you can watch it on TV?

How is current sf badly written? Most characterizations are good enough, if often overcooked and stereotyped. It is in the lack of realism that sf and fantasy fail; the stories are still sophomoric and juvenile in basic conception. We need to offer real people behaving in real future life, because if we continue to offer impossible heroes and heroines we are giving the reader printed TV. And no amount of flashy sf furniture and gimmicks will long distract from that dismal reality.

The over-reliance on Wonder is our other writing sin. Too many plots are mere sightseeing tours of science fiction themes. It all gets too familiar, too soon.

We've got to give readers real people in real situations in the future and limit the six-impossible-things-before-breakfast syndrome. Real people do become heroes and heroines, and real people are evil and villainous. At present only the villains in sf (usually) are realistic.

People still go to movies because they get uncensored TV at theatres. They won't stick with printed sf and fantasy unless we give them adult treatments of believably future problems.

But above all--good, solid stories are needed, and the construction and fleshing-out of a tight, tensioned story is still a very difficult effort, not easily learned or understood.

There are rumors of many new sf magazines and pocketbook mags in sf's near-future, plus hundreds of more hardcover and softcover novels, anthologies, collections.

This is good for one reason only---the demand will give new talent a quick opportunity for publication. We'll see some very good new writers bloom.

And we'll see tons of junk by new (and old) lazy writers. And then the bubble will burst.

In the meantime, let's help each other find and relish the good stuff...and warn each other of the shit.

RECEIVED: THE DEVIL IN A FOREST by Gene Wolfe. Ace 14288-5, \$1.50. Fantasy.

AFTER UTOPIA by Mack Reynolds. Ace 00958-1, \$1.50.

IT SAYS:
© PLANET
STORIES,
1942



THE KING IN YELLOW by Robert W. Chambers. Ace 44481-4, \$1.50. COMMENT: Macabre stories. Interesting that the copyright is 1895 in the name of F. Tennyson Neely. Was Chambers a pen-name?

OUR FRIENDS FROM FROLIX 8 by Philip K. Dick. Ace 64401-5, \$1.50. COMMENT: Reprinted from 1970. Vintage Dick. He doesn't write this way anymore, alas.

CONJURE WIFE by Fritz Leiber. Ace 11686-8, \$1.95. COMMENT: interesting cutout inside-outside cover. This is perhaps the novel which will last of all Fritz's books. A classic.

PAST MASTER by R.A. Lafferty. Ace 65301-4, \$1.50.

BEHIND THE WALLS OF TERRA by Philip Jose Farmer. Ace 05357-2, \$1.50. COMMENT: The fourth book of the World of Tiers series.

JACOB ATABET by Michael Murphy. Celestial Arts, \$4.95. Comment: A speculative fiction involving evolution. Murphy founded the Esalen Institute with Richard Price in 1962.

THE ADOLESCENCE OF P-1 by Thomas J. Ryan. Collier Books, \$4.95.

ENCOUNTER PROGRAM by Robert Enstrom. Doubleday, \$7.95.

THE FANTASTIC IN LITERATURE by Eric S. Rabkin. Princeton University Press, \$3.95. Academic analysis.

WORLD SOUL by Mikhail Emtsev & Eremai Parnov. Macmillan, \$7.95. Russian sf. [Advance copy] Feb. 1978 publication date.

THE HEARING TRUMPET by Leonora Carrington. Pocket Books 81837, \$1.75.

THE STAR CHILD TRILOGY by Frederik Pohl and Jack Williamson. Pocket Books 81105, \$1.95. COMMENT: The novels that make up the trilogy are: THE REEFS OF SPACE, STARCHILD, and ROGUE STAR. They were previously published separately by Ballantine after original publication in GALAXY and IF.

STARGATE By Stephen Robinett. Signet W7757, \$1.50.

MONDAY BEGINS ON SATURDAY by Arkadi & Boris Strugatski. DAW UE1336, \$1.75.

NONE BUT MAN by Gordon R. Dickson. DAW UE1337, \$1.75

Here's a quote or two from two sf shows on TV which have gone down the tube (courtesy Buzz Dixon):

SYLVIA: You like simple girls, don't you? Like Jessica.

LOGAN: Jessica isn't that simple.

SYLVIA: She's in love with you, isn't she?

--LOGAN'S RUN

For people who've been frozen 200 years, death is just a statistic.

--LOGAN'S RUN

MULDOON: Listen, Mark, we gotta get out of here. You ain't met this Thark. He's a giant!

MARK HARRIS: (seeing shovels and picks) He's a miner.

MULDOON: I don't care how old he is, he's really big!

--MAN FROM ATLANTIS

And from FERNWOOD TONIGHT:

Sometimes I think I'm a midget; the last to know it's raining and the first to know it's a flood.

ALIEN THOUGHTS CONT. ON P. 60

LIMBO BLUES

BY NEAL WILGUS

I was cruzin thru space with me baby
suckin a bottle of gin
peruzin a foldout from SPACEBOY
an wishin that she was that thin.
When all of the suddin I seen it
out thru the porthole in space --
comin right at us like crazy
a grinnin gigantic blue face!
I jumped when it winked an smiled at us
not knowin quite what to expect.
Me finger was right on her button
an we was all set to eject.

Then all of the suddin -- nuttin.

We was tryin to forget the intrusion
by hittin a bottle of scotch.
Me baby had just turned her heat up
an mine had gone up a whole notch.
When all of the suddin I realized
that sumpin was watchin our act
an could see how she'd gotten my heat up
an could see how me baby was stacked.
There at the porthole I saw it
just one huge gigantic big eye.
Whatever it was it was closer
an was learnin to peek and to spy.

Then all of the suddin -- nuttin.

She was tryin to pull her spacesuit on
an I was for keeping it off
so I gave her some hooch in a teaspoon
an told her it was good for her cough.
When all of the suddin I felt goosebumps
an knew it had come back again
an there in the air it was floatin
right there in our own cozy den.
This time a big mouth was a-smilin,
a mouth an a tongue, that was all.
So quick as a flash I got friendly
an gave it the drinks from our ball.
Then all of the suddin -- nuttin.

It was gone for some time an we wondered
if now it was goin for good
but in back of me mind I was certin
it would hurry right back if it could.
Then all of the suddin I saw her
her eyes lightin up full of fire
an the next thing I saw was the sumpin
full twenty inches long, I'm no liar.
It seemed to know just what it came for
an she seemed to know what to do.
I swear I ain't never been madder
than when I was watchin those two.
Then all of the suddin -- nuttin.

I was mournin me now missin baby
an nursing a bottle of wine
an thinkin about that strange sumpin
who'd decided he'd take what was mine.
When all of the suddin it hit me
that the sumpin was not like a man
and there in the air it had joined me
a great giant foldout I could scan.
Those blue legs were the legs of my baby
but the size was now sumpin to see
so quick as a flash I grabbed on em
and came to the point I was free.
Then all of the suddin --nuttin!

end



THE HUMAN HOTLINE

S-F NEWS

BY ELTON T. ELLIOTT

TERRY CARR will have an anthology out from Thomas Nelson, about Christmas. Tentatively titled SF CHRISTMAS STORIES: TO FOLLOW A STAR.

TERRY CARR will also edit, starting next year, a reprint anthology series for Berkley/Putnam, titled THE YEAR'S FINEST FANTASY.

RICHARD LUPOFF will have two novels published by Dell in 1978: SPACE WAR BLUES and CIRCUMPOLAR. SPACE WAR BLUES will have a George Barr cover and a long introduction by Harlan Ellison.

LEIGH BRACKETT will have the fourth John Stark novel published by Del Rey Books in 1978. She also has a TV pilot in process that is not sf.

STEPHEN GOLDIN has finished D'Alembert #5 and is working on #6. His current novel, ASSAULT ON THE GODS, from Doubleday, is set in the same universe as SCAVENGER HUNT and FINISH LINE, Laser's #25 and #45. He and Kathleen Sky Goldin have been asked to teach an sf course at Cal State-Northridge.

MICHAEL KURLAND will have a novel out from Nelson entitled PRINCES OF EARTH.

ROBERT ANTON WILSON is working on an Occult novel, THE DEVIL'S MASQUERADE, and has sold an sf trilogy to Simon & Shuster. The first book is SCHROEDINGER'S CAT.

THEODORE STURGEON will have 3 books out from Bantam. One is a reissue and two will be new collections of unanthologized stories.

SYDNEY J. VAN SCYLOC has finished a new novel, SUNWAVE.

ELIZABETH LYNN will have a story in MILLENNIAL WOMEN, edited by Virginia Kidd, out from Dell April 18. She will also have a story in DARK DREAMS, DARK SINS, edited by Barry Malzberg & Bill Pronzini. The anthology will be published by Doubleday.

R. FARADAY NELSON will have a Blade series novel published by Pinnacle. It's called DIMENSION OF HORROR and will appear under the Jeffrey Lord house name.

SCHEDULED DAW RELEASES:

March

BEAST OF GOR by John Norman
WHETTED BRONZE by Manning Norvil
DYING FOR TOMORROW by Michael Moorcock
CALLING DR. PATCHWORK by Ron Goulart

April

WELL OF SHIUAN by C.J. Cherryh
SAVAGE SCORPIO by Alan Burk Akers
A TOUCH OF STRANGE by Theodore Sturgeon
THE JOAN OF ARK REPLAY by Pierre Barbet

May

THE 1978 ANNUAL WORLD'S BEST Edited by Donald A. Wollheim
CITY OF THE SUN by Brian M. Stableford
KIOGA OF THE UNKNOWN LAND by William Chester
WARLORD OF THE AIR by Michael Moorcock.

JOHN VARLEY's first short story collection will contain: An Introduction by Algis Budrys; "Retrograde Summer," "The Phantom of Kansas," "Air Raid," "When the Black Hole Passes," "In the Hall of the Martian Kings," "In the Bowl," "Gotta Sing, Gotta Dance," "Overdrawn at the Memory Bank," "The Persistence of Vision."

The collection will be released in the Spring by Dial/James Wade Books.

J.F. BONE's unpublished Laser Book, THE MATADOR, will be published by Starblaze Series from the Donning Company, edited by Kelly and Polly Freas.

LASER BOOKS are returning all rights and manuscripts to the authors.

THOMAS N. SCORTIA and FRANK M. ROBINSON have a new novel coming out entitled NIGHTMARE FACTOR.

THE SPOTLIGHT

FEATURED AUTHOR: JACK L. CHALKER

To clarify an inconsistency in our first column, WORLDS OF MIST AND SHADOW was retitled by Judy-Lynn del Rey as WEB OF THE CHOSEN. Out on the stands by now, Jack Chalker regards it as a fun book. The cover is by Ralph McQuarrie, who did a lot of the artwork and planet design on STAR WARS.

MIDNIGHT AT THE WELL OF SOULS was Del Rey's biggest seller in Sept. and Oct. (excepting STAR WARS) and will be reissued as a top seller with major promotion in Del Rey Books' first anniversary in March. There will be a sequel late next year, and possibly a third and final book.

Del Rey Books have also purchased DANCERS IN THE AFTERGLOW. Described as a serious and downbeat political novel, Jack says it's unlike anything he has done before, and expects it to draw an enormous amount of critical fire, particularly from politically oriented reviewers of whatever persuasion. Jack worked on DANCERS while at Westercon and finished it upon returning home.

A story set after the events in JUNGLE OF STARS, Jack Chalker's first novel, is titled "Forty Days and Nights in the Wilderness" and will appear in ANALOG.

An sf ferryboat story (the Earthly type that moves through water), "Dance Band On the Titanic," will be in an early 1978 issue of ISSAC ASIMOV'S SF MAGAZINE. If it's popular, a series on the boat might be done.

Jack Chalker has finished a new novel, and is working on another.

REG NOTE: 1-4-78 Telegram from Richard Evans of Futura Publishing in England: JUST RECEIVED SFR 23 GOOD ISSUE BUT PLEASE NOTE PETE WESTON'S ANTHOLOGY SERIES NOT REPEAT NOT SUSPENDED BY PUBLISHERS. ANDROMEDA 3 NOW IN PREPARATION.

LETTER FROM NEAL WILGUS

11-17-77

'Colin Wilson's PHILOSOPHER'S STONE is sf---but it's being marketed as a "prophetic novel" as part of Warner Paperback's Rediscovery Series. With a bullshit introduction by Joyce Carol Oates, a mainstream biggie, yet. (She is "no admirer of Lovecraft.")

'I need to read one more Wilson ---THE STRENGTH TO DREAM---to do a sort of assessment of his relationship with sf (he's a big admirer of van Vogt, naturally.)....'

LETTER FROM DARRELL SCHWEITZER

November, 1977

'I am not going to "get" Bill Gibson for his letter ((in #23)), for all gladitorial director Geis would have me do so.... I don't see any reason to make an enemy out of the man. Nothing to be gained from it, & should we ever meet I can hope at best we can politely ignore each other.

'I've thought about his comments and this Language Problem in criticism, & it seems to me it stems from one of the reasons I'm a writer and not a teacher. I tend to lose patience with the articulate. You can see how this is bad news in a teacher---he has to bring himself down to the student's level without seeming patronizing & thus help the student to think & express himself more clearly---but for editorial work it's a positive asset. A writer can't be helped if he is so clumsy he cannot say what he wishes to say. You can send a story back for revision if the problem is structure or logic or development of the idea, but rarely for style. I have a tendency to not listen to the speech if the delivery is below a certain level.

'I'm not sure but that this isn't a good idea for a critic or book reviewer also. If someone (i.e. the people in SF STUDIES) cannot write English well enough to make themselves understood---and more importantly, to present their ideas so the manner of discourse doesn't get in the way of what is being said---then I should pan the book. The best writing should be invisible, and not just in fiction. The reader should not be constantly distracted by style,

especially when the distraction is in the form of having to go back & reread a paragraph a more capable writer could have made completely clear with half the wordage.

'This idea is hardly new. Robert Bloch puts it well in a letter in ALGOL 28:

"Another thing I noticed---the Asimov interview and the articles by Gunn and de Camp were written in plain English. Isn't it amazing how the Big Name Pros manage to express themselves in simple, declarative sentences, while the neo-writers-turned-critics must resort to prolix pontifications and polysyllabic pseudo-profundity? Saying what you mean is just as important as meaning what you say, and the real pros have learned how to do both."

'Of course many academic critics are not only not professional writers, but they have little trace of writing talent. Having a degree does not qualify one to write criticism, or anything else. And I don't intend to throw my degree around, just to point out it doesn't mean much. I have one & I'm not an academic. I actually have little respect for degrees. They are no guarantee of any sort of creative thought.

'Gibson would find it instructive to compare the best sf critics, say LeGuin, Blish, Delany, Kornbluth, Panshin, etc. to the various mumblers in the SF STUDIES book. The best critics tend to be writers, because of their naturally better facility with words (And we think in words. If you can't write clearly or speak clearly, you can't think clearly.) Even Lem when being a pompous slob expresses himself more clearly than some critics to whom English is allegedly their native language. & whatever I think of Malzberg, I'll grant that his essays are clearly and concisely written.

'Maybe I'm different, but I've always thought one of the greatest critical pieces ever written was Mark Twain's "Fenimore Cooper's Literary Offences," which contains more common sense about the nature of writing than anything else I've encountered. Two of Twain's rules were:

Use the right word, not its second cousin.
Eschew obfuscation.

'Steve Brown in his prozine reviews shows he has no sense of humor. He has completely missed the

point of Goldin's "When There's No Man Around," which is an outrageous farce aimed, not at traditional pulp stereotypes of women, but feminist attitudes about those stereotypes. ((Goldin)) deliberately threw together every cliché on the subject to knock down the new ones which have arisen as a reaction to the old ones. I'm beginning to feel, for instance, that the all-competent woman we see in John Varley's fiction is as much a stereotype as the old ANALOG engineer.'

LETTER FROM NATE BUCKLIN, MINNESOTA SCIENCE FICTION SOCIETY, INC.

November, 1977

'Dear Mr. Baen:

I'm writing on behalf of "Minn-stf"---the Minnesota Science Fiction Society, Inc. (We've all heard about your departure from GALAXY; but we have not heard whether or not the Galaxy Volunteers program is departing along with you. Therefore we're writing you anyway---as well as Richard Geis/Alter Ego, Spider Robinson, and the original Galaxy Volunteers P.O. box.) We would like to volunteer for the "clearing house" role as mentioned in the August, 1977 GALAXY, page 113; our own plans for services for the sightless include these:

'Basically, Minn-stf has in mind a program for (a) assembling a list of all sf available for the blind, in any form; (b) disseminating this list, in Braille, to interested blind readers; (c) getting feedback from blind sf readers as to what services they need (for instance: sf bibliography; sf criticism; convention news); (d) possibly--no promises--setting up our



own book-reading program, complete with alternative distributing channels.

"C" appears to be the priority, though getting on "a" and "b" will be no real problem---one blind local fan can transcribe from tape to Braille, and the list of works may be fairly short. "D"---our own book-reading program---will take somewhat longer to set up, and we'll probably delay starting until we're absolutely certain that it's both necessary and practical; even so, the amount of available energy for that program is tremendous. Also, since some reading services for the blind operate on the basis that "if you send us a book, one of our readers will read it onto tape and send you back the original", we're also set up---now---for operating a book search service, having as we do a large club library and many members who are active collectors.

'If you and DESTINIES' publishers are willing to "continue the fight" and disseminate information, names of volunteers, etc., we would appreciate both receiving any such information and having our name and address also passed on. Meanwhile, we'll be getting our list of available sf together---we may have quite a lot accomplished by the time this sees print!'

'Box 2128 Loop Station,
Minneapolis, MN 55402.'

12-6-77 Dear loyal subscribers and bookstore buyers... The ever-critical cash-flow figures are peeling the scales of illusion from my eyes, stripping me of hope, and dictating a return to the all newsprint 80-page format.

Isn't it remarkable what a cash flow can do to a man?

Simply, the lovely heavy covers are too damned expensive. I find myself putting off paying contributors, worrying about where-the-hell-the-money-is-going-to-come-from-to-pay-the-house-insurance, the doctor, the tax man....

A study of the circulation figures on page 79 will show that SFR has grown very little in the past year. (Incredible as that may seem!) This is fine with me. I have often said I do not want all the bookwork and mailing chores that go with a very successful (in sales) fanzine. And it looks like I got what I can handle. But the income does NOT permit the luxury of heavy cover stock. So, lesson

learned: SFR is a pulp fanzine all the way.

The books incoming have piled up, there has been a spate of must-publish letters, and some Comments have been bursting my seams. So let me get to it.

Oh, one more item of intimate editorial interest: I have been toying with my usual drastic change in contents format impulses, and the letters as usual, from readers, have once more Made Me Think.

You seem to want More Geis in SFR, as usual. Flattering as hell. And in order to save having to pay money to others for material to publish, starting maybe this issue, in the late pages, you'll find a new column by me.

I'll call it "Reports From Alternate Earth #666." In diary format, the entries will be my observations of the goings-on in the so-called 'real' world---politics, economics, sociology, culture... We do live in an alternate Earth, you know. A weird spinoff. The things happening around us nowadays can only be explained in that way.

So SFR will have two diaries by me---this one more or less restricted to sf, fantasy, SFR, publishing, editing, writing...and one filled with madness.

RECEIVED: UNEARTH #5 (Winter, 1978), \$1.50. [\$4. year, from 102 Charles St., #190, Boston, MA 02114] COMMENT: Big, thick issue, with a wild cover that features a male nude with woman's breasts and a tiger's head. Lotsa big names inside. Very professional package.

SECRET SCORPIO by Alan Burt Akers. DAW UW1344, \$1.50. This is the 15th Dray Prescott adventure.

CRY SILVER BELLS by Thomas Burnett Swann. DAW UW1345, \$1.50. Fantasy. This must have been completed shortly before Swann died. It is copyrighted by Margaret Gaines Swann, 1977.

PRISON OF NIGHT by E. C. Tubb. DAW UW1346, \$1.50. A Dumarest of Terra novel, #17.

THE BEST FROM THE REST OF THE WORLD Edited by Donald A. Wollheim. DAW UE 1343, \$1.75. An anthology of European S-f. 14 stories.

THE BEST FROM FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION, edited by Edward L. Ferman. Doubleday, \$7.95. The cream from the last four years, and not just fiction.

RIME ISLE by Fritz Leiber. Whispers Press, \$10.

COMMENT: Limited edition, with 10 full-page illustrations by Tim Kirk. This novel is comprised by novelets which appeared in FLASHING SWORDS #3 and COSMOS. In a covering letter, Stuart Schiff says, 'There is also a special signed and boxed edition of 250 copies at \$20. each.'

Order from: Whispers Press, Box 904, Chapel Hill, NC 27514.

This is, of course, a Fafhrd & Gray Mouser novel.

BLACK GOD'S SHADOW by C.L. Moore. Grant, \$15.

COMMENT: Five novelettes of Jirel of Joiry's adventures. Exquisitely illustrated with five color plates by Alicia Austin. Superbly made books.

THE THREE PALLADINS by Harold Lamb. Grant, \$12. Warrior-Hero historical fantasy. Four full-color, full-page paintings interior by Cathy Hill.

Order from Donald Grant, West Kingston, RI 02892.

ALIEN THOUGHTS CONT. ON P. 71

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"ON THE NIGHT WHEN THE AZTECS DROVE CORTEZ AND HIS MEN OUT OF MEXICO CITY, KILLING MANY OF THEM, AN EPIDEMIC OF SMALL-POX WAS RAGING IN THE CITY... THE PARALYZING EFFECT OF A LETHAL EPIDEMIC GOES FAR TO EXPLAIN WHY THE AZTECS DID NOT PURSUE THE DEFEATED AND DEMORALIZED SPANIARDS....

"MOREOVER, IT IS WORTH CONSIDERING THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF A DISEASE THAT KILLED ONLY INDIANS AND LEFT SPANIARDS UNHARMED. SUCH PARTIALITY COULD ONLY BE EXPLAINED SUPERNATURALLY... LITTLE WONDER, THEN, THAT THE INDIANS ACCEPTED CHRISTIANITY AND SUBMITTED TO SPANISH CONTROL SO MEETLY. GOD HAD SHOWN HIMSELF ON THEIR SIDE...."

---PLAGUES AND PEOPLES
William H. McNeill
Anchor/Doubleday

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AN INTERVIEW WITH ALGIS BUDRYS

CONDUCTED BY ED GORMAN

Certain quarters have it that Algis Budrys is a dark and brooding man. They will tell you there are certain questions you should not ask him. At least not without some risk.

The day I interviewed Budrys he was suffering the last symptoms of a bad case of flu. A good excuse to be short-tempered or uncooperative.

But Budrys was cordial, helpful and amusing. And he answered the questions, even some rather frivolous ones, fully and seriously.

Physically, he's a big man, blond and chunky in his forty-sixth year, reminding me of an early John D. MacDonald hero twenty years later. His voice is his most interesting quality--the sort of voice you hear a lot in advertising agencies--necktie-hip, sharp and swaggering, with an unaccountable edge of melancholy.

The ad agency reference is especially relevant to Budrys because he's spent many years in both advertising and public relations. And it shows. He has a superb sense of audience and an equally superb sense of self-deprecation, the two essentials required for writing seriously about underarms and politicians.

Before, and to some extent, during his career in various media fields, Budrys wrote some of the best science fiction of the fifties and sixties, including *ROGUE MOON*, a nearly flawless novel that was more "admired" than understood.

After several years of relatively little fiction writing, Budrys is busy once again. His new novel *MICHAELMAS* (G.P. Putnam) appeared recently to major and enthusiastic reviews.

The *NEWSWEEK* reviewer said "Budrys is a first-rate novelist, witty, humane and adroit..."

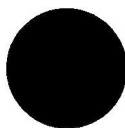
Everybody who knows Budrys' work knows how right, if belated, such an assessment is.

My thanks to George R.R. Martin for letting me impose on his science fiction workshop; to Ivor Ro-

gers for information and material; and of course to Budrys, who contributed much more to the final shaping of this piece than may be evident.

Ordinarily the piece should end here. But after Budrys read my introductory material, he decided to reply to my assertion that some people consider him "dark and brooding".

His reply is fascinating.



SFR: Do you agree with some of the New Critics who maintain that criticism can be as creative and substantive as fiction?

BUDRYS: Yes, sometimes it can.

SFR: Can you give me some examples?

BUDRYS: Sure, any of my columns. (Laughter.) No, I don't know if that theory is really one hundred per cent true, but I think it can approach that kind of thing occasionally. In the hands of someone like Damon Knight or James Blish I think sometimes it has.

SFR: Your criticism tends to be metaphysical. I'm thinking specifically of your piece on Lovecraft. I was never able to read him until you did your column which explained him to me. How do you approach a book? You seem to review people more than books. Or lives more than books.

BUDRYS: Well, I tend to review books in the light of what I know about the authors and in the light of my experience in science fiction generally. Because I see my job as one of attracting people to the field in an intelligent manner and of explaining as best I can things that might puzzle people. Lovecraft, for instance, is somebody whom a fair number of people have read and a great many people have heard about. In the case of an author like Lovecraft, his personal life, his personal orientations are extremely important to what he writes and how he writes it and why he writes it, and I try to get into that. Now, in the case of that particular review I was helped a hell of a lot by L. Sprague de Camp from whom I stole most of the information that's in the review.

SFR: That's my point. I read de Camp's book after I read your review. He never gets to that metaphysic...He never really explains Lovecraft as you do.



BUDRYS: Well, O.K., that's the difference between Sprague and me. And, in a way, it's the difference between Sprague's fiction and my fiction. I tend to write stories about people, try to get under their skins. For various good reasons I've always been able to either actually understand a character or convince a reader that I do. There's no way that I can determine for sure that I've got all this empathy and insight that people have credited me with in the past. As a matter of fact I don't think I do. I think the readers contribute at least half.

SFR: Why did you decide to start writing criticism?

BUDRYS: I've always been interested in how it all works. I got my first editorial job almost immediately after selling my first story. So the two things have always gone together. You start wondering why authors did this particular thing, you start seeing what editors do to work in order to make it, in their eyes, more palatable to the public. You become interested in processes. I have gone the whole route. As you know I now own my own production company. I've done it all. I've done it from copy editing on through standing over an Intertype operator's shoulder or trying to figure out how a photo-typesetter can handle a character line that is longer than the machine is capable of handling. I'm interested in processes.

SFR: As a critic have you ever made a mistake that still haunts you or embarrasses you?

BUDRYS: I've made a lot of mistakes. I can't remember any that haunt or embarrass me--none of them were deliberate. But, oh, my God, yeah, I've said some incredibly stupid things.

SFR: I was thinking of Richard Schickel who saw "Bonnie and Clyde" one week and said it was junk and went back and saw it the next week and recanted. Have you ever done anything like that? I mean really missed and then a week down the line smacked yourself on the forehead?

BUDRYS: I can't think of anything like that offhand. Of course, I tend to protect myself against that sort of realization. I would never go back.

SFR: How about the academic critics in the SF context these days? There was a piece in the NEW YORK TIMES by Gore Vidal claiming that mainstream novels were being killed by academic critics--professors writing for professors. How does that work in SF, good or bad?

BUDRYS: I don't think that's the right distinction. I think anything can be killed if it's spoken of more often by dumb critics than by smart critics. I've known some academic critics that were extremely perceptive, by my lights, and actually seemed to be making a positive contribution not only to scholarship and to their own credentials but to an understanding of how these things work. And I've known some other academics who were pretty stupid. In fact, I just got out of a weekend meeting of the Science Fiction Research Association where I got a chance to meet the whole spectrum. So that's not where the distinctions occur. They occur along the same old familiar lines--does this person understand what he is talking about or doesn't he? And then there's--does this person have influence or doesn't he? And the two groups split in different places so you get influential dolts and if they happen to gravitate into sufficient positions of power, yeah, it will do an enormous amount of damage. But you can't characterize that in terms of their specific orientation.

SFR: What trends in SF please you?

BUDRYS: My continued success is the one that I'm most interested in. (Laughter) I try to write a story that's reasonably free of stylistic experimentation on any obvious level. I try to write a story that proceeds from adventurous moment to adventurous moment and at the same time I try and make it mean something in terms of a better understanding of how people work and how the world works. What pleases me is I think I see more and more of that happening. Obviously, anytime somebody else writes a story like that I'm going to be happier with that story than with some other kind.

SFR: What pleases you in terms of science fiction as a commodity?

BUDRYS: The fact that there's more money in it.

SFR: And is it being marketed more shrewdly?

BUDRYS: I don't think so. I think there's just more money in it. And the thing that pleases me about that is that somebody is going to get a chance to put some away. Not that I think it's going to spread out evenly or that I think it's going to continue for any great length of time, or that I even think that it's a worthwhile trend. But for God's sake, when I think of all the science fiction writers who've gone to their graves impoverished or deprived, it's nice to see a few people at least getting overpaid. It's an unusual occurrence in the field.

SFR: Are there any trends in science fiction as a business that displease you?

BUDRYS: Yeah, there's a vast proliferation of editors who've been drafted into the job simply because some publisher has decided he's going to do science fiction this week. And he knows that there's some kid in the shipping room who's constantly reading Marvel comics. And the publisher says O.K., you're my science fiction editor until further notice. For some reason I don't understand and which has nothing to do with my male chauvinism, it's usually some earnest young lady that graduated from Radcliffe last week and wanted to get into a glamor profession. She's sincere as all get out and doesn't know the first thing either about editing or about science fiction--but she's willing to learn--on the job--at the expense of the entire field. I guess if more young men wanted to get into those glamor professions it would be a more even split.

SFR: Are there any writers whose books you refuse to read?

BUDRYS: No, no specific writers. There are many bad books that cross my desk and that I actually read, or start to read, but simply don't mention. I won't usually write a really slam review of a book unless one of two things happens--if I find other people praising it heavily and I think it's a case of their being fundamentally mistaken, then I'll bring out a negative review. Or if the book is bad in some way that will let me be instructive while picking it apart and maybe a little bit funny. Ever so often you've got to do that. I don't do it very often.

BE CERTAIN IT IS WHAT
YOU WANT...



I don't do it as often as I used to.

SFR: Do you have to do it for your own sake or for your readers' or both?

BUDRYS: Well, it helps you sharpen your own wits, but it also helps you from being so goddam deadly serious all the time. Besides, most review column readers like to see a little blood flow now and then.

SFR: That leads into my next question beautifully. In 1971 you ended your *GALAXY* book review column rather abruptly by writing, "Your faithful reviewer has no further grounds for believing himself to be even marginally competent." What inspired that sort of despair?

BUDRYS: Well, it wasn't really despair. At the time there was an enormous amount of trash being published and very little good stuff. I was having real trouble finding a couple of good books a month to talk about. And I was gradually drifting off the ground. I was beginning to not know for sure whether this book I had read was good or not. And that was true enough so that was the reason I gave. Then I went off and I woodshedded about that for a long time. In '71 or '72 I was busy working anyhow, wasn't going to be reading any fiction. So I had three or four years to think it over. But probably the main reason why I quit reviewing for *GALAXY* was I got sick of waiting for checks that never came in.

SFR: Over the years you've written many flattering things about several different editors. *ROGUE MOON*, for instance, is dedicated

to Larry Shaw. Was he particularly helpful to you?

BUDRYS: In a way. Not on the book itself. First of all, Larry is a hell of a human being. He literally fed me and housed me, many's the time. Second of all, then he was working for an outfit called Royal Publications/Magnum Publications that brought out a dozen magazines--two of which were *INFINITY* and *SCIENCE FICTION ADVENTURES*, but the others were things like *LION ADVENTURES* and *UNTAMED* and *GUNSPORT*, *CARS*, *CAR SPEED AND STYLE* and *CUSTOM RODDER*. He let me hang around the office and work on all these magazines. I learned an awful lot of editorial stuff and made a certain amount of money. I got a chance to work in fields in which I had some interest but which I would have probably never gotten into. And I got a chance to see what a real editor has to do, day after day, to get a whole series of wildly different magazines out. I was very impressed by Larry's skill in doing all of that. That's about it. I was able to write *ROGUE MOON* in large part because Larry was giving me the chance to do all this work. I had the financial ability to sit down in the middle of the night and work on *ROGUE MOON* a little bit.

SFR: In his essay, "My Affair with Science Fiction", Alfred Bester portrays John Campbell as being as dotty as someone out of P. G. Wodehouse. What was your impression of Campbell?

BUDRYS: Campbell was a genius, and he was a self-made man. People like that always display a certain amount of erratic--not erratic but idiosyncratic--opinion and if they're energetic they try to enforce that opinion. I've had Campbell walk up to me and thrust a dowsing rod into my hand and say, "Here, walk across my lawn". That never struck me as being much different from what my neighbor Nick across the alley does when he says "Goddamn Democrats are screwing up my tax bill again". It's a matter of degree. You know, not to say anything against Alfie, whom I dearly love, but some of Alfie's behavior wouldn't pass in church either. Neither would mine.

SFR: In the introduction to *BUDRYS' INFERNO* you pay a special thanks to Howard Browne. Surely

you're the only person to ever publicly thank Howard Browne for anything.

BUDRYS: All right. Well, Howard is another pro. I'm deeply prejudiced in favor of professional editors. When I wrote *DREAM OF VICTORY* it was first of all my very first novelette. I had sold maybe four or five stories before that and I was selling them at about the rate of one a week all of a sudden. Anything I could write suddenly turned to gold. And it wasn't that I was selling one editor. Just some sort of magic moment had occurred and I was really full of myself. *DREAM OF VICTORY*, which is 10,000 words long, I had 32 chapters in, some of them two words long. I was showing the whole world what a smart-alecky writer I was. And Howard went through it, through all the chapter headings and ran the chapters together into, in some cases, very short paragraphs, and you know, it read even better that way. I learned a lot from Howard's having done that. I didn't get a chance to see Howard very often after that, but I'd see him now and again over the years and we were pretty good friends.

SFR: Are there any outstanding editors in SF today?

BUDRYS: There's no one who dominates the field in the way Campbell did. The circumstances aren't the same. Campbell had a lock on the market during the time he imposed his definition of SF on the entire field. All he could do today would be to create a bastion of Campbellianism. Other definitions of SF would continue to rival his, and would realistically compete for writers and readers. Judy-Lynn del Rey is in that position now. Her attitude toward SF is as individual and as strongly held as anyone's ever has been. She has the skills and intelligence to carry it through and it's made her respected. Her view also seems to be making a great deal of money for her publisher. Also, Lester del Rey, working with her and Ballantine, appears to be well launched on an effort to revive fantasy as a commercial medium. So we have a well-organized, well-financed, successful editorial effort--and in some aspects, a team effort--carrying a great deal of weight in the market. Nevertheless, there are many rival efforts, and a writer who disagrees with the del Rey Books policy does not have to feel

that he has to settle for second best. Any time you can't give the writers the feeling that everyone else is second best, you're not a dominant editor, whatever else your merits might be.

SFR: For the past several years you've worked in advertising and public relations, meaning that your fiction writing was done on a part-time basis. Isn't that tough? After a day of punching it out elsewhere one doesn't always feel like going upstairs to the typewriter.

BUDRYS: Yes, I didn't do it.

SFR: You didn't at all?

BUDRYS: No. When I first went into PR I had already started a novel called THE IRON THORN and since it was a magazine serial and since the installments were running while I was writing it, I had to finish that. While I was between jobs I'd written a story that sold to THE SATURDAY EVENING POST.

While I was finishing up at PLAYBOY I'd written most of a story which they then offered to buy for an exorbitant price, if I would only finish it and leave. And let us see...that was it. Between jobs I'd write something so I never quite entirely disappeared from the market. But essentially I made no real attempt. Hell, when I was working in PR I was putting in 12 and 16 hour days. I wasn't about to start anything like that.

SFR: Advertising people enjoy telling stories about how stupid some of their clients are. There is the old saying, "Let's get down on all fours and look at it from the client's point of view". Do you care to take advantage of this unique opportunity and really do a job on somebody?

BUDRYS: No, not really. You run into a lot of stalwart 19th century companies. You know, meat packing companies, railroads, farm machinery companies. But I've got a lot of respect for those people. Nobody I ever worked for showed me very much outright stupidity. They all had good reasons for what they wanted. They weren't always reasons that seemed the best to me. But I've had, by contrast, some damn ingenious clients. My favorite one was a guy named William E. Moore, who is the executive secretary of an outfit called Pickle Packers International.

SFR: Pickle Packers?

BUDRYS: Pickle Packers International, Incorporated, had 207 members in seven Free World nations, we used to point out, and is the trade association of the people who pack pickles. I once master-minded the Miss Pickle tour of TV and radio stations throughout the United States and Canada. We had a ball. Bill Moore is dynamite. He's such an energetic guy and so goddamn creative in pursuit of this admittedly frivolous cause that you can only learn from somebody like that...

SFR: Once, we did one at what is now the Daley Civic Center in Chicago and was at the time just the Civic Center. It has this plaza out in front of it. In there now sits the famous carved steel Picasso statue which people tell me represents the head of a woman. But headon it could be a crouching baboon. It could be a dog. There were a lot of fine cultural comments on that level raised when the preliminary sketches came out in the papers. Now, the Pickle Packers have a very serious convention on even numbered years. They go to the Shoreham Hotel in Washington and they have senators and congressmen drop over at their beck and call. They represent an enormous number of votes. That's how I got to meet people like Jerry Ford, who was at one time the congressman for pickles. Literally. Hell, Pickle Packers supports Michigan State University. But on odd-numbered years they have what they call the Pickle Fair where machinery is sold and everyone has a hell of a time. You have to publicize that and Bill Moore came up with the idea that since everybody was in doubt as to what this proposed Picasso statue was going to be, we should present the city of Chicago with something totally unequivocal--which turned out to be a 12 foot, apparently juicy, dripping wet, plastic pickle on a marble base--which turned out to be my job to erect in Civic Center Plaza in broad daylight. In fact, at high noon. And we did.

SFR: You mean you erected physically...

BUDRYS: Yeah. You can't fool around with these things. You call in the TV and the photographers and you've got to have something for them to focus on. It'd better not be somebody saying, "Here's a small

studio photo print of it". Anyhow my immediate boss at the PR agency was a former Chicago Daily News rewrite man named Johnny Bohan, who was a B-17 navigator during World War II and apparently learned a lot about the PR business that way. A hell of a guy. God almighty, the things I learned from Johnny! We plotted this whole thing out and a fellow named Burt Thompson and I, having caused a theatrical studio to create this 12 foot pickle, went out and rented a truck. By now, three editions of the Daily News had followed this and the plaza was crowded with photographers, because we had managed to let them know somehow that all of this was going to happen. Well, Burt's at the wheel of the truck and I run around to the back and I grab hold of the base of the pickle, which is actually made out of plywood with marbelized paper on it. And sure enough the plaza security guards come running over--just as Johnny had predicted they would, and they say, "Get that truck out of here!" So I hang onto the pickle base and say, "Take it away, Burt". And Burt leaves. Now, here I am holding the pickle because it has emerged from the truck as Burt goes barrelling off. Now, at this identical moment a very nice lady named Christine Blackie, who is a sweet, gray-haired motherly person, is presenting to the Mayor of the City of Chicago a handwritten certificate presenting the Picklccasso to the City of Chicago. The mayor's secretary is saying, "We don't want it!" The security guard is simultaneously



telling me to get the pickle the hell out of there and I say, "I can't. You chased my truck away". I turn around and I shove this thing, which is now upright, into the center of the plaza. The security guard and the building manager are starting to jump up and down. I'd never done this kind of thing before. I was a quiet little old book-division editor a few months ago. How did I get into this? I discovered the power of the press. They began interviewing the security people. Everybody there who had the authority to arrest me or tell me to move on suddenly developed a whole knot of reporters carefully taking notes. They kept hustling them out of the way and I'd retreat a little bit and this left a clear field for the photographers--which was the whole object of the whole thing. Meanwhile Johnny's standing there with his arms folded looking just like an ordinary mope watching the proceedings. What nobody realizes, but I am hoping, is that he's got bail bonds in every pocket. After we had taken all these shots Burt suddenly reappeared with the truck and we shoved the pickle on board and got the hell out of there. That was the kind of thing we would do. Then we had Santa Claus come water skiing up the Chicago River with a two and a half foot pickle on his back...because "Holidays are Pickle Days". My kids all grew up with big inflatable "Pickle Men" in their beds with them. Cuter than hell. Two and a half feet of inflatable plastic. Little black top hat. Dancing feet. Little pink hands. Great. So when I went to work for International I started bringing trucks home. Same basis.

SFR: But you don't regret any of your years in advertising and PR?

BUDRYS: No, I don't. I learned more than I can ever repay from a whole bunch of people and it's had what I think is a pretty good effect on the kind of story I can do and how much I know about the world. It's increased the spectrum of skills I have--and all of that

SFR: I have three questions about your early career. How did you celebrate the sale of your first short story and of your first novel?

BUDRYS: Well, I celebrated the selling of my first story by going down to the luncheonette where I

used to work and where they always said, "When you get your first check we'd like to have the honor of cashing it". I went down there and explained that if they redeposited it my agent swore that this time it would clear. My first novel...I was, as a matter of fact, sitting in a bar when Fred Pohl, who was then my agent, told me about it and I had another drink. At the time I was courting the young lady that I've been subsequently married to for 24 years. I guess she had a drink, too.

SFR: Did you write the screen play for a movie called BRONTOSAURUS!"?

BUDRYS: No. I wrote the exclamation point for a movie that had been hitherto called DINOSAURUS, no exclamation point. I also did a story treatment which converted it from a story about a dinosaur attack upon a Maine fishing village into a dinosaur attack upon a Caribbean fishing village. That was about it. I got two hundred bucks, which is pretty good going for an exclamation point.

SFR: Most of your fiction seems political but not in any real sense ideological. THE FALLING TORCH is a prime exception. At the time it was published some said it was your vengeance on the Communists who took over Lithuania.

BUDRYS: I don't see how it's vengeance...I just don't see that formulation. It's about...it's more closely drawn...from a train of real events than most of my fiction is. It represents what usually happens. The depictions of what goes on inside a government in exile as the years drag on are based on observation, not only of what happened inside the Lithuanian governmental organizations, but my observation of what happened to the

Poles, to the White Russians...I knew all of those people in Manhattan because they used to band together for mutual comfort. The White Russians still hoping that the right revolution would come along. The Royalists still hoping that the empire would be restored. To that extent it's drawn from life. The lead character, Michael Wireman, is drawn from my observation that most of the world's great leaders have been alienated from the very people that they lead. Napoleon was a Corsican. Hitler was an Austrian. Stalin was a Georgian and not a Muscovite. Franklin Roosevelt, the great Populist, was actually a Patrician. And they're all either...well, they're all marked in some way. I think the farthest I had to stretch there was that Hitler had to grow that stupid moustache. Stalin was very badly pock-marked. Napoleon was very short. Tamerlane was crippled. Roosevelt was crippled...and so forth and so on. Lincoln was spectacularly ugly and didn't have city manners. So I threw all that together into a book I never completed. There are four missing chapters in THE FALLING TORCH. Deadline pressure got so bad I just never wrote them. I came to a certain point, stopped, wrote the last chapter, tacked it on, sent it in, took the money. Little did I know--it's my best selling book. Why, I don't know.

I don't push broad ideological theories. If it looks that way it is because I believe that stories ought to have a strongly defined protagonist. So you set somebody like Michael Wireman loose in a gang of events and it's going to look like I'm pushing the theory that great men, not events, shape history. It seems to me that it's difficult to write a convincing piece of entertaining fiction in



which the hero is simply pushed around by the things that happen around him.

SFR: Wireman believed in the process of government, Lucas Martino, the protagonist of WHO?, is the victim of it. Those seem to be very contrasting books in terms of your sense of government.

BUDRYS: Yeah. But it's a different book. I don't know that I have conscious, unifying theories. I'm sure I do, but I only call on them in a background sense when grappling with a character. That's an interesting question. It's a contrast that hadn't occurred to me. Yeah, despite all my great words about heroes pushed around by events, Martino is a consistent victim. I guess that just proves my other point, which is that I don't really have a strong conviction in that regard. I don't think that's my job. In fact, I think it's my job to stay away from having too strong a set of opinions and convictions there because I think it might get in the way of my telling a believable story.

SFR: All right. In ROGUE MOON the scientist Hawks gives a long and moving speech about women, about how unique and special they are--and this was long before feminism became fashionable. Yet Hawks concludes that women have a special purpose he couldn't grasp. Was this another way of asking what do women want, as Freud did?

BUDRYS: It's a way for Hawks to ask that, yeah. My characters do not speak for me.

SFR: I just wondered if I had misread it. Remember the speech?

BUDRYS: Not word for word. Obviously, Hawks had a great deal of difficulty relating to women. He had a great deal of difficulty relating to anybody. When people start talking in my head I notice that they don't always remain consistent. I've got a new book called MICHAELMAS in which a lot of people make speeches which establish their philosophical position and their motivations. I couldn't think of any other way to handle the story without doing that. Every one of those speeches breaks down as a piece of logic. Every one of them. They start out apparently saying one thing and they end up saying apparently something quite contradictory. All I can

tell you about that is that's the way people talk when they're asserting themselves. You let them talk long enough, urgently enough, strongly enough and they begin producing what appears to be contradictions. Then you sit down, you think about it and you begin being able to piece it all together and find out what the hell the consistent position is that's behind all that. I think Hawks' consistent position is...that he's terrified that women know something that he'll never be able to figure out.

SFR: One gets the feeling that you admire Hawks in a rather uncomplicated way. You understand and forgive him the things he does. But about Barker you seem ambiguous. While he had courage and his own kind of dignity, he also suffered from that kind of self-pity you find in Graham Greene or Joseph Conrad heroes. How do you feel about Barker today?

BUDRYS: I'm not sure, first of all, that it's true that I felt that way about Barker when I wrote him. He's a character. In my mind he's a rounded person. I could go ahead and tell you any number of any other things he's liable to do or say that I didn't bother to write down in ROGUE MOON. I can't really judge him any more than I go around judging other people. The way I work, you know, these things come up out of the back of my mind sometimes after years, and when the people start to ring true then the whole story starts to ring true and I write it down. How do I feel about Barker today? I've met him a lot of times since then and...he's the same old Barker. If you hang around enough automobile test tracks you'll run into him time and again.

SFR: Did you in any way slant ROGUE MOON for Gold Medal?

BUDRYS: No, as a matter of fact, I had no idea who was going to buy it while I was outlining it. I just wrote it according to that outline. I spent about three years on it. First I wrote the second chapter without any beginning or end to it. I just wrote the scene that takes place around Barker's swimming pool. And then I spent three years rationalizing to myself how those characters got there and where they went from there. At the end of which time I turned the beginning and outline

over to my agent and then the next thing I knew she'd sold it to Gold Medal. Gold Medal did a hell of a job preserving the manuscript, by the way. The most conscientious and careful job of copyediting that I've ever seen from anybody, particularly from a massmarket paperback house--which is in marked contrast to the fact they they completely diddled me on the title.

SFR: What was your title?

BUDRYS: It's supposed to be called THE DEATH MACHINE. I don't know what the hell ROGUE MOON means and I have no idea why they...well, I have some idea why they did it. It sounded like a science fiction title to them. Years later I wrote a book called THE IRON THORN and for their own wonderful reasons they brought it out as THE AMSIRS AND THE IRON THORN. I don't know what the hell the audience makes of a title like that. See, the only way you can know what an Amsir is, is by reading the book. So how's it going to attract you...

SFR: You didn't work with Knox Burger then?

BUDRYS: Oh, yeah. I did work with Knox Burger. Knox is the guy who just kept patting me on the head and telling me not to worry, that they knew what they were doing. But it was an anonymous copy editor who made sure that the damn manuscript got translated into type just as closely as possible, and I very much appreciate that.

SFR: Norman Mailer in A FIRE ON THE MOON failed to find the people at NASA very interesting. In your stories such people are not only interesting but sympathetic. What do you think Mailer failed to perceive?

BUDRYS: Of the people at NASA?

SFR: Yeah. Two of your novels and many of your stories deal with people Mailer would call technicians. He dismisses them out of hand.

BUDRYS: Well, O.K. At the time I wrote ROGUE MOON I had a more romantic view of technicians than I do now--and for that I can thank John Campbell who kept glorifying technicians in ASTOUNDING. None of the people in ROGUE MOON are in any way related to NASA. There is a Navy commander who at one point gives Hawks a little crucial help.

I don't think technicians are all that bad. I've met a lot of them since then, mostly through doing PR of one kind or another and some of them are damn dull and many of them damn stupid except for their skill, but that's also true of milkmen, meter maids, science fiction writers. It's true of anybody. You just can't generalize. I will say this, most of the NASA people I've met, specifically NASA employees, most of them are damn dull and many of them are rather stupid, yeah. But that doesn't relate to ROGUE MOON, it just relates to subsequent experience.

SFR: I want to ask you about MICHAELMAS. How does it make you feel now that it looks like it's going to go? PUBLISHER'S WEEKLY had a very favorable review.

BUDRYS: I don't know what to make of it. It's not supposed to do that. NEWSWEEK is going to review it. They sent a photographer around to my house the day before yesterday. Shot a picture of me to go with it. I'm not going to know how to react if it takes off. It's supposed to be a good science fiction novel for the science fiction market--period. And I'm hard at work now on the book that is supposed to take off. I'm just not going to know what to do and I will tell you in all truth I'll be damned surprised if MICHAELMAS turns out to be a smash success because it's kind of a difficult book. Most of the action takes place inside the hero's head. The second lead is invisible and can't be touched. When you finally do get around to an explanation for all these mysterious events the explanation is nearly incomprehensible. How the hell a broad audience could ever possibly come to like that book I don't know. So I guess I'll have to formulate an opinion after it takes off like crazy or if it doesn't take off like crazy I will be able to say I was right.

SFR: If there's a single truth you want your children to understand, what is it?

BUDRYS: Do a good job and make sure you get paid. I think that's what I've been telling them.

SFR: Do you think they're understanding it?

BUDRYS: I think so. My oldest kid is a hell of a motorcycle mechanic and a really sweet guy. Lovely kid--not a kid any more. He's

twenty-two, or close to it. The next one is a pretty good chess player. He's all right. Tries to get paid. And the two younger ones are doing a pretty good job. One of them actually wrote a hell of a term paper on the recombinant DNA controversy. The kid's 15 years old and was slinging the language around like an old pro. Matter of fact, I think what he produced was saleable as an article. That scares me. The thought of another writer in the family scares me.

SFR: Why?

BUDRYS: Because it's probably a very difficult relationship to handle. And the kid's got the pleasure of staring at a shelf full of books by his old man and wondering am I as good, am I better, what's going to happen. It's bad news, I think. I know some writers whose fathers were writers and they're a mess.

SFR: If you had two minutes on CBS to say anything you wanted, what would it be?

BUDRYS: About what?

SFR: Anything you want.

BUDRYS: Anything I want? O.K. In twenty-five years--I'm not going to take two minutes--in twenty-five years I have learned that the world is less complicated than people make it out to be. That people are better, simpler, more moved to love and more moved to an appreciation of beauty than they're given credit for. That a lot of the weeping, wailing, gnashing of teeth that we go through when we are younger comes as a result of young people making careers for themselves as professional tooth-gnashers. It gets better as you go along. I think it's always been better, it's just that you get to the point where you can realize it and work with it.

SFR: Thank you.

FROM ED GORMAN

'I realize that all you wanted or asked for anyway, was an interview. But my contact with Budrys didn't end with our meeting at Clarke.

'For one thing, AJ wanted to

JUST WHEN I'VE FORGOT REAL GOOD, I START BROWSING THRU 10-12 YEAR OLD FANZINES, AND IT ALL COMES BACK.



clarify one of his answers. And I wanted to write an introduction that would make me appear at least a tad brighter than the fellow who had asked the questions. And through phone calls and letters, something else evolved, too: AJ's discomfort with his image as a "hostile" man.

'I say discomfort, but that's presumptuous, I guess. I don't think I should try to characterize the following piece at all. It speaks lucidly for itself.

'But I would like to say this, for my own sake: through both his fiction and his criticism one gets the impression that Budrys is an extraordinary person. If you doubt me, reread his piece on H.P. Lovecraft, a wise and rueful eulogy worthy of Edmund Wilson. And as further proof, we have the essay that follows.

'The day I received "On Being A Bit of A Legend" I was reading Malcolm Braly's autobiography FALSE STARTS, one of the sanest and most methodically honest books I've ever read. What a perfect complement Budrys' piece was: equally sane, equally honest and every bit as worthwhile.

'Because it is much more than our time's worst indulgence, confession. It is nothing less than, in the Joycean sense, a truthful utterance.

'AJ's cover letter read in part:

'Here's the interview. With it is my reaction to the 'dark' assertion, and to the question about ROGUE MOON being slanted for Gold Medal. It--the reaction--began as a letter to you, but ended as an essay.

"Take care. Us glad-handers got to stick together".

'And so, here it is:'

ON BEING A BIT OF A LEGEND

BY ALGIS BUDRYS

I've been aware over recent years, in a distant and intermittent way, that many of the people I meet for the first time already have a series of ideas about what I'm like and what I mean by what I say. I have, I guess, finally become a high minor public figure.

Some of this comes from being a person who puts his work out before the public. People read my stories, or my essays, or critical writing about my stories and perform certain mental comparisons. They assess the mood they would have been in if they had said what I appear to have said, and pick a plausible tone of voice for me to have said it in. They decide how they would look in the postures they detect in my essays, or find described in the critiques, and create a figure who is Algis Budrys for them. When they meet me in the too, too solid flesh, they attempt to conduct a transaction with that shadow cast by my byline and its appurtenances. If they cannot make me fit my image, they walk around me, shaking their heads and saying "You're not what I expected. Not what I expected at all." From time to time, extreme instances of this dilemma will cause people to sincerely try to convince me I'm not me.

That's one problem, with which many of my colleagues have long been acquainted and with which I'm beginning to learn to come to grips in my own fashion. If I can establish human contact, I will, and that's what I would much rather do. But there are some instances in which that will not work at all, and then consequences follow.

However, that is not the main stuff of legend. The main stuff of legend is the continual gossiping and storytelling about personalities, which goes on in the SF life as it does in other underground communities, but which seems to me to be intensified by the fact that our community is so tirelessly verbal by first intention. At parties, I tell Fred Pohl stories, Cyril Kornbluth stories, Lester and Evvie del Rey stories, Bob Shekley stories, Horace Gold stories, Jerry Bixby stories, John Campbell stories...and that's just the material based on my adventures in the first week after I turned pro in 1952. I have a few other stories. All of them are as accurate

as I can make them--that is, as accurate as I can make them and remain consistent with the need to end on a good punchline. When I find one of them useful in an essay, or when teaching a class, I can tell them much more plainly, because they are pre-selected for aptness by the nature of the process. Even so, there must have been times when the editing mechanism in my head may have made me a liar or a fudger in all sincerity. All in all, I would guess I have scattered my share of apocrypha into the universal hopper. So I'm not surprised that many of my friends have obviously been returning the favor.

My enemies, now, are few in number but assiduous and, thank God, ridiculous. I have only one or two with the capacity to misdescribe me with verisimilitude, and even so this knack serves them only over short periods of time. Still and all, their work accounts for some percentage of the preconceptions I have to deal with, so I have to list that here as an added factor.

All of this would be insignificant in my life, and no fit subject for a long declaration like this one, but I am not a graceful fellow. I cannot tell you how much I admire the public cheerfulness of an Isaac Asimov, the matter-of-fact gentility of a Bob Silverberg, the self-possessed cockiness of Frederick Pohl, who I hope understands exactly what I mean by "cockiness" in his case, the charmingly arrogant manner of a Lester del Rey, or the untiring bumptiousness of a Randall Garrett. None of these attributes have been given to me...or, rather, I can be any of these things for short spells as I deem them appropriate, but the manner to which I come most naturally is that of sleepy-eyed alertness backed by very good distance vision and a rather sharp pair of ears. God did not intend me to speak, but to study, and report.

(My life is filled with events outside SF, and there I do speak naturally. This is because I am either conveying information to a supervisor or issuing an instruction or participating in the rigidly structured small talk which greases those gears. There, I am in context--a context I have now

given up. My hobbies are bicycle riding and car touring...solitary vices.)

I am a serious writer. When I was a kid, I read the letter columns and the editorials in the SF prozines, and I swallowed whole the idea that this was serious stuff practiced by artists of transcendent ability. So be it, I chose to be one of them in that endeavor. It wasn't until July, 1977--when MICHAELMAS reviews began appearing--that it ever occurred to me there were people, many people, who love SF, respect and understand it deeply, and are analytically incapacitated by the fact that when I tell a story beginning with a series of time-honored conventional scenes, I don't end that way and prove to have been going somewhere else with them. I thought, making the convention accomplish a little more than it had previously; they think, tinkering dangerously or unwittingly with what is good and essential.

I should have known a long time ago. The parallel is far-fetched, but exact. Horace Gold in 1953 accused me of not being smart enough to have had the insight to write a scene of mine that was down in black and white in his hand, and as I look back, he was only the first. People have notions of what is possible and proper. People who look at me--once I was pink-cheeked, very young, very open; now I am pink-cheeked, stolid, and apparently fatigued--keep reaching conclusions as to what I can and can't do, and attaining sincere appraisals of what equipment I have in my brain. In all these years I've lived with myself, I have never determined a half of that, if that, and I am surprised by their ability to leap with such rapid certainty into ludicrous conclusions.

Occasionally, when such people are in positions to enforce their preconceptions--to reject a story of mine instead of buying it, or worse, buying it and editing-out not the technical shortcomings and the structural oversights, but the new thoughts and carefully observed subtleties--my rage and depression are very difficult to contain. When someone reviews a new book superficially--whether it be Gerald Jonas, who overpraised what he thought he saw, or Dan Miller who

decried what he thought was not there--the same thing happens.

And it happens on two levels. It might be three, but in these instances I am sure I was right--as I proved to be when Anthony Boucher pooh-poohed ROGUE MOON's supposed gimmickry and Ted White pointed out its cynical supposed adherence to the Gold Medal spy novel formula, for instance. So where I might question myself, as I continually do in most other instances, I am sure of error in the criticism, and it is this surety which causes me to first, feel overwhelming disappointment in my old acquaintance or in someone who has attained power in our genre, and second, similar despair of the general capacity of the SF community to understand itself, its farthest possibilities, and the potential capacity of its practitioners, of whom I am one and not the best.

At such moments, the essential Algis Budrys is struck dumb. Everything of the previous friendship, all of the past scholarship, must be re-evaluated, beginning at once. My analytical mechanism engages of its own insatiable will. I am confronted by a person who, in all these years or months of easy discourse, has never once seen or heard me. I find myself in the presence of a preceptor all of whose previous observations have been leading not toward a mutual artistic goal but to error; not to fewer and better words but to piffle. And this is what Algis Budrys turns his attention to, for he finds himself standing not on solid timber but on a cone of dry sand. But the husk stands there, its face unguarded, and something must be done. So the part of me that cannot deal with people--a small, uncertain self which was systematically beaten and abused until, at the age of eleven, Algis Budrys took over its protection and education, unsuited to that task though he was--that part, conscious that it has been temporarily abandoned, not sure that its learned modules will return and re-unite with it, ever--has to cope.

Richard McKenna journeyed with a "little man" who was his inner self, and eventually wrote a superb essay on that subject. (See Damon Knight's TURNING POINTS anthology of essays). My "little man" I think still journeys, instead, with me...with the me who speaks to you almost every time. My little man, like McKenna's, is the source of my creativity, but I

was twenty, not in my forties with an integrated life already established, when I wrote the stories that would sell and make me a professional member of the SF life. My little man is much surer of himself than he used to be, because he has now been out in the real world long enough to pick up scars, deftness and muscle, but that is a recent fruition, and we are speaking here of how I have customarily been, within the SF community, over the twenty-some years after 1952.

And that little man, as he has been, is not a pleasant fellow. He has two principal modes only: retreat or attack. He has no judgment of degree. It is cringe or kill, and hardly anything less than either of those. You have seen this in other people in our life; I venture you have seen it in yourself, or I would not be able to discuss it with you here.

Perhaps I don't have to convince you how deadly a killer the little man can be. Just as well, because his ferocity when cornered cannot be adequately described. He cares nothing for friendship then, or for tomorrow. And he corners easily, for at first he flees so precipitously. Driven to the wall, he remembers overwhelming physical assault and devastating verbal abuse, and he will not accept any more of that, ever.

Certain constraints have come to operate on him, he having after all unexpectedly lived through his teens. He learned that the killing blow can shatter the wrist, thus making future killing blows less positive. Chronic pain makes an effective censor. In the arena of words, he learned that the killing words cannot be recalled, and he has learned to use them very sparingly, if never wisely, for still he has friendships forever

lost which he wishes were not lost. Chronic regret is not as effective, for it does not impede the efficiency of the strike itself. Still, regret's mounting weight appears to be gradually slowing his coordination in that respect.

But, to this day, the Algis Budrys you see walking around and hear talking--the Algis Budrys who is apparently coincidental with your legend--does not suffer fools gladly. He suffers them, instead, awkwardly.

The brash and bumptious find me shy and slow of wit; I blush, I stammer, I cannot meet their eyes. The little man cannot imagine where they got the idea they can just charge in on people, scattering opinions and assertions like billboards before them, seizing more space than they need, showing no understanding of privacy or private property, no conception of the fact that their time is no more precious than another's. They want to play the piano at you, sit at your table and quote people you have never read. They declaim from clever sources. And they never think to ask what your sources are, except for the purpose of not listening to the answer.

Most of all, I understand far better than they do how close they are to death if they persist. So I disappoint them if they expect something from me, and if that fails I try to leave, sweating, and if that fails I begin cutting at them, lightly. Once in a great while, that fails, and then Ted White, that spectator, gets to write a little essay about the time I pulled Randy Garrett over my shoulder in front of a lot of people who had always assumed Randy Garrett couldn't be thrown.

And so, thank you, another



piece of the Algis Budrys legend comes into being.

The courteous find me courteous and, I hope, satisfactorily responsive. The courteously persistent who do not take my answers seriously, or who cannot penetrate the meaning behind my replies when I reply in seeming jest, are in for a time similar to Randy's but on the level of discourse. The little man assumed that in the proper state of affairs, we are all here to help each other through the dark. Those who ask me a question had better be prepared to receive my best answer first. If I then detect that the question was a tactic, and that questioning, for this person, is a species of weapon, then I have detected that this person does not respect the integrity of questions. Then I will begin to do certain verbal things to the situation.

If, as a consequence, the questioner then abandons courtesy, he is feeding the little man's guiltiest vice; the intoxication of rising temper is his most secret addiction. The corner is his favorite place; there he has lived all these years, waiting to spring his surprise on those who have harried him. When he is in there, a clever person can bait Algis Budrys effectively, and make the visible me seem very clumsy. That is Algis Budrys dancing both with the questioner and with the little man, and sometimes such incidents, too, have added to the legend.

None of this is stuff that has not happened to you, or I wouldn't dare embarrass us both by talking about it in public. I have noted with some interest, however, over the years, that discussing an intimacy is nevertheless embarrassing even when it is mutual. When I was twelve, for example, I went to the movies with another boy to see "Men of Boys Town". We had to be driven to Vineland, NJ, from my home town. Returning in the car afterward, my friend's mother turned and asked me if the movie had been enjoyable, and I said yes, there was a part toward the end where both her son and I had cried. My friend swung around in the back seat and hit me as hard as he could. Algis Budrys said to the little man: "Isn't that interesting".

And it is. Indeed it is. Over the years, I have made it a point to re-test that observation from time to time, and it's invariably valid. There is one science fic-

tion writer in particular who had made a career--long, praiseworthy--of approximating its implications, and will hit you much harder than the average person, in consequence, when you touch him there. The first time that happened, unintentionally, I learned an enormous amount about that writer, about the SF community, and about the depth of the SF community's critical perception with respect to certain kinds of storytelling. I blushed and stammered. A legend had fallen.

Conversely, of course, I had changed in my colleague's eyes, and things were not the same between us. Over the years that followed, when we met occasionally, each time he tried to put me back in the box where he had first thought he'd found me. And each time, when I ran out of defensive resources, I tweaked him where he claims to live. And, sure enough, each time he got back into the box where I had first found him. By now, I suppose, he finally sees me in that box from which I box him, and, sadly, he never comes around any more. On another level, since I think he would be an even better writer if he lived at his real address, and I keep hoping he'll get that message, the sorrow is not so much personal as it is intellectual...and, sadly, arrogant. I do not think my good colleague, my lost older brother, is well-enough equipped to write as well as he writes, and suddenly here I am in Horace's box. It is big enough to accommodate Horace and me, and my colleague, and, sometimes, I suspect, all of us.

I guess I am on my way to accepting that all legends, even mine--mine, the most thrilling legend of all, if you ask me--are approximations by the very nature of legends, and of us. Soon enough, if the opportunity and need arises, I will be fluffily graceful on talk shows, artfully draining the content out of the truth, to the delight of all. Soon enough, I will learn to gauge just how much information to put into a lecture, and how to re-label it for human consumption. In due course, I will not care who calls me venal, for I will know that my motives are rational. But, remember me. I was once an honest man.

ALIEN THOUGHTS CONT. FROM P. 61

LETTER FROM PHILIP K. DICK

December 1, 1977

'As a prime mover in the anti-Lem faction, I have been asked to write---for publication---a letter clarifying the situation regarding Lem's Polish publisher, Wydawnictwo Literackie Krakow, with whom I have done business directly---they published my novel UBIK in Poland, and a very handsome edition it was: full bookplate size, acid-free paper, and the most sexy illustrations this side of Hades. I had written Ms Pamela Sargent a personal letter back in May of 1976, enclosing a carbon of my official letter to SFWA in which I broke radically with Phil Farmer as to the admission of Lem into SFWA on a normal, dues-paying basis; Phil Farmer had sent off a letter to SFWA, which SFWA published, in which he stated that were Lem to be allowed to join SFWA even on a normal dues-paying basis, "I and Phil Dick will resign from SFWA." So initially I want to clear that up, for Phil Farmer did not consult with me when he wrote SFWA that letter; I had absolutely no objection whatsoever to Lem's joining SFWA in the manner in which we all joined, and I was horrified to read Phil Farmer's letter. Hence I wrote SFWA at once, clarifying my position and disclaiming the reactionary position which Phil Farmer had taken.

'But on to happier matters and Wydawnictwo Literackie Krakow, my Polish publisher of UBIK and Lem's publisher there---or perhaps I should say former publisher, since rumors reach me that Lem defended a "politically suspect" translator and since has been banned from publishing in his own country. I need not comment on this, except to say, Fuck the bastards. And Hit 'em again, Stanislaw.

'Wydawnictwo Literackie Krakow always treated me with the professional respect that one expects (but seldom gets) from a publisher. FIRST, let it be known that, as I say, their books are beautiful as objects; I was delighted when I saw the edition. The royalties---ah, there is another matter there. They paid me 49,000 zloties for a 20,000 copy printing, all of which sold. But Polish currency cannot be taken out of Poland, so the only way I could collect my royalties



was to go to Poland. I checked with my bank as to the dollar (US)-zloty exchange rate. 49,000 zloties came to about \$106 US dollars---hardly enough to offset a trip which would have cost about a thousand dollars. Now, what I happen to know, which few American s-f authors (and even agents) know, is that \$106 is not a fair royalty payment even by Polish standards. Another Polish publisher has purchased two other novels of mine (SOLAR LOTTERY and THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE) and is paying \$500 per title. That is fair. It is more than Japan (which pays \$200) and Italy (which mails you a loaf of bread and a bra) pay. So Wydawnictwo Literackie Krakow is underpaying---and not only that, they are underpaying in zloties, whereas the above publisher of the two other titles is paying in hard currency, which can be transferred to this country, to my agent, and so I will be paid.

'So we have two issues here regarding Lem's Polish (or former) Polish publisher. (one) They are paying far too little. (two) They are not paying in hard currency, and there is no Polish regulation which prevents them from paying in U.S. dollars. This was the substance of my fight with Lem. He told me, in several letters, that "bureaucratic regulations prevented the transfer of the royalty payment to you," that "I had to go to Poland to acquire it." Not so. (Also Lem originally told me that

the royalty payment of 49,000 zloties could not be used to pay flight costs or a part thereof, but when I informed him that ---wow!--- Poland owns and operates an airline (LOT) flying between New York and Warsaw, Lem suddenly remembered that, yes, I was right. "Good news!" he wrote me excitedly (his letters were always brief, brutal and nasty, like my former wives). "I have found that yes, your royalties can be used to pay for your trip to Poland." However, he didn't mention that they would cover about one-tenth of the total cost (why tell people things they haven't asked about, seemed to be his principle).

'So my experience with Lem's Polish publisher is this: if you sell them a novel or story collection, DEMAND PAYMENT IN HARD CURRENCY, and DEMAND AT LEAST FOUR TO FIVE HUNDRED U.S. DOLLARS --- and make sure it's only a 20,000 copy printing at that price, because Poland does a lot of printing for the U.S.S.R. and may run off editions in the hundreds of thousands of copies.

'Finally, I do encourage you to send MSS or printed books to Wydawnictwo Literackie Krakow, because they are a market and they are reputable. They paid Ms Le Guin in U.S. dollars, I understand, so why not you (and why not me)? That is what struck me as the final, "I've had it" unfair part: that they pay or paid one/some U.S. authors in U.S. dollars, and others they paid in cigar coupons (so to speak). I mean, if you can't get your royalties transferred, then for all intents and purposes you are giving the book away free. I quoted to Lem from Karl Marx: "A workman is entitled to just compensation --wages-- for his work." That is a, if not the basic axiom of Marxist socialism. At the same time that I was unable to get my Polish royalties transferred here, Lem was receiving, in Poland, royalties from something like eleven books from the U.S. --- he got his from us, and from all the other Western countries, but I got nothing from Poland, even though they had signed the Pan American Copyright Agreement -- they signed it and then got around it on a technicality.

'I feel badly that I was involved in getting Lem booted out of SFWA; that was never my goal or intention; it never entered my mind that SFWA would solve the problem that way. I still say,

and will always say, that since SFWA has no such category as "honorary non-dues-paying membership" that technically SFWA was correct ---but again we are dealing, as with the payment of zloties instead of dollars, with technicalities. Lem should have been allowed to join as a dues-paying member; I should have received between \$400 and \$500 in hard currency from Wydawnictwo Literackie Krakow --- but, well, I certainly enjoy their edition, and as I say I urge you to do business with them. But be firm. Those guys are not gosh-wow fans; they are thoughtful, tough, professional people both in their fiscal dealings and in the production of their books. You may wind up with nothing more than four free copies of your book, otherwise (and I won't lay any Polish jokes on you, like, in their edition the novel starts in the middle and fans out in both directions). Out of all this what I hope for the most is that Lem (if the rumors of his being purged are true) will be allowed to publish over there without having to recant in some undignified way -- i.e. that he be allowed by the Authorities Over There to be his own man---which we should all be. Maybe he will come over to the West. But then, sigh, he'll have to deal with Don Wollheim...but that's another story, and even more horrific.

'PS: I may be wrong, but I think Wydawnictwo Literackie Krakow's address is: Drukarnia Wydawnicza, Krakow, Wadowicka 8, POLAND, and the editor-in-chief is Henryk Wozniakowski. If you know better, you are probably right.'

((Thanks for the clarifications and information, Phil. Your experiences show, I suppose, that publishers are publishers, even in the workers' heaven of socialism. The writer's basic rule-to-live-by should still be: DON'T TRUST NOBODY!))

NEW GROUP?

'We are exploring the possibilities of forming a group in north-eastern Indiana for the discussion of sf and related subjects. We hope eventually to have meetings in Fort Wayne. Those interested please write: Dave Wilkey

118 W. Cherry St.
Bluffton, IN 46714'

12-13-77 "HALT! What the hell's going on here, Geis?"

Alter, get out of the "Alien Thoughts"!

"Geis, in your infinite stupidity, do you realize you have pasted up 72 pages and have FIVE MORE PAGES of "Alien Thoughts typed up and waiting to be pasted onto layout pages?"

I do? I did?

"That adds up to 77 pages. That leaves you with 2 pages in which to squeeze MY THREE PAGES of reviews, at least FIVE PAGES of Darrell Schweitzer's material, and at least FIVE PAGES of Steve Brown's prozine reviews, to say nothing of whatever extensions of "Alien Thoughts" you might have intended, to say even less of the new diary column, "Reports From Alternate Earth #666" which you are faunching to start."

Bit of a problem there.

"BIT OF A PROBLEM!? Where's my knife! I'll demasculinize you for sure this time!"

Ah, Alter...heh heh...Alter, no...now, you don't want me to change personality, do you? P-p-put d-d-down the knife.... I'll let you have all the remaining space in this issue. Then NEXT issue---

"Promises! Promises! All I get from you are promises, Geis! It looks like I'm going to have to take over the editing of this crudzine from now on. Discipline is needed here! Radical editorial surgery is called for!"

I wish you'd get cutting off your mind....

"Give me a pen... *Scriggle, Scratch...* There. Here are your instructions, Geis."

Blench But, Alter---

"No buts, Geis! Starting next issue, SFR is a changed zine! You've let yourself get all out of editorial whack."

You're cruel!

"You'll thank me for it in the end, Geis, and the readers will thank me. You'll see."

12-7-77

SAMISDAT #59 has in interesting item: COSMEP (Committee of Small Magazines, Editors and Publishers) passed a little-publicized resolution last June barring 'racist' and 'sexist' books and magazines from their 'book bus'--a mobile bookstore funded by the National Endowment for the Arts.

SAMISDAT editors are outraged and rightly---the COSMEP board of directors is now in the censorship business. The COSMEP is dominated

by Liberals and Feminists, of course. And they live on the govt. welfare press handouts. Little pigs grunting and squealing at the Establishment trough.

SAMISDAT, by the way, is a tough little no-shit magazine which prints small press magazine and book reviews of uncompromising lack-of-mercy quality. They also print fiction that is full of slice-of-life crap.

Copy costs \$2. from Box 231, Richford, VT 05476.

CARD FROM JON GUSTAFSON

Oct. 7, 1977

'We have had an alarming percentage of our copies of NEW VENTURE #5 fail to arrive at the proper destination, despite stamping "Forwarding and Return Postage Guaranteed" on all the envelopes; we have only had two copies returned to us by the Post Office out of the several dozen that didn't arrive. Everyone who sends us \$2.50 will receive a copy, rest assured, and when we run out (which will be very soon), their money will be returned. That's about as good as we can do. Oh, and #6 should be out in a couple months.'

((Sorry, Jon, but your card just missed getting into SFR #23, but I hope its appearance now does some good. I wonder idly if it is possible for a mailer to sue the post awful for misfeasance and/or malfeasance? Those copies of the special art issue are valuable.))

SCIENCE NEWS is a goldmine of information. For instance, in the November 26, 1977 issue, is the results of a 30-year study on the effects of early counseling and psychotherapy on a group of "difficult" and "average" youngsters, age 5-13 in 1939.

'At random, half the youngsters in each category received one-to-one therapy with a personal counselor for about five years, and the other half received no therapy. One of the study's goals was to see if such counseling would divert the children from later involvement in crime.'

Nearly 80% of the subjects were located after 30 years and their lives examined.

Result? Those who had the most therapy committed the most subsequent crime. Those with no therapy or counseling had less trouble.

HA HA HA HA HA HA HA....

You can bet the Liberal press will ignore THAT study.

LETTER FROM SANDRA MIESEL

November 29, 1977

'From time to time people still ask me whatever happened to my quarrel with Leland Sapiro. At long last I am happy to report that the statute of limitations ran out on him last May and he cannot sue me or anyone else about the use of my essay "Challenge and Response". The essay, which had originally appeared in THE RIVERSIDE QUARTERLY (Vol. IV, #1, 1970), had been subsequently revised and reprinted at my own personal initiative in the Chilton collection MANY WORLDS OF POUL ANDERSON (1974), reissued by DAW Books as THE BOOK OF POUL ANDERSON (1975). In case any new readers came on the scene late, I sold the essay to Chilton without ever noticing that its RQ appearance had been copyrighted in Sapiro's own name and not "for the contributors" as is standard fannish practice. Sapiro felt that he held all rights to my work despite the absence of any contract or payment made for it. He imagined that "his" property had been "pirated" and began threatening lawsuits. (He threatened Chilton, Thomas Nelson & Sons, DAW, Donald Wollheim, SFWA, Jerry Pournelle, and every book dealer who'd sold the disputed volume.) I would have been personally responsible for all of those actions and driven into bankruptcy over an essay sold for \$100!

'But once these threats faded and expired, I approached Sapiro to obtain a total and unconditional return of all rights to my own work both for "Challenge and Response" and for two earlier essays. I wrote him on July 7 by certified mail with a return receipt. The receipt came back with Sapiro's signature but I received no reply. On the advice of Jerry Pournelle, then Chairman of SFWA's Grievance Committee, I wrote him again on Nov. 15, this time by registered mail with return receipt. The letter came back stamped "refused by addressee". Now Sapiro is on record in the pages of his own magazine as being willing to release rights to contributors and, indeed, has done so in previous cases. But not in my case apparently.

'Given the above facts, I'm confident the SF community is intelligent to think of some appropriate response to Sapiro's deeds.'

((Leland's behavior is suicidal

al, as far as his fan (and pro) reputation, and marvelously counter-productive. Who among his former contributors would now send him any manuscripts? Who would trust him? These may be moot points, since he hasn't published in a long, long time.))

LOCUS #206 (Nov. 1977) has some sad news:

#The news that Tom Reamy had died, and two photos of him...showing how overweight he really was.

#Paul W. Fairman died in late October. He was 61.

#Bill Butler died, age 43, of an overdose... He had been published in NEW WORLDS and ENGLAND SWINGS SF. He had been the publisher of Unicorn Books.

#Details of David (Ted Johnstone) McDaniel's death.

LOCUS has all the news, usually, and is a fine complement to SFR and other fanzines that publish longer material. \$9. year from Loc-
us Publications, POB 3938, San Francisco, CA 94119. (Above is USA sub rate.)

ANNOUNCEMENT FROM HARLAN ELLISON

5 December, 1977

'RE: THE 1978 WORLD SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION; IGUANACON: 36th World SF Convention, Phoenix, Arizona August 30 - September 4, 1978.

A STATEMENT OF ETHICAL POSITION BY THE WORLDCON GUEST OF HONOR

'It is not enough to talk the talk; in this life we must walk the walk as well. Otherwise we are lip-service hypocrites.

'That is the basic position.

'What it refers to, is not quite so simplistic. In point of fact, the situation to which that position speaks puts me---as they say---between a rock and a very hard place, indeed.

'I am very much in favor of the Equal Rights Amendment.

'Arizona is one of the states that has not ratified the ERA.

'I think this is a bad thing.

'I think the reasons behind the non-ratification in Arizona are even more more dangerous than that they contribute to the failure of the ERA. They are shadowy reasons

that go directly to the heart of the separation of Church and State in America. Arizonians will understand what I'm saying, though non-residents may find that an obscure reference. Please forgive the awful obscurantism; I do it purposefully to avoid lawsuits.

'But, as I boycotted the Miami WorldCon in large part because of the Anita Bryant influence in Dade County and Florida's position on the ERA, so should I now refuse to appear in Phoenix for the same reason. By turning down the accolade of being the 1978 Worldcon's Guest of Honor---something that caps my 25 years as fan and professional in the field---I would cause myself great unhappiness...but I'd be able to look in the mirror without flinching, and would be able to continue to think of myself as an honorable person. That was to have been my course of action.

'But there are considerations which make such a decision extremely difficult. First, I accepted the Guest of Honorship several years before NOW and the pro-ERA forces began their economic boycotts of states where ratification had been withheld. I accepted in good faith, and to weasel out today would be unethical in that respect. Second, though this is something in which I passionately believe, I don't think I have the right to morally blackmail the Iguanacon Committee that may not feel as I do, though I've been advised many of the members are in accord.

'If I were to vacate the Guest of Honor slot, I would also have to take advertisements in LOCUS, GALAXY, F&SF, ANALOG, UNEARTH, GALILEO, SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW and any other platforms of mass communication available to me, such as the NBC Tomorrow Show, etcetera, where my position could be explicated. I would have to urge those who might be coming to Phoenix in part because I would be there, to stay away...not to bring money into Arizona...to show the state legislature that there is an economic club that would be used against any state that fails to offer women equal rights.

'I would do that, at my own expense. It would be the logical extension of my decision

'But there is no way of ignoring the ugly reality that such ac-

tions would very likely damage the WorldCon, as well as the good and decent fans who have worked so long and hard to put the Iguanacon together. It would certainly cost them financially. They cannot get out of the contract with the convention hotel, they cannot move the convention to another state, and I would thus be bludgeoning innocent people with my ethical imperatives.

'I would be playing with their lives.

'Which would be unconscionably immoral.

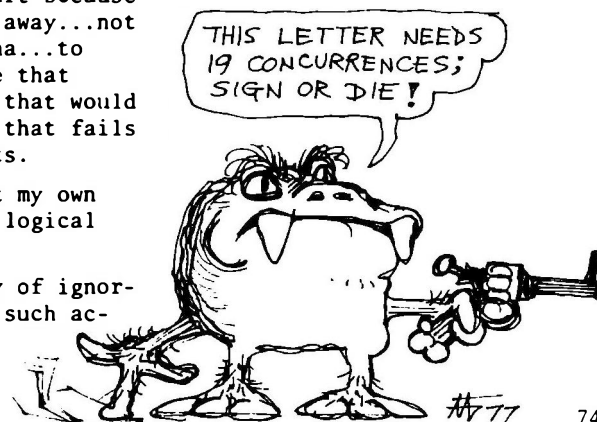
'Rock. Very hard place.

'When I thought all this out, I went to wiser heads for guidance. They have given it freely. Ursula LeGuin, Joanna Russ, Greg Brown who is head of the Iguanacon Committee, Vonda McIntyre, Marion Zimmer Bradley and Susan Wood have suggested alternatives to the extreme position. One of these alternatives seems both salutary and directly in service of the commonweal.

'It is this:

'I will come to the convention as Guest of Honor, but I will do it in the spirit of making the Convention a platform for heightening the awareness of fans and Arizona as a whole to the situation. I will do this because I feel I must, but in a way that will minimize any crippling of the convention.

'I will coordinate with the National Organization for Women (NOW), and pro-ERA elements in Arizona, and the convention committee itself, of course. I will take every possible public relations and promotional opportunity to publicize the situation. I have been assured by the Executive Committee of the Iguanacon that there will be time for publicity and discussion of this most urgent problem, that there will be no sexist enter-



tainment at the convention, and that Phoenix and the state will be apprised of the economic imperitiveness that obtain.

'In this way I will attempt to make the best of an untenable moral situation. I urge others to assist me in this. I suppose in some ways I'm trying to have my cake of conscience and eat it, too; but dammit, I can't think of any other way out of this bind in which my beliefs have put me, without hurting innocent people.

'As for those who will begin the barrage of flack, and I expect no less for assuming such a position, may I just remind them that there is recent precedent for utilizing a WorldCon for moral ends: Bob Heinlein believes passionately in the drive to obtain blood, and the conventions have been used as platforms to publicize that drive. What Bob has done is use himself as a loss-leader; I am doing the same. I'm uncomfortable leading anybody's parade, but I find myself in the barrel and not to do it would be cowardly. I can stand the flack, and the more the better, because it only serves to raise into higher profile the basic problem.

'As for those who share my belief that the ERA is a vitally important issue and must not be allowed to be killed by intransigence or by reactionary religious elements in the Arizona state legislature, I suggest fans coming to the convention figure out ways to withhold money from the state as much as possible. The Convention Committee should assemble a list of acceptable campsites for those fans who prefer to stay elsewhere than in the convention hotel. I will be one of those people. You are invited to stop by my tent, wherever it might be. But more: bring your own food. Set up feeding arrangements with local fans. Don't shop in the stores. Spend your money with the out-of-state dealers in the huckster rooms, but stay away from the tourist facilities. None of this is easy, but who ever said that taking a moral stand was going to be pleasureable?

'In short, let's just for once, in the world of sf, walk the walk, and not just talk the talk. For decades sf has trumpeted about Brave New Worlds and what Slanlike futuristic thinkers we are, how humanistic sf is, how socially conscious we are, how sf stories can deal with delicate social issues that mimetic fiction is afraid to talk about. And yet, on the whole,

sf fans and pros live in Never-Never Land when it comes to taking part in the pragmatic world around them; they would rather escape into a realm of creative anachronisms than go to the battlements to fight the real wars; to be precise, sf fans and professionals tend to be terribly provincial about the pressing issues of our times, to turn their heads and say it is none of their affair.

'Dealing with far-flung galactic civilizations is great fun, but we're supposed to be concerned people. And so...at what point do we put our bodies on the line for the things sf says are important: freedom, equality, living at one with our planet, free speech, intellectual awareness, courage, the best possible condition of life for people?

'Can we continue to deal with sf as merely escapist fiction, pointless, mindless entertainment, no nobler than trash novels or tv sitcoms, when we howl in outrage at reviewers and critics who accuse the genre of being no more than that? Can we permit the gap between what we say we are, and what we really are, to exist? Or is this, perhaps, a moment when we can make a brave statement with our fiction, our literary love, our bodies, and our annual World gathering?

Arizona, the WorldCon and I offer you this opportunity.'

((Harlan, you are a controversial personality, and you are going to push a controversial social/political measure at a WorldCon in what might be called a hotbed of anti-ERA sentiment? That is not the same as Robert Heinlein pushing blood donations.

((I think it would be a very serious mistake to let the Guest of Honor politicize the convention. This year ERA. What next year?

((I am sorry you are having such an attack of Guilties and Ethics over this matter, but if you go ahead with your plan---if the Convention Committee lets you---you will probably polarize the convention, bring a call for "equal time" from anti-ERA people at the convention, possibly provoke legal problems for the Committee, bring about hooting, catcalls, and demonstrations at all of your convention appearances, be hounded day and night...for what? It is generally admitted by pro-ERA strategists that ERA hasn't a chance of passing

in the Arizona state legislature this year. No way.

((You may think you can use the convention as a convenient, effective platform to propagandize your pro-ERA beliefs, but I suspect your platform may turn out to be a battleground.

((I am pro-ERA myself, and favor Gay Rights, and decriminalization of pot...but I do not favor using the SF WorldCon as a tool for their advancement. You're proposing to set a dangerous precedent, Harlan. I hope you and the Convention Committee will reconsider.))

NOTE FROM DENTON/THOR

Early December, 1977

'The really big news on the HUSTLER front: I recently heard Larry Flynt on the radio, explaining that Jimmy Carter's sister had converted him. Yep, he got saved! HUSTLER is going to become a Christian magazine...but it will feature nekkid wimmin! I'm not sure I've got that one figured out yet.'

((It does take some thought. But Flynt got publicity, he got some brownie points in some minds and may get a break in his legal problems in re porno convictions and appeals, and Jimmy Carter's sister got her payment in publicity, egoboo and etc.

((Of course---nekkid wimmin aren't in themselves anti-Christian. The beauty of the human body, etc., but HUSTLER is a "pussy-looker"-zine, and that specialty might be a bit difficult to explain to the congregation.))



NOTE FROM TED BLISS, BOOKSTORE OWNER

24 Nov. 1977

'I would like to start a section in the shop devoted to small press publications. I would appreciate it if any publishers looking for an outlet would contact me.

'They should send a description of what they publish, if possible a sample issue, and rates, etc.

'Send to me c/o:

RODNEY--the compleat bookshop
144 S. Water
Kent, OH 44240.'

LETTER FROM GEORGE HAY

16.11.1977

'I have an item, relating to van Vogt's mention of G. K. Chesterton, which may make you laugh/weep. I'm going to write vV about it, but you might like to run it for the interest of your readers. Also for R.A. Lefferty; I'm not in touch with him, and I'd like him to see it.

'It happens that I've been a Chesterton fan since way back, and have been trying to get pb publishers here to put out some of the novels which their editors never seem to have heard of. They know about the 'Father Brown' detective stories, which have been pb'd, but that's all. Well, here's a letter from the editor of one of these houses---a big outfit. She's a nice lady, and has already put out items I have put up to her from other writers, so I won't quote her name---

""Dear George,

THE BALL AND THE CROSS ... have come to the conclusion that it really would not fit into our list at all. Obviously, from a personal viewpoint I can see the qualities you admire in it, but it really is so different, so alien, in a way to the kind of sf that is selling at the moment, that, in my opinion, it really belongs in a specialist house where smaller print runs can be accommodated."

'So now we have a new category ---alien sf!

'I have recently come across a lady writer over here who has me quite enthused. She deserves a much wider readership, and I'm going to give quotes from one of her books, in the hope that you will carry them and thus encourage peo-

ple to look them out. What follows then, is from THE HUMAN EVASION by Celia Green, obtainable at £3.50 from the Institute of Psychophysical Research, Oxford, England. Please note that her use of the word 'sane' here is ironical:--

""Society begins to appear much less unreasonable when one realizes its true function. It is there to help everyone to keep their minds off reality. This follows automatically from the fact that it is an association of sane people, and it has already been shown that sanity arises from the continual insertion of 'other people' into any space into which a meta-physical problem might intrude."

...

""...it should be noticed that 'keeping everyone alive and well-fed' is the highest social aim which the sane mind can accept without reservation or discomfort. This is because everyone is capable of eating ---and so are animals and plants---so this qualifies magnificently as a 'real' piece of 'real life.' There are other reasons in its favour as well, such as the fact that well-fed people do not usually become more single-minded, purposeful or interested in metaphysics."

...

""...society is not only the chief source of compensation to a sane person, but his chief instrument of revenge against other people. It is useless to point out that there is no need to revenge himself on them. If he were ever to admit that they were not responsible for his finite predicament, he would have to direct his hatred against the finite predicament itself, and this would be frustrating. It is this frustration that the human evasion exists to evade."

...

""It is obvious...that a sense of purpose repels rather than attracts existence. You have only to consider the immediate sympathy that would be aroused in a sane mind by the complaint of some child that it was being driven to work at things far too difficult for its capacities, compared with the distrust and reserve with which it would view complaints by the

child that it was not being allowed to work hard enough."

...

""Sane people regard an apparently purposeful activity as disinfected by numbers--- i.e, if a sufficiently large number of people is involved, they feel assured that the outcome will be harmless to sanity, no matter how frenzied the labours may seem to be. The most large scale examples are wars and politics. Into these activities people allow themselves to enter with almost single-minded devotion."

...

""Both war and politics have played a particularly helpful part in retarding the march of progress. In fact, the history of the human race is only comprehensible as the record of a species trying not to gain control of its environment."

((Very entertaining, George, very idealistic, very thought provoking, and very wrongheaded.))

ADDITIONAL DETAILS: TOM REAMY AND DAVID MCDANIEL

From DE PROFUNDIS #95, the newsletter of the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society:

'DAVID MCDANIEL DEAD AT 38

'David McDaniel, known to most people in fandom as Ted Johnstone, died on October 30th in his home, due to an accident; he apparently fell while taking a shower. The body was discovered by Charles Lee Jackson II on the 31st. There was a memorial service for Tedron on December 2nd at Forest Lawn in Glendale. The service was attended by many current and formerly active LASFS members. David leaves a wife, Joyce (also called Lin Johnstone), and a son, Tommy.

'Tedron joined LASFS on Junr 21, 1956, and was an active member of the LASFS for the next 21 years. He was a prolific fan writer, appearing in a wide variety of fanzines, and for years contributed to APA-L. He was also active in Dungeons & Dragons fandom in recent years. He made amateur and semi-professional movies, and attended countless sf conventions. He served several terms as LASFS Secretary, and wrote three books in the "Man From UNCLE" series of paperbacks; THE VAMPIRE AFFAIR, THE MONSTER WHEEL AFFAIR and THE DAGGER AFFAIR.

He leaves unpublished the last book in the series, THE FINAL AFFAIR. He also wrote the sf novel, ARSENAL OUT OF TIME. A separate obituary and memorial flyer will be included in the next issue of DE PROFUNDIS.'

'TOM REAMY DIES

'LASFS member Tom Reamy died recently of a heart attack. He was found slumped over his typewriter, having just finished the editorial for the next issue of his fanzine, NICKELODEON. Tom was very active in Texas fandom for years, and had more recently been living in the Kansas City area, and served on the WorldCon committee in 1976. He is perhaps best known as editor of TRUMPET, a major fanzine in its day. Recently, he had turned to professional writing and had received several honors for his recent science fiction short stories.'

LETTER FROM J. OWEN HANNER

November 19, 1977

'Just a quick item of general interest here. In SFR 21 you ran a loc from one Cal Johnson asking for assistance in getting started in fandom. I wrote him, mainly because I wanted to know, too, and we've since started a correspondence and I thought you might like to know what happened to him. Well, a lot. He's got a zine, MIJOK, out that you might like to read and he's gotten going so well that he told me everything I know today. Or, a lot of it. I was really beginning to doubt fandom before that, but the response he got bolstered my faith, and it helped me get started, too. So, this is sorta indirect thanks to everyone. I really enjoy Cal's friendship and I'm quite glad about the way he's grown into fandom.

'You can get MIJOK #1 from:
Cal Johnson
803 N. 37th
Corsicana, TX 75110

'Single issue is 30¢, 3 11¢ stamps, or the usual.'

((Two older fans gone, and two new ones coming on. So it goes...))

TAFF TAFF TAFF TAFF TAFF

'Prologue:

This flyer will be sent out to people who I think might be interested in helping TAFF. I will be running versions of it through the following apas: A Woman's Apa, Canadapa, TAPS, Apaloosa and Q. I will

be sending it to the following newszines: SPANG BLAH, KARASS, TWEED, SFR, CHECKPOINT and MAYA. The following cons will also see versions of it (in 1978): Lunacon, Boskone, Skycon(Eastercon), Balticon, Disclave, Midwestcon, Autoclave, Unicon(Maryland), Conebulus, Iguanacon, Pghlange, and Philcon. About a hundred or so miscellaneous friends, enemies, and people-I've-heard- tales-of will be getting this from the wild blue yonder (hello!). Please feel free to distribute this either in total or run (at least the last half) through other fanzines, apas and program books.

'First Half: TAFF

The Trans Atlantic Fan Fund (TAFF) has been sending people across the Atlantic since 1954. It was created to bring a well-known European or North American fan (rotating years between continents) to the other side of the ocean. Once across the water he would meet fans and attend cons that they couldn't otherwise afford.

'The winner of each election becomes TAFF administrator for the following race. The next race will be for 1979 and Seacon. Requirements are:

- 3 American fan nominators
- 2 European fan nominators
- 1 \$5 good faith bond.

(For European races there should be 3 European fan nominators and 2 American fan nominators.) A short platform (a couple paragraphs) on the fan nominated and why he is worthy of standing for TAFF will be published on the ballot sheet. The nominators send the name of the fan they are nominating to the local TAFF administrator along with the money and the platform. The current North American administrator is: Roy Tackett
915 Green Valley Rd., NW
Albuquerque, NM 87107

The nominating period for this race is Oct.1st, 1978 to November 30th, 1978. The voting period is from Dec. 1st, 1978 to April 14, 1979 (Easter). To vote you must be a fan that is known to either the administrator or known to a fan he knows. A contribution of a \$1. for each person voting is sent along with their names and the person they are voting for TAFF to the local administrator. Not too hard.

'The European administrator is:

Peter Roberts
38 Oakland Dr.
Dawlish, Devon, UK

'There was a 30% increase in voting in the 1977 race, but even

with that the total votes were 205.

'Second Half: Publicity, Auctions and Legends.

'To publicize TAFF and raise money for it I want to set up four major efforts next year (1978) to coincide with Boskone, Disclave, Iguanacon and Philcon. I would like to hold auctions at these conventions and distribute publicity flyers.

'I have been told that NESFA is very serious and business minded, so I am looking for computers, calculators, electronic games, manuscripts and author's proofs of their books. Anything dedicated to the sercon life.

'At Disclave I would like items of a more fannish nature: propellar beanie, fanzines, etc.

'For Iguanacon I want to do a showy auction. I have been asking artists to do custom designed T shirts. I am also hoping to get a huckster's booth and sell TAFF reports, and other items for some other fannish charities (DUFF, Tucker Transfer, FAAN awards, etc.). I would like to obtain old fanzines and other hard to obtain articles for a sealed bid auction-by-mail.

'The Philcon auction would wrap up the year and, since it is during nomination period for TAFF would be a good advertisement.

'At other conventions I attend I will try to set up smaller impromptu auctions for all the fannish charities.

'If the above auctions go well I would extend the ideas over into the TAFF voting period in 1979 and auction at Boskone and Balticon.

'I, also, want to hold a special uction over Easter at Skycon (if I can afford to get there). I imagine various American books and related items would do well there.



'Any items offered can be given for a specific auction, if so desired. A minimum bid should also be attached, especially for items for the sealed bid auction at Iguanacon. Tentative dates for items due are two weeks before the convention or at the convention (if you plan to attend), however in the latter case, please let me know ahead of time.

'Please write or call:

Joyce Scrivner
Apt. AG3-3
Hatfield Village
Hatfield, PA 19440

PHONE: (215) 368-4697

'I am especially interested in obtaining artists that want to do T shirts for Iguanacon. I plan to send the blank shirts out in May/June. I also need items very soon for the Boskone auction.

'I am planning on issuing a companion volume for the Neo-fans Guide called Of Such Are Legends Made. This would, of course, contain articles on fannish legends: Tucker Hotel, Black Jelly Beans, Fannish Ghods (Roscoe...), Hoaxs (Joan Carr), Legendary Slan Shacks (Tendrill Towers...), etc. It will obviously be incomplete, but I can foresee revisions and supplements to be issued in the future. All proceeds from this will go to TAFF. Tentative publishing date is May 15. Any particular ideas of interest in this category would be appreciated.'

RECEIVED: THE SPACE MACHINE by Christopher Priest. Popular Library 04142-0, \$1.50

MORE FROM FRITZ LEIBER

Early December, 1977

'Yesterday I finished the Mouser novelette, "The Mer She"---it is for WHISPERS...and probably also for a collection of my recent stories Stuart Schiff is pulling together for Whispers Press---something in the nature of "Heroes and Horrors," at least those are the topics.' ... 'I'm still very happy about my new apartment. I was certainly ready for a little more space and quiet!'

((HEROES AND HORRORS is a great title! Good luck with it.

((One of these days, Fritz, you'll break down and buy a little house.))

12-15-77 Alter is right, of course. My editorial eyes have

been much larger than my publisher's stomach. Basic desire to do all that needs to be done in the way of sf reviewing vs. space and financial and time limitations. Also character needs. To the extent that SFR diverges from the original REG/TAC format of commentary on the world and sf and self toward a more formal SF REVIEW, to that extent I become restless and unhappy.

Guilty of hubris and pretension. Guilty of Losing My Way.

Compromise in order. Next issue will be a couple interviews, an article, "Other Voices," and the rest will be Geis in one guise or another.

I hope no one is in shock. The format and balance of this mag has changed so often....

We'll see how it goes.

LETTER FROM ARTHUR TOFTE

November 18, 1977

'In your issue #23 in the S-F News by Elton T. Elliott, brief mention is made of the death of Raymond G. Palmer. He is described as a "long-time controversial figure in sf, editor of AMAZING and FANTASTIC during most of their fat pulp days..."

'There is no question about his being controversial. That he was. But to let that stand as his epitaph is unrealistic.

'I was a good and close friend of Ray's. We both belonged to the Milwaukee Fictioneers in the thirties when it also included Robert Bloch, Stanley G. Weinbaum and Ralph Milne Farley, besides a number of others who have had success in other fields of writing.

'Ray suffered a broken back when he was a boy of seven and he never grew to much over four feet tall. If nothing else this could help explain why he may have been controversial.

'In the years I knew him, I was always strongly impressed with his keen mind. He and Bob Bloch would toss ideas around at the Fictioneers meetings like ping pong balls. His memory for stories that had been published was phenomenal. When one of us would suggest an sf plot, he would grin and say that it had been used in such-and-such an issue.

'When he left Milwaukee to take the job as editor of AMAZING, one of the first things he did was to

ask us Fictioneers for stories. All I can assume is that the stock pile he inherited must have been pretty dismal. Both Bob Bloch and I sent him stories. In fact, Bloch's first story in AMAZING appeared in the same issue with my first story (August, 1938). Later Palmer bought more of my stories. When he introduced FANTASTIC in May, 1939, I had the cover story in Volume 1, Number 1.

'I had a long letter from Ray only a year or so ago in which he described his success as an independent publisher of (admittedly) far-out publications. But he was enjoying life. He was making money. He had property and a happy family life.

'I'll always feel indebted to him for giving me a start in sf. After a 45-year career in advertising, I retired and returned to writing. In the past five years I have sold seven novels and about thirty short stories (all after I was seventy years old). In the last letter from Ray, he said that he was proud that one of his proteges was not only back in the fold, but beginning to make out again.

'Ray Palmer was controversial to be sure. But he was a lot more than that. He had one of the sharpest minds I've ever met. He brought success to his papers. He gave a start to many new, young writers. And he loved sf. Why should a man be indicted for being controversial? Isn't the whole field of science fiction writing full of controversy? Indeed, Dick, where would SFR be without the spice of controversy?'

((In my view a controversial person is an admirable person.))

'The attached photo was taken at a Fictioneers meeting (probably in 1936). Ray Palmer is the center figure, back row. Bob Bloch is directly in front of Ray, first row center. I am the character at the far right of the picture. The others are either dead now or long-retired.

'I believe I started reading THE ALIEN CRITIC and then SFR from the very first issue. And always a fan....'

((Thank you very much for the photo, Arthur (although Bob probably wishes it had been lost!), and the comments about Ray Palmer. And good luck with your writing.))

12 XII 77 (To Philip K. Dick)

'Dear Phil,

'Pam Sargent sent me a copy of your letter to Dick Geis, and very glad I was to see it. I only wish some of this clarification could have got into a SFWA publication, but they have announced they wish to hear no more about Lem. But if you & Dick Geis are still game, can I set one more sort of sub-fact straight? You got told by somebody that "they paid Mrs. Le Guin in U.S. dollars," but somebody was dead wrong. Wydawnictwo Literackie has paid me nothing, in dollars or in Zlotys; and the book they contracted for (A WIZARD OF EARTHSEA) has never been released. That is the case you heard of -- of the translator getting into hot water for speaking up against censorship, & getting black-listed. Wydawnictwo Literackie may be "thoughtful, tough, professional" as you say, but I cannot say I like their ethics or their politics, & I can't support you in urging anybody to send them MSS or books. In fact I'd say avoid them like the plague.

'If anybody is interested, I hope I can eventually write up this whole weird business; but I can't now because I am afraid of getting the translator, & possibly Lem, into even worse trouble. One never knows whether to be quiet & let things blow over without getting the government humiliated & therefore vengeful -- or whether things are so bad one should shout Hey Look! so that the gov't knows that at least somebody is watching; which is, of course, what protected Solzhenitsyn while he was in Russia, etc.'

((Thanks for the further clarifications and commentary, Ursula. I presume something in your book poisoned the translator's mind against his government's policies and it follows that that book will never be released to poison thousands of other minds. Proves, I guess, that science fiction writers are both revolutionary and counter-revolutionary.))

TO OPPOSE AUTHORITARIANISM IS NOT
ONLY A STRATEGIC NECESSITY BUT A
SPIRITUAL IMPERITIVE.

---Confucius



12-26-77 Fortunately for my very life, Alter has found a one-page gap in my paging (pg.41) and is claiming it for his insane book reviews and other weird comments.

Contrary to my assumptions on page 28 of this issue, Major Books is not dead. The new address is: 21335 Roscoe Blvd., Canoga Park 91304.

See you next issue!

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Richard E. Geis

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