MARCH-APRIL 1979 NUMBER 30

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW

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Interviews: JOAN D. VINGE STEPHEN R. DONALDSON NORMAN SPINRAD

Orson Scott Card - Charles Platt - Darrell Schweitzer
Elton Elliott - Bill Warren

LARRY NIVEN WRITING SF PORN? SEE PAGE 33

DAMON KNIGHT SUES HARPER & ROW SEE PAGE 38

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW

Formerly THE ALIEN CRITIC

MARCH, 1979 ---- VOL.8, NO.2

WHOLE NUMBER 30

RICHARD E. GEIS, EDITOR & PUBLISHER

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CONFUCIUS SAY MAN WHO PUBLISHES FANZINES ALL LIFE DOOMED TO SEEK MIMEOGRAPH IN HEAVEN, HEKTOGRAPH IN HELL

COVER BY STEPHEN FABIAN
Based on "Hellhole" by David Gerrold
(To appear in ASIMOV'S SF MAGAZINE)

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2-8-79

LAST-MINUTE NEWS ABOUT GALAXY

Hank Stine called a moment ago, to say that he was just back from New York and conferences with the publisher. [That explains why his phone was temporarily disconnected.]

The GALAXY publishing schedule is bi-monthly at the moment, and there will be upcoming some special separate anthologies issued in the GALAXY magazine-size format.

Hank is close to moving to a new house, but the editorial address will remain the same:

GALAXY/Hank Stine
585 Caddo St.
Baton Rouge, LA 70806

His phone number will probably be changed by the time you read this.

He also called to tell me my GALAXY book review column (with Alter-Ego in charge!) will be needed in two weeks.

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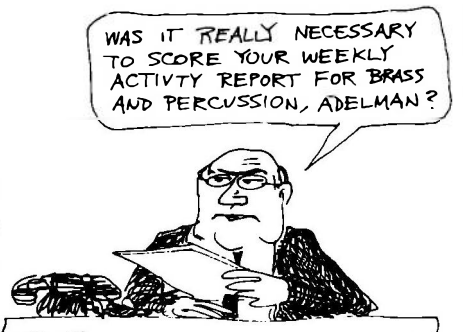
BY RICHARD E. GEIS

PLUS "OTHER VOICES,"
"SMALL PRESS NOTES,"
"AND THEN I READ..."
AND THE NOT-IN-HAND BUT EXPECTED
S-F NEWS, THE MOVIE NEWS AND
REVIEWS, AND A LOT OF INTERESTING
LETTERS.



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ALIEN THOUGHTS

BY THE EDITOR

1-8-79 Roger Elwood called the other day to correct information given in George Warren's letter concerning the demise of Roger's magazine INSPIRATION...

Roger said that he was not fired at Peterson Publications. It was decided to cease publication of Roger's magazine and he decided not to stay on.

His analysis of why INSPIRATION was folded is that the publisher's usual distribution pattern was not suited to the magazine; too few copies to "Bible-belt" areas and too many to the more secular outlets and areas.

Roger said he may give the magazine to another publisher---one more suited to it.

He said the magazine made some money, just not enough to suit the publisher.

He said that was the case with the Laser sf line---the books made money, but not enough to keep the publisher happy.

LETTER FROM GEORGE WARREN
POB 114-C
Pasadena, CA 91104
January 22, 1979

'For some reason I keep watching BATTLESTAR GALACTICA and halfway enjoying about every third episode in spite of myself, in spite of the inescapable fact that there is always something in there to make me wince. (That was true of a lot of KOLCHAK: THE NIGHT STALKER too, for all the wit in some of the scripts and in all of McGavin's and Simon Oakland's performances.) I do not think it will hurt TV SF though. Lowbrow entertainment never hurts anything. It is the pretentious crap that hurts the media. NASHVILLE hurt the movies. THE PUBLIC BURNING hurt the hardback novel. THE SORROW AND THE PITY hurt documentaries, and so did HEARTS AND MINDS.

'We went out to see a few movies recently. We hated SUPERMAN cordially and INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS not so cordially. PINOCCHIO was a jewel, but the new Disney short feature with it was dismal, insincere button-pushing and poor animation to boot. I have not had the guts to go see WATERSHIP DOWN or LORD OF THE RINGS yet. I am afraid to. I have a lingering affection for both books. In spite of myself.

'We did see THE RED SHOES and TALES OF HOFFMANN a while back though, and noted that the former is available now in a novelization by the authors (rather good one too). Those guys really gave the world a lesson in how to film ballet and opera, back in the late 40s but nobody picked up the ball. Filmed opera is still the same old shit and nobody learned the lesson at all, and Powell and Pressburger -- who the hell were they anyhow? Just a couple of arty nances with no cachet. They never got to make another movie after HOFFMANN bombed. 30 years passed. And now it is possible to see them as the fantastic creative geniuses they were. Bah. Talk about operating in a vacuum. And this in a medium in which a nonentity like Robert Altman is praised as a creator.

'OMNI is still not selling. I think it is not-selling even worse than it used to be not-selling. Huge stacks on the stands just sitting there not moving at all. I don't see any re-runs of Asimov's flat-size mag either although the digest-sized ones seem to be doing damn well. (I cannot see why; I can't read it either.) Where is Geis in the latest GALAXY? I miss him. (I don't miss Alter either. I am sure you were getting tired of him. That is the way of series-characters the world over. I am getting tired of Nick Carter -- after only 3 of them.)'

((Yes, truth to tell, I AM tired of doing the Alter-Ego shtick, and reluctantly note that my unfinished GALAXY column in which Alter is in command is not very good. But, then, I begin to wonder if I'll ever get the go-ahead to finish it. I look upon the Alter/Geis dialogues as simply space-wasters, now. The zest is largely gone from the thing, and I'd like to not do him anymore. But we'll see if I can actually kill him off.))

LETTER FROM JAMES WILSON
1215 30th St.
Des Moines, IA 50311

'Just got back to Drake from my Christmas vacation in my home town: Chicago. Among the many items in my mailbox I was very happy to find the latest R.E.G. Haven't had time to read it yet.

'Other items of note were letters from Arnold Abramson, Fred Pohl and Isaac Asimov. Isaac has cleared up a recent minor question. In SFR #27, Elton mentioned in his column that OPUS 200 would be Isaac's 200th book and he quoted me as the source; the November LOCUS said that IN MEMORY YET GREEN is to be Isaac's 200th. Both are half correct.

'Isaac says, ..."Both books will be published in February simultaneously and will tie for my 200th book."'

LETTER FROM PATRICIA MATTHEWS
1125 Tomasita St, NE
Albuquerque, NM 87112
Jan. 11, 1979

'Why will your STAR WHORES have artificial bodies and sentient minds? In the setup you described, real whores do everything they can to blot out the fact that they are sentient, with drugs and alcohol. And wouldn't management prefer programmed beings?

'Easier to handle. Or would this be punishment, like the brothels of Shainsa? Am looking forward to answers.'

((Some present-day whores are into depressants to dull the unhappiness of their lives. Some present-day, highly paid whores are happy as clams with their lives. I suspect the happiness/unhappiness level is more due to factors other than the sex activity involved. Life Scripts given to the child by the parents, a need to punish oneself, punish others by humiliation, etc....are the wellsprings of why a whore is a whore, today.

((In the future I envision for STAR WHORES, sex workers are highly unionized and respected as professionals. The implantation of a human brain/mind into an android or robot body for a term as a sex worker on a starship would be a matter of a contract, with each party---mining ship owners and worker---bound to

the negotiated terms of the contract.

((Society, in my future, will have found other put-down roles and behaviors to use.))

The following is an anonymous contribution.

ODE TO BATTLESTAR GALAXATIVE
(Or...A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Peace Conference)

Something appealing (John Dykstra's visual effects)
Something appalling (The writing, acting, and everything else)
Something for everyone (Bits and pieces cribbed from every major ---and several minor---mythologies that ever existed. The ponderous former owner of the Ponderosa. And a lot of other stuff too depressing to talk about)
A travesty tonight (Did they even consult any of the sf writers in Los Angeles?)

At least there's still "Pigs In Space"

Whimper.....

LETTER FROM POUL ANDERSON

3 Las Palomas
Orinda, CA 94563
Jan. 10, 1979

'Robert Anson Wilson's diatribe against the American medical profession and your own more temperate but mostly favorable reply call for an argument, merely in the interest of fairness. I am not a physician myself, nor do I have any interest in any hospital or the like. However, I have known a pretty fair number of medical people, sometimes as a patient, sometimes a friend. I have also looked into some elementary economics and sociology. The fact seems to me to be that Mr. Wilson is assailing a straw man with a Hitler face painted upon it. This wouldn't matter in itself, but unfortunately, a lot of other people feel the same way. Let me make a few observations.

'First, then, about friendly versus professional relationships. I have always tried to keep these separate where doctors are concerned, if only for reasons for privacy; i.e., I don't mingle socially with my G.P., though he's a perfectly pleasant man. However, such fences can't always be kept up. So, for example, I once had to appeal to a doctor who also happened to be a kinsman; there was nobody else readily available. "Look, Jens," I said, embarrassed, "I expect to be billed for this; business and friendship are different things". To which he replied briskly: "You'd let me stand you a drink wouldn't you? Okay, let me stand you a shot of penicillin. Roll over."

'The point of this anecdote is merely that doctors and nurses are human too. And this brings us to Mr. Wilson's thesis #1, that they are "getting rich and fat out of the pain and suffering and agony of their fellow citizens".

'For God's sake! Are they expected to work for nothing? I speak from the heart now, because so often I am asked to contribute my time to this or that, on the bland assumption that the income which supports my household comes out of nowhere. And I don't have many years of expensive education behind me, or an expensive office and assistant and assorted equipment to pay for, or inflated malpractice insurance to maintain -- or, for that matter, anything like those unsanctified hours to keep. A million dollars a year could not get me into that kind of working conditions. Life's too short.

'Actually, nearly all doctors I've had to do with have been perfectly decent, concerned people. (It cannot be expected that they will be as concerned with my illness as they would be with a wife's or child's or mother's. Given a few hundred patients, that would tear them apart. But they have been genuinely interested in getting me, or some member of my family, well.) Their charges have been reasonable, all things considered. Not uncommonly, they have declined to do this or that procedure, explaining that it was not necessary or would be too risky. (Nota bene, my family and I are not invalids, but in pretty good health. I am discussing only the usual ills to which the flesh is heir.)

'On the friendship level, I've seen some doctors and nurses weep at what they themselves have witnessed -- but this would take us too far afield. Suffice to say: Sure, a certain percentage are evil, and a larger percentage are fools. Can you name me a profession of which this is not true? The medics seem to average at least as well as anybody else.

'Now, Mr. Wilson's point 2, about American medicine being "cold, inhumanizing, and generally treats (sic) the patient like a part on a Ford assembly line". There is a certain amount of truth in this as regards hospitals -- though there are more exceptions than examples -- but again, part of the reason lies in the nature of the case, and part of it goes back to economics and politics.

'The horse-and-buggy doctor made regular house calls because he had few enough patients for this to be possible; not so many people could afford his services, modestly priced though they were. He comforted the sick and the dying because usually there was nothing else he could do for them. Today's medics, in office or hospital, save a much higher percentage, but they do it with equipment, lab tests, and pharmaceuticals that are monstrously expensive. (The high price of drugs is due in large part, though not entirely, to the cost of developing them; an even larger part is due to the cost in time and paperwork of getting them approved by the federal bureaucracy.) Somebody has to pay for these things, whether it be in his medical bills or his taxes. I much prefer the former.

'In spite of the cost, we have sufficient prosperity nowadays that most people can avail themselves of physicians and hospitals. This heavy case load combines with the modern kind of therapeutic technology to make the whole process usually very impersonal. Too bad, perhaps; but if a shot of antibiotic will fix me up, I don't need my hand held into the bargain.

'A major reason why so many are seeking doctors today is that insurance or the government (Medicare, etc.) pick up the tab. This naturally drives prices up, according to the law of supply and demand. Socialism can't repeal it, either. All that socialism can do is drive the quality of medical care down by overcrowding the hospitals and waiting rooms still more.

'Even considering this, I must admit that hospital bills are often out of line. It is also true that many people still can't afford care they need. Many others are financially ruined, or their families are, by prolonged treatment which does no real good. What to do about all this? I don't believe in utopian solutions to problems, but do agree that there is room for improvement.

'Socialized medicine is frequently advocated. If this means making all doctors and nurses government employees, no, thanks! Why do liberals assume that people instantly become wise and benevolent when they enter government? History shows that, if anything, the tendency is the opposite one.

'There is something to be said for the state underwriting medical insurance. This has been done for generations in the Scandinavian countries, among others, and there it works pretty well; the standards of care are at least as high as ours, and in some areas higher. However,

when you look at the whole picture, you see society paying for this, and similar public undertakings, with sky-high taxes, bloated bureaucracies, and a generally unenterprising populace.

'We don't need that over here. All we need is to extend coverage by private insurance. In my own case, I pay about $700 a year for what amounts to open-ended protection for my family; no medical catastrophe can wipe us out. It costs no more than that because there is a fairly high deductible, $1250 to be exact. We can meet that, and one should only insure against unbearable losses.

'This situation is probably not applicable to everyone, e.g., those with lower incomes. But almost everybody can work out something appropriate for himself. I don't like Blue Cross and Blue Shield either, but they are far from the only game in town. Shop around, folks.

'There are, of course, some people too poor to buy any insurance. I would not oppose government paying for them. But this doesn't require nationalizing the industry; it need only be a part of welfare.

'To maintain the prices of doctors, laboratories and hospitals -- or better yet, reduce prices -- in the face of increasing demand, obviously we must increase the supply. As usual, the way to do this is not through government, but through getting government out of the act. Overregulation is the main reason for scarcity and, for that matter, less than optimum practice.

'I'd throw the whole field wide open. Let anybody build a hospital or practice medicine who wants to, any way he sees fit. The only role of government should be to certify places that meet its standards, and to make sure that nobody calls himself a "doctor" who hasn't had the appropriate training. (Let the rest call themselves "healers" or whatever.)

'We'd very rapidly get a lot of low-priced paramedics coping with about 90% of cases, those that don't require elaborate treatment. Regular physicians would then have time to deal properly with the hard 10%. We'd also get all kinds of unorthodox procedures. Most, only a fool would submit to; fine, that way we get some fools out of the gene pool. Some would seem worth trying, and some of these would probably prove out well enough that they got adopted into standard practice. Meanwhile, our medical and insurance bills would be much lower, our national health noticeably better, and we'd have less government on our backs. The last of these benefits is, all by itself, ample reason to adopt such a policy.'

1-16-79 I see that multiple ear piercings are a fad---with as many as seven earrings decorating the ear.

My male sexist mind speculates that someday women will begin having their labia pierced and will decorate those with precious stones and finely wrought gold and silver filigree.

Before that happens, though, there will have to be a complete divorcement of the womb-vagina system from childbirth. That is, a foolproof, perfect, no-drawbacks system of contraception...or...an artificial womb technology which frees the woman totally from pregnancy and childbirth.

When that point is reached the child-bearing plumbing becomes demoted and modesty concerning those areas will fade. The purely sexual/pleasure function will emerge and all kinds of cultural variations will emerge in clothes, customs and attitudes.

One could write a fine sf novel on that: the political and social conflicts forced by the artificial womb technology. Thinking the implications through and constructing a story structure to best show the technology and the cultural upheavals would take a while...

I realize here that as a novelist I tend to think in a narrower focus than most sf novelists, who depend on giganticism and magic science and saving everything from mankind to the universe.

I recoil from that kind of plot, for myself; the high-stakes plot and the bigger-than-anything-before plot are traditional and often a road to riches, but in my guts I want to write what might be called local science fiction...or personal-effect science fiction...which may be a mask for an even deeper need to write sex novels of the future.

LETTER FROM ORSON SCOTT CARD
117 J Street
Salt Lake City, UT 84103
Jan. 7, 1979

'While it was lovely to have Elton Elliott run an extended note on me and my work, I cringed a bit when he said that "Mikal's Songbird" had been nominated for a Nebula. Unless he's had results I haven't heard of in the Nebula balloting, my story has only been recommended by a couple of people (who, of course, have wonderful taste) and is far from ending up on the final ballot as one of the five or so final nominees. Also, I misled Elton when I told him that A PLANET CALLED TREASON would be out in February -- official word is the end of March. Dell has bought the paperback rights. And a few words of praise to St. Martin's and Ace and Baronet -- they have been scrupulous about typesetting my manuscripts as I wrote them, with no arguments.'

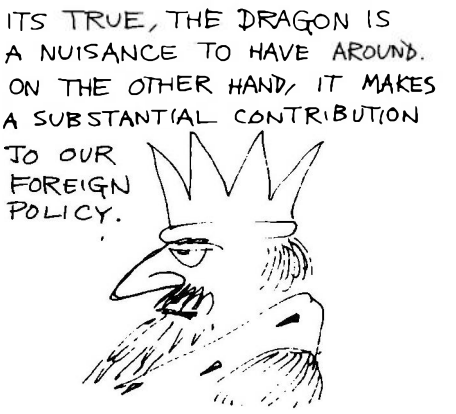
THE DRAGON BOOK

Editor, Orson Scott Card
Art Director, Michael Goodwin

With one page of four-color art for every page of fiction, this anthology will combine the best of fantasy with the best of fantasy art. The stories must include dragons, but the dragons may be protagonist, antagonist, or even peripheral (but still necessary) characters. Stories can be funny or serious, and any reasonable definition of the word dragon will be accepted, provided it still allows an artist to draw a dragon. Settings can range from Middle Earth to Merry Olde England, from downtown Chicago in 1979 to Aldebaran in 8875. In other words, I'm open to any good story.

Advances will be 5¢ a word against pro rata share of royalties, with a minimum of $300. No stories longer than 15,000 words will be considered, and the ideal length is under 7500 words. Stories of three paragraphs, if they work, will be considered. Submissions should be sent (with SASE) to Orson Scott Card 117 "J" Street, Salt Lake City, Utah, 84103. Please don't send any art -- that won't be considered until after we have the stories.

A few suggestions: Don't St. George us to death -- look for a new twist. Sword and sorcery is out -- we're looking for fantasy of the quality (and brevity) of Ursula K. LeGuin's "Rule of Names" and Larry Niven's "Transfer of Power".



LETTER FROM NEAL WILGUS

Dec. 5, 1978

'Orson Scott Card's so-called anti-review of my review of Donaldson's LORD FOUL'S BANE is not going to provoke any anti-anti-review from me -- he's entitled to his ravings and let him enjoy them. But I will cry Foul on two points: 1. My review was of LORD FOUL'S BANE only, not the whole Covenant trilogy -- Card's anti-review was headed LF'sB but his comments concerned the entire trilogy (and when I finish reading the whole work perhaps I will rave about it); 2. Card says he found dozens of "fulfilled and developed characters" in the trilogy but neglects to name any -- which tends to reinforce my feeling that Thomas Covenant is the only real character and the rest (with the possible exception of Saltheart Foamfollower) are cardboard cutouts. This is not to say I'm anti-LORD FOUL'S BANE or Donaldson -- my review was generally favorable with mild criticism of some fairly obvious weaknesses and I was sufficiently interested to contact Donaldson and secure the interview with him scheduled for the next SFR. Beyond that, and loaning my copy of BANE to someone who lost it, I can't really go.'

((I see we forgot to type in your address up there. Your address is Box 25771, Albuquerque, NM 87125.))

LETTER FROM DAVID GERROLD

January 16, 1979

'Thanks for the review of DEATHBEAST in issue #29. A couple of corrections, however:

'1) I did not start my writing career, as Paul McGuire III asserts, "by writing two non-fiction books for STAR TREK fans". As a matter of fact, the two STAR TREK books were my ninth and tenth books to be published.

'2) The characterization of STARLOG's readers as non-SF readers is neither fair nor accurate. While STARLOG is generally more media- than print-oriented, the mail response continues to indicate a strong nucleus of readers who are familiar with notable works and authors in the field. The magazine's audience seems to be growing from a base of predominantly film-oriented fans to a larger readership with a much wider range of interests.

'3) There are only eight human characters in the novel, not nine as MacGuire says in his review. The sidekick is named Kalen, not Karlen. (Or was that a typo?) Megan and Loevil are not man and wife, they are co-relations/lovers in a group marriage, with Megan somewhat the stronger partner of the two.

'MacGuire's suggested casting (for the mental movie) was interesting. His critical comments also provided some entertainment, as much for what he missed as what he picked up on. But it would have been nicer if he could have gotten his facts right; that's the first step toward accurate analysis and criticism.'

((David, your address wasn't on the letter, and I can't find it elsewhere. I know you're no longer at the Hollywood box.
((I suppose this is a good place to ask all reviewers and letter writers to please make sure your name and address are on your letters and/or manuscripts. Envelopes usually are thrown away. And, to repeat yet again, our address file is arranged by zipcode, not alphabet.))

LETTER FROM RICHARD BILYEU

TANELORN ARCHIVES, LTD.
1346 SE Center St., #6
Portland, OR 97202
January, 1979

'I'm writing you to see if any of your readers might be of assistance to me. As you know, I am in the process of compiling a collection of the works of Michael Moorcock, known as the TANELORN ARCHIVES. I founded the archives in November of 1976 with the intention of creating the ultimate library of Mike's writings. The archives began with 36 books and has grown to about 2,000 fixtures (i.e. books, fan and prozines, records, manuscripts, related art, etc.) and is continuing to expand at a somewhat alarming rate. Not only are there the archives proper but I am also maintaining a stock of duplicates with the hope of being of service to Mike's readers in the future, as well as forming a source of income to support the archives. So much for the history of the archives.

'Several months ago, Chuck Garvin, of Garvin & Levin Booksellers, ordered a random sample of 1960's fanzines from England and several contained letters and articles by Moorcock. Chuck, ever the mathematician, calculated that Mike may have written for as many as two out of ten fanzines produced in the 60s in England. What I need, therefore, are lists that your readers may be able to supply me with. I need information pertaining to fanzines, both British and American, with articles and or letters written by Mike. I am also interested in articles written about Moorcock and information about foreign editions. Any help would be gratefully accepted. The hardest quests are the ones where you have no idea of what it is you're questing for. Or is it the other way around?

'I've been asked why I'm doing this kind thing, what mad obsession has driven me to this. It's not easy to put into words, really, except that something in Mike's work has struck a chord in me that no other author has ever done. In reading and studying his work, I, in some strange way, have come to understand something of myself and my fellow man. That, coupled with my experiences in life, has somehow made me a little less cynical and a lot more optimistic. It's all for the best.'

((When I get letters like this I can but sit appalled. However, if it gives meaning and direction to one's life...))

LETTER FROM GEORGE H. SCITHERS, EDITOR

ASIMOV'S SF MAGAZINES
Box 13116
Philadelphia, PA 19101

13 January 1979

'Dr. Dean R. Lamb's letter gives the impression that Scithers doesn't answer mail or return manuscripts. This isn't so; I do so answer mail, and virtually all manuscripts are returned within less than a week (except, of course, those we buy, which I return after the story has been put into a particular issue of the magazine, and those that the Post Awful eats). If one of Dr. Lambe's manuscripts was delayed by us, of course I apologize; but according to my records, his most recent two stories were each mailed back within a day of receipt.'

LETTER FROM ARTHUR TOFTE

7237 Wellauer Drive
Wauwatosa, WI 53213
414-774-0203

January, 1979

'In Issue #29 you suggested a "Robert Bloch for Pope" campaign. Forget it. I contend he'd never learn Latin well enough to come up with those puns of his. And without his puns, he'd be blocked. A pope with his puns down.'

ALIEN THOUGHTS CONT. ON P. 12

AN INTERVIEW WITH JOAN D. VINGE

Conducted By Darrell Schweitzer

SFR: Have you ever perceived science fiction as a male-dominated field?

VINGE: I think probably just about every woman who has read science fiction for any length of time has perceived it in the past as being a male-dominated field. I think it has changed radically in the 1970s. The whole idea of society being affected by the women's movement seems to have come out in an extreme way in science fiction. The acceptance of women writers has been very great. I have really been impressed, because for an awfully long time it has been regarded as a bastion of maleness. The men did all the things in the stories and the men did most of the writing too, and the women who wanted to write it very frequently had to hide behind male names. I think Ursula LeGuin broke the ice, really hitting it big as a woman writer, and that paved the way for other women writers. Now it is probably one of the most egalitarian fields as far as being a woman writer. That's very gratifying. It makes me feel like science fiction is keeping its promises to the world somehow by being in the forefront of social change.

SFR: How much of this is cause and how much effect? Is it more of a passive thing in terms of few women being interested, or active resistance to women writers? I know that going way, way back, you can find women in the science fiction magazines under female bylines. Claire Winger Harris is the earliest one I can think of.

VINGE: Well, there were always women writing under female names, but for the most part they never hit the big time the way the men did. I don't know, but I think it may be something of a fallacy to say that women didn't read science fiction in the past because I've been reading science fiction for about fifteen years, and all my female friends -- just about everyone I know -- separately have discovered science fiction and have read it. I know a lot of people whose mothers liked science fiction. Their brothers would get all of the old science fiction magazines and they would covertly read them. I think there may have been a large underground audience of women out there. Somehow they just never talked about it. I haven't been into fandom that much, so I don't know what portion of fandom has always been female. I get the impression that it wasn't a large part in the past, but the women who were in it were pretty active. I think the coming out of women in the reading of science fiction and the numbers of women who are writing it and writing it very well now, suggest that there must have been some sort of unappreciated group of women enjoying science fiction all along.

SFR: The only recorded case of outright discrimination in the field was Hugo Gernsback's claim that women couldn't write science fiction, and then discovering much to his surprise that Leslie F. Stone, from whom he had been buying, was a woman. Will a woman entering the field today find herself treated any differently than a male writer?

VINGE: I really don't think so, by just about anybody in the field. I think there are one or two -- one person in particular who shall remain nameless, but who would, I think, sooner die probably than buy stories from women. I have certain unfavorable and unhappy memories of having my stories rejected by this person. But in general, I think even people who were not exactly in the forefront of encouraging women to join the field now realize that a good story is a good story, that the readers appreciate a good story and it doesn't really matter whether a man or a woman wrote it. Sending a story to just about any editor that you could name these days with a woman's name on it can't hurt. In some cases it might even help. I understand that OMNI is looking actively for women writers just because they want to get some women's

names on the cover as well as men's names.

It's practically been a fad for a while now to publish a woman science fiction writer. There have been a lot of anthologies of stories by women and things like that. To some extent that may be reverse discrimination, which is unfortunate. But on the other hand it has let the readers see that women do write very good science fiction. I think that once the readers enjoy their writing, things will settle down and establish a normal status quo where women and men are both accepted equally as writers. I think that is beginning to happen at the present time.

SFR: It seems to me that some of this is a kind of category marketing. A feminist book fits into a category unto itself, and a science fiction book does likewise. Somebody is trying to hit both audiences.

VINGE: Well, perhaps you could say that about a certain small percentage of science fiction written by women which is very strongly feminist oriented, but I think the majority of things written by women -- like Ursula LeGuin, Vonda McIntyre, and most female SF writers including myself -- generally has a very humanistic bent rather than a strictly feminist bent. I think that most of the women who are writing science fiction are primarily interested in writing science fiction. They may want to portray women in strong roles, but a lot of the male writers who are writing nowadays, people like John Varley and Spider Robinson, are also writing about strong women. It is not strictly a thing that has to be a feminist diatribe. I think that the idea of science fiction being a narrow category unto itself is broadening out too, so that more and more people who don't normally read science fiction are beginning to find -- thanks to STAR WARS which is giving it a boost -- that science fiction is not so unapproachable. I think feminist science fiction is only a small percentage of what women science fiction writers are doing these days.

SFR: What attracted you to science fiction originally?

VINGE: I think it was the sense of wonder business. The first story that I read was Andre Norton's STORM OVER WARLOCK. When I was in junior highschool I found that at the corner grocery store and I read it, and I was so excited by it. I thought, gee, where has this been all my life? Just the idea of things taking place on another world and the absolute imagination of it, appealed to me so much. I've never really wanted in my own writing to write anything besides science fiction. I like to write about characters. I write about people a lot, and I've thought to myself from time to time, well, if characters are the most important thing, why don't I just write mainstream fiction? And I realized that actually it wasn't the characters. It was the new ideas and the unique alien backgrounds that really appealed to me. I have a background in anthropology -- a B.A. I think that the appeal of anthropology and the appeal of science fiction for me were very similar. I just liked having my mind stimulated, thinking from a different point of view than the one I'd always seen things from -- the typical Western point of view. I liked the idea that people could function in different ways and still function well. To learn about people in a different culture here on Earth or about one on a completely alien world somewhere in space is so exciting. It is wonderful, and it stimulates the imagination. I just enjoy that. I get an immense thrill out of it. It really is the ideas that make science fiction what it is, and that's what I like about it.

SFR: Do you see this appeal as being similar to that of a historical novel like SHOGUN?

VINGE: To some extent I think that is true. When you get a historical novel you get a very different world view. In SHOGUN there is of course the Japanese culture which is to the Western mind very unusual and almost like being in an alien world. To some extent I enjoy reading historical novels and anthropology for the same reasons. I think there are a lot more things that you could actually think of as science fiction because they do have this different viewpoint. We were talking earlier this evening about the movie AIRPORT and how important the technology was to that, to the airport situation. It's all the same sort of thing. It's a different way of looking at the world. In AIRPORT it's the technology that's important. In SHOGUN it's more the social sciences. I think it's the uniqueness factor of the background. Sometimes I don't care for historical fiction as much because very often it reflects reality in a very literal way. The author must attempt to portray the society as it actually was, and most of human history has not been all that great, frankly. I suppose it's the "escapist" side of science fiction which counterbalances that for me -- when you make up a society of your own, very often you can make one that's very wonderful and has all the positive values that you would like to have in a society. Not always, of course, but when you look back at history you have what has already happened, which is essentially an uphill struggle to improve the lot of humankind in general, advancing 13 steps and sliding back 12. This all comes down to the fact that I prefer science fiction over historical fiction, but I do acknowledge the fact that as far as their background goes, they share some similarities.

SFR: How far can you go depicting the positive values in science fiction without the negative ones, before you lose versimilitude? I don't see how the future is going to be anything else but an uphill struggle to improve the lot of mankind. In this sense, more of the past.

VINGE: You don't mean that Mankind is destined to repeat all its mistakes, do you?

SFR: No, we'll invent new ones.

VINGE: Well, that's probably true, and that's very frequently what science fiction deals with -- that is, man inventing new mistakes and trying to figure out what to do with those. I think the ecology movement demonstrated this -- every new thing you do has a direct effect on the old things, and other unexpected effects that nobody ever imagined before. Certainly if you always go about creating utopias in which everything is perfect you have no conflict and you have no story. You can't get away from having drama and conflict when you're writing about the future too. I don't mean to sound absolutely simplistic. It's just that you have little choice when you're working with a historical novel. If you want to accurately reflect what actually happened, you can't tinker too much.

There are some things like Georgette Heyer's stories, of course, which are essentially fantasies set in Regency England. But I had in mind those long, thick historical novels which tell the life history of Henry V or someone -- where essentially you have to deal with the society the way it was if you want to reflect it accurately. When you are creating future, you can manipulate various things. When you're playing with something which is essentially brought out of your own imagination, it's like getting to play God, in a way. You can do whatever you want in a society, and even if things are unpleasant you're always in control. History is in control when you're writing a historical novel.

That's part of the excitement of the future, that it contains unexpected things, and you are the master creator of them. When you're writing science fiction that's real-

ly wonderful, and I think that when you're reading it a lot of the excitement is in seeing what has come out of someone's mind: An entire future history, or a world in a certain novel or story that has been created essentially out of one person's imagination. It's really incredible to see the new insights an author can come up with.

SFR: I know this can't be reduced to a simple formula, but how do you go about creating a society?

VINGE: How do I go about it? Well, I tend to use my anthropological background, because it comes in handy for simply laying things out. I do ethnography for the society, an outline in which I think about things like the physical setting and what the economic base would be, what the resources are like, what sort of viable society would work in that situation, and what their economic structure would be, what sort of religion they have and so on. Then very often I will take pieces of one society which I have read about and combine them with pieces of another to create a new society which has elements of both. You know, a caste system from one society and an imperialistic twist from another. You can fit them together and create societies which have not existed on Earth but which are recognizable and understandable to the average reader. I build them from the ground up, thinking about the various factors which would enter into how an actual group of people on Earth would develop.

By reading anthropology you begin to get a feel for that sort of thing. That's one of the things that really interests me about Ursula LeGuin's work. She does have an anthropological background, because her parents were very well-known in the field. You can see that in the way she creates her mythologies and alien societies and how they interact with their environments. I think that's one of the things that gives me the most pleasure when I write, creating new societies. From there I take the sort of characters that I want to deal with in the story and I think about how the society I have created will affect those characters and that develops their personalities.

Of course, on top of that you have the basic plot, where you're starting from with them, and where you want them to go. But for me, creating the background first is probably the most important part of the story.

SFR: When you first started to write, did you first have backgrounds and start writing stories about them or did you have stories and later develop your ability to create background?

VINGE: Well, I think I was not as orderly in my preliminary work when I first started writing. I would start out with certain basic premises, but I wouldn't go into a lot of detail in my plot outline about them The more I work the more preliminary detail I go into, because I find that the more you have thought something out ahead of time, the easier it is to write. Getting from point A to point B in the plot when you actually begin to write a story, makes you discover all the steps you have to take in between, and if you haven't thought out the society ahead of time, you have to stop in the middle of the writing and do more thinking.

Planning ahead gives you a path from point A to point B. So I learned as I went along how important it is to do careful background work beforehand. It saves you time. It makes your job easier. In the process of my writing I learned just how important these things were to knowing where I was in the structure of the story. I don't have everything laid out. I never do before I start writing a story, but the more of a basic outline you have to begin with, the more steps you have thought of ahead of time, the easier those steps are to take when you're actually putting them down in prose.

SFR: Do you have an actual outline of the plot?

VINGE: Yes, I usually do. I have at least the main characters I want to write about, and the background of course, and I have brief character studies done. Usually I know the beginning and the end of a story, and depending on the length, I have various major incidents in the story developed ahead of time. I know some writers who lay out everything they do ahead of time, and my mind boggles. I can't imagine how they do it. But I do usually have an outline in classic outline form, saying what the people are doing and what they will be doing next.

I keep thinking of this novel which I have just finished writing, which I thought would be a two-hundred-page novel and has just turned out to be a six-hundred-page novel. I thought I had all the main points of that story figured out before I started writing it, but once I got into the story there was just so much more of it. It kept growing and growing, and it turned out much better for it.

Stories do take on a life of their own and characters take on a life of their own, and I'm really pleased with that. I used to worry when I'd make an outline -- at the thought of making a more detailed outline -- about whether that would curtail my creativity once I got into the story, because very often as the story begins to grow, something will suggest itself, out of the way the story has developed, that I never thought of when I was first laying it out. I was afraid that if I locked myself into an outline too carefully this spontaneity that I get when I'm writing would be spoiled. But I find that even if I have a detailed outline for something, the surprises are still there and the spontaneity is still there, the things which make it fun to write.

The outline is like having a trellis and the story becomes vines, which wrap themselves around the trellis. It's useful to have that format. Then you have flexibility

within it to make it richer and broader than you expected originally. So an outline is a very useful thing. I recommend it highly, and I think that people who worry about it ruining their spontaneity don't need to, because it won't.

SFR: Have you ever discovered half way through that you are nowhere near the outline and going off 180 degrees?

VINGE: Thank God, I don't think that's ever happened to me. But frequently when you have a world envisioned, when you actually have to put it down in cold hard prose, you find it doesn't look at all like you thought it did when you were first thinking about it. It's like first looking at a picture and then looking at it under a magnifying glass. The details you see change your total view of the background. But usually a story remains for me pretty true to what it was when I started it.

I think my story "The Crystal Ship" was one that didn't. It turned out to be a much longer story

than I thought it would be, and the character of the alien in that story really took over. He was a very strong character and he dominated the story a lot more than I thought he would, and so that story became a longer and more complex thing than I thought it would originally. And that one was the one I had the most trouble writing as a result, because it got away from me and went in some strange directions. But usually when I write I find that the vines stick to the trellis. The basic premise and outline I had develop into a story that works out pretty much the way I thought it would. Usually I'm satisfied with what I've done when I've finished it.

SFR: Isn't even a runaway a kind of learning experience, because by the time you're done with it you have encompassed everything it has attempted to run away with.

VINGE: Yes, I definitely think that is true. as long as a story doesn't refuse to finish itself, I think it is always a learning experience. Even if you never sell it, sometimes it's a learning experience because by sending it out you'll find out where you went wrong with it, and hopefully, not repeat that mistake in the future. It is a surprise to have a story turn out differently than you thought. Yet this doesn't necessarily mean it isn't a good story or that it shouldn't have been written. You don't begrudge it for having taken on a life of its own. It's exciting in a way. It makes your writing exciting because you never know if things are going to work out the way you think they will. It's like reading someone else's story. Part of the pleasure of reading someone else's story is finding out what new twist is lying around the bend; by figuring out how your own story twisted in a way you didn't expect, you can learn things about how your own mind works, and the way your writing works on a technical level too.

SFR: What is this long novel you mentioned which grew to 600 pages?

VINGE: It's a novel called THE SNOW QUEEN, which Dell is in the process of buying. It's based in part on Hans Christian Andersen's folk-tale, "The Snow Queen". There was a nifty animated movie made of that once which captured my fancy, and I thought it would be fun to take that as just the bare bones and build a science fiction story around it. For some reason that really appealled to me. I have also been doing a lot of reading in mythology, which is another area of anthropology I am interested in, and I've read Robert Graves' THE WHITE GODDESS, a fascinating book which deals to a great extent with the "vegetation cult" religion and the mother goddess and how they influenced the various Celtic, Near Eastern and Greek mythologies. The mythological elements seemed to fit in very well with THE SNOW QUEEN because most folk tales and fairy tales are degenerate mythology. When you begin reading at all deeply into European mythology you find that the parallels are very striking. I began working with these within the science fiction framework -- THE SNOW QUEEN actually is a science fiction story, but it has mythological elements and it can be read hopefully, on various levels by people, depending on what they want to get out of it.

But the science fiction elements are something quite apart from the mythology, and it's ... it's so huge I can't go into a complete rundown of the plot or we'd be here all evening. I feel that it's far and away the best thing I've done, and part of that is the fact that it did grow so long. I knew that I wanted to tell a very large story. Part of it centers around a certain city which is a starport on a backward world. The city is called Carbuncle, because it is "either a jewel or a fester depending on your point of view", and in the city of Carbuncle different cultures from a small galactic empire come together and intermingle. Near this city's world there is a black hole which is used for transportation from world to world in the empire. People come here to this planet from other worlds and go to them, and I wanted to deal with the cultures of the different worlds and how they interact.

I knew I would need a lot of characters in order to do justice to the various cultures in the story. I didn't have all my characters when I started writing it. I had the main characters and I figured I'd meet the other characters as I went along in the story, and I did. I kept getting more and more characters I was interested in, and as a result of getting more characters whose stories I wanted to tell, I wound up with a six-hundred-page book. I was very pleased, ultimately, because, although I felt it was out of control for a while, and I'd begun to wonder if I'd ever get all these stories pulled together into a cohesive end (or if I was going to do a year's work and then find out I had to throw the whole thing away), everything finally came together for me.

SFR: Have you ever wanted to do a straight mythological fantasy?

VINGE: Well, I would like to, actually. I think I'm waiting for the right inspiration, the right story. I do enjoy fantasy a great deal. As a matter of fact, I'm working on a fantasy short story right now which I hope to expand into a novel. The short story is essentially going to be the very beginning of the novel. The particular novel is not going to be a masterwork. I hope it will be an enjoyable light adventure novel in a fantasy setting.

It involves a were-unicorn among other things -- a man who turns into a unicorn instead of into a wolf. I would like sometime to do maybe a trilogy bringing in a lot of the mythology that I've read. Sometime when I get the right inspiration for it, I'll do something like that. I don't really have any desire to write fiction outside of the science fiction and fantasy area, but I definitely have an interest in fantasy as well as in science fiction.

SFR: What fantasy interests you?

VINGE: Well, of course, I enjoy Tolkein very much. I like just about everything, I guess with the exception of the "Wombats of Gor" genre...Let me think...It's like someone asking if you've heard any good jokes lately. Every one immediately flies out of your mind. RED MOON AND BLACK MOUNTAIN by Joy Chant, and I like Patricia McKillip's work very much too. I think some of the most artistically beautiful writing that has been done recently has been done in the fantasy field.

There are a lot of new people coming into the field. Elizabeth Lynn is doing a fantasy trilogy and Dianne Duane, and I'm really looking forward to reading something by both of them. I've read some of Elizabeth Lynn's science fiction and I've enjoyed it, and I think her fantasy ought to be good to.

SFR: This brings us back to where we started. Why is it that the fantasy field, as opposed to the science fiction field, seems to be dominated by women? Most of the major writers are women.

VINGE: I don't know. I know that at one time on some panel we were talking about that. I was saying before that a lot of women seem to like all the different genres in the science fiction field, and like to write about them.

I think it might be that no one ever denied that women had imagination. It's just the technical association: Men were supposed to write the technical stuff. The cultural river guided women more to the fantasy sort of story, which wasn't loaded down with technological background, but still contained the same elements of imagination, the basic things which still appeal to the science fiction reader.

There's no question in my mind

that a lot of women have a great deal of talent at writing just as a lot of men do, and it may be cultural inclination, just as in the past girls were encouraged not to go into mathematics, even though in the lower grades they do just as well as boys. It's the sort of thing: "Oh, girls don't need math". It might be, "Oh, girls don't need to write science fiction". They end up writing fantasy instead. I don't know if fantasy was thought of as less hard-nosed and more women were inclined to write it. I don't know if that actually had any bearing on it or not. I could see something like that influencing it.

I can see more crossover of men writing in both fields in the future too. Of course, a lot of men already do. Poul Anderson does and Larry Niven does and Gordon Dickson has written fantasy.

SFR: The curious thing is that this female dominance of the fantasy field is a contemporary phenomenon. In the past, it was almost exclusively male territory. There is no woman writer with the stature of, say, Tolkein, Peake or Lord Dunsany. The Ballantine fantasy series came up with Hope Mirrilees and Evangeline Walton, both of whom were hopelessly out of print and forgotten. Do you think there's been some sudden change in the past 15 years?

VINGE: I don't know. I think it's perhaps just the change in society that women are getting more involved in careers, though the technology involved in most science fiction and the social sciences, are actually relatively recent "contemporary" phenomena themselves. Without those things it's difficult to write anything but fantasy, and of course, there have always been women among the foremost writers in the mystery field.

You know, there are very few men who measure up to Tolkein. It's hard to point your finger at one classic in the science fiction field, but it's very easy to point to Tolkein in the fantasy field. There's nothing in the world anyone has ever done which everyone agrees is the greatest thing, but with Tolkein it's probably as close to unanimous as anything every gets. Tolkein is head and shoulders above the rest, if only by having gotten there first in creating such an epic fantasy.

Most of the books in the Ballantine fantasy series, including those by men, were also things which had been long out of print. A lot of those books were quite obscure, really, and some of them with good reason. I think that in general women did not have the freedom even that they did 15 years ago, to go out and do what they wanted to in society at the very beginning of the 20th Century, when a lot of that fantasy was written.

SFR: Thank you, Joan Vinge.

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ALIEN THOUGHTS CONT. FROM P. 7

1-20-79 There is a new development in intensive, technological vegetable farming that can have great impact on the future in many ways.

General Electric and General Mills have entered the 'indoor farm' industry. Not greenhouse farming, but warehouse building farming---windowless farming. They are turning to completely controlled environments---lights, heat, nutrients---all scientifically controlled and timed. They are getting tremendous yields per square foot of "garden", and this total control allows the companies to set up shop anywhere, especially close to the markets for the crops, and the crops are available year around. They produce vegetables up to twice as fast as field farms and greenhouses. The crops cost more raised by this intensive quasi-hydroponic, controlled environment system, but money is saved in transportation costs and higher prices are being charged for guaranteed freshness.

So how does this impinge on science fiction?

The techniques and technology developed by these large corporations can unquestionably be used in space. totally controlled environment farms are required for space colonies and long-voyage spaceships.

And the libertarian/self-sufficiency-living part of my character is attracted to the idea of using an upstairs room...a large closet...as a controlled environment farm to produce food year around to suplement that grown in the outside gardens.

The big questions are costs---electricity, food solutions for the plants, equipment...and time required to service the plants and mechanicals.

I imagine that single-house sized operations would be too costly at the moment. But I also suspect there are ways to cut costs and perhaps compromise on the 'total' control of environment required. It's worth thinking about and certainly a good science fiction writer would have to incorporate this technology into his futures.

The Academy of Science Fiction Fantasy and Horror Films (334 West 54th St., Los Angeles, CA 90037) has sent a release giving the nominees for the 6th annual Academy awards.

The 1300 member organization will vote, and the winners will be announced during the SCIENCE FICTION FILM AWARDS which will be taped February 24th, 1979 and syndicated on TV throughout the country.

The 1978 awards nominees are:

BEST SCIENCE FICTION FILM:
- THE BOYS FROM BRAZIL
- THE CAT FROM OUTER SPACE
- CAPRICORN ONE
- INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS
- SUPERMAN

BEST FANTASY FILM:
- HEAVEN CAN WAIT
- THE LORD OF THE RINGS
- LE MERVEILLEUSE VISITE
- WATERSHIP DOWN
- THE WIZ

BEST HORROR FILM:
- HALLOWEEN
- MAGIC
- THE MEDUSA TOUCH
- PIRANHA
- THE WICKER MAN

BEST ACTOR:
- WARREN BEATTY, Heaven Can Wait
- CHRISTOPHER LEE, The Wicker Man

LAURENCE OLIVIER, The Boys From Brazil
CHRISTOPHER REEVE, Superman
DONALD SUTHERLAND, Invasion of the Body Snatchers

BEST ACTRESS:
BROOKE ADAMS, Invasion of the Body Snatchers
GENEVIEVE BUJOLD, Coma
MARGOT KIDDER, Superman
ANN-MARGARET, Magic
DIANA ROSS, The Wiz

BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR:
MICHAEL ANSARA, The Manitou
MICHAEL JACKSON, The Wiz
JAMES MASON, Heaven Can Wait
BURGESS MEREDITH, Magic
LEONARD NIMOY, Invasion of the Body Snatchers

BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS:
DYAN CANNON, Heaven Can Wait
UTA HAGEN, The Boys From Brazil
MABLE KING, The Wiz
VALERIE PERRINE, Superman
BRENDA VACCARO, Capricorn One

BEST DIRECTOR:
FRANKLIN J. SCHAFFNER, The Boys From Brazil
WARREN BEATTY and BUCK HENRY, Heaven Can Wait
PHILIP KAUFMAN, Invasion of the Body Snatchers
RICHARD DONNER, Superman
ROBIN HARDY, The Wicker Man

Awards will also be given for: BEST WRITING, BEST MUSIC, BEST SPECIAL EFFECTS, BEST COSTUMES, BEST MAKE UP.

The Academy will also present non-televised awards for: BEST PRODUCTION DESIGN, BEST EDITING, BEST SOUND, BEST EXECUTIVE ACHIEVEMENT, BEST CINEMATOGRAPHY, BEST PUBLICIST, BEST FILM CRITICISM, and a LIFE ACHIEVEMENT CAREER AWARD.

LETTER FROM ROBERT BLOCH

2111 Sunset Crest Dr.
Los Angeles, CA 90046

'Well, you've certainly started the new year right! I'm fascinated by the plethora of material reviewed ---but share the view that this is probably the last literate generation. The technologists will, of course, continue to "read" mathematical formulas and computer printouts, but visual orientation is rapidly moving in other directions. I'm just grateful to be around during the Decline of the West. By the way, thanks for suggesting me for Pope--- but my wife won't let me!

'Pax vobiscum, to say nothing of Kyrie Ellison.'

((I dunno.....somebody is buying all those books and magazines. I think it's too soon to bury the written/printed word.

((I wasn't sure if you wrote 'Pax' or 'Pox' in your inimitable green script, Bob. Err...does that latin mean "May a vile disease fly up Harlan Ellison's nose"?))

LETTER FROM JONATHAN BACON

7613 Flint, #A
Shawnee, KS 66214

'I haven't read all of SFR #29 but via skimming I don't see any mention of the Balrog Awards. I hope maybe you can mention them in your March 1979 issue. I've enclosed copies of the info sent earlier. By March it'll be too late to nominate, but SFR readers could write to me for a ballot and vote. Deadline for voting is March 23, 1979. We're really anxious to have a good turn-out ballot-wise. Individuals wishing ballots should write me at: Student Activities Office, Johnson County Community College, Overland Park, KS 66210.

'On another matter, my new address for FANTASY CROSSROADS and personal correspondence is *((at top of this letter))*. FANTASY CROSSROADS #15 is due back from the printer on January 22, 1979. Many thanks for the nice comments you've offered on past issues. I continue to get a few new subscribers everytime you blurb the mag. I hope you enjoy #15; it's got (what I hope you'll consider an interesting interview with Stephen R. Donaldson, a shot of the Balrog Award, a front & bacover by Fabian, plus a couple more chapters of the round robin novel by Lumley & Long.'

((The Balrog Award(it should be noted) is a fantasy fiction award. I ignored the Balrog Award flyer because, frankly, I thought it a small-time thing, thought the name Balrog ugly-sounding and dumb, and feel that the field does not need another fantasy award. The World Fantasy Awards seem adequate to honor the field.

((Nevertheless, for those interested in voting, the opportunity above is there.

((A copy of FANTASY CROSSROADS, by the way, costs $3.00.))

LETTER FROM SAM MOSKOWITZ

361 Roseville Ave.
Newark, NJ 07107
Jan. 16, 1979

'In re your references to a possible tapering off of the science fiction boom. Having watched a series of booms and declines extending back 45 years, this present boom leaves me without any pat answers. There is a groundwell of interest in science fiction. In part it has grown out of the colleges.

'The three to five hundred college level courses in the United States alone and the possible 1,000 courses at the high school level are literally educating new generations of youths to read science fiction. They don't have to accidentally find the stuff somewheres.

'Also, one to three hundred science fiction and fantasy paperbacks on display tends to give it incredible availability. The science fiction movies can't help but create more adherents. The hardcover book field is in pretty good shape, too.

'Perhaps the strangest phenomena are the one hundred or so books about science fiction that have come out and the new ones appearing in a steady stream. Thirty years ago, if anyone had told me that a book about science fiction could be a drag, I would have thought him or her crazy. I not only find them hard to read, I find precious little I didn't know in them. How someone can turn out a 70,000-word book on science fiction without a single new fact seems to me a very difficult thing, but it is managed and very frequently.'

Jack Dann, who edited WANDERING STARS (Harper & Row, 1974; SFBC, 1974; Pocket Books, 1975), is considering doing another WANDERING STARS anthology, as there were stories he would have liked to have used in the first book but could not for reasons of space.

WANDERING STARS II has not yet been submitted to a publisher and should not yet be considered a market. Dann is interested in short stories and novelettes, either fantasy or science fiction, with Jewish themes. Send him a Xerox or just a note where the story can be found.

The new WANDERING STARS will contain original material, but will most likely be invitational. However, authors who have ideas for stories and would like to contribute should contact Dann. Do not send original manuscripts!

This is a chance for those of you who missed the first WANDERING STARS to get into the second. With G-d's help, there won't be a third.

(A note: The original WANDERING STARS is still making royalties, albeit small ones for its authors. And the royalties paid were more than the original advances on the stories.)

Contact Jack Dann at:

Box 555
Johnson City, NY 13790

Or telephone him after 3:00 pm at 607-797-3386 or 607-797-1000.

ALIEN THOUGHTS CONT. ON P. 17

THE VIVISECTOR

A Column By Darrell Schweitzer

But my pen name *is* my real name.

THE GREAT FETISH
By L. Sprague de Camp
Doubleday, 1978, 177 pp., $7.95

In THE SFWA HANDBOOK, Poul Anderson gives this advice to writers: "A planet is a world, likely to be as diversified both physically and socially as Earth".

I wish more writers would pay attention to that. I am tired of seeing stories which suffer from the State of Delaware Syndrome, i.e. a whole planet no more varied culturally, politically, geographically, etc., than Delaware.

One of the reasons that THE GREAT FETISH is one of the most enjoyable science fiction novels to come along in a while is that de Camp knows how to create a world. Each time his characters enter a new country, the difference is obvious from the first people they meet, just as someone from Delaware would notice it at once if suddenly plunked down in Baghdad. Of course, de Camp has travelled widely, and he knows how these things work, and this is why his places have texture.

His characterization is not quite as good. The two familiar figures, the muscular adventurer who wants to be a scholar, and the puny scholar who wants to be an adventurer, are with us again. Both behave plausibly, exactly as more detailed characters would, but we never get to know them very well. I'm not sure if this is because they are excellent two-dimensional impersonations of three-dimensional human beings, or simply because ordinary characters are much harder to write. De Camp's characters are usually straightforward, healthy types, and you will notice that the most memorable folks in literature tend to be out-and-out nuts, like Captain Ahab or Macbeth.

Anyway, it seems like the normal, healthy and sane thing to do for our hero to seek to slay the man who has run off with his wife, since his culture expects this of him. (Again, de Camp escapes the ordinary. How many formula novels start out with the hero motivated that way?) In a neighboring country, where homicide is (inexplicably to the protagonist) illegal, he has to put aside his plans, but they get accidentally carried out anyway, and complications result. Much of the subsequent story deals with the attempts of the hero and a friend to reach a philosophers' convention in a balloon the latter has invented. More difficulties arise from a church vs. state heresy battle. It seems that the world of the novel is a lost Earth colony, but with the slower-than-light mission having gone awry, there hasn't been any contact for centuries. Technology is on a pre-industrial level, and the Earth is thought to be a spiritual afterworld.

All of this is presented very smoothly with a great deal of wit and a good eye for detail. There is a genuine substance in it, in the satire, and particularly in the discussion of the value of scientific truth vs. its social consequences. The "fetish" of the title, by the way, is of religious/anthropological variety. Leather and chains types can ge re-read DHALGREN.

THE FACE IN THE FROST
By John Bellairs
Ace, 1978, 174 pp., $1.75

THE FACE IN THE FROST is apparently one of those curious hybrids of the publishing world, the hardcover juvenile/paperback adult book. Until very recently, it seems, American publishers have not really grasped the concept of fantasy for grown-ups. Lin Carter had to carefully explain what he meant by "Adult Fantasy" in the first book of his Ballantine series. (The 1969 edition of Pratt's THE BLUE STAR.) Probably it was the Carter series, along with the continued success of Tolkein that made the difference. Nowadays most paperback publishers have caught on, but hardcover houses, perhaps inherently more conservative, have not. As a result Patricia McKillip's work is still marketed as juvenile in hardcover, even though it's an adult, general circulation paperback. This is also true of the LeGuin EARTHSEA trilogy, assorted Alan Garner titles and quite a bit else. What this means is that the distinction between "juvenile" literature and "adult" is frequently an arbitrary fluke of category publishing, and that the paperback edition is often crucial in gaining recognition for a book beyond a few knowledgeable readers and a lot of children's librarians.

Unfortunately, Bellairs' impressive debut in the fantasy field went virtually unnoticed for this very reason: There was no quick paperback in the "adult" category. Now, ten years after the first publication, there is, and I think he is about to become famous, especially if he follows up and writes something else. But at the same time, I hope he doesn't let success go to his head, and conclude that he knows everything there is to know about writing, because he doesn't. THE FACE IN THE FROST shows a lot of first-novel flaws which have to be overcome, but also a sometimes astonishing array of strengths with which to overcome them.

The author's greatest gift is truly inventive imagery, coupled with a spare, straightforward, but very visual style. He is at his best describing supernatural phenomena, and he knows it, which causes him to try to cover up a sometimes flimsy storyline with incident after incident. The magician, Prospero, ("not the one you are thinking of") and his friend, Roger Bacon, (the Bacon of myth who tried to ring England with a wall of brass, as told in Greene's FRIAR BACON & FRIAR BUNGAY, not the historical inventor of the scientific method) spend most of their time traveling around in search of clues to the identity and intentions of an evil sorcerer. In the course of this they encounter a series of supernatural dangers and boobytraps with such regularity that after a while the reader is

sure that this next village or castle or forest will contain one, and always he's right. Prospero, however, doesn't seem to have figured that out, nor does he wonder why things happen so conveniently. He wins out in the end by means of a spell he's always known, but never been able to use. He just happens to meet someone who has had a key in the family for centuries which opens a cabinet containing a note telling him to use the spell. When things look hopeless he enters into another world and meets a new character who proves very helpful.

Halfway through the book, when Prospero and Bacon have reached the library in which they look up what they want to know about the evil wizard, then keep on traveling, we wonder where they are going and why. Only then does Prospero remember that he and the villain studied together and share power over a magical "paperweight" they built together.

But even if he is piling scene upon scene for their own sake, Bellairs is one of the few writers who really knows how to handle magic in fiction. Few things are more tedious than standard sword-and-sorcery conjuring, a few demons and the like. Bellairs' magic is more pervasive, more part of the universe of the novel:

'One man told how frost formed on the windows at night, though it was only the middle of September... people saw seasick wavy lines, disturbing maps that melted into each other and always seemed on the verge of some recognizable but fearful shape. At dawn the frost melted, always in the same way: At first two black eyeholes formed, and then a long steam-lipped mouth that spread and ate up the wandering white picture. In some towns people talked of clouds that formed long opening mouths... Doors opened at night inside some houses and shadows that could not be cast by firelight fell across beds and floors. People who lived near forests and groves dreamed that the trees were calling to their children; in the daytime, pools of shadow that floated trembling around the trees seemed darker than they should have been... Voices rose from empty wells, and men locked their doors at dusk.' (pp. 123-4)

In one of the most vivid passages, Prospero comes to an inn in a town which doesn't seem to be quite all there. Of course, it is a magical facade set up to entrap him. Slowly the unreality of the place shows through. Mirrors don't reflect anything. All the other rooms in the inn are empty and bare. When he finally confronts the landlady:

'And still the woman stood silent, staring down with dead eyes... He walked to where the slumping figure stood. Grasping her shoulders, he shook her violently... He looked up at the woman again and stepped back with a gasp. His hand went to his face and his staff fell to the floor. The woman's eyes were gone. In her slowly rising head were two black holes. Prospero saw in his mind a doll that had terrified him as a child. The eyes had rattled in the china skull. Now the woman's voice, mechanical and heavy: "Why don't you sleep? Go to sleep." Her mouth opened wide, impossibly wide, and the whole face stretched and writhed and yawned in the faint light.' (pp. 94)

A sure sign of Bellairs' enormous potential is his ability to shift from such scenes of sheer horor to wacky humor and back again without one ever ruining the other. The description of Prospero's gadget-cluttered house is reminiscent of the very best of T.H. White's anachronistic humor. There are even a couple of good Lovecraftian jokes. Prospero collection of arcane tomes includes such titles as NAMELESS HORRORS AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT THEM and, "of course, the dreaded KRANKENHAMMER of Stefan Schimpf, the mad cobbler of Mainz." When a few celestial bodies go astray in a miniature universe in a tower, the creator-hobbyist remarks, "I think we must blame that terrible black planet Yuggoth, which rolls aimlessly in the stupefying darkness". (p. 50) And yet within a few pages of these, Bellairs produces one of the best pictures of an innocent man corrupted and overpowered by evil lore that the field has seen since "The Haunter of the Dark" and THE CASE OF CHARLES DEXTER WARD.

All Bellairs has to do is learn how to plot more carefully. He has all the other gifts required to make him an absolutely first-rate fantasist.

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CLASSIC SCIENCE FICTION: THE FIRST GOLDEN AGE

Editor, Terry Carr
Harper & Row, 1978, 445 pp., $14.95

The contents of this book should be familiar to most of you, and they speak for themselves: "The Smallest God" by Lester del Rey, "Into the Darkness" by Ross Rocklynne, "Vault of the Beast" by A.E. van Vogt, "The Mechanical Mice" by Eric Frank Russell, "And he Built a Crooked House" and "By his Bootstraps" by Robert Heinlein, "Microcosmic God" by Theodore Sturgeon, "Nightfall" and "Victory Unintentional" by Isaac Asimov, "Child of the Green Light" by Leigh Brackett, "The Twonky" by Henry Kuttner, and "Storm Warning" by Donald A. Wollheim. However, this one is distinguished from the usual compilation of familiar stories by Carr's extensive and well researched introductions, which set each item in the context of its time and the author's career. The result is a very lively history of science fiction in the 1940s, as good as any I've seen. Highly recommended as a textbook, a gift to neophyte readers and for libraries.

●

FOUNDATION #1-8
March 1972 to March 1975
Editor, Peter Nichols et.al.
Gregg Press, 1978, $35.00
Facsimilie of issues, paginated separately, plus introduction & text.

Gregg Press has done us another great favor by preserving the first eight issues of The Science Fiction Foundation's journal in a long-lasting hardcover. To my mind FOUNDATION has been consistently the best academic/scholarly SF magazine. The writing is far superior to that in SF STUDIES and EXTRAPOLATION. Happily the British, who supposedly have a reputation for stuffiness, put out a magazine which is much less pedantic and muddled than its North American counterparts. I think one reason for this is that a larger percentage of the contributors are fiction writers, not professors. As somebody points out herein, the talents of storytelling and criticism don't necessarily spring from different sources; in the past many of the great critics were also fiction writers, and it's nice to see such traditions being upheld in science fiction. I also find refreshing the statement by Kathryn Buckley:

'Beware of the critic who says, "Ah, but you see, it's all symbolic" leaving the poor reader feeling that he must be too obtuse to understand the thing. If neither critic nor reader can make some sort of sense out of the symbolism then the reader is entitled to assume it may well be the writer who is at fault.' (Issue #1, pp. 17-18)

Which may give you some idea of the tone and quality of FOUNDATION. The criticism tends to be direct, concise and substantial. Of course, not all the contents are critical. There is a small amount of fiction and even a story or two, plus an excellent series of articles by various writers on how they came to

write SF. Some of the material is available elsewhere; Samuel Delany's "Shadows" is in THE JEWEL-HINGED JAW and the Silverberg and Aldiss pieces are in HELL'S CARTOGRAPHERS, but most is not. It would be hard in the space available even to list all the highlights. There's a series of articles on precursors of SF by Peter Nichols, an analysis of social attitudes in 1950's SF by Robert Chapman which, curiously and provocatively enough, suggests that all the bad movies of the period had more in common with literary SF than we'd care to admit. Contributors include John Brunner, Ursula LeGuin, Poul Anderson, Ian Watson, James Tiptree, Larry Niven, Douglas Barbour, J.J. Pierce, Bob Shaw, Mark Adlard and other notables. There are a lot of book reviews, some of which, like those in Knight's IN SEARCH OF WONDER, remain of interest years afterwards because of the principles they set down and illuminate.

I imagine $35.00 is too high a price for many individuals, but the book is a must for the serious collector and for any university library with any pretense of a serious SF collection.

●

THE FANTASY WORLDS OF PETER BEAGLE
Viking Press, 1978, 430 pp. $14.95

This omnibus contains all the published fantasy of Peter Beagle, his only other work being a travel book, I SEE MY OUTFIT, plus some screenplays, notably that for THE LORD OF THE RINGS. Of course, it's best that any artist take his time to produce his very finest work rather than a flurry of hurried and second rate stuff, but I wish Mr. Beagle would devote more time to writing. He has been working on another novel, by his own account, "for what seems like half my life".

His complete works consist of two novels, THE LAST UNICORN and A FINE AND PRIVATE PLACE, a short story, "Come, Lady Death", and a novelet, "Lila the Werewolf". All are, in their own separate ways, excellent. A FINE AND PRIVATE PLACE I reviewed here a couple issues ago. Maybe it's too long, and a little static, but it is immaculately written, witty, filled with charmingly bizarre characters, and at times genuinely moving. You may put it down for a while, but you'll eventually come back, remembering everything vividly. THE LAST UNICORN is a Tolkeinesque fantasy which, like all first-rate Tolkeinesque fantasies, doesn't resemble Tolkein much at all. Beagle is on his own, quite unlike, say, Terry Brooks, but he has written a story of imaginary lands, magic, wizards, mythical creatures, etc. This one is about the last unicorn in the world trying to find out what happened to all the others, and it ranges all the way from whimsey to terror and back again. It's a much more active book than A FINE AND PRIVATE PLACE, and I think it demonstrates a better command of the novel form.

"Lila, the Werewolf" is about an ordinary girl in the present day who has one bad habit. The linkage between lycanthropy and sex is one of the more interesting variants of the subject I've seen. Beagle's protagonist finds the werewolf downright attractive at times, in a manner which probably could not have been printed in most places not long ago. Lastly, "Come, Lady Death" is about a bored socialite of the 18th Century London who invites Death to her ball just to make things interesting, and ends up taking on the job herself. Again Beagle manages to create genuinely living characters and avoid all the cliches that usually turn up in such stories. No Grim Reaper with a scythe this time.

The edition is handsomely illustrated by Darrell Sweet, printed on good paper, and bound in heavy, cloth covered boards, but I wish they'd used sewn signatures rather than just glue to hold the pages in. Allegedly if you use the right kind of glue it'll last forever (I remain unconvinced: my copy started to come undone a bit & I had to add a drop of my own glue), but in any case it would be nice if a book which is going to be lovingly reread several times, and slowly, could be laid flat, which this can't. Viking Press used to do it right. As recently as KINGDOMS OF ELFIN they did.

●

THE TOWER OF THE ELEPHANT
By Robert E. Howard
Grosset & Dunlap, 94 pp. $6.95

The second of G&D's facsimile reprints of Donald Grant's Conan series. A very handsome package, for those inclined to pay seven bucks for a paperback of material available elsewhere. Grant's Conans have ranged from superbly illustrated (Barr) to disasterously bad (Boas). This one is somewhere in the middle, more toward the upper end of the scale. Several of Richard Robertson's 9 color paintings are very good indeed, impressionistic, and quite a departure from the majority of the bulge-and-bicep school. As for the two stories in this volume, "The Tower of the Elephant", about Conan's adolescence, is one of the best things Howard ever wrote. "The God in the Bowl" is just so-so, a talky Hyborian whodunit with a rather contrived ending.

●

THE WAY THE FUTURE WAS
By Frederik Pohl
Del Rey, 1978, 312 pp., $8.95

This is yet another book which could not have been published by a bigtime publisher until very recently, simply because there was not enough interest in books about science fiction. Or about science fiction writers. Or by science fiction writers, about themselves. I think we have the academic interest to thank for this -- something good has come of it, see? THE WAY THE FUTURE WAS is just what the doctor ordered for libraries with huge SF collections, for historians of the field, as a primary source for the Ph.D mill.

And for just plain readers. It's a very enjoyable, immensely readable book, which is the highest compliment I can give it. Interesting. Probably important. In a lot of ways, illuminating.

Briefly, it is the story of Fred Pohl's life, from earliest childhood up through the 1970s, and there are lots of fascinating nuggets buried in it. Ignore the silly jacket blurb about "the bizarre world of the pulp magazines" and (ghodhelpus!) "the strange mating rites of the SF community" (which conjures up images of South Sea savages jumping off towers with vines around various parts... all noted by our anthropologist in ith helmet) and you'll find much that's intriguing: First hand material on how some of Pohl's famous works came to be written (or not destroyed, like the novel he burned, page by page while rereading it to remind himself just how bad it was; large helpings of personal anecdotes about many famous names in science fiction; for those who weren't there (and perhaps those who were), a good, vivid account of what it was like to grow up in New York during the Depression and how many things we take for granted just were not seen in the same way (e.g. 1930s Communism; and answers to lots of questions. Why didn't Larry Niven, the leading "hard science" writer of the late 1960s, ever appear in John Campbell's ANALOG? Answer: Pohl had first grabs at everything, and when he finally suggested that Larry submit something to Campbell, it (A GIFT FROM EARTH) was rejected, which goes a long way in showing how JWC managed to abdicate his position as leader of the field. ((Actually, the footnote on p. 241, which brags of

9 stories in THE HUGO WINNERS from Pohl magazines, 2 from all other sources, is a bit misleading. A HISTORY OF THE HUGO, NEBULA, etc. (the DeVore book) reveals for the years in question, 1960-69, (years of publication, not when the awards were actually handed out), the score was: ANALOG - 1, F&SF - 2, DANGEROUS VISIONS - 2, NEW WORLDS/YEAR'S BEST SF - 1, IF/GALAXY - 8. No ANALOG story won between Poul Anderson's "The Longest Voyage", Dec. 1960, and George Martin's "A Song for Lya", June 1974, which does make the point, that Pohl had the competition trounced, despite a lower budget.))

I, for one, find the literary wrangling fascinating. There's the incredible story of how Pohl as an agent, was selling more material to many editors than all other sources combined, but still managed to go broke. And how he single-handedly forced the top rates up a third in 1950. I wish he could force today's medium-to-low rates up... One thing I noted was that while, as an editor's assistant, I can make more in an afternoon than he got in a week for being editor in chief of two magazines; I've sold a lot of stories at 1940 prices. And the dealings of Don Wollheim and friends with Hugo Gernsback are very reminiscent of the contemporary GALAXY.

I could go on like this, but no, let him do it.* Sometimes THE WAY THE FUTURE WAS is very funny. When describing tragedy, it is moving. It is never dull. Highly recommended.

*An eyebrow-raiser in the last chapter or so is the statement that The Amazing Randi taught Pohl how to do Uri Geller's key-bending trick. Gee, if only he'd outlined the method in some detail right there on the page, so there'd be thousands and thousands who could do it...

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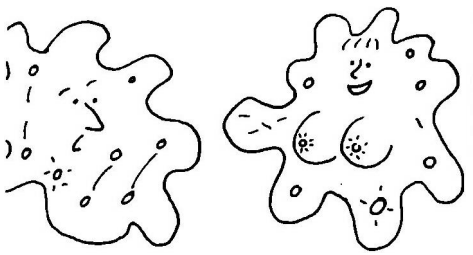


What's the matter, *E. Coli* baby? Ain't you never seen a padded cell before?

ALIEN THOUGHTS CONT. FROM P. 13

1-25-79 I was contacted the other night by a representative of the Portland s-f organization whose name I have forgotten--never having attended a meeting [mostly because of inertia and ennui]--and the club is thinking seriously of putting on a small convention this coming November.

Would I be willing to be Fan Guest of Honor?

At first I said yes/no, then yes provided it was understood I would not make a speech or appear on any panels. I'm perfectly willing to wander around with a large name tag and a foolish grin and meet people, but that's about it.

So it was agreed that I would be a "Non-participating" GOH.

Now we'll see how the group makes out in its convention plans and execution. This will be, I understand, their first attempt.

Metagaming has issued a new game: STICKS & STONES ($2.95), which is their MicroGame #11.

It is stone age warfare---10,000 B.C.... battles between tribes.

I'm not into these board games and would appreciate anyone out there who is sending a review of these new issues by Metagaming and others. This is an aspect of science fiction and fantasy that should be covered.

The address of Metagaming is Box 15346, Austin, TX 78761.

LETTER FROM DARRELL SCHWEITZER
113 Deepdale Road
Strafford, PA 19087
January 23, 1979

'I find the Michael Moorcock interview and letter of much interest. Covell's interview came off a lot better than mine (in ALGOL), possibly because Moorcock expresses himself better on paper than into a tape recorder. My one attempt at a through-the-mail interview didn't work very well, so I've always done them in person.

'Anyway, Moorcock might be glad to know that I've never suspected him of being out to get me, for all he's disagreed with me time after time in your pages. I have too much respect for him for that. I admire his integrity, and his refusal to compromise his fiction, even if at the same time I don't know how he reconciles this with having dashed off the Hawkmoon books in three days. I'm glad to hear that he's taking far more time and care with his newer stuff. He's always struck me as being a latter day Robert E. Howard, a superior writer whose work suffers from repetition and haste. His sword & sorcery novels are all rewrites of each other. Of course, after that many times through the typewriter, the routine becomes polished, which is why I always advise people to read the more recent specimens, like the second Corum trilogy. GLORIANA does look interesting. I went through the trouble of sending away for the Allison & Busby edition, which I probably would have reviewed if somebody else hadn't gotten there first.

'But sometimes I think Moorcock is barking up the wrong tree on the matter of artistic integrity. I remain unconvinced that the writer has to be anything more than true to what he has written. Thus any magazine or anthology which will publish the story without making unauthorized changes in it is okay. (As for editing, sometimes the editor can make very helpful suggestions about lapses in logic, a sentence that doesn't make sense, inconsistencies, etc. No writer is perfect, and often another viewpoint catches the sort of thing which becomes embarrassing in print. But the editor should never try to fix anything. He should have the author do it.)

'My experience, which is of course more limited than Moorcock's, is that most editors today will print a story as I write it, give or take typos and an occasional closing of a gap I wanted open to indicate transition. ANDROMEDA sent me galleys to go over. I found that the editor had changed one sentence, shortened the name of a spaceship, and allowed me to consistently misspell Aquitaine throughout. FANTASTIC printed me verbatim, after the editor had made a very constructive suggestion about the ending which I carried out. Basically, I have yet to have a serious run-in with what John Brunner calls The Meddling Moron, except in FANTASY & TERROR some years ago, which was hardly a major market. So I don't see why a writer shouldn't take Norman Spinrad's often repeated advice and "aim high" when submitting stories. Moorcock's approach will only insure that he will continue to be better known for novels, since his short work seldom appears in wide-circulation outlets. A writer whose output consists primarily of short fiction would go broke that way.

'I would also differ with Moorcock on the Fuck The Reader approach to editing and publishing. On page 21 he describes the NEW WORLDS approach as "we didn't give a shit about money, circulation, or public opinion", although this doesn't quite mesh with the statement at the top of page 23 that he can't write unless he is sure the reader can enjoy the result. The problem

with Fuck The Readerism is that the reader will fuck you back by ceasing to read. This may seem naive of me, but somehow it seems to me that when more readers flock to a magazine or anthology, the editor gets letters of praise, and the circulation figures go up; this is a good thing. When the reader throws the book across the room in disgust, writes an angry letter and then stops reading, this is a bad thing. Correct me if I'm wrong. My guess is that much of the "New Wave" of the 1960s destroyed itself by sheer economics. If no one will read it, it doesn't continue to be published. I don't see how NEW WORLDS was supposed to be reaching for a larger audience when the circulation was at fanzine level. (Remember that article "An Editor's Day" by Charles Platt you published about 1969? In it he described putting all the subscription copies into a bag, hopping on his motorbike and going to the postoffice. I recall Ted White's incredulous remark, "Surely he doesn't think this is what a professional editor does!")

'Now, the period of NEW WORLDS in question is that of the large-sized issues, #173-201, roughly 1967 to 1970 when the New Wave crested. I find that very few fans are familiar with the magazine, since it was not widely circulated. For a short while it showed tremendous promise as an experimental science fiction magazine, publishing things like CAMP CONCENTRATION, BAREFOOT IN THE HEAD, a chunk of STAND ON ZANZIBAR, most of BUG JACK BARRON and so on. But as it went on, it began to resemble the undergraduate literary magazines I was putting together at the time (early 70s -- I was getting the magazines from dealers a couple years late), and frequently no better. There was far too much of what I call "non-functional word patterns", which is the Fuck the Reader attitude taken to an extreme in the writing itself. To cite some examples, I don't see how a Ballard condensed novel, or "How Dr. Christopher Evans Landed on the Moon" (#187) or "The Generations of America" (#183), or much of the work of Giles Gordon, James Sallis and Graham Charnock, or Alan Burns' "Babel" (191) have anything to offer to a fiction reader at all. This goes for virtually the entire contents of the newest incarnation, #213.

'I recall another particularly relevant comment made by Ted White (about 1970, when he gave a talk in Philadelphia) that NEW WORLDS was no longer a fiction magazine at all, but one of "tightly written paragraphs". Ten years later it seems the readers have borne me out. The gibberish NEW WORLDS published is forgotten, while the few outstanding stories remain in print. (This includes work by Moorcock. Often I got the impression that he was the only professional level writer involved in the later NEW WORLDS, and he was slumming with the amateurs.) NEW WORLDS is very much a magazine to read in reprints. All the good stuff has been reprinted. (Except something called "The Circular Railway" by John Calder, in #182, which really deserves to be anthologized.)

'NEW WORLDS and ORBIT are very much alike in that both print(ed) much brilliant and innovative fiction, but fail(ed) to maintain any minimum standard of readability. If two stories in a book are excellent and the rest are outrageously bad, the reader will give up more readily than he will with one where one story is excellent and the rest are so-so. Minimum standards are as important as maximum ones. The other magazines, GALAXY, ANALOG, etc. were able to go through the same period undisturbed because, while they didn't as frequently print stuff as good as NEW WORLDS' best, they didn't even approach its worst.

'The same is true of ORBIT. It has died now because too many readers threw it away in disgust. (Also, honestly, other factors are involved. The anthology field is still not out of the post-Elwood depression.) It also will be something which will be fondly remembered in the future and read through reprints of about 25% of its contents. The same with QUARK, which suicided more quickly and for the same reasons. This sort of editing always destroys itself, and I think does more harm than good by convincing publishers that anything with serious intentions and ambition won't sell and therefore should not be published.

'P.S. Some news: I've sold another novel, well, really a bunch of stories in sequence cobbled together into one, a 'la THE DYING EARTH or EYES OF THE OVERWORLD. It is the medieval fantasies about the knight, Julian, "The Hag", etc. (More are forthcoming in HEROIC FANTASY, THE YEAR'S BEST HORROR and various Paul Collins anthologies.) The title presently is WE ARE ALL LEGENDS and the publisher is Borgo. Out in the early 80s.'

LETTER FROM DARRELL SCHWEITZER

Dec. 16, 1978

'IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT:
I would like it to be known that the statements attributed to me in the 11th issue of Taral Macdonald and Victoria Vayne's "news"zine DNQ in regards to relations between ASIMOV'S SF and the artists Freff and Phil Foglio are absolutely untrue and I never said anything of the sort. Furthermore, this "report" was published without my knowledge or permission, and no adequate retraction has been made. The comments in issue #12 seem to vaguely perpetuate the distortions and untruths originally printed in #11. (The truth is you'll be seeing work by both artists in future issues.)

'To add insult to injury, I was not sent a copy of the issue in which the first item appeared, and had to find out about it second hand. The same is true of issue #12, which contains the inadequate and half-hearted response to my protests. Also, comments in #12 would imply that I am retracting because George Scithers got upset about the affair. Well, he did, but so did I as soon as I found out, and I wrote to DNQ before having heard about it from him. I don't like having false and potentially damaging statements attributed to me!'

LETTER FROM CHARLES PLATT

70 Ledbury Road
London W.11, England
January 5, 1979

'I'm at the above address at least until March. Mike Moorcock lent me his copy of SFR #29 last night; I'm writing first in reply to Orson Scott Card's review of Eleanor Arnason's THE SWORD SMITH (a novel that I accepted while I was editor at Condor).

'I feel sorry for Orson (his endearing humility encourages the use of first-names). He emerges from the punishing drudgery of reading for purposes of review, every single story in every single current science fiction magazine. He picks up THE SWORD SMITH. His eyes scan the pages for the familiar formulas, the heroics, the gimmicks, the quests and climaxes that constitute literature as he knows it -- and -- nothing! The hero isn't a hero, the dragon talks like someone's aunt, none of the people in the book act with any high drama, or even ambition! What the hell is going on here? What (in the familiar phrase used by Orsons everywhere) is the point? I suppose I can offer him a point. In Michael

Moorcock's words (p. 22, SFR #29) "Fiction serves only one purpose. To formalize and interpret the experience of its readers". --A purpose that THE SWORD SMITH obviously fulfills, as evidenced by Orson's commendably honest list of reasons for his own identification with Arnason's "hero".

'I am pleased -- excited even -- that an Orson should be able to enjoy (in his fashion) and recommend this novel. But I am depressed that he was baffled by it. Here is a book whose strength is its simplicity. It could hardly be easier to read. Damn it, it's half way to being a children's book! Yet the literary experience of an Orson is so narrow, his preconceptions are so entrenched, his self-awareness is so lacking, he doesn't "understand" the book -- or even why he sort-of enjoyed it. His only virtue is his frank admission of his own inadequacy. Oh, well, back to Conan...

'And to Darrell Schweitzer exposing himself openly, at last, as a true elitist-juvenile secret-society member, in his wholly narcissistic "introduction to fandom" that no one but an already-entrenched fan could possibly penetrate; and magazine reviews listing the publications in order of the word-rates they pay; and myself sounding like a true wide-eyed sycophant in my little article on Asimov, misguidedly attempting to be "objective". Whatever happened to values? Thank God we find some -- almost a pious excess -- in the Moorcock interview, but as usual the interviewer's private reality didn't intersect at any point with the interviewee's, so it's pearls before swine. Mike is, of course, right: Better to be true to oneself than "objective", no matter how you justify it (my own justification was that I wanted to put a word in for fiscal restraint among greedy workers in the writing business -- a polite word, couched so tentatively, so naively, even an Orson might take note, and stop trying quite so hard to become a new Jerry Pournelle ... but really who the hell cares about Orsons? Or Pournelles for that matter. That self-obsessed smug fascist bastard ... excuse me.

'And now you're scheduled to run my Spinrad interview, which again is another piece of objectivity so-called, which is to say that it is not entirely frank in its expressed opinions. Some cosmetic work has been done. I was not as open in my opinion of Norman's new book as I should have been, really, were I to be true to my ideas about values. So how honest can one be? Especially reviewing the work of friends. I don't know, but I know it isn't right to paper everything over blandly. And I know that part of my motivation for pursuing objectivity was to assemble, in due course, a collection of such interviews, with the aim of selling them as a book; and I thought the book would have a better chance of selling if it was built to this specification than if it was more opinionated and rude. So once again, even in this trivial instance, the market controls the composition, and I'm no better than any of the crap artists salivating at the scent of dollars in the air and trying to hit that Winning Formula instead of trying to write something with integrity.

'Well, I still want to write up the Delany interview for you, and since I am not a close friend of Chip's, and he knows I disagree with him strongly in some areas, I'll feel freer to be franker, and the result will perhaps be more interesting as well as less diplomatic.

'Meanwhile it's back to work on the three different books I am now contracted to write for various U.S. publishers. All the books are formula jobs. The only advantage of such work over, say, working on an assembly line is that the hours are shorter and the pay is better.

'Incidentally, I loved your review of ALGOL -- a deft touch; use it more often. And thanks for your very kind mention of NEW WORLDS. I am currently at work on NW 216 (will be typesetting it next week); NW 215 is being printed now and NW 214 has just been mailed to the USA, where it will be distributed by my assistant at "Patchin Productions" and you should get a copy (naturally) though you probably won't like it. Oh, well. Onward. Issue 214 was considerably delayed in its appearance in the U.S. because the first shipment never turned up, and it took me six weeks to be sure of this, and then send out more copies from here, once I arrived in London. Nothing is simple.'

((Darrell wrote that article on fandom at my request, to give new fans and those SFR readers who are not fans an idea of what the hardest core is like...or was like.
((Too often the 'integrity' issue in writing ignores the integrity of the professional who deeply believes in "giving the reader what he wants" and submitting himself to that end. The 'personal artistic integrity' attitude is too often a mask for attacking successful, money/entertainment oriented writers and/or excusing personal failure.
((My belief is that a writer or any craftsman or artist is happiest being true to his talents and skills and the luckiest artist/craftsman is the one who knows his talents and character and has the guts to be true to them. It's so easy to be jealous and envious and compromise for the big money. It's a problem many cannot solve. I suppose most compromise...and are only marginally unhappy as a result.
((Andy Porter, editor/publisher of ALGOL, called a few days ago and we talked for a while. He said he laughed at my review and he played his usual one-upmanship games, conscious and unconscious. He also astonished me by saying he never makes subscription refunds, as a matter of principle. Well, he did once when a subscriber died and the heirs asked for the money back. Of course it is his privilege to not make refunds, but that policy should be known to potential subscribers. As a matter of personal and publishing ethics a notice of "no refunds" should be in all ALGOL advertising. It isn't. Why not?))

LETTER FROM DAVE PRILL

1211 W. 86th Street
Bloomington, MN 55420
January 22, 1979

'Thought you (and collectors of your 1960's porno novels) would be intersted to know that CD/DM Books has BEDROOM CITY listed in their science fiction and fantasy catalog from last fall (their latest, I believe). The price is $1.00. You can get a copy of the catalog by writing to: CD/DM Books, Box 7188, Powderhorn Station, Minneapolis, MN 55407. They have a lot of really obscure titles.

'Most of the interview with John Brunner seemed a waste. Instead of getting 7 pages of Brunner's thoughts/feelings/philosophy, etc., we got a half dozen pages of Brunner correcting Ian Covell's misconceptions and one page of fascinating discussion. Better preparation would have helped.

'Hawkwind are now called the Hawklords and their latest album (as far as I know) is "PXR5". This information comes from an article in MELODY MAKER (November 18, 1978) in which Robert Calvert and Michael Moorcock talked with MM's Mike Davies about the group.

'I think "The Review of Short Fiction" would be much more effective if the space given each story was cut down. One or two lines are enough. Crisp, concise and combustible. Go for it, Orson.

ALIEN THOUGHTS CONT. ON P. 29

YOU GOT NO FRIENDS IN THIS WORLD
A Review Of Short Fiction By Orson Scott Card

My own stamina surprises me. I just finished reading my 105th story in preparation for writing this column, and I don't hate science fiction. In fact, despite tired eyes and a screaming baby in the next room (he is determined that all his waking hours will be spent walking around holding onto my fingers, which makes it difficult for me to type), I was able to recognize in the 101st story I read the finest one of the bunch. If you can still fall in love with a story after reading a hundred of them, you have stamina.

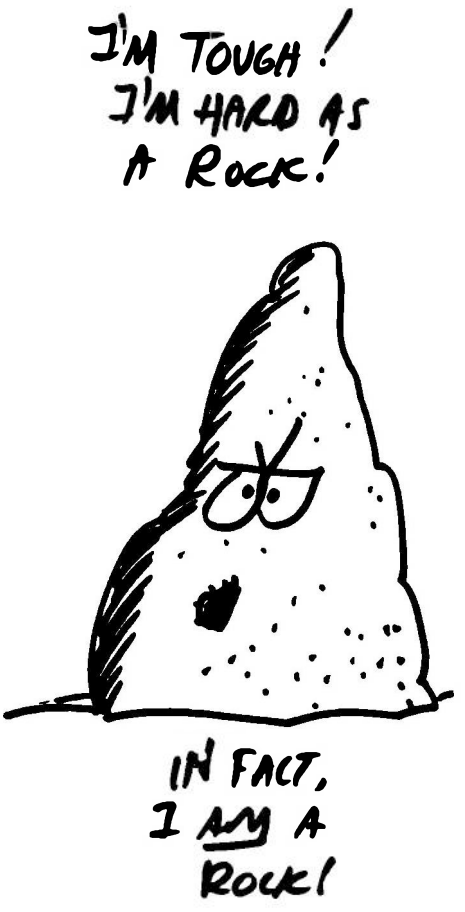
"Palely Loitering", by Christopher Priest, (F&SF, Jan.), is not only well-written, it is also a good story. Too often in my reading I've found that a writer who puts words together in ways that make my hands tremble while I read doesn't know how to turn that marvelous style into a story and I end up frustrated. Priest has written with the grace and slow tempo of the best of the Victorian writers, yet where even Hardy often plods, Priest's writing sings. Ostensibly this is a time travel story, but Priest has made it so much more: It is the story of a love growing up, of a man who gradually becomes his father, of an adult surrounded by his adolescent self. The time travel paradox, in Priest's hands, becomes a metaphor.

And "Palely Loitering" does something I've longed to see more science fiction do -- develop characters in a real family setting. True, Priest's family is a Victorian one, with the traditional dominant father and the son much intimidated by, yet enamored of him. But it is believable, and because we have seen his family the first person character is more fully fleshed than most SF protagonists -- even when the authors have all the pages of a novel to work with.

At the heart of "Palely Loitering" is a myth, one of the most potent, to me, at least. It is the story of the man who pursues something all his life, something beautiful, and then discovers that it was already caught somewhere in his past and he missed it and let it go and doesn't have even the memory of it.

* * *

Religion is usually treated unfairly in science fiction, primarily because the voice of science fiction is almost inevitably an agnostic voice. Yet, now and then, a science fiction story or a fantasy illuminates the religious experience brilliantly. Dean Ing's "Domino Domine" (DESTINIES, Jan/Feb) is one such story, in which the incredibly powerful god of a savage tribe turns out not to be quite so omnipotent as he had seemed.



Another treatment of the God-man relationship is Frank Herbert's "Songs of a Sentient Flute" (ANALOG, Feb), the last and best of the MEDEA stories to appear in print before the book itself is published. I have a confession to make. While I loved DUNE, I have not liked a single thing by Herbert besides that book, not even (especially not even) the DUNE sequels. Herbert's hard science was too heavy on plot, too thin on people; his Dune sequels were far too mystical, and seemed to me to be mistakes that only weakened his masterpiece.

But in "Songs of a Sentient Flute", I believe Herbert has rediscovered the balance between mysticism and science, between action and character that made DUNE such a memorable experience. Nikki, a poet raised by the godlike Ship for some arcane purpose, has an intuition which, while completely logical in origin, borders on prescience and telepathy in effect. When Ship assigns him to work with two other colonists, he does not realize that Ship is using the three of them almost like fingers, unthinkingly fulfilling purposes they neither comprehend nor even suspect. Ostensibly they are investigating the balloon-like ouranids, trying to find out enough about them to enable the human settlers to cope with them. They discover that the ouranids are a group-mind -- sent out by an intelligent mass of seaweed exactly as Nikki and friends have been sent out by the Ship. And then, the discovery made, one of the crew disappears, himself a direct creation of Ship and not a man at all. A stunning story that proves Herbert still has it in him -- DUNE wasn't a one-shot.

* * *

Another Medea story, Jack Williamson's "Farside Station" (IA'sfm Nov/Dec), also deals with religion, though more directly than Herbert, and also deals with an effort to communicate with the ouranids. The writing is good, and he gets over the hurdle of dealing with members of a fanatic religious group rather well. At the end, however, his ambition far surpasses his achievement, and when he wraps things up with news of an upcoming virgin birth it seems not exalting but rather nasty and horrible, perhaps because the child will be as much the child of a corpse as of the Cosmic Union. The one is too ghastly, the other too abstract to mean much to me.

* * *

A third Medea story is "Concepts" by Thomas M. Disch (F&SF Dec). I don't intend to use this column for pan reviews -- the space is too limited and there are too many good stories to recommend. But since Ed Ferman praised the story in the blurb, which he does not usually do, and since Harlan Ellison called the story "Thomas Disch's most brilliant SF story", I couldn't just ignore it.

And so, over the past few weeks I have been carefully constructing my verbal destruction of shallow avant-garde writing that achieves boredom, affectation, and little else. Not only that, but a story by Jack Dann, "A Quiet Revolution for Death", from NEW DIMENSIONS 8, found its way into my mailbox in the form of a Xerox copy that arrived suspiciously close to Nebula nominating

time. The Dann story and the Disch story seemed to me to be cut from the same cloth, and boy, was I going to rip them to shreds.

Until I examined the proverbial beam in my own eye, and realized that if intelligent people are liking this stuff, it can't be the utter dreck that it looks like to me. Certainly neither Dann nor Disch can be dismissed, as I had been tempted to dismiss them, as mere imitators of the worst of self-indulgent American fiction in the seventies. I haven't changed my mind about the stories -- I still find them impenetrable -- but I have changed my mind about my motives.

I'm just a believer in the future of humanity and the fundamental goodness of man, and both these stories seem to me to be saying I am wrong. Both present characters that are so blindly selfish and relationships that are so pointless and shallow that, if I ever truly believed people are or ever could become that way, I don't know how I could continue living among them. My response is visceral, however I cloak it in rationality, and so I viscerally tell you that I do not like or understand the people in these stories and therefore I do not like or understand the stories.

* * *

That may be the very reason I so much enjoyed R.A. Lafferty's "Quiz Ship Loose" (CHRYSALIS 2), even though he, too, is dealing with a future society so jaded and sophisticated that it is incomprehensible to the normal human. What makes the difference, I think, is that Lafferty has presented such a story from a group of (almost) normal humans' point of view. And his beliefs about human nature come a bit closer to mine -- his jaded future society is bored and boring, and all their pent-up or rejected imperfections come out in their children, who are marvelously insane and therefore have something to offer the rest of the universe.

* * *

Two of the finest stories I read deal with a child's relationship to his or her dead parent, and both writers dealt with the ghoulish topic so sensitively that they made my informal list of the best handful of stories reviewed this issue. "The Wanda Lake Number" by Robert Thurston (ANALOG, Jan), brings together a show business agent with delusions of integrity, a strange but beautiful woman, and an impressionist who does his act in three dimensional illusions that become so real they have a life of their own. And in William Rotsler's "Parental Guidance Suggested" (F&SF,Jan) the son of a dead movie star starts noticing that his father has started speaking to him out of his old films, which are slowly altering to take the young man in. The only life he has had with his father is in those films, and at the end of the story that unreal life becomes reality. Both have some of the finest, most believable characterization I've seen in science fiction and fantasy.

* * *

Themes often seem to pop up in different stories at the same time, but it's not too common for such similar stories to appear in the same issue of the same magazine. The February issue of FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION contains a story by Stephen Dixon, "A Home away from Home", in which a middle-aged man is forced to take his aging father's place in an old age home, and there discovers that old age is a product of expectations -- he ages prematurely while his father, free at last of his son's constant reminders about how feeble and incompetent he is becoming, is restored to youthful health. In the same issue, "Not to the Swift", by James Patrick Kelly, tells of an old man who is losing his place in society -- the designer of a magnificent building, he is now reduced to serving as a janitor in it, and even that job is about to be taken from him. He gets involved with an experiment in eidetic memory -- total recall. And, at the end, he finds a way to trigger that memory whenever he wants it, providing his escape from a steadily more unpleasant life.

* * *

"Ker-Plop" is the silly title of an excellent novella by Ted Reynolds (IA'sfm, Jan.). Most of the story is the eidetic memory of Checker Cotter Oren, induced hypnotically by -- well, this one has enough surprises that I don't want to reveal them. I hope this is the skeleton of a novel, or that this story can find its way into book publication -- it deserves as many readers as it can get. There are only two good characters, but that's above average; and the idea has the scope of Ringworld, Riverworld, Foundation or Rama.

Another good story with an unfortunate title is "Just in the Niche of Time" by Thomas F. Monteleone (CHRYSALIS 2). The title leads the reader to expect a joke story. While the story is light in tone, it turns serious toward the end, as a rich man who is in trouble with the mob finds an easy way to change his life through a series of cold sleeps and time trips. It isn't another entry in the long list of Bootstrap Stories ("All You Zombies", "By his Bootstraps", "Door into Summer", all Heinlein); he actually does something new.

* * *

I had strong prejudices about Gregory Benford's work long before I ever read any of it. Because he is a professor of physics, I assumed his work was the hardest of hard science fiction. In utter contradiction to this, I also thought of him as an artsy-fartsy writer on the avant-garde end of things. This latter impression came because of the reviews of IN THE OCEAN OF NIGHT, which made it sound like the snob hit of 1977, and because every time I glimpsed him from a distance at the 1978 Nebula Awards weekend he was surrounded by an eager coterie of (I prejudged them) sycophants and disciples. Which just goes to show what a fool I can be when I let my prejudgments get the better of me.

You see, I've been reading his work now. And three of his stories turned up in this batch, all of them worth reviewing, and all of them showing completely different facets of his talent.

"Time Guide" (DESTINIES, Jan/Feb) is a hilarious satire on various historical periods, including our own, in the form of warnings and hints to time-traveling tourists who want to blend with the natives. A sample: Visitors to Berkeley in the late sixties are told, "Cultivate a dreamy, dislocated expression; occasionally don't finish your sentences. (Option; every once in a while, wander away into traffic and have to be led back to the sidewalk.)"

"Old Woman by the Road" (DESTINIES, Nov/Dec) is a short, sensitive characterization of a young man and an old woman, both of whom are reluctant to leave their swampy, ugly, beloved home country in time for it to be destroyed in a stupid conflict.

And, going off in a third direction entirely, "A Hiss of Dragon" (OMNI, Dec., in collaboration with Marc Laidlaw) is a hard-science adventure yarn as good as any I've read. You can see the professor of physics in this one -- it had never occurred to me before that in

low gravity you could throw a rock at somebody and then talk to him for a while until it hits....

So much for my prejudgments of Gregory Benford as a writer. He doesn't fit in any of the categories. A damned inconsiderate thing for him to do to a reviewer who feels most comfortable sorting people into various cubbyholes.

* * *

I'm not a fan of H.P. Lovecraft. Not that I have any objections to his work -- I'm just uninterested. So I confess that if I hadn't set myself the goal of reading every story, I would have skipped Richard Lupoff's "The Devil's Hop Yard" (CHRYSALIS 2) a sequel to Lovecraft's "The Dunwich Horror". I discovered that while Lovecraft leaves me cold, Lupoff doesn't. And he came up with what was to me a new horror idea -- a young girl who remained infant size, but while still a child developed a fully adult figure. Monsters of completely alien mien do nothing to me. Monsters of human form who are odd only in detail or scale strike me as being far more frightening. However, the buildup was so intense and so well-handled that no ending could possibly have been satisfying.

The ending of "Hand in Glove" by Robert Aickman (F&SF, Jan) also failed to work for me, but for the different reason that Aickman was a bit too obscure. In his tale of vengeance taken by jilted lovers he wrote beautifully, but left just a few too many questions unanswered for me to feel horrified rather than mystified by the ending.

Perhaps it's just my theatre background, but the most horrifying of all the horror fantasy stories was "One More Song Before I Go" by Craig Shaw Gardner (CHRYSALIS 2). I can't think of a more terrifying way to spend eternity than being trapped inside a tacky musical comedy with a bad lyricist -- and in this case the ending was, to my taste at least, exactly right. Gardner is a new writer, and one well worth watching.

* * *

I'm now getting into my cubbyholes. Five hard science fiction stories (beyond those already mentioned) struck me as being quite good. And one of them, "The Works of His Hand, Made Manifest", by Karen G. Jollie (CHRYSALIS 2), is a first fiction sale, which makes the brilliance of the story all the more remarkable. Jollie's scientific credentials are secure -- she is the author of TWO NEW GENERA (THORACOTHRIX GEN., Nov., AND POLYDINIOPSIS GEN., Nov.) AND FIVE NEW SPECIES OF SPIRODINIID CILIATES FROM THE CAECUM OF THE AFRICAN ELEPHANT: AND A REVISION OF THE SUBFAMILY POLYDINIELLINAE NOM., Nov. And this story makes her fiction credentials just as secure. She has actually taken the superman theme and made a moving, believable, suspenseful, and satisfying story out of it. And you thought it couldn't be done....

Kerstin Lange's "By the Hours in a Day" is a treatment of an old theme, too -- the woman who wants a mechanical man to be the perfect replica of her departed lover. What makes the story unique is what happens when she meets the original lover again. It won the National Federation of Fantasy Fans writing contest "a while back", according to ISAAC ASIMOV'S SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE, in which it appeared (Nov/Dec).

Back in the spring I fell in love with Glen Cook's "Ghost Stalk", one of the most gripping and powerful fantasies I had ever read (I recommend you get an old F&SF and read it!). He came up with a not quite so brilliant (but only weaker by comparison) SF story in the December FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION: "The Quiet Sea". Maybe it's partly because of my love for the Horatio Hornblower series, but Cook can write about life on a sailing ship so that I can taste the salt and hear the lines singing in the wind.

"Body Game", by Robert Sheckley (OMNI, Dec), tacked a kind of dumb ending on an otherwise excellent story about an old man who gets taken in by a shyster used-body lot, where the retread corpses are only guaranteed for thirty days. And "To Race the Wind" by Jack C. Haldeman II (OMNI, Jan) started out as if it were going to be a standard environmentalist tract, and then wasn't. Instead it was a lovely and powerful story about a sport for crippled and weakened people who could never hope to achieve their ancestors' athletic prowess.

* * *

Another cubbyhole: SF crime stories.

"The Man With the Eye" by Phyllis Eisenstein (IA'sFM, Nov/Dec) is superficially a fantasy mystery about a man who uses his telekinetic powers to rip off or take advantage of other people -- but only in moderation. If Eisenstein had opted for the easy ending, it would have been nothing more. Instead she went for good characterization and made it a memorable story.

Joan Vinge's "Fireship" (ANALOG, Dec) is the lead novella in her book by the same title (Dell, 1978), so

it is getting reviewed elsewhere. Suffice it to say that I enjoyed it thoroughly, and if she has in other stories been known to write with more depth, it is nice to know that she can also spin a good adventure yarn.

I didn't know there was such a writer as Edward Wellen until I started doing these reviews. Now I'm aware, and eager for more. His "While-You-Wait" (F&SF, Jan) is built around a narrator who solves crimes by computer and clever thinking. The story is good; the character is wonderful; I hope Wellen writes more stories using him and his techniques, because I want a book of about fifteen of them. Or more.

And Eric Norden's "The Gathering of the Clan" (F&SF, Feb), while cursed with a rather ordinary plot, is still so well written that the story deserves some note.

* * *

In the continuing battle between Aliens and Humans for Supremacy in the Universe, the two sides fought to a draw in these last few months. On the down side, in "Cultural Conflict", by David Drake (DESTINES, Jan/Feb), a group of well-meaning human beings inadvertantly destroy the entire intelligent species on a planet without ever realizing the enormity of what they are doing -- just a little clumsy, that's all. And the aliens also lose round one in "Stand Pat, Ruby Stone" by Roger Zelazny (DESTINIES, Nov/Dec), in which love takes three players and the human beings are voyeurs determined to watch the most brutal sex act I've ever read about. Not Zelazny's best, just Zelazny's better-than-most-other-people -- he must get frustrated having his excellent works constantly compared to his perfect works and found wanting.

The aliens come out ahead in Frank Herbert's and F.M. Busby's "Come to the Party", (ANALOG, Dec.), in which the human race commits itself to support of a beleaguered intelligent race without realizing that in the process they are turning an infinitely more intelligent species into implacable enemies. Written with great good humor, the story still manages to be chilling. Aliens also prove their superiority, but more benignly, in "Old Rocking Chair's Got Me" by Suzette Haden Elgin (F&SF, Feb.). A young female alien runs afoul of the legal system when she reaches out to provide some kind of relief to an utterly blind, handicapped species -- us. Believe me, the story will make you want to buy a rocker.

In "The Ways of Love" (DESTINIES Jan/Feb), Poul Anderson spends what seemed an excessively long time telling a gently ironic story in which some good human beings run into aliens who really know what love is all about.

Too often first-contact stories have Joe Average and the Normal American Family meet the benevolent aliens. In "Where is Next Door?" by Mildred Downey Broxton (CHRYSALIS 2), the aliens instead are trying to help a human family that is deeply troubled: Their only child has a congenital terminal illness, which is pushing the husband deeper into his work and the wife closer to madness. They can cure the illness -- but can they cure the human malaise?

* * *

Stephen R. Donaldson, by a terrible miscarriage of justice, did not win the John W. Campbell Award in 1978 (no, dammit, I won't give it back), but his Thomas Covenant trilogy has earned him a permanent and prominent place in the landscape of modern fantasy. To the frustration of those of us who would like to take it easy and not have to worry about being good every time, he keeps on proving he deserves that place. "Mythological Beast" (F&SF, Jan) is the story of a man who makes a metamorphosis as exalted as Kafka's was demeaning. Disney to the contrary notwithstanding, disobedient boys don't turn into jackasses -- they turn into unicorns. Except for Peter S. Beagle, no one has ever made me care so much about unicorns; and only Donaldson has made me wish I could be one.

Jane Yolen has created another engaging fairy tale with "The Pot Child" (F&SF, Feb). Ray Russell's "The Humanic Complex" (F&SF, Dec) deals with the frustrations of trying to cure God's delusions of humility and get him back on the job; a delightfully written piece. And "The Bulldog Nutcracker" by Thomas Thurston (CHRYSALIS 2) starts with the supposition that John Keats is still alive and dominates a rather odd social group. I quote the second paragraph:

"Keats reads all the biographies of himself several times each. He marks every section that is not true with a Flair pen and charts all the inaccuracies chronologically on his bathroom wall. He plans to collect all the inaccuracies into a book labeled the definitive biography."

If this is the same Robert Thurston who wrote the novelization of BATTLESTAR GALACTICA, this story and "The Wanda Lake Number" are enough to win him absolution. Or almost enough.

And OMNI, which is not limited to hard science fiction, has printed two fine fantasies, the first of which, "The Chessmen" (Nov) by William G. Shepherd, is the story of a Russian woodcarver who cleverly made a chess set where one side was Communist and the other side capitalist. Unfortunately, the capitalist side could not lose, and the Communists could not win; a bleakly delightful story. "And Whether Pigs Have Wings", by Nancy Kress (Jan), is a first person story by the alien who is trying to make life livable for mankind. She tried once before, but they crucified her. The idea sounds a bit hokey, but the story is skillfully executed and works well.

* * *

I am a Harlan Ellison fan. But I'm sure I'm not the only one who was disappointed by "Count the Clock That Tells the Time" (OMNI, Dec). Yes, the style is still Harlan's, still inimitable, still entertaining. But the exposition sticks out awkwardly from time to time, and where the story isn't vague it feels, well, a bit silly. Ellison wrote this while on display at Iguanacon in Phoenix, and perhaps is a hint that not everything he writes while on display ought to be displayed. It's not a complete disaster, just a disappointment to those of us who have been conditioned to expect much more from him.

Another disappointment was Spider Robinson's "Antimony" (DESTINIES Nov/Dec.). The idea of the story is good enough for a novel: A man and a woman fall in love in the last year before her terminal leukemia forces her to be frozen to await the discovery of a cure; unfortunately, the process of freezing and thawing her wipes out all her memories of that last year, so that she does not know (but he does) that they

were ever in love. In fact, that may be the problem. The story probably should have been a novel. Hurried as it is in this short form, exposition sticks out and looks ugly; a third character who could be lovely is so abruptly handled that she looks like a young Mary Worth; and because the story moves along at a too-brisk pace, Robinson's irrepressibly cheerful style of writing is constantly at war with a much more poignant plot. What's frustrating is how good the story is despite those weaknesses. With more time and a less dashing tone, he could make it an intense and powerful book.

* * *

I want to wrap up the column by mentioning three stories that must have been written with chortles and a fiendish glint in the writer's eye. "To Be or Not" by Ben Bova (DESTINIES, Jan/Feb) takes cloning to its excruciatingly logical extreme. "Be Jubilant, My Feet!" by Gary Jennings (F&SF, Dec) is a delightful spoof on the horror genre, starring an intrepid missionary for the Southern Primitive Protestant Church. And "Controlled Experiment" by Rick Conley (OMNI, Nov) is an ironic proof of the importance of a scientist's never taking anything for granted in his research.

* * *

What good is this review column, anyway? By the time it comes out, none of these magazines is going to be on the stands any more -- you can't rush out and buy a copy.

No, you can't. But I suspect many of you are like me. You have good intentions of reading the magazines, and you buy most of them every month (or subscribe). But after you read the editorials and letters and science articles and book reviews, you set the magazine aside until you have time to read the stories. If you get back to them at all, you read only the shortest ones or the stories by writers whose names you instantly recognize.

I did that time after time, until I finally realized that if everyone did that no one would ever have noticed me except my mother. The magazines, contrary to popular opinion, are not going to hell. Fully half

of the stories printed are worth reading, and some of the finest short fiction in the English language is appearing first in periodical form. And so I appointed myself to go through and find which of these are good enough to be noticed by a lot more people. I've tried to identify them as clearly as possible, not just arbitrarily as good or bad, but also by the type of story each is, so that you can use this column as a guide to which stories in those piles of unread magazines are worth looking up and reading.

So for heaven's sake, pick up the damn magazines and read. If you don't, I read those 105 stories in vain.

STORIES REVIEWED (In Order)

"Palely Loitering," Christopher Priest
"Domino Domine," Dean Ing
"Songs of a Sentient Flute," Frank Herbert
"Farside Station," Jack Williamson
"Concepts," Thomas M. Disch
"Quiz Ship Loose," R.A. Lafferty
"The Wanda Lake Number," Robert Thurston
"Parental Guidance Suggested," William Rotsler
"A Home Away From Home," Stephen Dixon
"Not to the Swift," James Patrick Kelly
"Ker-plop," Ted Reynolds
"Just in the Niche of Time," Thomas F. Monteleone
"Time Guide," Gregory Benford
"Old Woman by the Road," Gregory Benford
"A Hiss of Dragon," Gregory Benford and Mark Laidlaw
"The Devil's Hop Yard," Richard Lupoff
"Hand in Glove," Robert Aikman
"One More Song Bofore I Go," Craig Shaw Gardner
"The Works of His Hand, Made Manifest," Karen G. Jollie
"By the Hours in a Day," Kerstin Lange
"The Quiet Sea," Glen Cook
"Body Game," Robert Sheckley
"To Race the Wind," Jack C. Haldeman II
"The Man with the Eye," Phyllis Eisenstein
"Fireship," Joan Vinge
"While-You-Wait," Edward Wellen
"The Gathering of the Clan," Eric Norden
"Cultural Conflict," David Drake
"Stand Pat, Ruby Stone," Roger Zelazny
"Come to the Party," Frank Herbert and F.M. Busby
"Old Rocking Chair's Got Me," Suzette Haden Elgin
"The Ways of Love," Poul Anderson
"Where is Next Door," Mildred Downey Broxon
"Mythological Beast," Stephen R. Donaldson
"The Pot Child," Jane Yolen
"The Humanic Complex," Ray Russell
"The Bulldog Nutcracker," Robert Thurston
"The Chessmen," William G. Shepherd
"And Whether Pigs Have Wings," Nancy Kress
"Count the Clock That Tells the Time," Harlan Ellison
"Antimony," Spider Robinson
"To Be or Not," Ben Bova
"Be Jubilant, My Feet!" Gary Jennings
"Controlled Experiment," Rick Conley

MAGAZINES AND ANTHOLOGIES REVIEWED

ANALOG, Dec, Jan, Feb
CHRYSALIS 2, (Dec 1978)
DESTINIES, Nov/Dec, Jan/Feb
FANTASY and SCIENCE FICTION, Nov/Dec, Jan
OMNI, Nov, Dec, Jan

THE AWARDS ARE COMING!!!

By Orson Scott Card

I've heard that the Hugo and Nebula awards mean nothing. I've even seen it in print. Usually the argument centers on the fact that only a few hundred people vote on the Nebulas and only a thousand or so on the Hugoes. And nominating is done by many fewer than that.

But I disagree. Not because of some philosophical difference, but because I remember my own reading patterns as I first started into science fiction. There were a few of the great names (Asimov, Heinlein, Clarke, Bradbury) that I read because I had actually heard of them. But soon enough I was confronted by shelves of paperback science fiction by people I had never heard of. (Yes, it's true; outside of fandom the names Niven and Zelazny are not exactly household words.) I found that the simple words "Hugo-award-winning author" were a fairly reliable guide. I almost never picked up a book with those words on the cover without finding that the writing was good and the book enjoyable.

The Nebula was just as reliable a guide, except that it tended to be given to more "literary" types. And when a particular author had won both Hugoes and Nebulas, I never found a clunker.

Why? Because even if in any particular year the genuine true Best Story or Best Novel doesn't win, a good writer wins. The best writers will eventually win at least one award. If their stories and books are consistently excellent, they will win several. Occasionally a fine writer goes unawarded for an embarrassingly long time (cf. John Varley), but eventually the awards do come (as this year Varley will inevitable win both Hugo and Nebula for "Persistence of Vision").

And after all, what do we expect of the awards? After reading all the stories published for the last six months, I am keenly aware of the fact that there are many fine, award-worthy stories. Some of the best will not even get on the ballot, because there are only five places in each category. Does that mean the awards are not any good? Of course not. It just means that the awards only skim the surface, and there are plenty of other good stories to read. But the awards do provide a guide that helps introduce new readers into the mass of authors and stories; and the awards do provide a welcome sign to authors, editors, and artists that their work is noticed.

Whether the awards are good or not does not depend on the manner

of selection so much as on the matter selected. If God himself (or Isaac Asimov -- there is some confusion on this point) were to choose the award winners, and then consistently chose second-rate or far-out books, the award would become meaningless. What makes the awards meaningful is that by and large they have gone to deserving stories written by fine writers.

Which brings us to this year. I'm not going to make across-the-board recommendations, even though I suspect I've read more stories this year than anyone but the editors of the best-of-the-year anthologies -- and perhaps more than even they have read. I just want to point out some places where awards have been long deserved and not given, or places where the award-winners are likely to be obscure and hard to notice.

I already mentioned John Varley. He has narrowly missed too many awards. Without any boost from me, he is going to get them this year.

There are several fine editors around. I have as good a reason as anyone to know that Ben Bova is an excellent editor -- his help on my stories and his encouragement in my career have been the difference between moderate success and miserable failure. Another fine editor is Jim Baen. We have never had so good an opportunity to recognize the talents of an editor as when GALAXY went to hell after Baen's departure. Now, with DESTINIES, he is editing the most attractive of the magazines.

But Ben has had plenty of awards and Jim can wait another year, because the greatest inequity in the awards is the fact that Ed Ferman has never won an editing Hugo. Perhaps you haven't ever gone through every story in every issue of every magazine for six months as I have, but believe me, Ed Ferman's magazine, FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION, is the most consistently excellent in the fiction it presents. Issue after issue, F&SF has as good an average as any anthology I've read -- fine stories are always in the overwhelming majority.

Ed has told me that he just buys what the writers send him. But there has to be a reason writers continue to send him some of their best work in spite of F&SF's relatively paltry payment rates. Part of the reason is because the magazine is open to fantasy and horror and experimental writing. But most of the reason is because writers are proud to appear in such an excellent magazine, even though it doesn't pay that much. At least I am. And, personally, I think it's about time Ed Ferman received the only recognition the fans can give him.

There are other fine editors who deserve to be noticed. Stanley Schmidt will do a good job at ANALOG. Terry Carr and Robert Silverberg are still turning out annual anthologies that are always noteworthy.

There's a newer editor who also deserves to be noticed. Despite a sometimes problematical publisher (Zebra) and shoddy distribution, Roy Torgeson's anthology, CHRYSALIS, is the most exciting thing to hit the anthology market in a long time. I included stories from CHRYSALIS 2 in my short fiction review column this issue; CHRYSALIS 3 is already out and CHRYSALIS 4 will be out in February. Roy's judgment on stories is excellent. Inevitably, each issue contains a few that I absolutely loathe -- but each issue also contains more than a few that I absolutely love. While the stories by well-known writers are quite good, the most exciting thing is Roy Torgeson's aptitude for discovering new writers.

Which brings me to the Campbell award. Let's face it -- the whole point of the Campbell award is to rescue good new writers from obscurity. Unfortunately, the very obscurity of the writers sometimes works against their receiving the award. After all, the award wasn't given to George R.R. Martin, John Varley or Thomas Monteleone. A pretty impressive list of people who were overlooked. At the same time, it has been given to some pretty good writers, most of the time. And I have a vested interst in seeing excellent writers win it in the future -- it'll make that plaque on my wall more and more meaningful all the time.

The award has tended to go to novelists or to ANALOG writers because novel-readers and ANALOG readers are the two largest groups of voters. Ergo, let me bring to your attention several writers who deserve at least to be on the ballot this year, and who haven't appeared in books or in ANALOG.

Karen Jollie's first story, "The Works of His Hand, Made Manifest", is, in my estimation, a fully self-contained masterpiece. It is emotional, it is exciting, the characterization is subtle, believable, beautiful. And after that story appeared in CHRYSALIS 2, she upped and wrote herself a sequel, titled "Chrysalis Three", which appeared (get this) in CHRYSALIS 3. I didn't think she could do it, but she topped her first story with her second. Watch her. Brilliant things are coming from her corner.

Another Roy Torgeson discovery is Craig Shaw Gardner. All right, all right -- he appeared first in UNEARTH. But the work that moves him to the forefront of new SF/fantasy authors is "One More Song Before I Go", which appeared in CHRYSALIS 2. He is an excellent writer, it is an excellent story, ergo: Notice him, good people!

And Stephen R. Donaldson is still eligible for the Campbell award this year -- for the last time.

One final suggestion. If you haven't read the novelet, "Ghost Stalk" by Glen Cook, which appeared in the May, 1978, FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION, get a copy and read it. It will almost knock you dead. (If it did knock you dead, who would read his next story?)

I had plenty of other favorites this year, but they're likely to get noticed without any help from me. In fact, you may well have noticed the ones I've mentioned already. I just wanted, well, to make sure. Because the awards do mean something, and it's our responsibility to do what's necessary to keep them meaning something for a long time to come.

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ATTENTION ARTISTS!!!!!

Please sign your work with initials, name, or on the back! I forget very quickly who did which unless your style is unique and long known to me. Thanks.

— REG

AN INTERVIEW WITH STEPHEN R. DONALDSON

SFR: Your trilogy, THE CHRONICLES OF THOMAS COVENANT THE UNBELIEVER, will inevitably be compared/ contrasted with J.R.R. Tolkien's LORD OF THE RINGS trilogy. I know you have great respect for Tolkien's work but isn't it difficult to explore the same grounds without losing your own originality? Is that why Covenant is such an unsympathetic character -- even an anti-hero? Are his leprosy and bitterness an antidote for Hobittitis?

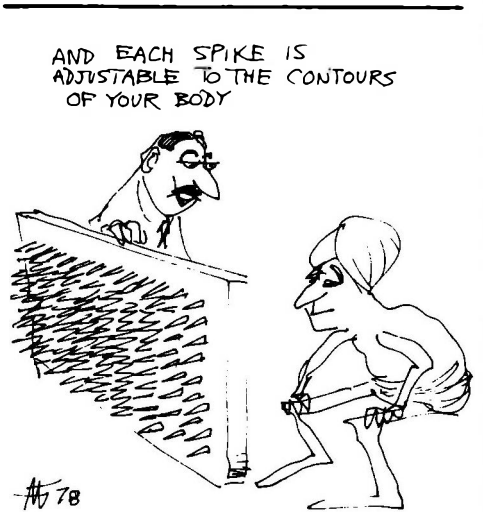
DONALDSON: Ah, where to begin? Let me say first that I shudder every time anybody compares/contrasts COVENANT with LORD OF THE RINGS. Of course, my respect for Tolkien is unbounded, so in that sense I suppose I should feel flattered. But comparisons/contrasts are often odious to the people being compared/ contrasted. Writing fiction, after all, is not a competition. In fact, nothing can destroy a writer faster than a tendency to compare/contrast himself with some towering predecessor.

In writing COVENANT, I was certainly aware that I was working in Tolkien's shadow (after all, his shadow covers most of the field). But I took LORD OF THE RINGS as a source of inspiration, rather than as any kind of counter-argument or antithesis. I read Tolkien while I was planning COVENANT as a way of reminding myself of the value of fantasy (at that time, I had never been published, never written any fantasy, and almost never read any worthwhile fantasy; Tolkien, Lewis and Peake were the exceptions). So I certainly was not looking for any kind of antidote for Hobbittitis. I was looking for Donaldson -- trying to explore the kinds of things that moved/excited/convinced me, with as little reference as possible to anybody else.

As for Covenant himself, I've never considered him to be "unsympathetic". I wouldn't have written him if he had not so fully engaged my sympathies. But, of course, while I was writing him in LORD FOUL'S BANE, I knew what he was going to become in THE POWER THAT PRESERVES. That -- combined with my interest in people whose guilt arises from their essential innocence (just as their innocence grows out of their guilt) -- probably gives me an unusual tolerance for him.

SFR: The giant called Saltheart Foamfollower, the most likable character in LORD FOUL'S BANE is a great talker and laugher whose credo is "When comprehension is needed, all tales must be told in full". Is this an expression of your own view? Is this why you wrote a trilogy rather than a single volume?

DONALDSON: If I were to use that quote from Foamfollower to support what I've done (not to mention what I may do in the future), that would be rationalization rather than defense. As a general rule, when I'm writing I try to express what my characters believe, rather than ask them to express what I believe. And, from a strictly logical point



of view, no tale is ever told "in full".

I wrote COVENANT as fully as I did for a variety of reasons: in part because that's the way my brain works (I think I'm a natural born long-novelist); in part because the more fully I wrote, the more completely the story commanded my attention; and in part because I swore I was going to (I had recently read a spate of books, the authors of which did not appear to appreciate the value of their own material; these skimpy books were full of unrealized potential, and I concluded that the most frustrating writer in the world is one who is too stupid to know it when his imagination is trying to tell him something. I resolved not to make that mistake myself).

Structurally, COVENANT fell into trilogy form in my mind almost from the moment of its first conception. The "triple-decker", like the sonata, is a very attractive arrangement for people like me. So I welcomed the possibility of doing COVENANT as a trilogy as if there were no other choice. (To be fair, however, I probably should say that my initial forecast of COVENANT called for a manuscript of 1000 pages. The manuscript eventually reached 2355, before I was forced -- first by my friends, then by my editor -- to cut it back to 1940. I suppose that if that doesn't constitute "in full", nothing does. It turned out to be fuller than I had originally intended.)

SFR: You were quoted in a local (Albuquerque) newspaper as saying the Covenant trilogy was rejected by every fiction publisher in the country, then revised and resubmitted to Ballantine where it was accepted but was "whipped into shape" under the guidance of fantasy editor Lester del Rey. What kind of evolution did you go through during this process? What kind of guidance did del Rey provide?

DONALDSON: COVENANT was, in fact, rejected by every fiction publisher listed in the 73-74 LITERARY MARKETPLACE, including both my present publishers, Ballantine and Holt. I was unpublished, and had no prospect of ever finding a publisher -- in view of the fact that COVENANT was the best work I'd ever done. If it was unpublishable (as many editors told me), there was no hope.

During those years of full-time writing, all day every day, month after month, I learned to appreciate Prothall's great truth: "Service enables service". The only thing that kept me going was COVENANT itself: The story simply refused to let go of me. Even then, by the time I finished writing the trilogy, rewriting it, and then rewriting LORD FOUL'S BANE a third time (the conclusion of that work coincided very nicely with the end of my alphabetical "mystery tour" through American publishing), I was a walking textbook case of depression -- a perfect clinical study.

Several things happened to my writing in the process. I gained

insights into despair and death that improved the quality of my work. And, on a more pragmatic level, I learned to write leaner prose (COVENANT may not be absolutely "lean" as it stands; but in my third rewriting of LORD FOUL'S BANE, I reduced the manuscript from 787 to 622 pages without shedding a drop of blood. COVENANT is certainly "leaner".) I learned to trust "story" rather than "language": I learned to resist some of my bad habits -- e.g. a pernicious tendency toward abstract imagery.

At that point, I resubmitted LORD FOUL'S BANE to Ballantine out of sheer desperation. I had no idea that the former Fantasy Editor had been fired, or that Lester del Rey had taken his place. So, in a very real sense, I was saved by happenstance. Lester's enthusiasm for the book was almost immediate.

In return for restoring my psyche, Lester required that I: 1) cut as much fat out of THE ILLEARTH WAR and THE POWER THAT PRESERVES as I had out of LORD FOUL'S BANE; and 2) correct some truly horrendous problems of inner consistency that I had half-wittedly created for myself in THE ILLEARTH WAR. So his editorial contribution was of the best possible kind: He helped me to do a better job of bringing my own desires into being. Now (two and a half years later) he and I have a relationship which is half mutual admiration, half sumo wrestling.

SFR: You were also quoted in the news story to the effect that "good vs. evil" is an important theme in your work. BANE certainly has heroes and villains, but the more heroic or villainous they are, the less convincing they seem to be. Is Covenant, who is a typical human mixture of good and evil, a demonstration of the "golden mean" between heroism and villainousness?

DONALDSON: This seems to be a good time for me to discuss the relationship between LORD FOUL'S BANE and the rest of the trilogy. Structurally, of course, each of the three books can stand alone -- i.e. each has a beginning, middle and end. But I conceived and designed the trilogy to be a single story: LORD FOUL'S BANE launches issues that I do not even pretend to resolve until THE POWER THAT PRESERVES. It was never my intent that any one of these books should be considered independent of the other two. Hence any attempt to interpret COVENANT based on LORD FOUL'S BANE alone is doomed from the beginning.

Covenant is certainly not a "golden mean" in any normal sense. His is an extravagent personality, for good or ill -- almost literally incapable of emotional (or ethical) moderation. So he is a mixture of good and evil insofar as he contains within himself the raw materials of which both Lord Mhoram and Lord Foul were created: both are aspects of himself. But, within that context, I perceive him as being far more heroic than villainous: Even his bitterness is just part of his ceaseless and uncompromising attempt to define some kind of integrity for himself in the face of the impossible contradictions of his situation.

In fact, I might as well come right out and say that I deeply admire my heroic characters -- Bannor, Foamfollower, Mhoram. If they are indeed "less convincing" than Covenant (or Atiaran?), that is a symptom of artistic failure rather than authorial intent. As for the other extreme, Lord Foul is more a conception, a walking definition of evil, than a person; and I would hate to have him judged solely on the basis of his believability as a character. Within this spectrum, Covenant is no "golden mean": He is a "humane instinct" seeking to define himself in opposition to an "instinct for contempt". In my view, both of those "instincts" are "typically human".

SFR: I occasionally had the feeling in BANE that the evils being fought were symbols of our real-world problems of pollution-population-war and so on. Is there a message in the Covenant trilogy?

DONALDSON: Well, I happen to think that there are all kinds of messages -- all kinds of what we used to call "relevance" -- for the "real world" in COVENANT. But it ill-behooves the writer to go around pointing them out. I take myself too seriously as it is. So I'll content myself by saying that my conception of "evil" is very much rooted in the real world. I believe that a contempt for life-- which manifests itself variously as cynicism, self-pity, self-hatred, racial or sexual prejudice, apathy, environmental suicide, political turpitude, self-righteousness (the list goes on and on) -- is the besetting ill of our civilization. We are terribly quick to commit every form of murder -- and equally swift to call everyone else murderers. Lord Foul chuckles every time.

SFR: Who beside Tolkien has been the major influence on your outlook and writing?

DONALDSON: As a 'fantasist", I look with affection and respect at C.S. Lewis, and with frustrated admiration at Mervyn Peake. But most of my roots lie in the mainstream of realistic fiction (I was, after all, a Ph.D. candidate in English Literature before I began writing full time).

My heroes have always been Conrad, James and Faulkner. Sometimes I believe that everything I have always wanted to know about writing (and most of what I've wanted to know about people) can be found in those three giants. Each of them creates an entire ethos of language. I aspire to that level, but I've got a long way to go.

But, oddly enough, I don't trace COVENANT back to any of those three. Rather, I trace it to Blake and Camus -- strange bedfellows, about both of whom at least half my

knowledge is second-hand. Blake in his numinous world-view -- like Camus in his pragmatic one -- insisted on the affirmation of contradictions. For Blake, neither God nor the devil was evil: Evil lay in separating God from the devil (Heaven from Hell, soul from body, stasis from energy, black from white) and trying to choose one over the other. All choices are evil unless the contradiction is made whole, unless both sides of the paradox are affirmed. For Camus, man is in the absurd position of being a questioning animal in an unanswering universe (no, worse than that -- a universe which contains no answers, which is utterly void of purpose or meaning); and Camus' response is to affirm both the blankness of the universe and the importance of the questions -- to affirm the absurd, the paradox, because it is the vital stuff of life. "Sisyphus is happy".

Covenant is torn between the impossibility of believing the Land true, and the impossibility of believing it false: It is unreal and irrefusable. He comes into his power when he learns to affirm the paradox itself. He is like the prophet who finally had a vision of the Truth: God is/God is not. That revelation answered all his questions.

SFR: What's the story behind the fantasy language we get glimpses of in BANE? Is this an elaborately worked out part of the background?

DONALDSON: I probably shouldn't answer this question: Some people are going to be disappointed. But I'll go ahead, if for no other reason than to defend myself against misplaced expectations.

Unlike Tolkien (or C.J. Cherryh), I'm not a linguist. In fact, from the point of view of linguistics, I can't even master English: I can write grammatically enough, as a rule, but I couldn't define a "subordinate clause" to save my soul. In other words, my grasp of grammar is visceral rather than intellectual (surely the rhetoric of COVENANT bears this out). And as for foreign languages -- well, I nearly flunked college German.

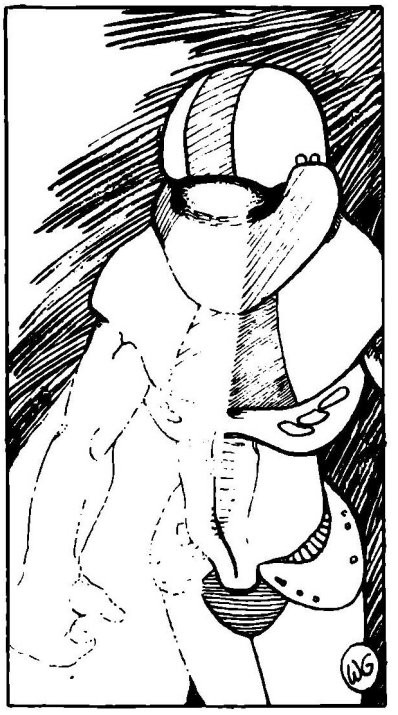
As a consequence, the "fantasy language" in COVENANT is not "elaborate" in any deliberate sense. It is visceral rather than intellectual: I created it all by ear. In the process, I "stole" heavily from whatever resources came to hand. This really should not be a revelation to anyone: Many of the names I use are clearly not "made up" (for example, the ancient names of the Ravers -- samadhi/Sheol, turiya/Herem, moksha/Jehannum -- were words which met two criteria: (1 Their sounds matched the use I made of them and 2) their true meanings were emotionally appropriate to the use I made of them.

My purpose in using "fantasy language" is simply to try to evoke the strangeness, mystery and power of a "fantasy world". But don't misunderstand me: I would gladly make my fantasy language "an elaborately-worked-out part of the background" -- if only I were capable of so doing. Unfortunately, you can't get blood from a turnip.

SFR: The use of leprosy in the Covenant trilogy stems from your childhood in India -- what else would you say was a result of your unique upbringing?

DONALDSON: That's not easily answered. Like anybody else, I am who I am because of where I came from. One could easily argue that everything about me is a result of my unique upbringing.

But I suppose that the most obvious effects of my background on my writing were to make my fiction romantic, religious, exotic and grim. Romantic because my life was full of adventure (just to give one small example: I remember a day when the boarding school I attended was closed because a man-eating tiger was known to be in the area; hunters killed the cat that night and displayed the body the next day), and because my parents were people of superior commitment and efficacy (how many kids in this country can literally "believe in" their parents? The power of my father's skills was visible on ev-



ery streetcorner). Religious because as missionaries we were constantly steeped in religion; it was the supreme motivator of our lives. Exotic because India is an exotic country, full of extremes of experience that make America look like a remarkably bland place (most children raised in India go through a crisis of boredom that threatens to become terminal during their first year or two in the USA). And grim because India teems with poverty, filth, degradation and pain unparalleled by anything in the United States.

Therefore, I write fantasy. I call myself a romantic, and write about leprosy. My characters don't believe in God and I call myself religious. Not many people spend as much time contradicting themselves as I do.

SFR: Your use of horses and superhorses in BANE -- is this just a poetic image or are you a horse fancier in real life?

DONALDSON: Actually, I dislike horses. They are the stupidest animals known to man, and nothing is worth the amount of trouble they bring with them. I know from experience: My wife loves horses, and we raised one for five and a half years. At one time while I was writing COVENANT, that horse of hers convinced me to kill off all the Ranyhyn. She had to resort to emotional violence to make me change my mind.

(Well, seriously, now -- there was a time while writing COVENANT when I intended to destroy the Ranyhyn: I thought that was an appropriate thing for Lord Foul to do. My wife convinced me that I was in danger of destroying my story by carrying wholesale slaughter too far. She was absolutely right.)

But as a child (say, eight to ten years old) I was fairly typical in my attitude toward horses. I wanted to be the Lone Ranger and I couldn't very well do that without Silver. (Or was his horse named Kemo Sabe? I forget.) Writing fantasy is often a child-like (if not actually a childish) activity. In creating the Ranyhyn, I harked back to the days when I would have wanted one of my own.

SFR: What are you working on now? Science fiction? More fantasy? Non-fiction?

DONALDSON: After Lester and I arrived at a final manuscript for COVENANT, I wrote one fantasy story ("The Lady in White", F&SF, Feb. '78) and two science fiction stories ("Animal Lover", STELLAR #4, and "Mythological Beast", F&SF, to be announced). But then I decided to tackle something different. I wrote a detective novel. It had a lot of virtues, but the plot wasn't good enough -- it bombed. But producing it did me some good: It reminded me of all the reasons why I like writing fantasy so much.

That lesson gave me the courage to attempt something of which I had been deathly afraid -- a sequel to COVENANT. I think the fear was justified: There's nothing in fiction as bad as a bad sequel, and I might never be able to salvage my self-respect if I let COVENANT (not to mention Covenant) down. But finally I decided that the sequel I had in mind was worth the risk. After all, life is a risk. And, as Mhoram once said, "Anything that passes unattempted is impossible".

So that's what I'm working on now -- the Second COVENANT Trilogy

(variously known among friends and sceptics as "II Chronicles", and "Covenant Redux"). It's going very slowly because I've made a lot of mistakes. All I can say to readers who liked COVENANT is, I'm doing my damnedest to make this story a worthy companion to the first trilogy. And Lester is holding my nose to the grindstone with an iron hand.

SFR: That brings up the age-old question of where-do-you-get-your-ideas? Is inspiration or perspiration the most important in your fiction?

DONALDSON: Where? From the un- or sub-conscious recesses of my own mind (ideas that actually originate outside have no value). When I'm receptive, they can be fished to the surface by almost any kind of external stimuli (one whole sequence in THE POWER THAT PRESERVES was triggered by a can of disinfectant in a restaurant washroom). However, to the extent that ideas do come from some discrete source, most of my ideas come from the story itself. "Service enables service": Working generates both the capacity and the material for future work. In short, I endorse E. Newman's dictum (which I paraphrase -- he was talking about musicians): "Great writers do not set to work because they are inspired, but rather become inspired because they are working".

Of course, no one can ignore what Patricia A. McKillip calls, "the tail of the comet": Revelations which sweep out of nowhere and change everything. One cannot predict or summon such intense insights -- one can only be grateful for them. But I do get a lot more of them when I'm working than when I'm not.

And where less exalted ideas are concerned, I believe that the imagination is like any other muscle: exercise makes it stronger. Writers grow by writing, not by waiting around for the comet. When the act of writing itself (sitting down at the typewriter, putting words on paper) becomes a habit, that habit greatly facilitates the achievement of the receptive state in which ideas appear. Furthermore, the excitement of putting previously-obtained ideas into practice brings up new ideas -- which increases the excitement -- which generates more ideas. That is where the true magic of writing occurs -- in the imaginative cyclotron which enables the writer to exceed himself.

The single most crippling obstacle to this process is self-consciousness: Self-consciousness blocks receptivity. No writer can reach down into his own intuition while his attention is trapped on the surface of his ego. That, in a nutshell, is why writers need privacy -- and why no writer can afford to think of writing as a competition.

SFR: How does it feel to be a hit? Are you satisfied with the response to the trilogy?

DONALDSON: How do you define a "hit"? For a $30 set of books by an unknown author, COVENANT has sold fairly well in hardback. The reviews have been good, and I get a certain amount of fan-mail. Thus far, I'm more than satisfied.

But I think that the contemporary audience for fantasy is largely a paperback audience. We'll find out whether or not COVENANT is a serious success when Del Rey Books publishes its edition.

Frankly, I hope that COVENANT does not become what I would call a "hit". Success in large doses exerts a great deal of pressure, and most of its effects are negative (quick, try to think of an immensely successful author whose future books were not a disappointment). For one thing, successful writers tend to lose their privacy: They become part of the public domain. For another, it is very difficult for a writer to have a "hit" behind him without falling into the trap of looking at his new work as a form of self-competition.

However, I'm trying to support my family (and my ego) in this business. Large success or small, I'll try to accept it as gracefully as I can. After what I've been through as a writer, I'm grateful for success, period.

SFR: Thank you, Mr. Donaldson.

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ALIEN THOUGHTS CONT. FROM P. 19

'One of the reasons Elwood's INSPIRATION folded may have been because the stores sent it back to the distributor as soon as it came. That's what B. Dalton did, anyway. Religious exploitation bullshit doesn't sell and anyone who buys the name/concept/contact lists from Petersen needs psychiatric help.

'Whenever SFR seems to drag a bit, I think back to a couple of issues of ALGOL I read. Than I smile and keep reading. Do people actually loc that thing?'

((Of course BEDROOM CITY was not sf, or fantasy. A mere sex novel, very tame by today's hard-core porno standards.))

1-23-79 I'm getting a few letters from subscribers telling of mixed-up pages, missing sections, in their copies of SFR #29.

I noticed that a small percentage of the copies I was inserting in envelopes were mis-collated, and went through as many copies as I could to check. I missed some, obviously.

Someone in the Times Litho printing plant goofed. I'm sorry this happened. I've forwarded the info to Times Litho, and they promise it will be guarded against in future issues. Indeed, it's the first time it's happened since I first employed them to print TAC/SFR in 1975 (I think it was).

If you received such a copy, please let me know and we'll send a perfect new copy of #29.

I'm getting the galloping Guilties again regarding all the books and magazines I receive and cannot review or even note, given the present SFR format.

It's really not fair.

So starting next issue---May, 1979---I'll go to a continuing "Publications Received" series of entries in these "Alien Thoughts." There will be an almost daily diary-type situation, I think, with books and mags received (with whatever I may have to say about them) in a box.

Part of the reason for this change is that there is a need for this info and part a compensation for my inability to free much time for reading and reviewing. In fact, in the following months I'm going to be writing more sf and other type novels for separate publication by myself and other publishers, and that means even less time to read/review.

Yet the demand/obligation of daily entries in this bastard editor's diary will inevitably produce more editorial/reviewing words by me than if I just tootle along as I have been. I'm naturally lazy, and tend to sluff-off a lot. The result is the readers and publishers get shortchanged by me too often. I have to structure-in work---I have to force myself by various devices---to get work done. A near-daily pot-pourri of letters, commentary, and publications-received entry will take a specific time during the morning and will, I think, be of great interest and value to SFR readers.

The problem is---who or what will get cut to make room for this expanded Geis presence? I'm not sure. All I can do is ask the reviewing crew and columnist crew to be a bit more brief. And I think I'll be editing most contributions more close to the bone.

LETTER FROM ALLAN BEATTY
POB 1040
Ames, IA 50010
10 January 1979

'Darrell Schweitzer's article in SFR #29 might as well have been titled "FIAWOL -- A Look Behind Sci-Fi Fandom". In talking down to the reader and in the low level of actual information imparted, it resembled certain books with similar titles. What was the point of publishing the article in SFR anyway? Schweitzer's cliquish in-group attitude will put off the reader who is not a hardcore fan, and hardcore fan will find nothing in the essay that they didn't already know. Yes, I know fandom often is cliquish and in-groupish, but a better article would have gone into more detail on this and other aspects of the sociology of fandom, rather than spending so much space on a mere listing of slang terms.

'Schweitzer says, "There are literally thousands of them (fanzines) going right now, and all attempts to keep track of them inevitably fail". I attempt to do just that in the FANZINE DIRECTORY, an annual bibliography of all fanzines (that I can find out about) published in the previous year. The 1976 edition listed 874 different titles (different fanzines, not number of issues published), and that did not include apazines. The FANZINE DIRECTORY is priced at $1, but I prefer to trade with other fanzines.'

((A problem is staying power, in keeping track of new and current fanzines, plus deciding what is and what isn't a sf or fantasy fanzine. There are so many variations, shadings of content...mixtures.... It usually drives collectors and bibliophiles mad.))

LETTER FROM RONALD LAMBERT
2350 Virginia
Troy, MI 48084
Dec. 12, 1978

'Question: Who is John Norman really? I know that Elton T. Elliott said some time back that the author of the Gor novels is a New York City College instructor who is actually named John Norman. That may be -- I don't know how good Elton's source was.

'But can someone tell me why Volume III of the Chronicles of Counter-Earth, PRIEST-KINGS OF GOR (Ballantine Books, 1968) ascribes the copyright to "John Lange?"

'John Lange, as most people know, is a penname used by Michael Crichton for his suspense stories, like BINARY and ZERO COOL.

'Is the copyright notice in PK ofG a mistake?

'Or is Michael Crichton the one to blame for the Gor novels?

'Whoever is responsible, I have a bone to pick with him over the way the series has degenerated. The first Gor novels I liked. There was an implied sense of proper outrage at the kidnapping of Earth women by Gor slavers, and it seemed that the hero realized that the Gorian practice of subjugating women was wrong -- he made his lover a "free companion". But later on in the series, the author seems to approve of female slavery, and continually eulogizes the Gorian barbarity.

'If the recent Gor novels accurately reflect the author's psychological state, then he is a sick man. I would be uneasy to have him for a neighbor. At the very least, he would be pitiable for his evident ignorance of real love. The "love" he writes about wouldn't even satisfy most animals, let alone human beings. If that is the only love he knows, then he has not gotten something that is a basic need of the human psyche, and he could not avoid being a sickie because of this lack.'

((I've heard and read that the Gor novels are written by a college prof. Could be John Lange. Could be Michael Crichton is another pen name for John Lange. Could be a coincidence that Crichton chose Lange as a pen-name. Could be we'll have to wait for someone who really knows for sure to tell us.

((You're making that old mistake of assuming that the work of fiction is a reflection/mirror/clue to the mental state of the writer. In which case all us writers have a lot to answer to. Actually, in the Gor novels, I'm sure the author is simply indulging a small corner of his id, indulging in fantasies that he would never apply to the real world. And his fantasies strike chords in a lot of readers.

LETTER FROM SANDRA MIESEL
8744 N. Pennsylvania St.
Indianapolis, IN 46240
Jan. 8, 1979

'The thermodynamic justification for the behavior of living organisms was worked out by 1977 Nobel laureate Ilya Prigogine. He showed how certain systems far from equilibrium draw organizing energy from their environment but of course at the cost of increasing entropy in the total package. I'm not about to try to explain it in any more detail -- thermo filled me with utter dread in my chemistry days. But I had to review the subject while researching my Borgo booklet on Poul Anderson, AGAINST TIME'S ARROW, which uses the Laws of Thermodynamics as its organizing metaphor. I'm not aware of anyone using science this way in SF criticism before.

'Surely, Geis, even you must have heard the expression "Holy Mother Church". In Scripture and iconography the Church has always been personified as female. So for that matter was Synagoga in the Middle Ages. Let's not be coy about the amount of anti-Christian and particularly anti-Catholic bigotry in fandom, the latter surely a reflection of the high percentage of lapsed Catholics among us. It's a fashionable stance of course, "the anti-Semitism of the intelligensia". No one would dare sneer ar Neopaganism, would they?

'But then, considering SF's experience with Roger Elwood ..... I must admit I read your account of INSPIRATION's demise with glee. The wretch got his just deserts for once. Several years ago, while that magazine was in the planning stage, I was commissioned to write an essay for it relating to SF at an appealing 10 cents a word. The assignment was a sop for a previous outrage of his and since it took so little effort, I gambled and wrote it up. But once Roger moved to California, nothing was ever heard from him again (June, 1977). He never responded to my queries about the fate of the essay, not even returned the MS. Joe Haldeman's efforts as Grievance Chairman drew no reaction either. So I tried to sell the thing elsewhere. Today it goes out for the eighth time. Writing to Roger's exact specifications produced something with a paranoid flavor that appeals to no other editor. The only point in telling Elwood stories at this late date is catharsis. Also, we who were stung by him need to know we weren't the only victims.

'Glad you liked the cover painting on the Winter issue of ALGOL. It happens to belong to me and, indeed, be modeled on me. A number of other Freas illustrations are, too, but this is a recognizable likeness.

'Brunner and Covell were just not on the same wavelength, were they? But Brunner's expressed admiration for Kipling neatly refutes the widespread assumption that such taste is merely a rightist (nay, fascist) aberration in our field. And notice the resemblance between his literary principles and Gordy Dickson's theory of the "consciously thematic novel".'

ALIEN THOUGHTS CONT. ON P. 63

AND THEN I READ....

THE NECROMICON---The Book of Dead Names, edited by George Hay. Published in UK by Neville Spearman (Jersey) Ltd. £5.50

Not the book detailed by H.P. Lovecraft, but a book that purports to show that there is something real about the Cthulhu mythos and to that end Colin Wilson and L. Sprague de Camp and others---with their tongues in cheeks---straightfacedly go about this business. With additional research by Robert Turner and David Langford, and especially with the very effective illustrations by Gavin Stamp and Robert Turner, the book comes across as a combination of convincing speculation and "fact" married to research into the occult. A handsome hardcover, bound in black, with a suitably somber and chilling dust jacket by Reg Boorer.

I would consider this something of a collector's item and worth having for the aura of truth attained and the skill that implies. You might call this occult fiction nonfiction. Then again you might not.

HANDBOOK FOR SPACE PIONEERS---A Manual of the Galactic Association (Earth Branch)
Prepared by L. Stephen Wolfe and Roy L. Wysack.
Grosset & Dunlap, Inc. $7.95

Another fictional non-fiction book, of a kind that Stanislaw Lem called for some years ago as alternatives to pure sf novels.

This is an as-if handbook for colonists who have a choice of eight planets to choose from, complete with maps, geography, weather info, and samples of life experiences on each.

The manual tells how colonists are chosen, the starships used for transport (designs, etc) and even includes a preliminary application for the Gaile Pioneering Program.

The manual is painstakingly detailed, convincing, and attractive with its high-quality softcover binding and letter-size pages. A vast amount of work went into this book.

Again, something of a collector's item. I doubt this type of science-fictional non-fiction will be very popular, if only because it lacks story and fiction dynamics.

THE OFFICIAL BATTLESTAR GALACTICA SCRAPBOOK
By James Neyland
Grosset & Dunlap, $6.95

Chock full of still photos from the TV series, chock full of praise for the TV series and its creators, and chock full of background information about the production of the series, and chock full of info about the actors and actresses in the series.

Printed in the increasingly popular full-size quality paper, slick cover stock soft-bound format.

Hype, hype, hooray!

THE ANTS WHO TOOK AWAY TIME
By William Kotzwinkle
Pictures by Joe Servello
Doubleday, $6.95

Aimed at the 6 to 10-year-old reader. A bit of fantasy science fiction about the Great Gold Watch which keeps time for the universe. Then, while the head timekeeper is on vacation, giant ants start to disassemble and cart away the Clock. Time stops everywhere except....

I suspect this picture-and-big-print book will be liked by those children barely old enough to read its words, but to anyone older than eight I think it will be dumb, childish, and corny...because kids of eight & up will have watched the more disciplined and "mature" sf on TV.

Hardbound, about 60 pages, illustrations-on-every-page in color.

Note: the characters are all males of various ages.

ICE!
By Arnold Federbush
Bantam 12151-0, $2.25

I read this chiller about an incredibly fast-developing ice age while huddled in blankets without electricity in the house and an ice storm ravaging the city. The novel has an aura of Jesus-Christ-this-could-happen! authenticity, gut-realism, some sex, and a great cover by Lou Feck which shows NY City enveloped in fifty feet of snow.

But now with the ice melted and the oil furnace going I think Federbush exaggerated by hundreds of years the speed of the horrendous ice age which is mankind's doom.

The story is about a young college meteorologist who spotted the signs of doom and could not make himself be believed by the powers-that-be until too late. In the end he, too, was unable to adapt to the new, brutal cold equations of survival. Good book.

THE RUINS OF ISIS
By Marion Zimmer Bradley
Starblaze Editions (Donning), $4.95

A beautiful wraparound cover by Kelly Freas (who, with his wife Polly edits this series) makes this trade softcover book a very handsome package.

The novel by MZB is a set-up, a contrived situation story in which she examines sexism by both sexes, prejudice and chauvinism by both sexes...

There is no case being made for matriarchy---or patriarchy---in this story of a man and wife team sent to a dogmatic matriarchial world to examine the society and the ancient ruins said to have been left by the mythical Builders of galactic civilization of eons past.

The male Master Scholar must pose as a sexual plaything of the woman Scholar, with resulting problems. Inevitably, the Scholars become involved in the politics of the planet Isis.

Marion Zimmer Bradley forces the reader to look at his/her own attitudes and preconceptions in re sexism and prejudice while progressing through the novel. It's a learning experience. For some it could be traumatic.

A good novel, though it clanks a bit with Message.

TOMORROW AND BEYOND
Edited by Ian Summers
Workman Publishing Co., $9.95
1 West 39th St., NY, NY 10018

Ahh, this is THE pure sf and fantasy artbook. It is almost all full-color reproductions of the finest, most enthralling, wonderful paintings in the world.

300 paintings...the best work of more than 65 artists... Many, many paintings you'll recognize from the covers of magazines and books, here fully shown. Many, many, many you have never seen before...beautiful renderings in full 9 x 12 size.

BOOK REVIEWS
By The Editor

The editor, Ian Summers, picked the paintings, assembled them in categories such as Aliens, Astronauts, Barbarians, Spacecraft, Robots, Fantasy, Other Worlds...and then got the hell out of the way.

There is an Index of painters at the end, and an Appendix telling the artist of each painting, its title, its professional appearance. Many of the paintings are as yet unused on covers, and are listed simply 'Untitled, from the artist's studio.'

For beauty, quality, variety, and quantity, this large trade softcover is the best I've seen.

VECTOR ANALYSIS
By Jack C. Haldeman, II
Berkley/Putnam, $8.95

Captured alien animals brought aboard a science space station in orbit over Earth project visions to the human scientists and, as a result of an environment leak, spread a strange, fatal disease.

Haldeman has written a good, solid suspense story, a race to find an antidote before everyone is infected and dies. It is a predictable story, too, with stock characters, including the evil politician trapped on the satellite, the strong, courageous commander, the young male scientist with the inspired, desperate, solution. All in the ANALOG tradition.

THE MAGIC GOES AWAY
By Larry Niven
Illustrated by Estaban Maroto, cover by Boris
Ace, $4.95

With a large black and white illustration on almost every page, this story of a quest to find more of the mana which makes magic possible, in a pre-historic civilization in which magic is dying out, is enhanced considerably. Larry Niven writes realistically of a small group of old, failing magicians on a last, desperate search. He adds a guilt-laden warrior...a powerful rival magician...a wild and weird journey aboard "solid" clouds.... The novel ...or novela...is an exceptionally fine piece of realistic, disciplined fantasy.

Maroto is a fine craftsman. His drawings make the story more interesting and concrete.

The format is the increasingly popular trade paperback: hardcover size, with quality book paper and full-color heavy-stock cover.

COWBOY HEAVEN
By Ron Goulart
Doubleday, $7.95

Ron is the master of the dictum, 'Be brief.' He can convey more information in fewer words than any writer I know. He is a master of dialog. And because he is viewed as a 'hack' by most reviewers, his books' social satire and acid commentary on humanity and society are too often overlooked because he mixes the bite with the ever-present drollery, humor, caricature, and jape.

This one is about an agent's desperate attempt to pass off an intelligent androidal robot copy of a John Wayne-type movie super star as the real thing because the star is out of it because of heart trouble.

Fun reading. Vinnegar and spice.

THE PERFECT LOVER
By Christopher Priest
Dell, $1.75

How Chris must have howled when he learned of Dell's retitling of this novel. It was originally published in England as A DREAM OF WESSEX.

The story is about an experiment with the Ridpath projector---a machine that can link the minds of 30-40 people while their bodies---in a giant filing cabinet---are fed and kept hypnotised. The aim is to create a probable future for England and the world and from that future divine a way to avoid it.

The future they expect is one Sovietized and drab.

There is a romance that develops between two of the "dreamers" while they are in the "future"---she is Julia, the key character around whom the story flows---slowly, by the way ---and who, in the end, is as confused as the reader as the author does a number on Reality and we all find ourselves baffled by which reality is the real one---and David, who is immune to the hypnotic triggers which are supposed to bring him back from the "future" for rest and recuperation; he has been in the machine for two years.

There is a madman in the dream, screwing up the "future"...

This book had potential but it fell apart and lies here on my floor in a catatonic trance, all its loose ends exposed.

LETTER FROM LARRY NIVEN

November, 1978

'Enclosed are four cartoons and a possibly cryptic list, and this letter. They all relate to the word "rishathra".

'"Rishathra" is a word used extensively in THE RINGWORLD ENGINEERS, a sequel to RINGWORLD, now two-thirds finished. It is one of the few words common to all of the Ringworld languages.

'The word means "Sex outside of one's species, but within the hominids". Sometimes rishathra applies to intelligent hominids only, and sometimes not, depending on who (and what) you're talking to. A given species' attitude toward rishathra, whether determined by custom or by biology, can be very important in trading, in treaties, in war.

'Obviously, what Louis Wu was doing with Halrloprillalar was "rishathra".

'I was having lunch with Bill and Charmin a year ago, and I broached this subject. I had been jotting down a list of possible replies to the question, "Shall we do rishathra?" Bill looked it over. Then he started drawing cartoons. He's given me permission to send them to you for publication.

'Some of what's on the list of replies will go into the book. Some are useless, of course. "You do not have sufficient openings" would surely not apply to the hominids!'

****

'"SHALL WE INDULGE IN RISHATHRA?"

1) Sure.
2) You're too big/small.
3) If that's what it takes to make a trade deal ---
4) It is not my season. Can you wait around, or come back in a falen or so?
5) Taboo!

6) Our species cannot. Please do not be angry/insulted.
7) Only during our menstrual period. Day after tomorrow?
8) Only with sentient beings. Would you mind taking a short intelligence test?
9) Only with nonsentient beings. It lets us avoid becoming involved.
10) Does your companion indulge? (This would require long explanation, given that Louis Wu's companion is a kzin.)
11) Yes. We will choose you a companion if you will state your sex.
12) May my family watch?
13) My family insists on watching.
14) We have certain practices to be used as a substitute --
15) We must eat together first.
16) Our form of foreplay may be dangerous to you.

17) Can you function underwater?
18) No! You have the odor of a meat eater.
19) May we watch you with your companion? We will reciprocate -- (Sorry, Chmeee is male.)
20) You do not have sufficient openings.
21) Negotiate first! Then discuss rishathra.
22) No, but we like to talk about it.
23) We would like to make tape recordings for our communal archives.
24) Only during our fertile period, as a means of birth control.'

SCIENCE FICTION *ON FILM ON PAPER*

Science Fiction and Fantasy, the most imaginative narrative literary genres, have historically been the most imaginative cinematic genres. From the first dim flickerings of primitive projectors, audiences have been more fascinated by films of pure imagination and fantasy than by films limited to the ordinary possibilities of everyday experience (witness Melies' naive "trick films", the box-office smashes of 1896 and succeeding years).

At times, meager flights of imagination and overenthusiastic hype, touted by super-enthusiastic fans, have given F-SF films a sleazy, juvenile connotation to the mainstream audience. Some tiny-minded producers and directors have created films which would have better been left unmade (e.g. SANTA CLAUS CONQUERS THE MARTIANS), and some cynical but powerful critics, self-styled members of the current ranks of the "intelligentsia", have turned a sour public away from some excellent films. Nonetheless, the F-SF field continues to provide the richest menu of possibilities for filmmakers and the most engaging offerings for an audience desperate for a cinema of possibility in an age of pessimism.

Book publishers, ever aware of popular trends in other media, have in recent years put forth several worthwhile books dealing with fantasy and SF films. Though the books themselves are not the usual fare of SFR readers--dealing as they do with the facts of film production rather than literary creation--several of them may interest the inquisitive reader of fantasy and science fiction.

Some of the following reviews were published in the WASHINGTON AREA FILMMAKERS LEAGUE NEWSLETTER, Box 6475, Washington DC 20009.

THE HORROR PEOPLE
By John Brosnan
St. Martin's Press, $11.95

Brosnan's recent book MOVIE MAGIC: The Story of Special Effects in the Cinema, was so full of professional detail and yet so fresh and accessible (both to the general public and to the film pro) that I wasn't surprised to learn of Brosnan's fannish background. His interest in the cinema seems to lie along SF/Fantasy/horror lines, and with his previous book as an entree into professional circles, he has here compiled some fine and unexpectedly new material. Rather than lumping all of fantasy film together as his topic, Brosnan makes clear the lines demarking SF from Fantasy from Horror. In his carefully-considered introduction, he goes on to explain the ultimate significance of horror films:

"The artistic liberation of the current Hollywood product grew not from the influence of the underground/avant-garde filmmakers but from the cheapest roots of the commercial cinema itself--(from companies which) in the 1950's and 1960's adapted their films, often horror ones, to the changing tastes of the teenagers while adult America dozed in front of its collective television set. ...Horror films have also gained a certain amount of respect within the industry simply because, since the mid-1950's, they have consistently made money."

Brosnan wisely passes over the technical aspects of these effects-filled films, a topic done to death in other works. Besides, if you want to read about tricks, see his previous book. Instead, he answers some long-neglected questions about the art and craft of putting together films that seek out an audience's subtlest fears.

There has long been an informal (fannish) body of literature dealing with the personalities in the field, and this literature has rarely been accorded the protection that has been given as a matter of course to, say, studies of personalities like Chaplin or D.W. Griffith. An academic paper on Welles or (Heaven forfend!) Friedkin could be well accomplished entirely within the walls of any college library, but to do a similar study of Karloff, director James Whale or animator Ray Harryhausen, the author would have to travel, to make personal contacts, just in order to find and leaf through back issues of FAMOUS MONSTERS, or to find knowledgeable, in-depth interviews in THE ALIEN CRITIC (now SFR), or penetrating articles in GORE CREATURES and the like. Where would film scholarship be if Welles was never accorded serious study in his lifetime, or if Griffith research could only be done properly amidst ceiling-high stacks of fading magazines in someone's garage? (One hears echoes of "You'll have to throw all of that silly John Ford stuff out, Jimmy, I need the space for our new barbecue grill.") We can't pretend that every one of these personalities is worthy of academic veneration, and yet it is hardly sensible to ignore a whole genre altogether when the makers

By Wayne Keyser

of cheap thrills like THE EXORCIST make the pages of FILM COMMENT every time they sneeze.

Brosnan has highlighted the careers of a selected handful of the more significant actors, directors and producers, and adds an extensive appendix capsuling the careers of a great many other related people. The book first deals at length (and without sentimental bias, for a change) with Lon Chaney (Sr. & Jr.), Bela Lugosi, Boris Karloff, directors Karl Freund (THE MUMMY) and James Whale (THE BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN). Director-producer Val Lewton (CURSE OF THE CAT PEOPLE, I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE) gets a chapter. Following chapters trace divergent sub-genres beginning in the 50's: the traditional SF/monster film (Jack Arnold's INCREDIBLE SHRINKING MAN and CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON), the British Gothic resurgence, the surprisingly inventive low-budget films from American-International's Roger Corman (THE TERROR, LITTLE SHOP PF HORRORS), and the "gimmick" films of William Castle (THE TINGLER). Then, Brosnan deals with three immensely-talented, currently working actors (though actors often cast in sorry roles): Vincent Price (who showed what he could do when he tried in WITCHFINDER GENERAL, titled CONQUEROR WORM in America), Christopher Lee and Peter Cushing. There are also chapters on writing horror (Richard and Robert Bloch), directing horror (Freddie Francis and Roy Baker) and producing horror, with a final nod to those strangely devoted, often shocking people, the horror fans.

In all, THE HORROR PEOPLE is a good introduction to the human side of a fascinating genre, though it does cost a major fortune for its class.

A HERITAGE OF HORROR: The English Gothic Cinema 1946-1972
By David Pirie
Equinox (1974), 192pp, $2.95

A HERITAGE OF HORROR breaks some new ground in its detailed examination of the British Gothic film tradition, ranking with the best of the very few serious studies of the horror/SF/Fantasy film.

Just as, in America, Universal's horror films had their own house style, British production companies have developed distinctive approaches to the type of film designed to leave audiences well-chilled.

Pirie, a regular contributor to SIGHT AND SOUND Magazine, claims that the horror genre "remains the only cinematic myth which Britain can properly claim as its own and which relates to it in the same way as the Western relates to America." Certainly, in this well-illustrated and very affordable work, he makes some good, interesting arguments.

The book first examines traditional Gothic literature, which began in 1746 with Walpole's "Castle of Otranto", then moves on to study the rise in popularity of the Gothic tradition in film.

Hammer Studios, founded in 1948, carefully focused its corporate directorial attention on the traditional Gothic story elements opened up by fantasy plots, rather than dwelling at length on the simple Bogieman aspects. The pure suspense and human reactions implicit in the genre carry Hammer's best films, rather than the flashy possibilities of monsters and mad scientists. Though often present, the technological and supernatural beasties are never permitted to become cheap thrills.

Hammer's brilliant re-interpretation of the Frankenstein story (THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN, Terence Fisher, 1956) sparked a major flurry of production in other British studios. These other producers generated some very different styles and sub-genres of their own--witness Amicus Productions' long string of anthology films in which a light, often ridiculous central story ties together four or five vignettes, separate film-within-a-film, a director's delight. One example is TALES FROM THE CRYPT, Freddie Francis 1971).

Nonetheless, Hammer's versions of the classic horror/fantasy plots have left a record that has yet to be rivaled in Britain. Though Lugosi still comes to mind as the archetypical vampire, Hammer favorite Christopher Lee's interpretations have just about replaced Lugosi's as the definitive Dracula.

Pirie's detailed analyses of important films and directors are accurate and complete, and represent a significant insight into an adventurous and colorful cinema which has long deserved a collective study. Future books dealing with the SF/horror/fantasy film genre(s) will have to be almost scholarly to better this book for insight, interpretation and value.

THE FLEISCHER STORY
By Leslie Cabarga
Nostalgia Press, $12.50

Max Fleischer's pioneering role in the history of American animation (and American fantasy) has been largely ignored by the American film establishment, in favor of the work of Disney and the Warner's cartoon unit (Chuck Jones and friends). However clever the antics of M. Mouse and B. Bunny might have been, they rarely approached the low-down, self-confident, mature flights of fantasy -- even horror -- of Fleischer's animated films-noirs.

Fleischer invented the rotoscope, a device for tracing live-action films onto animation cels for speed and ease of animation. With this handy tool, he produced films of striking graphic quality (for instance, the world's second animated feature, GULLIVER'S TRAVELS) and hundreds of one-reelers. He also invented the "follow the bouncing ball" SCREEN SONGS sing-along films

Technical innovations aside, Fleischer's cartoons had a gritty reality underlying their fantasy, a seamy view of life that Disney has never yet dared or cared to convey. Popeye, as Fleischer produced him, definitely surpassed the comic-book character he has lately become -- Fleischer's Popeye was a rough-thinking, sex-obsessed sailor who was always muttering under his breath things that were just around the corner from being foul. Fleischer creation Betty Boop never let you forget that she was a woman who knew the score. Picture poor flapper Betty, beaten and bound, lying helpless before her hulking, slavering boss, singing "You can feed me bread and water, or a great big bale of hay, but please don't take my boop-oop-a-doop away!"

Fleischer put his characters into a gray, mysterious, magical world. There, as in all good fairy tales (se Bruno Bettelheim's masterful book THE USES OF ENCHANTMENT for some insights), magic was as menacing as it was fun, and as uncontrollable as a nightmare. It was a world that had happy, talking flowers, but under the surface were deep, slimy, haunted caves where you might meet the rabid Old Man of the Mountain or a ghost walrus (rotoscoped from bandleader Cab Calloway's supple form) doing the Slow Drag and singing of Minnie the Moocher's cocaine-fiend lovers. It was the real world as seen through a child's eyes -- not entirely sweet, a magical, terrible place (remember?) where Louis Armstrong's gigantic, bald head could appear in the clouds singing the frankly sexual, back-alley lyrics to "I'll Be Glad When You're Dead". I re-

cently saw the cartoon of that title, and sure enough there was Louis singing "You gave my wife a Coca-Cola so you could play in her vagola". Yup.

Author Cabarga seems more an encyclopedist than a theoretician. True, the text may not have the skilled psychological analysis that was so well done in the animation issue of FILM COMMENT a few years ago. However, THE FLEISCHER STORY has the sort of detail that no magazine could offer -- Cabarga's complete Fleischer filmography has long been needed.

There's plenty of room on my shelf for this sort of book. One might wish that Cabarga had authored THE ART OF WALT DISNEY -- his perceptive style could have done much for that colorful but superficial book. Though THE FLEISCHER STORY lacks color (except for the brilliantly evocative dust jacket illo), it does have over 300 never-before-collected illustrations and adds to the reputation of Nostalgia Press as a publisher of well-printed, reasonably-priced and brilliantly conceived books.

THE MAKING OF "THE WIZARD OF OZ"
By Aljean Harmetz
Knopf, 329 pp, $13.00

Regular NY TIMES writer Aljean Harmetz has come up with a fine new film book, fully titled THE MAKING OF "THE WIZARD OF OZ"; MOVIE MAGIC AND STUDIO POWER IN THE PRIME OF MGM AND THE MIRACLE OF PRODUCTION #1060. Some years ago there was a rash of GONE WITH THE WIND books, overly glittery and mass-pitched, and last season THE MAKING OF KING KONG was unfortunately ignored. For a change, however, THE MAKING OF "THE WIZARD OF OZ" is as valuable to the filmmaker as it is to the film buff.

The American Film Institute funded the research for this book through the Louis B. Mayer Foundation, and MGM may be credited for helping to unearth never-before-published records and photos (not all of them entirely complimentary to the studio).

Perhaps the book's greatest value lies in its presentation of the making of a hit by committee, one of the many movie masterpieces (CASABLANCA comes to mind) that were worked over by many hands. GWTW had 3 directors, but OZ had four: George Thorpe (TARZAN), George Cukor (GWTW, DINNER AT EIGHT), Victor Fleming (GWTW), and King Vidor (THE BIG PARADE, OUR DAILY BREAD). CASABLANCA had three teams of writers, but OZ had ten, including Ogden Nash and Herman Mankiewicz. The studio was noted for being a factory, a movie mill rather than a creative cradle, and the stars were treated like cattle -- Buddy Ebsen, for instance, got deathly ill from his aluminum Tin Man make-up, so Jack Haley was drafted at the last moment (Ebsen says that some of the long shots in the final cut may be him rather than Haley). The films produced by such methods were often forgettable, even execrable, but were surely no worse than the bulk of today's product. They were occasionally inspired, and it is those films that ought to be studied as closely as Harmetz has studied OZ.

She has done her homework and spares no feelings in this tale. She indicts MGM with a passion -- Wicked Witch Margaret Hamilton, for instance, fell victim to lazy direction and was severely burned in one of her firey disappearances. But, as she tells for the first time, she dared not press for compensation. "I knew very well that if I sued, I would never work again in any studio". Later, she recalls, "The studio never mentioned my accident, never. But when Billie Burke (Glinda, the Good Witch) sprained her ankle, they had an ambulance come out and ... pictures of her being carried out. And I was very much amused."

Harmetz wastes no time on the all-too-usual Special Effects chapter, though she gives enough details to satisfy. Instead, she concentrates on the people involved, because OZ is definitely a "people" picture from start to finish. The temperaments, the pettiness, the occasional nobility, the inspired concepts, the callous excisions, and the public's long-lasting affection are all here in what amounts to a textbook on the personal angles of the film business. And, make no mistake, though the film was made 40 years ago, people are still the same.

Harmetz' professionalism never fails to ensure that the right details are recorded, but never intrudes on a healthy sentimentalism for a film that has drawn record-breaking audiences both in theatres and on TV, a film that is, unfortunately, ignored in favor of lesser works in most histories of the musical cinema.

The book is a gem, one of the season's few sensible film books. It is profusely illustrated, yet never overwhelmed by photos (all of which, by the way, are well chosen; I doubt that more than five of the hundreds of photos here have been printed before). It is well written but never public-pandering. It is well researched, but not obsessive. Buy it if you want the definitive look at studio fantasy film production on a personal level.

FANTASTIC TELEVISION
By Gary Gerani and
Paul H. Schulman
Harmony, 192 pp, $5.95

Television has long been the "black sheep" of the filmmaking world -- disreputable, but unavoidable. Sometimes it has been the wretched mess it has always been accused of being, but sometimes it has been the medium of some of the cinema's finest artists and craftspeople, and this artistic side is by no means limited to public television's "artsy" offerings. Perhaps some look down upon TV simply because there are so many negative influences that a few flashes of excellence can't stand out. Suffice it to say that, given the constraints imposed by contemporary commercial television, the fantasy series allows the creative filmmaker freest reign. In such a series, more of the filmmaker's creativity has a chance to reach the screen when many of the restricting dramatic and commercial conventions have gone by the board.

Gerani and Schulman, in FANTASTIC TELEVISON, have come up with a wealth of information from the world of commercial fantasy TV: over 350 photos grace the book, but this big paperback is never turned into an oversized picturebook, as has been the failing of so many similar works. Instead, solid text backs up every chapter. This is definitely a text-oriented book, well illustrated, and that text is a fine work indeed.

The authors divide the book into separate chapters for each of 13 major fantasy-SF series, with collective chapters for lesser efforts (the remainder of American and almost all of British telefantasy, kidvid and made-for-Tv movies). Within the coverage of major series, well-researched introductions precede complete illustrated listings of each episode with title, author, director, stars and capsule plot. There is a gold mine of data in this type of listing. I never realized, for instance, that the anthology series NIGHT GALLERY often let writers direct their own material, or that they sometimes let actors cross over into directing as well. Nor did I know that much of the claus-

trophobic ambience of the OUTER LIMITS series came from the acclaimed camera artistry of Conrad Hall.

Of course, you're never going to get ahead in either filmmaking or literary appreciation with any of this data -- it's no help at all to the strictly pragmatic. But it reads well, it brings back a lot of memories, and with so many successful plots compiled in one book, it's a good spur to the writer's imagination. I haven't seen quite so much value-per-dollar in a fantasy film book in years.

Of course, as in any field, there are bound to be a number of average and poor books among the outstanding ones. Mindless consumer picture books or unoriginal rehashes of things already covered better flood the market, and wind up on the "reduced to 99¢" tables before too long. But in their pass through the market, these forgettable books often turn the potential reader off to other, better books in the field. One example of the nothing-new-to-say SF/Fantasy film book is:

THINGS TO COME, An Illustrated History of the Science Fiction Film, By Douglas Menville and R. Reginald, Times, 212 pp., $15.00.

The authors of THINGS TO COME have managed to put SF as a film genre (or theme, it might be better to say) in a good perspective, showing the place of SF within the universe of narrative film. That's what makes THINGS TO COME interesting.

The authors have, however, managed to write a fairly diffuse treatment -- evident when one compares the detail and care evident in this effort with that shown by some more careful and readable authors. The well-illustrated volume contains some real insights, but not many. There is little here that has not been written before, and better. That's what makes THINGS TO COME a less-than-outstanding volume. It costs fifteen dollars, and there's just not enough meat in it to warrant that kind of price. This is the sort of material that might be worth reading in a smaller, less-expensive paperback edition. As it is, however, THINGS TO COME is just another book that won't make a very big splash.

There's nothing wrong with THINGS TO COME that a little more time, care and attention on the part of the authors and publishers wouldn't have straightened out. But it is, as it stands, a good lightweight book with a tremendous price tag, rather than an entry of any lasting significance. Really, there had to have been a better way.

What can we compare this type of book with, to get an idea of the best and worst that can be had?

Jeff Rovin, a terribly prolific and often sloppy nonfiction author, has written a real eye-opener:

FROM THE LAND BEYOND BEYOND, The Films of Willis O'Brien and Ray Harryhausen
By Jeff Rovin
277 pp, (paperback), Berkley, $5.95

I hate Jeff Rovin. He's younger than I am, he doesn't seem to know any more about writing nonfiction than I do, but he sells almost every word he writes! In this case, he has created a masterpiece -- a meaty, accurate treatment of a wonderfully interesting subject, profusely illustrated and very nicely priced.

FROM THE LAND BEYOND BEYOND deals with the Fantasy film's most delightful heights -- the stop-motion animation films of Ray Harryhausen and his mentor, Willis O'-Brien -- films like KING KONG, EARTH Vs THE FLYING SAUCERS, SEVENTH VOYAGE OF SINBAD, and many more. None of these films has any special dramatic pretentions, but each (almost without exception) is an entertaining presentation of an exciting story centered around masterful special effects. Some of them transcend their roots to become respectable artistic successes, and it's a sad comment on the film establishment that many of the field's more worthy entries are ignored because they lack the self-conscious "artiness" of the more usual "critic's darlings". KING KONG, only lately coming into some establishment respect because of its perpetual audience appeal, is a classic fantasy that is also a textbook example of the perfect action film: strong, empathetic characters; careful but entertaining exposition (Kong does not appear until the fifth reel); a basic respect for its audience and a climax of breathless excitement.

Early, jerky stop-motion techniques have been refined by Harryhausen until, in the latest opus SINBAD AND THE EYE OF THE TIGER the live action and the animation join perfectly in every shot; there appears to be no difference between the twelve inch rubber-and-steel model of the "troglodyte" and the live actors standing beside him in the same frame. Harryhausen's technique, perfected over years of experience, uses travelling mattes, carefully-matched live action shots, miniature sets and a master editor's eye for dramatic flow, all coming together into sequences of unaparalleled realism in fantasy.

Rovin writes from a longtime fan's viewpoint, and some questions are left unanswered that filmmakers might have liked to ask. But the comprehensive text, the well-chosen illustrations and the author's enthusiastic dramatic analyses leave little to be desired. Lovers of fantasy films really ought to have this book on their shelves.

THE OUTER LIMITS,
An Illustrated Review
Planned for publication in several volumes, Vol. I $2.50, 62 pp., paperback, from Scorpio 13, 11100 Governor Avenue, Cleveland OH 44111.

Ted C. Rypel is the editor and, I assume, chief writer for Volume I of this absorbing study of a neglected SF teleseries. Episodes are covered at length, in the order of their appearance on TV, with intelligent plot summaries and credits followed by thoughtful dramatic analyses. Rypel is not afraid to damn a sloppy episode for poor production or writing, or to give effusive praise where it is genuinely due. Though other books have covered a wider variety of televised F/SF, none has done as much as this to bring to light the real cinematic, dramatic and literary virtues of such an ephemeral medium as the teleseries. Though the price tag may seem high for 62 pages, the amount of information and insight in this first volume more than justifies the expenditure.

CONCLUSION:

Reading about films can be as boring as reading about sex (if you're serious, why are you sitting around reading?), but readers who also love films can relive their favorite films in print, gleaning new, deeper meanings from the printed comments of the films' creators. Even those who prefer print may wish to study the many ways in which important works of genre fiction can be re-approached (for better or worse) either by the original authors or by others assigned to translate the printed story onto celluloid.

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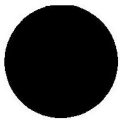
THE HUMAN HOTLINE

S-F NEWS
BY ELTON T. ELLIOTT



Remember the address for this column is: Elton T. Elliott, SFR, 1899 Wiessner Dr. N.E., Salem, OR, 97303. Phone: (503) 393-6389

Damon Knight and Lloyd Biggle have filed a lawsuit against Harper & Row. The suit was filed against the paperback division of H&R, not the trade division.

The suit, filed in Michigan Federal Court, charges that H&R reneged on a contract signed in 1975. The contract covered a proposed 8 volume anthology series, SF UNIVERSE, which was to be edited by both Damon Knight and Lloyd Biggle.

The date for the trial has not been set, but they are taking pretrial depositions.

The lawyer for Lloyd Biggle and Damon Knight, is Alex Berman of the Southfield Michigan firm of Kozlow, Woll, Crowley and Berman. He said they will be asking 820,000 dollars in damages with 750,000 of that being for lost royalties. He also mentioned that Harper & Row have filed a counterclaim for 8,000 in advances. This is a fairly common legal maneuver. Mr. Berman said of the counterclaim.

Mr. Berman went on to say that the treatment by H&R in this case, was so shoddy that his clients had no alternative but to take "drastic action" and "fight back". He said the case "could be precedent setting" and that it's "an indication some authors are fed up" with the shoddy practices prevalent in the publishing industry. He enlarged upon that point by saying about lawsuits, "It's going to happen more often" and that there are more and "more inequities. SF is coming into big money, but the authors are still getting messed over".

He went on to say that this case is very important and that the outcome could be of great import to every writer in the field.

Chet C. Clingan has resigned as editor of THE DIVERSIFIER and will start a new magazine entitled DRAGONARD. Named after a character in several of John Jakes' books, the first issue will be out in March. Chet describes the new magazine as a "cross between ALGOL and SF REVIEW, with a few things neither contain". I will be doing a book review column and Chet is also looking for other regular columnists, articles, interviews and movie and book reviews.

Mr. Clingan has also done a short story, "Goldenlight and Fleetwood", which will be published in ALIEN WORLDS, edited by Paul Collins, editor of VOID magazine in Australia. Chet is also marketing two reprint anthologies, FANTASY MASTERS and GALACTIC HEROES AND OTHERS. He will also be U.S. agent for Cosmos Literary Agency in England and will be agenting some U.S. authors.

Mr. Clingan's address:
C.C. Clingan
POB 1836
Oroville, CA 95965

NEBULA AWARD NOMINEES:

Novel

DREAMSNAKE ------- Vonda N. McIntyre (Houghton Mifflin/Dell)
STRANGERS ---------- Gardner Dozois (Berkley)
THE FADED SUN: KESRITH--C.J. Cherryh (SF Book Club/DAW)
KALKI ----------Gore Vidal (Random House/Ballantine)
BLIND VOICES ----------Tom Reamy

Novella

"The Persistence of Vision" ---John Varley (F&SF, Mar.)
"Seven American Nights" --Gene Wolfe (ORBIT #20)

Novelette

"A Glow of Candles"-Charles L. Grant (GRAVEN IMAGES)
"Devil You Don't Know"------Dean Ing (ANALOG, Jan)
"Mikal's Songbird"--Orson Scott Card (ANALOG, May)

Short Story

"Stone ---------- Edward Bryant (F&SF, Feb)
"A Quiet Revolution for Death" ----- ------Jack Dann (NEW DIMENSIONS #8)
"Cassandra" ---------- C.J. Cherryh (F&SF, Oct)

The deadline for SFWA voting members is March 20. The winners will be announced April 21.

Because participation in the Nebula nomination process has dropped so low (5 recommendations were sufficient to get a story on the ballot this year as opposed to 30 a decade ago, despite the fact that the SFWA has grown greatly over the same period of time) Jack Williamson, president of the SFWA, has formed a committee to look into ways of increasing participation. Our source also mentioned that the entire award policy would be looked into. Our source went on to say that there has been well-known ballot stuffing in the past, and that whole categories (or at least one) on the current ballot are the result of ballot stuffing.

Clifford D. Simak has sold a novel, THE VISITORS, to Del Rey books. It will be serialized in ANALOG.

According to a source, Stanislaw Lem has been paid very little of the money due him from Seabury and Avon.

Gregory Benford has sold stories to NEW DIMENSIONS and UNIVERSE. He has sold another story to OMNI, the earlier story in OMNI, "A Hiss of Dragon", written in collaboration with Mark Laidlaw, (Mr. Benford broached the idea first, not Mr. Laidlaw, as earlier reported) has been select-

ed by Terry Carr for inclusion in his BEST SCIENCE FICTION STORIES OF THE YEAR anthology.

Frederik Pohl's new work, COOL WAR, is a novel, not a movie as reported in the last column. The gremlins strike again.

Lou Fisher reports that SCHOLASTIC VOICE, a magazine for High School teachers and students, is featuring his SF story, "Bloodline" in the current (Mar.) issue. The story originally appeared in EPOCH, an anthology edited by Robert Silverberg and Roger "SF is a ghodless field" Elwood.

Stephen E. McDonald will have a story, "The Duppy Tree" in NIGHTMARES, edited by Charles L. Grant.

He also wants it known that he is not Stephen R. Donaldson, no matter what Del Rey tells him. He received a letter from Judy-Lynn Del Rey addressed to a mysterious Steve McDonaldson.

Norman Spinrad's novel, A WORLD BETWEEN, will not be published by Jove because of a contract dispute; Mr. Spinrad reports that it will be published by Pocket Books in October.

Orson Scott Card, in addition to short fiction upcoming in OMNI, DESTINIES, F&SF, will have a novella in ANALOG, which will make up the first 100 pages of his novel, MIKAL'S SONGBIRD.

Jack L. Chalker reports that Berkley has rescheduled THE IDENTITY MATRIX for August. It will be a paperback original. Del Rey will do AND THE DEVIL WILL DRAG YOU UNDER, a fantasy/satire. The final Well World book, NATHAN BRAZIL, has been contracted for by Del Rey and will probably be brought out in two volumes. He also will be doing a mainstream novel for Doubleday, more on this novel next issue.

Ben Bova has signed to do a novel with Doubleday. Berkley will publish his juvenile trilogy EXILED FROM EARTH, FLIGHT OF THE EXILES, and END OF EXILE, in an omnibus volume.

In LOCUS #216, Ted White in a letter, protested Ace Books' handling of Alexei and Cory Panshin's novel EARTH MAGIC. Particularly the fact that Ace didn't give credit to the novel's serialization in the April, July and September, 1973 issues of FANTASTIC. And in the letter's last sentence, intimated that these facts were well known to James Baen, SF editor at Ace, and that he could "only deplore Ace Books' unwillingness to admit the prior publication of the novel". I contacted Mr. Baen who mentioned that he came in on the middle of negotiations on EARTH MAGIC. In answer to Ted White's comments, Mr. Baen had this to say, "I was under the impression that substantial revisions had been made in the text". He went on to mention that the change in the title was the authors'. As for the omission "this is the first comment I've received; all during the galleys nobody, including the authors, noticed the omission. It was an unfortunate omission; we failed to note publication in the other form and for that Ace apologizes. What should've been said was 'First Book Publication'". Mr. Baen also mentioned that Ace does about 175 titles a year and that there will be inevitable accidental omissions.

Pocket Books, in an auction for the rights for the STAR TREK books, was the highest bidder and now has complete rights to all the titles. Bantam, Ballantine and Signet will quit publishing STAR TREK titles, with the exception of books already in inventory.

Like to own a mass-market paperback house? Three houses are up for sale, Popular Library, Jove and Pinnacle.

Popular Library, owned by CBS, is up for sale because CBS, which recently bought Fawcett, wants to sell Popular Library to avoid charges by the Federal Trade Commission that its purchase of Fawcett give it too large a share of publishing.

Harcourte Brace Javonovich, owners of Jove, are in financial trouble.

Michigan General (based in Dalles despite the name) is looking for somebody to take Pinnacle off its hands.

BERKLEY REPORT

They have signed Philip Jose Farmer to a three-book, six-figure contract.

One of the books will be a "sidestream" Riverworld novel. It will be set in the Riverworld scenario, but not part of the main sequence of books, which will end in the publication of the fourth novel in the series, THE MAGIC LABYRINTH, which will be published in October with a Vincent DiFate cover. The subject matter of the other two books are not set yet.

I talked to John Silbersack, who (along with Victoria Schochet) is co-editor of Berkley-Putnam's SF line.

He mentioned that Mr. Farmer has "basically no other obligations" and that Berkley intends to "treat Phil as a major author".

All three books will be very large novels of over 150,000 words. I asked Mr. Silbersack about this: "Phil is one of the very few authors who appears completely in control of a long novel. We encourage that; the Riverworld series needs scope".

He also mentioned that they will be bringing a lot of Farmer's backlist into print.

OTHER BERKLEY/PUTNAM NEWS:

* The sequel to TITAN by John Varley will tentatively be titled WIZARD. Mr. Varley is working on it right now.

* They have bought reprint rights to SOUL CATCHER by Frank Herbert.

* They have purchased two books from Grant Carrington. One is based on the story "Down Among the Ipsies".

* A new trilogy from Kevin O'Donnell has been purchased.

* They have procured Damon Knight's first novel in ten years. Its title is, THE WORLD AND THORRINN.

* Mr. Silbersack and Ms. Schochet (the correct spelling for both their names, to correct my botch in last issue's column) will be editing a thrice-yearly anthology series entitled THE SCIENCE FICTION BOOK. Payment will be 5¢ a word for the first 7,500 and 3¢ a word thereafter. They are looking for stories of all types from SF to Sword and Sorcery, from Hard SF to Science Fantasy. The length can be anywhere between 2,500 to 20,000 words, and they will accept excerpts from novels.

The purpose of the anthology, according to Mr. Silbersack, "is to catch the boom in good young writers". Young writers, he says, are "fresher, better, exciting, who have no preconceptions" and who have "really stirred up the market".

He says the aim of the anthology is to present "the best in all the science fiction genres, with no editorial biases; quality is paramount".

DELL REPORT

* In May, Dell will publish MILLENNIAL WOMEN, an original anthology editied by Virginia Kidd. All the stories in MW were written by wo-

men and supposedly the anthology was closed to men. This sparked a lot of debate in the SFWA and elsewhere. In answer to a question I put forth about the validity of an anthology to which men couldn't submit stories, Dell SF editor, Jim Frenkel had this response:

"This is my thesis: all the women in this anthology have had an experience not common to men. And that is growing up as women, which gives women a certain focus on reality. Therefore, it is valid in sociological terms to collect a body of work which shares this point of view".

* Dell has signed a four-book contract with Theodore Sturgeon. The four books are, THE STARS ARE THE STYX and THE GOLDEN HELIX, two new-story collections; BEYOND, a reprint collection, and VENUS PLUS X -- Sturgeon's most controversial novel, originally published in the early 50s. All four books will be highly publicized.

* They have signed contracts for two Orson Scott Card novels, MIKAL'S SONGBIRD and A PLANET CALLED TREASON. The latter went for $50,000. Both novels will receive major publicity pushes.

* Also signed is TM NEBULON HOROR, a fantasy-horror novel by Hugh B. Cave.

* Dell has just bought the rights to Joan D. Vinge's new novel, THE SNOW QUEEN, for a reported $50,000. It also will be well publicized.

* I've completed an interview with Jim Frenkel.

FAWCETT

* Michaela Hamilton, Fawcett Gold Medal senior editor, mentioned that Fawcett Gold Medal is looking to increase the number of SF titles they do. She said interest has been spurred by the phenomenal success of LUCIFER'S HAMMER (Niven and Pournell's best seller). She is looking for "books which are in the action-adventure model".

* Upcoming titles include:
THE ETERNITY BRIGADE
By Stephen Goldin. (Gold Medal)
THE HUGO WINNERS: VOLUME 3, BK. 2.

ACE

April

Fred Saberhagen ------- BESERKER MAN
David Drake ------ HAMMER'S SLAMMERS
Ian Watson ----------THE VERY SLOW TIME MACHINE
(A short story collection)
Bob Shaw --------- SHIP OF STRANGERS
Roger Zelazny ------ THE ILLUSTRATED ZELAZNY
Marion Zimmer Bradley ------ ENDLESS UNIVERSE
(ENDLESS VOYAGE redone)
H. Beam Piper ----- FOUR-DAY PLANET/ (Double) LONE STAR PLANET
James Baen ---------- DESTINIES #3
(See special magazine section for contents.)
James H. Schmitz ------THE UNIVERSE AGAINST HER
Robert E. Howard --------- THE GODS OF BAL-ZAGOTH
Glenn Lord (editor) ----- THE HOWARD COLLECTOR

May

Orson Scott Card ------- HOT SLEEP: THE WORTHING CHRONICLES
(An ANALOG book)
Keith Laumer ------ RETIEF: UNBOUND
Walt & Leigh Richmond ------- SIVA!
Marion Zimmer Bradley-THE BLOODY SUN
(Revised and expanded)
James H. Schmitz ---------- LEGACY
(Original title: A TALE OF TWO CLOCKS)
Philip Jose Farmer --------THE HAWKS FROM EARTH
(The unabridged version of THE GATE OF TIME)
Robert Sheckley ------- DIMENSION OF MIRACLES
Andrew J. Offutt ----- CONAN AND THE SORCERER
G. Harry Stine ---------- THE THIRD INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION
(This important non-fiction work has been updated.)
L. Sprague de Camp ---- THE BLADE OF CONAN
(Another non-fiction book.)
Robert E. Howard ------- CONAN: #1
----- CONAN OF CIMMERIA: #2
----CONAN THE FREEBOOTER: #3

AVON

April

Joan Cox ---------- MINDSONG
Ursula K. LeGuin ------ THE LATHE OF HEAVEN
(A tie-in with the PBS TV show)
Damon Knight ----- RULE GOLDEN AND OTHER STORIES

BANTAM

April

Gordon R. Dickson (Editor)----NEBULA AWARD WINNERS #12

May

Sandra Marshak & Myrna Culbreath --
------THE FATE OF THE PHOENIX
(A sequel to their first STAR TREK novel, THE PRICE OF THE PHOENIX)
Janet E. Morris-THE CARNELIAN THRONE
(4th in the Silistra series)
Andrew J. Offutt ------ THE SWORD OF SKELOS: CONAN #3
(#3 in the Bantam series of Conan books)
Gordon Williams -----THE MICROCOLONY
(Sequel to MICRONAUTS)

BERKLEY

April

Richard Matheson --------I AM LEGAND
Joanna Russ ----- PICNIC ON PARADISE
Robert Silverberg--A TIME OF CHANGES
(A new introduction)
James Gunn ------THIS FORTRESS WORLD

May

Larson & Enoble ----THE BATTLE STAR GALACTICA PHOTO-NOVEL
Poul Anderson ------THE EARTH BOOK OF STORMGATE
(Includes the full-length version of THE MAN WHO COUNTS)
J.G. Ballard ---------- CHRONOPOLIS
Joanna Russ ---------AND CHAOS DIED
Richard Matheson ---------- SHOCK 1

DAW

April

C.J. Cherryh-THE FADED SUN: SHON JIR
Page & Reinhardt (Editors) -- HEROIC FANTASY
Alan Burt Akers ---A LIFE FOR KREGAN
Jack Vance ----------SPACE OPERA
John Brunner ---------- POLYMATH

May

Donald A. Wollheim (Editor)-THE 1979 ANNUAL WORLD'S BEST SF
Doris Piserchia ---------- SPACELING
Jack Vance ----- CITY OF THE CHASCH
(First in the Planet of Adventure series, originally published in the late sixties by Ace)
Emil Petaja -----SAGA OF LOST EARTHS
(Another book which Ace, under Donald Wollheim, printed)
Gerard Klein ----STARMASTER'S GAMBIT

DELL

April

George O. Smith ----- THE FOURTH "R"
Russell M. Griffin-THE MAKESHIFT GOD
(A first work; Mr. Griffin is a teacher)

May

Vonda N. McIntyre ------- DREAMSNAKE
(This book was moved from April, will receive a major publicity push)
Steven G. Spruill ---THE PSYCHOPATH PLAGUE
(Revised from the hardcover, first in a series)
Virginia Kidd (Editor) -- MILLENNIAL WOMEN
(See Dell SF Editor, Jim Frenkel's comment elsewhere in this issue)

DEL REY

April

Alan Dean Foster-MISSION TO MOULOKIN
(Sequel to ICERIGGER)
Syd Logsdon ---------- JANDRAX
Cordwainer Smith ---THE INSTRUMENTALITY OF MANKIND
(Some stories not previously published; for some it's the first time they've seen print)
James Blish --- A CASE OF CONSCIENCE
James White ------ ALL JUDGMENT FLED
D.C. Fontana-------THE QUESTOR TAPES

May

Anne McCaffrey -----THE WHITE DRAGON
(Made Publisher's Weekly best seller list)
Phyllis Eisenstein -- SORCERER'S SON
Frederik Pohl-THE WAY THE FUTURE WAS
(Mr. Pohl's autobiography)
Hal Clement ------MISSION OF GRAVITY
James Branch Cabel--FIGURES OF EARTH
Fritz Leiber ----- GATHER DARKNESS

FAWCETT CREST

April

Robert Hoskins ---- AGAINST TOMORROW
(An anthology)

May

Jerry E. Pournelle (Editor)----BLACK HOLES
(This anthology originally published in England, sold in the U.S. for $20,000, a record for the reprint rights to an anthology)

FAWCETT GOLD MEDAL

No titles during April or May.

JOVE:

April

Piers Anthony -------- GOD OF TAROT
Stanislaw Lem ----THE CHAIN OF CHANCE
Brian Lumley --IN THE MOONS OF BOREA
Ben Bova ----------THE STARCROSSED
Cordwainer Smith ------- SPACE LORDS

May

E.E. "Doc" Smith -- MASTERS OF SPACE
(An original title!)

POCKET

April

William Hjortsberg -----GRAY MATTERS
George Turner ---------- BELOVED SUN

May

A.E. Van Vogt ------ THE RENAISSANCE
Saemus Cullen --- ASTRA AND FLONDRIX
Jane Gaskell ---------- THE CITY

POPULAR LIBRARY

April

Brad Munson --------- THE MAD THRONE

May

Thomas F. Monteloene--THE SECRET SEA

SIGNET

April

Barbera Paul ------ PILLARS OF SALT

May

Octavia Butler ---------- SURVIVOR
Robert A. Heinlein ---REVOLT IN 2100

HARDCOVERS

BERKLEY-PUTNAM

April

Ursula K. LeGuin ---LANGUAGE OF THE NIGHT
(Essays edited by Susan Wood)

May

Frank Herbert & Bill Ransom --- THE JESUS INCIDENT

DOUBLEDAY

April

Dave Bischoff & Dennis Bailey----TIN WOODMAN
(Published on 4/13/79)
Jayge Carr -------- LEVIATHAN'S BEEP
(Published on 4/20/79)

May

Terry Carr ----------UNIVERSE #9
(Released on 5/4/79)
Gene Lancour ---- THE MAN-EATERS OF CASCALON
(Released on 5/18/79)

HARPER & ROW

April

George Zebrowski --------- MACROLIFE
(More information on this major new novel in the Spotlight on Zebrowski)

ANALOG

The May Issue (out in early April)

Novelettes by:
Orson Scott Card ----"The Monkey's Thought 'Twas All in Fun"
George Harper--"A Twice Told Tale"

Short Stories by:
Kevin O'Donnell
Paul Nahin
Eric Vincoff & Marcia Martin
M. David Stone

The June Issue (out in early May)

Serial:
William E. Cochrane -----CLASS SIX CLIMB

Long Novellette:
Larry Niven & Steve Barnes ---"The Locusts"

Short stories by:
Alfred Bester
George J. Annas
Ian Stuart
Michael Bishop

More ANALOG News:

* I asked Stanley Schmidt about the situation at ANALOG with regards to the reviewing. He said that for the time being he will be "alternating reviewers, and deciding on a permanent one in the future."

* He also mentioned that Jerry E. Pournelle and G. Harry Stine will be alternating a science news and comment column.

ASIMOV'S

At the time when I called George Scithers the stories for the May & June issues weren't set. He did however provide me with the titles and authors of stories in inventory but not scheduled. Here is a listing:

"The Cool War" ----- Frederik Pohl
"Storming the Bijou Montmour" --- --- Michael Bishop
"The Dead of Winter" -------Kevin ------O'Donnell
"Solo" ---Steve Perry (Jesse Peel)
"A Midsummer Newts Dream"--Stanley -----Schmidt
"A Day in Mallworld" -------Somtow -----Sucharitkul
"The Initiation" ---Barry Longyear
"The Thaw" ------------Tanith Lee
"The Pinchitters" ------George Alec --- Effinger
"Priest of the 'Baraboo'"--- Barry --- Longyear
"Hellhole" --------- David Gerrold
"Mt. Wings" ---Sydney J. Van Sycoc
"Adventure of the Solitary Engineer" -------------- J.M. Ford
"Enemy Mine" ------- Mark Ringdahl
"Illusions" ------- Tony Sarowitz & Paul Novitski
"C.O.D." ------------- J.M. Ford

Plus Stories by:
A. Bertram Chandler
Isaac Asimov
Steve Perry
Jo Clayton

Alex Schomburg will be doing several covers for them in 1979.

ASIMOV'S ADVENTURES

The Third Issue (End of March)

The third issue of ASIMOV'S ADVENTURES will have a cover by Paul Alexander. It will also have stories by:

(No title given) ---Joe Haldeman & Jack C. Haldeman II
"The Last Defender of Camelot" --- --- Roger Zelazny
"The Tale Gogrik"-Samuel R. Delany

FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION

Starting with the May issue, F&SF will have a redesigned logo and parts of the inside will also be changed. The May issue (out the first part of April) will be a special Half-Anniversary issue.

May

Stories By:
Poul Anderson
Philip Jose Farmer
Robert Bloch
Russell Kirk
R. Bretnor

In June:

"Out There Where the Big Ships"-- by Richard Cowper

Other authors with stories in inventory:

Stephen Tall
Lisa Tuttle
Tanith Lee
Edward Bryant
Joanna Russ
Keith Roberts (Several connected stories)
Orson Scott Card
Marta Randall
Jack Dann

Hilbert Schenk (An oceanographer, Mr. Schenk has sold several seagoing stories)
Barry N. Malzberg

The October 30th Anniversary Issue will be a retrospective look at the best of the last 30 years. It will be 320 pages and will tentatively retail for $2.50. Of the stories reprinted, 21 in all, most are not set.

GALAXY

"The Sex War" by Norman Spinrad has been rescheduled for a later date. The final J.J. Pierce issue has yet to come out. I've been unable to get in touch with Hank Stine, and he hasn't been in touch with me for at least a month. The reported sale of GALAXY is now reportedly off. There was a six month hiatus between the last two issues, and it appears that several months will go by until the next issue comes out. Other than that I know nothing more than you do. It is a shame to see GALAXY wasting away; I'm not very optimistic about GALAXY's future.

AMAZING & FANTASTIC

With the resignation of Ted White and the sale of the magazines (from Sol Cohen) to Arthur Bernhard, they have gone mostly reprint. They, of course, will not pay the authors for reprinting their stories. I hope things turn around, and they get sold to somebody who won't rip off the authors. Until that happens, I hope the present owners reconsider their reported position and pay the writers for reprint rights.

OMNI

Ben Bova describes OMNI as a "design-dominated magazine" and maintains that the schedules "are so flexible" he "can't comment" on the contents of future issues. He did however report that General Motors, which doesn't advertise in PENTHOUSE, is now advertising in OMNI. He said they waited for several issues before deciding to advertise. Mr. Bova also mentioned that OMNI is getting other long term ad commitments from large corporations.

OMNI now sells about 800,000 copies per issue, with 77,000 of that being subscribers.

OMNI may, however, be in financial trouble, according to a well-placed source in New York. They are two months late on a $1,000 payment to one author, who reports that in effect, "It's payment after publication".

DESTINIES

Contents for the Third Issue (out in April) Partial Listing:

"Spirals" ----------Larry Niven & Jerry E. Pournelle
"The Pilot" --------- Joe Haldeman
"The Storywriter" ---Richard Wilson
"Sleas" ---------- Dean Ing
Plus: Spider Robinson's book review column, Dr. Jerry E. Pournelle's science column, Poul Anderson on science & science fiction and G. Harry Stine on the 3rd industrial revolution.

SPOTLIGHT: FEATURED AUTHORS ARE ---
PAMELA SARGENT
JACK VANCE
A.E. VAN VOGT
GEORGE ZEBROWSKI

PAMELA SARGENT:

Is writing a novel for Simon & Schuster, with paperback rights going to Pocket. It will be a 250,000-words-plus novel, and it sold for a large five-figure advance.

CLONED LIVES will be reissued. It sold for a larger than usual advance in England; it also was published in Germany and Japan.

Her three reprint anthologies, WOMEN OF WONDER, MORE WOMEN OF WONDER and NEW WOMEN OF WONDER have sold to Spain, France and Great Britain.

She will also be doing a juvenile for Harper & Row, titled DIVIDE THE NIGHT.

JACK VANCE:

Has completed the 4th novel in the Demon Prince series; entitled THE FACE, it will deal with Lens Larque.

He is currently working on a Fantasy novel.

Also in the works are a second volume of Cugel the Clever stories. He has completed and published two stories and plans to write three or four more; together they will make up the book.

The fifth Demon Prince novel, more novels in the Alastor series, sequels to MASKE: THAERY and his Miro Hetzel stories will be put on the back burner until current commitments are out of the way.

A.E. VAN VOGT

He has completed a novel for Doubleday titled THE UNIVERSE ENDED 1704 A.D., which will probably be changed to THE COSMIC ENCOUNTER.

He is completing a novelization of his movie script, both of which are titled COMPUTER WORLD.

He has a novel for Daw 75% finished, entitled TO CONQUER KIBER.

He will have an article out in Future Life, "The Future War".

His title for the upcoming Pocket Books novel, RENAISSANCE, was INDIAN SUMMER OF A PAIR OF SPECTACLES.

GEORGE ZEBROWSKI:

April, Harper & Row will publish MACROLIFE... a novel; MACROLIFE will be $10.95, have a wrap-around cover and four interior illustrations by Sternbach; it will be oversized 9 1/2 X 7" and run about 400 pages. A major novel about space habitats, George Zebrowski spent most of this decade writing it.

Harper & Row will publish his juvenile, FREE SPACE, sometime in 1980.

A revised edition of OMEGA POINT will be out from Grosset & Dunlap/Ace later in '79. The first book in the War Star series, ASHES AND STARS, (originally titled WAR STARS) was published by Ace in 1977.

The third book in the series, MIRROR OF MINDS, will be out from G&D/Ace in 1980.

For Doubleday will be a trilogy which will include THE STAR WEB, out sometime in the near future. THE STAR WEB, originally a Laser book, will be completely rewritten.

He is also editing THE BEST OF THOMAS N. SCORTIA for Doubleday.

He will have a column out in F&SF on international SF. Also for F&SF is a story entitled "The Word Sweep".

Foreign Rights: ASHES AND STARS sold to Japan, England and Germany for high figures. THE OMEGA POINT sold to those three countries as well as to Portugal and France.

CONCLUDING WORDS:

Thanks to all who sent cards and letters, and a special thanks to Lou Fisher for his kind comments.

My apologies to Maxim Jakubowski and Jacqueline Lichtenberg who sent letters. They arrived too late to get into this column. Next issue both will be featured in the "Spotlight". Again, my apologies.

See you next column.

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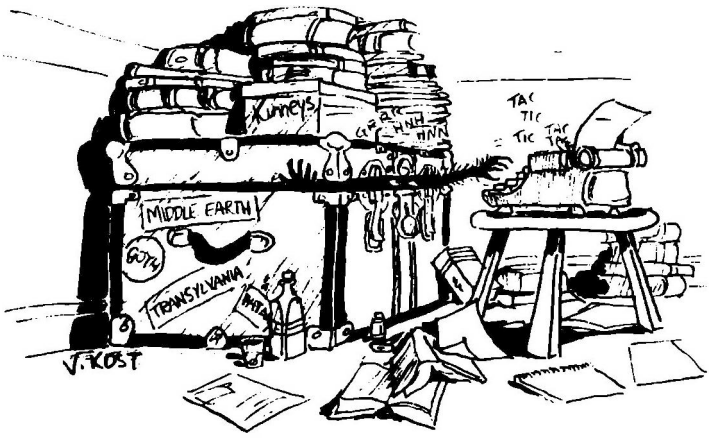
SMALL PRESS NOTES



BY THE EDITOR

The DIRECTORY OF MULTILINGUAL FANS strikes me as a valuable item, with its 40-odd listings of people from Europe, mostly. 20¢ will bring you a copy from Allan Beatty, POB 1040, ISU Sta., Ames, IA 50010.

JoeD Siclari has moved, recovered his energy and is now publishing his valuable fan magazine FAN HISTORICA. The latest issue is #8. He is also resuming publication of Harry Warner's fan history of the 50's, A WEALTH OF FABLE...in several volumes.

FANHISTORICA #8 is available for contributions of art, written material, old fanzines, trades, letters of comment, or $1.

#8 has material by F. Towner Laney (Part 1 of his Ah, Sweet Idiocy!), "Up the Garden Pathology" by Walt Willis, and "What Was That Fandom I Saw You With" by Ted White. Present-day fan rich brown contends with Ted on fandom and its eras and where we might be today in historical perspective...and Bob Tucker is here with "Beard Mumblings."

For those fans of s-f and s-f fandom, this look at the past greats might be brain-opening.

JoeD's present address is: 2201 N.E. 45th St., Lighthouse Point, FL 33064.

Ah, yes, I remember sixth and seventh fandom well....

FANTARAMA is a professionally produced newsstand-type fanzine devoted to sf, fantasy & comic art. Has a cover and some interiors by & an interview with Bill Warren [the artist, not the SFR film columnist], and other things----a comic strip or two, book reviews...

Offset printing on newsprint with a two-color cover. 75¢ plus 25¢ for postage, etc. will likely get you a copy from Pubbug Publications, 11220 Bird Road, Richmond, BC V6X 1N8 CANADA.

The same group publish LULU REVIEW, a 6-weekly rating of recently-received fanzines of every stripe. They do a good job, obviously, since they give SFR a 9 rating (out of a possible 10).

SPACING DUTCHMAN is a short novel by Eric Vinicoff and Marcia Martin... Well, make that a novelette. It is published in booklet format and has a fine wraparound cover by Frank Brunner, and several very good action illustrations by Brent Anderson.

It's a story of intrigue, save-the-space-city, and heavy action. I liked it. Vinicoff and Martin write good professional sf.

Price is $1.25 from Aesir Press, 2461 Telegraph Av., Berkeley, CA 94707. Recommended.

THE THIRD BOOK OF VIRGIL FINLAY is another of Gerry de la Ree's finely crafted, quality publications devoted to the works of the late famous sf and fantasy artist. full-page size, gloss stock, hardcover, 128 pages, with dust jacket. $15.50. You can observe Finlay's subtle development from these selections from his b/w work from 1938 to 1956. The man possessed marvelous skills, talent and patience.

Order from Gerry de la Ree,
7 Cedarwood Lake
Saddle River, NJ 07458

Rip Off Press, refusing to learn from experience, sent me THE CARTOON HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSE---Volume Two ---"Sticks and Stones---The Descent of People."

Written and drawn by Larry Gonick. It's a clever, well-done visual history of what science thinks is the way mankind developed and spread and got civilized...up to Sumeria. Next volume will be titled RIVER REALMS--The First Civilizations.

Ambitious project, trying to make history palatable to kids (and some adults, I imagine). Rip Off is doing a fine job with this series. I commend them.

Send $1.25 to Rip Off Press, POB 14158, San Francisco, CA 94114. Tell them SFR sent you.

Jonathan Bacon's FANTASY CROSSROADS continues to improve markedly in visuals and the professionalism of its layouts and "look".

I thought the interview with Stephen R. Donaldson excellent, a complement to the interview with him in this issue of SFR.

A superb front cover by Steve Fabian, beautifully printed with a light blue tint.

FC costs $3.00 from Stygian Isle Press, 7613 Flint #A, Shawnee, KS 66214.

Two highly informative, interesting, revealing interviews---Ian Ballantine, Marta Randall---highlight SF&F36 #8. [No, I don't know why that '36' is in the title. It's confusing and therefore dumb!]

75¢ from Jim Purviance, 13 West Summit Dr., Redwood City, CA 94062.

KELLY FREAS sent along prints of his latest series of cover reproductions which he markets himself. These five are the wraparound covers that make the new Donning Starblaze Editions so beautiful. The paintings are on white textured museum quality paper, without text, with borders, and are 20" x 26". Eminently suitable for framing. All, of course, in full color. The prints are :

#26 WHAT HAPPENED TO EMILY GOODE AFTER THE GREAT EXHIBITION
#27 APOSTLE
#28 ANOTHER FINE MYTH
#29 CONFEDERATION MATADOR
#30 THE RUINS OF ISIS

These prints cost $7.50 signed, $5. unsigned. Add $1.50 to each order for postage and shipping. Each order of prints is shipped in heavy duty mailing tubes. Damaged prints will be replaced.

Kelly has other prints for sale, too, mostly ANALOG covers. Ask for his full-color catalog.

Order from Polly & Kelly Freas
4216 Blackwater Road
Virginia Beach, VA
23457

Titles are deceptive. Thus the ROCKET'S BLAST COMICOLLECTOR (RBCC for short) sounds like a cornball amateur zine put out by a 12-year-old.

Nope. It's a handsome, pro-quality, excellently edited magazine with fine art and writing, published by James Van Hise, an adult. Circulation: 2200 per issue.

It is also long-lived, since this November, 1978 issue is #146. And it isn't strictly a comiczine, with articles and features on movies (YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN) and TV's THE AVENGERS--a complete index of episodes.

RBCC is the finest comic fandom fanzine (semi-prozine?) I've seen. Costs $1.95 per copy from James Van Hise, 10885 Parkdale Av., San Diego, CA 92126.

SPEAKING OF SCIENCE FICTION by Paul Walker (Luna, $6.95 + 50¢ shipping costs in USA; 75¢ outside USA) is a really well done collection of interviews with sf writers.

Since some of the interviewees wear editorial hats, the range of information and opinion is wide and fascinating.

Most of these interviews were conducted by mail, and that technique allows the interviewee to think, give detailed answers, even conduct some research for answers. The weakness in mail interviews is a lack of spontaneity. But that isn't readily apparent in many of these.

There is a sort of stuffy introduction by Tom Roberts, an academic type, and a very good, informal, insightful Afterword by Samuel Mines. The writers interviewed are:

R.A. Lafferty, Ursula K. Le Guin, Philip Jose Farmer, Clifford D. Simak, Fritz Leiber, Roger Zelazny, James Schmitz, Keith Laumer, Poul Anderson, Isaac Asimov, Frederik Pohl, Horace L. Gold, Damon Knight, Terry Carr, John W. Campbell, Jr. (as remembered by Harry Harrison), Michael Moorcock, James Blish, Joanna Russ, Ann McCaffrey, Andre Norton, Zenna Henderson, Robert Silverberg, Harlan Ellison, Alfred Bester, John Brunner, Robert Bloch, Wilson Tucker, Edmond Hamilton, Leigh Brackett, Jack Williamson, and Brian W. Aldiss.

An index is included.

Book paper, perfect binding, in the large, quality softcover format.

Most of these interviewes appeared in LUNA MONTHLY, a sf review magazine.

The ordering address is: Luna Publications, 655 Orchard St., Oradell, NJ 07649.

THE WHOLE FANZINE CATALOG #3 (October, 1978) is available from Brain Earl Brown, 16711 Burt Road, #207, Detroit, MI 48219. 35¢ for a copy, $1. for 3.

It's a review of all current sf fan magazines that Brian receives in trade, and I think he gets almost all of them.

If you're an artist and an archivist type, you might be interested in NORMAL BEAN (the Preview Issue) which contains an incomplete bibliography of Mahlon Blaine, who was an accomplished commercial illustrator of books in the 20's and 30's, mostly. Editor and publisher Roland Trenary is an artist himself, and is visible in NORMAL BEAN with a pretty good graphic art story and a double-page occult ink drawing.

There's a striking cover by Mahlon Blaine titled "Alraune."

Roland wants $1.50 for a copy of his issue. He lurks at: 2409 23rd Av. S., Minneapolis, MN 55404.

Seems overpriced, and of very special and limited interest.

W. Paul Ganley, of WEIRDBOOK fame, and other quality publications, is starting a new advertising magazine specializing in sf, fantasy, horror, sword & sorcery, mystery and adventure. Very specifically, comics ads will not be accepted. The new title is FANTASY MONGERS and will also contain articles and other items of interest to collectors and readers.

The first issue of FANTASY MONGERS will be free to anyone who sends his/her name and address. (One per family, please.)

Subscription rate is 6/$6.

Full details available (including ad rates, specs., etc) from: W. Paul Ganley, Box 35, Amherst Branch, Buffalo, NY 14226.

I enjoyed THE REVOLT OF THE UNEMPLOYABLES by Ray Faraday Nelson, and I can't help wondering why it didn't find a "big name" publisher. I also can't help answering my own question.

The central character is a withdrawn, alcoholic, unsociable nonentity who is that way primarily because he isn't able to get a job. And in this not-too-distant future world in the USA, the unemployed and unemployable are warehoused in huge hundred-floor barracks and doomed to a life of emptiness. The employed class hate the expense and kid themselves that the huge army of unemployed are living in idle happiness.

But there is an underground among the idle masses, and a plan for revolt.

The fascination is in the characters and their lives in the great barracks, and the fear of them by their keepers.

I can see why the editors may not have thought this novel "commercial". But it's different and well written...a breath of fresh air in sf.

Anthelion Press has published it in large-size paperback at $2.95 per copy.

Anthelion Press, P.O. Box 614, Corte Madera, CA 94925.

BEYOND THE FIELDS WE KNOW #1 is a slick-cover-stock, book-paper 'Tales of Fantasy' magazine, expensive at $4.50, which features an interview (interesting) with Terry Books (author of SWORD OF SHANNARA), stories by Thomas Burnett Swann, Charles Saunders and others, plus poetry by M.Z. Bradley, Joy Chant, plus articles on William Morris and Dunsany... And the artwork, or which there is a lot, is all good, with some excellent items. The wrap-around elf & fairy cover by Danielle Dupond is outstanding.

1000 copies were printed. Available from Triskell Press, P.O. Box 9480, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1G 3V2.

THE WHOLE FANZINE CATALOG #5 is now published, listing Dec. 1978 fanzines. 40¢ a copy. From Brian Earl Brown, 16711 Burt Road, #207, Detroit, MI 48219.

The so-called 'legendary underground classic', PRINCIPIA DISCORDIA, has been reprinted by Loompanics Unlimted, POB 264, Mason, MI 48854. $4.

I view this as a caricature, a send-up, a mocking, of all religion, cults, secret societies and of the basic faith of mankind that life has meaning. It's all a fraud, people, and so is this book, which is at least entertaining in its fashion.

My Ghod, haven't I reviewed this yet? It's ECHOES FROM THE VAULTS OF YOH-VOMBIS, which is all about a free, inquiring mind named George F. Haas, a little-known writer of fantasy and sf and a believer in Mysteries. Haas is Old now, but he has an admirer in Don Herron, who published this tribute to him and his life and interests. High quality printing on high quality paper. $3.75. From: Don Herron, err...I can't find an address for Don in ECHOES, or in my files. He lives in St. Paul, MN, though...

I hadn't seen a copy of ARIEL, the Book of Fantasy, until George Basco, Associate Editor, send me a copy of Volume Four.

This is not strictly a small press operation, since Ballantine has a hand in it, but I ran out of room in "And Then I Read..." so here I say a few impressed thoughts about the production.

Large (9 x 12) size, gloss stock, exquisite full color painting on the non-commercial-layout cover, mostly superb sf and fantasy artwork (the rest is merely excellent), with short fiction and short interviews spacing and decorating the feasts of art.

It costs $7.95 and is probably worth it. It is distributed by Ballantine to bookstores, especially sf and fantasy bookstores.

THE BEAST OF BEACHWOOD

FILM REVIEWS AND NEWS BY BILL WARREN

Bill Warren
2150 N. Beachwood Dr.,#4
Hollywood, CA 90068

Things are hanging fire in the fantastic film "industry" right now. And I've been having a little difficulty getting some film news: I scout HOLLYWOOD REPORTER and other trade publications, but any news or comments readers might want to pass along to me would be appreciated. Geis has forwarded a couple of items to me, and I really love getting feedback.

SUPERMAN is apparently heading for big boxoffice returns; with STAR WARS and CLOSE ENCOUNTERS having done so well, few studios would still claim that big-budget fantasy features that make tons of money are just flukes. Unfortunately, some people have perceived all three films as being "mindless" (which STAR WARS, at least, certainly is not), and the large grosses being racked up by LORD OF THE RINGS as being due to its being a cartoon.

As a result, far too many of the announced films are mishmashes whose creators failed to realize that the three big hits have a grasp of science fiction and show some respect for it. Or they are grimly preachy "science fact" thingies. One can only hope that Harlan Ellison's script of I, ROBOT will be filmed, for it reportedly combines some of the spectacle audiences loved in STAR WARS, CE3K and SUPERMAN, with humanity and an adult-oriented plot, derived from CITIZEN KANE as well as Asimov. (Personally, I wish Ellison would quit pointing to the inadequate CHARLY as a model of a good SF film. I watched it again recently, and found Cliff Robertson's performance to be inaccurate and somewhat insulting, the direction ham-fisted and insensitive, and the script -- of Keyes' fine novel -- to be obvious and trite. Just because it tries to grapple with Real Issues doesn't make it a good movie.)

Horror films still loom large. There are several Dracula-based films shooting or ready for release, including LOVE AT FIRST BITE with George Hamilton as a lovelorn Dracula in modern New York. (Sure-fire turkey time, folks.) Werner Herzog's remake of NOSFERATU, with Klaus Kinski in the lead, should be out around the time you read this; it has received rave reviews in France. And John Badham's production of DRACULA, with Frank Langella in the title role and Laurence Olivier as Dr. Van Helsing, is just about finished and will open in mid-summer. It's from a script by W.D. Richter, and considering his wonderful job on INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS 78, I'm really looking forward to this. It's not a version of the stage play, and is instead based somewhat loosely on the novel itself. For instance, the two female leads have been changed somewhat; I assume Mina is still Mrs. Harker, but Lucy has been rewritten to be Van Helsing's granddaughter. Van Helsing is also apparently not an expert on vampires. Two Saturday-morning Dracula TV series have been announced, one live-action and one cartoon.

NIGHTWING will be out soon, as will THE BROOD. That stars Oliver Reed, and is directed and written by David Cronenberg, a talented director of revolting films such as THEY CAME FROM WITHIN and RABID. John Carpenter's THE FOG is almost certainly a horror film, and The Wolfen has been purchased. Geoffrey Holder will direct VOODOO TRAGEDY. THE UNSEEN is being made by The Unseen Film Company. THE DARK is Bud Cardos' latest film; he made KINGDOM OF THE SPIDERS so my hopes are up.

We also have been warned about DRACULIN, and other films announced include INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE, THE DAY THE SUN DIED, SPACE VAMPIRES, VAMPYRO BLAST, FANGS, THE FISH MEN, BOG, DRACULA ROCKS, HUMAN EXPERIMENTS, ISLAND OF THE LIVING DEAD, ODYSEA and RESURRECTION; but REVENGE OF THE SCREAMING DEAD is a retitling of MESSIAH OF EVIL. (This info from Famous Monsters #152.)

Other horror titles include CARNIVORA, BENEATH THE DARKNESS and SCREAMS OF A WINTER NIGHT. SANCTUARY FOR EVIL, written by Linwood Case is about "a terrible evil that lurks in Griffith Park", a phrase subject to varying interpretations. OMEN 3, the wrap-up, is being scripted by Harvey Bernhard, creator of the concept, and British mystery writer Andrew Birkin, who was assistant director on 2001.

AIP announced GORP, written and produced by Jeffrey Konvitz. THE GREAT LOS ANGELES FIRE is in the offing. ALTERED STATES will not be directed by Arthur Penn, but rather by (good lord) Ken Russell. That's like replacing Ernest Hemingway with H.P. Lovecraft. Roger Corman has announced SUPERHUMAN, about a superpowered woman. SUPERSONIC MAN, with Cameron Mitchell, is about to be released in Europe. Max Keller is producing SPACE PORT, and the long-delayed FLASH GORDON feature will be directed by Michael Hodges. THE FURTHER ADVENTURES OF FLESH GORDON has been threatened, as has DEATHSPORT II. And there's a new Bigfoot film, THE CAPTURE OF BIGFOOT, under way in Wisconsin.

SCHLOCK TREATMENT

A young boy discovers that alien beings are on Earth and are using human beings as their slaves. He can get virtually no one to believe him. And off we go with another rip-off/hommage film, this time inspired by INVADERS FROM MARS. Set in Oregon but filmed in California, PHANTASM is a nifty if trashy and

confusing thriller dealing with unspecified aliens who have taken over a mortuary. The fact that they turn corpses into unkillable, obedient dwarf zombies is a side issue; the film mainly deals with the nightmarish adventures of the young hero in trying to first prove the aliens exist, and then to get rid of them.

The director-scenarist was Don Coscarelli, special effects were by Paul Pepperman, and the leads are Michael Baldwin, Bill Thornbury and Angus Scrimm.

PHANTASM has too many plot twists, too many characters and the film keeps galloping off in all kinds of directions. But there are lots of almost stunning shock scenes. The best takes place in the crypt, as the boy is pursued by an orange-sized silver globe which zooms through the air. He dodges it and it slams into the head of the bystanding caretaker. In a scene so grotesque as to be comic and scary at once, the globe swiftly drills a hole in the victim's head, and he expires as a fountain of blood shoots out the back of the hole. I don't know why the aliens need such a fancy gadget, but it's a shocker.

There are car chases, unexplained ties to the past, unresolved bits of fantasy (what's the fuzzy worm?), and a very unsatisfactory, dramatically incorrect ending. PHANTASM is amateurish, cheap and sloppy, but, wow, does it deliver the goods. The preview for this is one of the most dizzying things ever seen; it looks like the last panels from a flock of EC horror comics. And the film has every one of the scenes. It's worth seeing.

ZEN AND THE ART OF KICKING SOMEONE'S HEAD OFF

When he was living in Los Angeles and working as an instructor in Martial Arts (one of his pupils was Harlan Ellison, HE turns up all kinds of places), Bruce Lee became close friends with actor James Coburn, and between them they worked out a script embodying and combining martial arts action and Lee's Zen-oriented philosophy. Stirling Silliphant was brought in to spruce things up a bit, and around 1971, Coburn announced plans to film the project -- then called THE SILENT FLUTE -- in India. This did not come to pass.

In 1976, Sandy Howard picked up the rights to the film, and it was shot in Israel in 1977. Avco-Embassy bought the distribution rights, and it was recently released under the title CIRCLE OF IRON. In Los Angeles at least, they had virtually no press screenings, indicating that Avco is trying to sneak the film out, as if they are unsure of just what it is. I can't blame them, because it's a very unusual film. Most people I've spoken to did not like it at all, but I rather did.

CIRCLE OF IRON is the closest thing yet to an American-made sword and sorcery film. It's set in what seems to be the pre-historical past (not prehistoric), although there is a reference to Buddha. Jeff Cooper plays Cord, a young martial arts expert who wants to battle Zetan, the almost mythical martial arts master who, somewhere far distant, guards the Book of Enlightenment. Although Cord does not win the contest granting him the right to seek Zetan, he eventually does become the official seeker, and the story deals with his quest and the trials that confront him.

David Carradine plays four roles in the film, a blind flautist, the leader of the monkey-men, an effusive but enigmatic and magical Turk, and Death, personified as a pantherman. All are also experts in martial arts. Eli Wallach and Roddy McDowall appear in cameo roles, and Christopher Lee plays Zetan, whom Cord finally meets at the end.

The film is remarkably good-natured and unforced; there's plenty of laughs along Cord's way, most provided by Carradine who's excellent in each of his roles, especially as the blind musician. Most of the philosophical aspects are presented in a loose, easily-grasped fashion, though some are pompous, and the thick-eared audience I saw CIRCLE OF IRON with seemed to like the film a good deal. It's a little tedious around the edges, and Cooper is a very unlikable hero, but the picture is worth seeing, as more than just a curiosity item. I wish the distributors had had more faith in it.

NEW STAR FROM KRYPTON

And another fantastic film becomes An Event, the current Movie to See. Hyped like few films have been -- contrary to revised history, STAR WARS received scant promotion until its hit status was apparent -- SUPERMAN has been soaring at the boxoffice beyond expectations. It's not surprising. For a film that was compromised almost out of existence, SUPERMAN is remarkably likeable.

Despite the beliefs of some, SUPERMAN was not conceived as a ripoff of STAR WARS, and was in fact well along in preproduction when STAR WARS began. The mammoth cost of SUPERMAN, reportedly the most expensive film ever made, was in part due to very bad luck and poor planning, but the cost must also be amortized over the sequel, much of which was shot at the same time as SUPERMAN I. I can't justify Marlon Brando's unconscionably high salary. Clearly, the Salkinds were trying to legitimize a comic-book movie by hiring the most famous actor in the world for a key (though not large) role. The casting does have the desired effect -- Jor-El is made to be a figure of dignity, but other actors would have sufficed. Cheaper actors.

There's much that's wrong with the film. The opening scenes are too solemn, and the white sets make Krypt'n look like a huge modern art museum, rather than a place anyone would live. Some of the Kryptonian sequences are awesome, particularly those dealing with the three villains (who'll turn up in SUPERMAN II) and with the destruction of the planet. But the dialog scenes are somewhat ponderous and slightly dull.

The plot is attenuated and weak. It's okay that half of it is taken up with establishing Superman on Earth, getting Clark Kent settled down with the Daily Planet, introducing Lois to Superman, etc. But it's really a costly error to spend so much time on Luthor and his cohorts; he's a scientific genuis, so we'd accept his pushing buttons to set the control devices on the rockets. The long, tiresome scenes in which he and his two buddies mess around with the Army and the Navy (designed to use up Gene Hackman's expensive time) is running time that should have been devoted to more Superstuff.

But the biggest mistake is in the characterizations of the villains. The other deviations from the Superman story as established in the comic books are acceptable; the Buck Rogers-type "future" society that was Krypton's in the comics isn't essential; having Ma and Pa Kent remain on their farm and Clark's not becoming Superboy are okay changes. But changing Luthor from an implacable, humorless, single-minded and monstrous mastermind into a land-hungry dandy who surrounds himself with comic bunglers is strictly from the Batman TV show, though it isn't campy. It throws the film out of kilter every time the story returns to them; the contrast with the zesty but straight Clark Kent/Superman scenes is jarring.

I understand that during production, Richard Donner, who only directed one previous theatrical film, THE OMEN, so irritated the producers that they called in Richard Lester to be a sort of back-up director. (In addition to his Beatles films,

he'd handled THE THREE/FOUR MUSKETEERS for the Salkinds in beautiful fashion.) I've encountered claims, ranging from that Lester directed almost the entire film to that he was merely present on the set. As usual, the truth probably lies somewhere between. If Donner directed any scenes all on his own, as he certainly did, I wouldn't be surprised to learn if they were the weak scenes with Luthor and the henchmen.

However, the virtues of the film far outweigh the defects. The special effects are largely excellent; it's a mark of their excellence (and also a testament to their limitations) that you soon accept the flying scenes almost as reality. There are few glaring indications that you are watching a sophisticated wedding of many exposures of film. Superman flies, and that's the reality. It's also the limitation, since although extremely difficult to depict realistically, after a while a man flying is not very spectacular in and of itself. His climactic pursuit of the missile is, however, excellent, as are most of the scenes in that section.

The script is only okay; it sure sounds like it was written by several different people. Four people are directly credited with it, which was rewritten by "creative consultant" Tom Mankiewicz, and Norman Enfield, too. I understand other people may also have worked on it. There aren't any brilliant lines, but it's a solid script in terms of dialog; it's the structure that's screwed up.

The main virtue of the film, unusual for a spectacle of any type, is in the acting of the leads. I've liked Margot Kidder for some time; she has a certain brittle quality which puts some people off but which I find appealing. She's limited in some ways -- I can't imagine her playing a society wife or Juliet -- but she's just right for Lois Lane. She's all that Lois should be -- bright, enthusiastic, egocentric and appealing. Everything, at least, that I always loved about Lois in the comics.

And then we come to what was, for me, the biggest surprise and greatest glory of SUPERMAN: Superman. Christopher Reeve. He's only been in one other movie (GRAY LADY DOWN), appeared for two years on a soap opera, but has been on the stage since his early teens. (He's about 25 now.) You wouldn't ordinarily think it necessary to have the role of Superman/Clark Kent played by an excellent actor; a strong chin and a good build would seem to suffice. But Reeve goes way beyond that. He's witty and relaxed, yet extremely sympathetic to the role; there's not even the slightest hint of a send-up. He is Superman, a warmer, sexier, more believable Superman than I thought possible. I've seen the film three times now, the second two almost entirely for him. It's the best job by a new actor in an American leading role since I don't know when. Reeve is in the same league as Robert DeNiro, Al Pacino, Jill Clayburgh -- he's that good. And he's that good in SUPERMAN. His only weak scenes are, appropriately, when he's affected by Kryptonite. The focus of the scene is on Luthor, not on Superman's helplessness, which isn't convincing anyway.

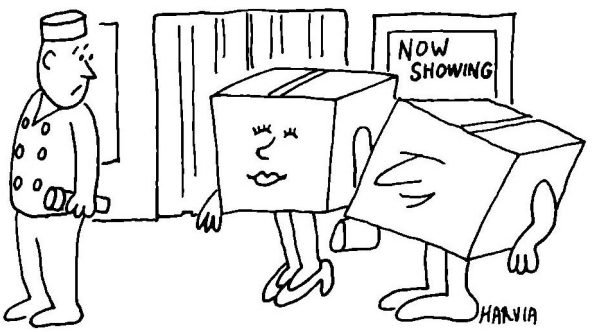
Some people resent so much money being spent on a comic book character, but Superman has transcended that over the years. He's not just a comic book character, he's the comic book character. He established comic books as we know them today, and is probably the most recognizable human figure in the entire world. Along with Tarzan and Sherlock Holmes and even more than those two, he's one of the most famous fictional characters of all time. Michael Fleisher has pointed out that comic books constitute the largest body of children's literature in the world. That's true and serious stuff, friends. If a movie about Superman should be made (and I think it should), this is the proper scale on which to make it. I have quarrels with how it was made but not that it was. I'd rather have seen it the result of a dedicated young director with a personal vision, like Lucas or Spielberg; they would have made their fantasy epics even if they weren't sure of making money. SUPERMAN, on the other hand, was made by a committee who hoped to make a bundle. Still, there is no guarantee that personal commitment to a project makes the resulting film better. But to quarrel with how or why a film was made is futile; the film exists. We must deal with its reality.

And in that way, as something already done and here, SUPERMAN will more than just do. It's an entertaining adventure, and establishes some new stars. It largely deserves the money it's making, and I liked it a lot.

GLACIER WORLD

I suppose that one of these days, Robert Altman will repeat himself and then the world can safely come to an end, its purpose fulfilled. He's made MASH, IMAGES, THIEVES LIKE US, NASHVILLE and A WEDDING, among others; none of them resemble each other in any strong way. His films can be superb, like McCABE AND MRS. MILLER, or pretentious, self-defeating flops like BUFFALO BILL AND THE INDIANS. Now he's made QUINTET. He wants very little plot information released on it, but because of the nature of this magazine, I think I'll reveal some.

The cast is international; Paul Newman, Vittorio Gassman, Fernando Rey, Bibi Andersson -- they're the leads, each from a different country in reality. Altman says this is to give a timelessness and placelessness to the film, but it seemed to me to be set in the unimaginably distant future. The Earth is freezing over; animals seem to be dying out. The end is near. Maybe once technology could have held back the frigid destruction, but that time, like everything else, is in the past. Essex (Newman) returns from the south, the seals all gone, to the huge city he came from; he brings with him an innocent, Vivia (Brigitte Fossey), who is pregnant. In the ice-locked city, he looks up his brother, and as the family, delighted to discover Vivia's pregnancy, sits down to play the obsessive game of Quintet, they are all killed by a mysterious assassin. All except Essex, who apparently loves life so much that the thought of anyone killing another, especially under the conditions the world has come to, is an abhorrent mystery. So he begins to track down the reasons behind the killing, and discovers more killings as he goes.



Which way to the box seats?

Most of you are going to hate this film. I guarantee it. It's very, very, v-e-r-y slow-paced, and much of it is so solemn as to get laughs where none were intended. The style of the film and Newman's loose, relaxed acting style occasionally cause laughs, too. The audience, what there was of it, hissed it at the end. I cannot recommend the film to most people; I can understand why virtually everyone who sees it (and not many will; it's going to bomb) will hate it. What I can't understand is why I liked it. But I did.

The slow pace didn't bother me a great deal; I'm only annoyed by a slow pace when there's nothing much going on. QUINTET, on the contrary, is a fascinating film. Like STAR WARS (and this is the only way it's like STAR WARS), it creates a fully-realized world totally unlike ours; however, in the case of STAR WARS, that world was the standardized future of space ships, alien worlds, etc. QUINTET creates a unique world, a dying iced world in which all thought of hope) except in the mind of Essex) has been so long forgotten that there isn't even any despair any more. The world is winding down, and that's just the way of things. Scavenger dogs roam in quiet, well-behaved packs; as soon as someone dies, which is frequently, they are there to eat the corpses. This is so much a part of the world that there's even a statue to these dogs. Explosions and mysterious creaking sounds are heard continously; I had the impression that they were the sounds of people being blown up. It's a little like that most distant future visited in the novel THE TIME MACHINE; it's a world quietly waiting to end.

There are a few signs of hope, though: the pregnancy; the goose Essex sees flying north, of all directions, at the beginning; and at the end, there are subtle hints that things may be beginning to thaw out.

The script is by Frank Barhydt, Robert Altman and Patricia Resnick, from a story by Altman, Resnick and Lionel Chetwynd. Altman produced and directed it, and the film was made under extremely arduous conditions in Montreal. No heated sets were used for any scene; the foggy breath the actors emit is real.

I was engrossed throughout most of the film; it's too long, especially for the pacing; if it had been paced that way but been shorter, it would have been better. Longer and faster would have also been okay.

The actors are all excellent, really remarkable, especially Newman, Rey and Gassman. The bulky, medieval-looking costumes most of them wear seem more like their own pelts. The acting comes from deep within and is very expressive, working with the bulky clothing. Newman is especially interesting; his character isn't particularly bright, nor is he very determined, or even very heroic. He's just puzzled; he left the city 10 or 12 years before, and things have changed a lot. The changes are all evil, and since he doesn't feel the despair-beyond-despair that all the characters (except those in the big Quintet tournament) are experiencing, he's driven as much by curiosity as anything else.

The superb photography is by Jean Boffety, and the production design, unique, complex and convincing, was by Leon Ericksen. But the film is mostly Altman's; it's the only original American science fiction film (and it is, it is) that I've seen with the richness and density of a novel. There's a background behind all this; we aren't informed of what it is, because why the world got this way is not important. What is, is that it is this way. The world has wound down to ice, death, the dogs and Quintet. Essex tries to set right his own small section of the world; against his will, he is made a player in the larger game -- he even wins. But he must win on his own terms. He's a brave man. So is Robert Altman.

The film is glacial; it moves as fast as a glacier, and it's as frigid as one. But I've always liked glaciers. Let me close on a note of warning: Not one in 25 people will like this film. To like it is no special virtue, to dislike it is not a failing. But it's very unusual, a brave and startling attempt at something really different by the man who's always different. It's slow, it's ponderous, it's pretentious -- but I liked QUINTET. I liked it quite a bit.

THE PODS ARE BACK

First things first. In my opinion, INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS was the best new film of 1978. Powerful, haunting, witty, imaginative -- it's more than just a remake of an old classic, it's a new classic in itself. Don't get me wrong, however; I like the old film very much. No one connected with the first version has anything to be ashamed of, and those are wrong who think that to make anything less than an invidious comparison is to be disloyal to Don Siegel's film.

When the remake was first announced, I wasn't too thrilled. I figured it wouldn't be any better than the first and almost certainly worse. What remained to be said on pods? But as the production went along, I learned that Kevin McCarthy, star of the first one, had agreed to do a cameo role in the new version, and that Don Siegel, director of the old one, was to appear in the new one as a taxi driver. This boded well. Also, I'd liked the other two films I'd seen by Philip Kaufman, chosen to direct the remake; these were THE GREAT NORTHFIELD MINNESOTA RAID and THE WHITE DAWN. I knew little about W.D. Richter, the new scenarist, but my hopes were up.

Still, I didn't expect what I saw: A film that's better than the original. It's got a bigger budget, so things that could only be implied in the first version can be dealt with more thoroughly here. The cast is better. The dialog is better. The effects are more convincing. Until it slightly falters about 3/4 of the way through, the film is dynamic in excitement and tension. I knew the plot thoroughly, yet I was in a constant delicious agony of suspense.

The premise is balderdash. It's been said many times that no one ever made a good movie from a bad script. But bad concepts sometimes make good films. The concept here is silly, doesn't hang together, and one major question goes unanswered. But it's a great metaphor, and it's convincing, and the high quality of the film generates that good old willing suspension of disbelief.

The basic storyline in this version is about the same as in the original, except that it's set in a city -- not incidentally, San Francisco -- and the characters are treated differently. Donald Sutherland plays Matthew Bennell, working for the City Health Dept.; his associate, Elizabeth (Brooke Adams) reports that her lover (Art Hindle) is just not himself, and Bennell later hears similar claims elsewhere. Gradually, these two plus two friends, a screwily intense poet (Jeff Goldblum) and his slightly crackpot wife (Veronica Cartwright), realize that strange parasitic plants from outer space grow pods which, left near a sleeping person, duplicate that person in almost every detail including memory -- but not including love, hate, humanity, all that makes us people and not plants or machines. The story does not conclude the way the old one does, but instead ends on the bleakest possible note.

The difference between this new and the old film are very important. The old picture suffered from low budgetitis. The actors, with the exception of McCarthy, were indifferent and uninteresting. In terms of dialog, the script was lackluster

with many clunker lines. Because of the budget, the film had a slightly hangdog air to it, which Don Siegel's extremely efficient and fast-paced direction tried successfully to overcome. The new film has a much healthier budget, and so many of the flaws of the original were wiped out by money.

The additional virtues of the Kaufman version are so plentiful it's hard to describe them all in this space. Richter has carefully designed the characters so that they are more vivid, more "real" than in the earlier film. For instance, Veronica Cartwright, in the latest of a recent series of superb performances, is a crackpot; when she realizes basically what's going on, she begins enthusiastically ascribing it to pollution and Von Daneiken aliens. To allow a hero to be wrong while remaining basically right and in character is a luxury few writers will engage in. The character played by Leonard Nimoy is a trendy, pompous psychiatrist who's given to mouthing platitudes both before and after being snatched; he's so much a surface person that it's almost impossible to tell when he's been snatched. Which is very clever, and one of the things for which I admire both Richter and Nimoy, who's never been better.

The new film's structure allows Richter and Kaufman to do two things missing altogether from the earlier film. We are shown the fate of the bodies of the duplicated people: They become grey fluff, and this is a constant, subdued feature. Without anything ever being made of it, in the backgrounds of many shots, garbage trucks loaded with the grey fluff can be seen going about their business. Also, we're given a hint of what the world will be like when everyone has become a pod. It's ghastly.

Absolutely everything is ominous, almost comically so; Kaufman and Richter acknowledge that the audience knows they are there to see a scary movie right away. The title certainly gives a real hint. We're way ahead of Sutherland and Adams in figuring out the story, so Kaufman gets us into eerie territory immediately. The camera movement throughout is used for maximum unease. The sense of dislocation this gives to the story is tremendously effective. So is the use of a windshield cracked by disgruntled restaurant employees; Sutherland sees much of the first portion of the film through this distorting window.

Virtually every shot has a plant somewhere in it. Not pods, just regular plants. This is not emphasized, but it's still as if philodendrons and their brethren are spying for the pods.

Inventive use is made of background noises throughout the film. The track is Dolby and stereophonic, and the street noises of San Francisco, often subtly distorted, pop up from different speakers all around the theatre. The sounds are almost all naturalistic, but are fitted into the texture of the film in the most imaginative way. Ben Burtt, who did the bizarre (and Oscar-wining) sound effects for STAR WARS, did the same here. The jazz score by Denny Zeitlin is unobtrusive and excellent.

To choose San Francisco as a location for the story was a very good idea, very much in keeping with the theme. More than any other American city, Frisco is the last bastion of the eccentric. The street performers, the nut cults, the common and everyday weirdos seen everywhere in the city, are very much a part of it. For the inhabitants of San Francisco to lose their individuality almost literally overnight is a bigger, more obvious tragedy than it would be for those of other cities -- simply because there's so much more individuality in San Francisco.

After the sequence in Sutherland's garden, the film's very rapid pace slows down somewhat. The leads are then chased by pod people for the rest of the film. There's only so many things that can be done with a chase scene, only so many variations on it. The director seems to lose interest and the picture becomes slightly stretched out. Much of the energy goes away, and I felt myself physically relaxing, sitting back in the seat, the tight feeling in my chest diminishing.

The film is scary. I'm not easily scared by movies, but this one did it to me. The characters are real enough that you experience a sense of genuine loss when they go, one by one. The idea of sleeping becomes a source of apprehension. More even than the first one, this should have been called SLEEP NO MORE.

The message of INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS is as true today as it was 20 years ago, maybe more so; that came along in the middle of the 1950s, when the freaky, individualism-worshipping 60s were soon coming up. The pendulum is now swinging backwards, and we are probably heading for an era of repression of individual differences. Pods are all around us, telling us to join them, that it's better, more peaceful, to be a pod. The menace is real, even if not science fictional. Both INVASIONs OF THE BODY SNATCHERS tell us that the eccentricities, the humanity, in our own natures are to be encouraged. Or we're next.

SHORT NOTICES of other kinds of movies:

THE GREAT TRAIN ROBBERY is a pleasant little diversion with Sean Connery and Donald Sutherland (thankfully away from those pods) as an elegant Victorian bandit and his cohort, out to rob 25,000 pounds in gold from a moving train -- in 1855. It's a caper film; it's never quite as clever as director-writer Michael Crichton was hoping, but it's beautifully produced, well-acted and a lot of fun.

IN PRAISE OF OLDER WOMEN is an interesting, sexy little film about a rake's progress. There's a great deal of semi-nudity. It begins in Czechoslovakia and ends in Canada; the earlier scenes are by far the best.

THE BRINK'S JOB, with Peter Falk, Peter Boyle and Warren Oates, is about the famous stickup of 1950, and like TRAIN ROBBERY, though reasonably good, never quite rises to the level it might have. The cast is good, especially Oates at the end, and it's overall a much better picture than director William Friedkin's previous two (THE EXORCIST and SORCERER).

THE GLACIER FOX is a moderately interesting animal film from Japan. The title tells all -- it's a year in the life of a glacier fox, mostly well-photographed but edited clumsily. An amazingly insipid narration and banal songs drag the film down, and it becomes rather tedious.

In no particular order, the best films of 1978 that I saw included COMING HOME, AUTUMN SONATA, INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS, DAYS OF HEAVEN, SUPERMAN, AN UNMARRIED WOMAN, HEAVEN CAN WAIT, WHO'LL STOP THE RAIN, WATERSHIP DOWN, PICNIC AT HANGING ROCK, THE LAST WAVE, THE BOYS FROM BRAZIL, THE BIG FIX, DEATH ON THE NILE, MOVIE MOVIE, SAME TIME NEXT YEAR and THE DEER HUNTER.

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OTHER VOICES, ***OTHER VOICES,*** OTHER VOICES, **OTHER**

WOMAN ON THE EDGE OF TIME
By Marge Piercy
Fawcett Crest, $2.25

Reviewed by George R.R. Martin

Marge Piercy's byline is not likely to be familiar to science fiction readers, unless they happened to pick up a copy of the original anthology AURORA: BEYOND EQUALITY, a 1976 Fawcett/Gold Medal release that included a chunk of WOMAN ON THE EDGE OF TIME.

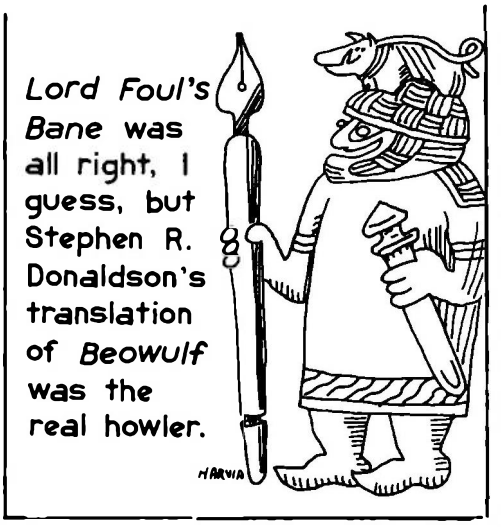
Those who did sample Piercy's work in AURORA would have discovered a writer of passion, power, and skill, and an intriguing imaginary society. Hopefully they would have gone on to WOMAN ON THE EDGE OF TIME in its full, novel length. Those who were deterred by the price of the hardcover, and those who have never heard of WOMAN or its author, now have another chance: The Piercy novel has been released as a Fawcett Crest paperback.

It is not being marketed as science fiction, and that decision is not entirely a commercial one in this particular case. It is a moot point whether WOMAN is SF or not. The novel is the story of Connie Ramos, a Chicano woman confined to a mental institution, where she is ultimately used -- unwillingly -- as a subject for experimental brain surgery. But Connie is also a time traveler, and fully half of the novel is about her visits to the future, to the utopian society of Mouth-of-Mattapoisett.

That plot, of course, gives the reader two possible interpretations. SF readers will probably decide that the time travel element is real. In that case, WOMAN ON THE EDGE OF TIME is science fiction, no matter how it is marketed. Mainstream readers will probably view Connie's jaunts into tomorrow simply as hallucinations, as her visions of a better world, symbolically but not literally true.

Myself, I incline to the SF side. A defect of my upbringing, perhaps. But I do think the bulk of the internal evidence in the novel leads us to believe that Connie is really visiting the future (or, more correctly, a future -- she does glimpse an alternate track at one point). Besides, it is a better and more powerful book if Connie is not hallucinating.

All of this is, in a sense, beside the point. The thematic heart of WOMAN ON THE EDGE OF TIME is neither mainstream novel nor science fiction: It is a utopia. As such, it is interesting to view the book



in comparison to another recent utopia, Ursula K. LeGuin's DISPOSSESSED. The two books are utterly different, yet strangely similar.

The utopian form has always had its problems. Chief among them is boredom. From St. Thomas More through WALDEN TWO, most utopian novels have been bloody damned boring. While the ideas contained therein have sometimes been arresting, utopias traditionally suffer from a lack of conflict, and conflict is the driving force behind good fiction. A perfect society, of course, would have none of the conflicts that fester in less perfect societies. How then to drive the plot? Where to get the emotional content, the laughter and rage and tears? Intellectual exercises make bad fiction.

Piercy and LeGuin, both writers of no mean skill, tried to solve this problem in oddly similar ways. Each included in her book a second setting, a bad society to be contrasted with the good utopia, and each tried to make tensions and conflict grow out of that contrast (LeGuin hedged her bets a little by making her utopia somewhat flawed -- hence the subtitle, an "ambiguous utopia" -- with its own internal problems). Both elected to tell their tales in alternating segments, flashing back and forth between settings. The main timeline of THE DISPOSSESSED showed LeGuin's protagonist moving against the decadent capitalistic world of Urras, but every other chapter flashed back to earlier years on utopian anarchistic Annares. Piercy sandwiched each of Connie Ramos' trips to the future between powerful glimpses of her life in the mental institutions of present-day America.

Interestingly, despite using such similar methods, the two authors got strikingly dissimilar results. The strengths and weaknesses of THE DISPOSSESSED and WOMAN ON THE EDGE OF TIME are not at all the same. In fact, they are almost polar.

LeGuin succeeded brilliantly in her depiction of Annares. Perhaps because it was "ambiguous" -- read, real -- Annares came alive as no other utopia ever has. The Annaresti were people, striving and sweating and sometimes failing, complete with warts and bad habits and nastiness, heirs to all the failings of the human race. Their society was attractive in many ways, a human kind of society, a place the reader could believe in, and dream of living in.

But LeGuin failed in her alternate chapters, when she tried to sketch in Urras, the contrast. Here her subtlety suddenly deserted her, and we got a straw man of a world, erected solely for the purpose of demolition. The straw man was built around the skeleton of Earth, and it had neither personality nor presence of its own. The bones kept peeking through, and the parallels were all too heavy-handed.

In WOMAN ON THE EDGE OF TIME, the situation is neatly reversed.

The episodes in the barrio and the mental institution crackle with tension and vitality. Piercy has done her homework superlatively, and she makes the protagonist's nightmare situation come vividly alive. The reader cares passionately about Connie Ramos, her fears and her humiliations, her attempts to escape, her involvements with the people around her. Even the secondary characters in these sections come across powerfully -- Alice Bluebottom and Sybil the Witch and Skip the homosexual, who share Connie's prison, and the men who have earlier shared her life, and Dolly her niece, a strung-out prostitute -- and even the villains, the doctors, are recognizable, human, individual.

When Connie Ramos slips into the future, though, something happens. In Mattapoisett we are given love and death and sex and even a war. None

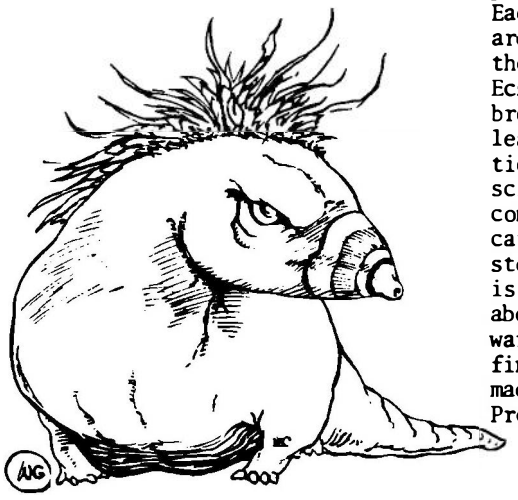
"Our American professors like their literature clear and cold and pure and very dead."

---Sinclair Lewis, Dec. 12, 1938 in Stockholm upon receipt of the Nobel Prize for Literature.

of it quite works. Here the tension drains away, the narrative meanders and the book drifts into periodic lectures of the sort so often found in the classic utopias. Piercy devotes a lot of effort to characterization here, but never quite brings it off. None of the residents of Mattapoisett take on the depth of the hospital inmates. They are too interchangable, too forgettable, too bland and nice and wonderful. Nothing brings this home so strikingly as death. In the asylum, one of the minor characters is turned into a smiling vegetable, a second is driven to suicide. The reader feels both tragedies as a wrench in the guts. In the future, one of the major characters -- on whom far more wordage has been expended than on either of the poor damned inmates -- is killed at war, and it is difficult to feel anything. He was just not real enough, a problem he shared with his world.

Piercy's Mattapoisett is fully as interesting as LeGuin's Annares, in the realm of ideas. As fiction, though, as a setting in a story, it is markedly less successful. It is not ambiguous in the least, and that is precisely the difficulty. People there are all nice. There is no dissent; everyone loves the system and seems perfectly happy under it. They are at war against another society, but the enemy is totally evil; right is entirely on one side. And so on. And so forth.

So Marge Piercy's WOMAN ON THE EDGE OF TIME is a flawed book. this is not to be taken to mean that it is a failure. Far from it. It shares with THE DISPOSSESSED the distinction of being awesomely ambitious, and if it does not fulfill all the dreams to which it aspires, it still succeeds on a much grander scale than most novels I have read recently, SF or otherwise. Piercy offers us some intriguing social speculation, an attractive vision worth thinking and arguing about, and -- in the scenes in the mental asylum -- characters the reader can care for, prose that is frequently exact and electric and a strong, suspenseful plotline. SF readers who are more interested in good stories than in labels would do themselves a favor by wandering down one of those other aisles in the bookstore, and picking up a copy of WOMAN ON THE EDGE OF TIME.



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DIRTY TRICKS
By George Alec Effinger
Doubleday, 179 pp., $7.95

Reviewed by Joe Sanders

Effinger is widely and frequently published, talented and acclaimed. The jacket blurb says so. And to scan the list of his publications and observe that this is his third collection of short stories in four years, you would think that Effinger must truly have a lot going for him.

Well, so he does. He has, for one thing, a sharp eye for details, the bits of action and appearance that most people barely notice but that can bring a character or scene to life. Effinger writes well, too, and he can mimic several prose styles effectively, thanks to that same eye for detail. He can use these abilities to achieve variety in his writing; he is able to shift unpredictably from humorous to serious, matter-of-fact to surreal many times within the same story. A reader never can settle comfortably into an Effinger story; the action whips off into ugly brutality or slapstick farce without warning.

All this could be very useful to a writer who wanted to unsettle his readers, to make them think -- and feel -- more profoundly about things they either take for granted or determinedly ignore. There are hints throughout Effinger's work that he has something of the sort in mind. But most of the time, and especially in these pieces, he doesn't accomplish that or much of anything else. Each piece starts brightly, plays around with an idea or a situation, then stops. "The Mothers' March on Ecstasy", for example, shows an outbreak of mob euphoria that apparently leads to the collapse of civilization; all this is described by a mad scientist straight out of a 1940s comic book -- literally; Effinger carefully exaggerates the narrator's stereotyped nuttiness. The story is fun to read. But if you think about it for half a second afterwards, you wonder: So what? Is Effinger trying to show that comicbook mad scientists don't appreciate fun? Pretty trivial. Is he suggesting that people who don't dig ecstasy are killjoys like the mad scientist? Too little direct information on what the scientist is attacking to give much sense of that. So has Effinger done anything beyond writing a cute little skit that's fun to read? Once?

This is not to say that all fiction must be Serious, let alone Optimistic. It's altogether possible to argue that despair is a plausible reaction to the human condition, and it may be that life is such a mixture of comedy and tragedy that no consistent viewpoint is possible. Still, Effinger's blend of hilarity and horror, human passions in cartoon pastiches, doesn't seem to point toward much more than a bemused inability to figure anything out. For example, sometimes characters in different stories have the same names; sometimes, in that case, it is the same person, but sometimes they're different. Everything is questionable, tentative. This all may be part of an effort to shake readers up: You've got to be alert -- can't take anything at face value. Unfortunately, this can lead to the feeling that the only safe attitude to hold is a general amused disdain, a so-what attitude. And unfortunately, Effinger's fiction is one of the handiest and easiest things to say "So what?" to.

A couple of stories in DIRTY TRICKS do more than I've suggested. "B.K.A. The Master" shows a slum kid making his choice between ultimate Good and Evil, and the story is gently, damningly convincing that it was an unfair choice. "Strange Ragged Saintliness" seems to have wanted to say something about the futility of general social reform and the need for more love; however, it settled for being a plot summary of that story. Overall, despite Effinger's talent and the momentary enjoyment of reading these stories, this collection is unsatisfying. Effinger probably is more than a Goulart with pretentions. I'm not sure though, how much more and what more. Until he figures out a way to show me, I too am left with the feeling -- "So what?"

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GLORIANA
By Michael Moorcock
Fontana Paperbacks, 378 pp., $2.50

Reviewed by William Gibson

This is easily the year's best fantasy. That, as they say, is the good news, the bad being that the book may not yet be available in the United States. My copy is a Canadian edition of the British paperback, and I suspect that if an

American edition were on the stands, I would have heard about the book before I'd had a chance to read it. As it happens, I can't remember when I last had as pleasant a literary surprise.

This is Michael Moorcock, the very same, author of the endless adventures of Jerry Cornelius, and perhaps more popularly, of that whole raft of Elric-Hawkmoon-Corum books which I have never been able to work up much enthusiasm for. GLORIANA stands in roughly the same relation to the average "adult fantasy" as the novels of John Le Carre do to the imitators of Ian Fleming: superior creations that resemble their genre counterparts but are vastly more entertaining, and which turn out, in spite of all the fun, to have been fairly serious novels. And GLORIANA is vastly entertaining, make no mistake.

Gloriana rules an Albion whose empire includes a continent-wide Virginia and a good deal of Asia. As the novel opens, her reign is a Golden Age, although peace and prosperity are more often than not maintained by Chancellor Montfallcon's Machiavellian intrigues. These are executed by Captain Quire, a frighteningly complex villain whose characterization might owe something to Fritz Leiber's Mouser, but who lacks the Mouser's easy hedonism. The Queen is unaware of this night side of her rule, and is tortured by her sense of duty, which requires her to be both soul and symbol of Albion, and by her own terrible and fruitless search for sexual fulfillment. Montfallcon, one of the few survivors of the hideous reign of King Hern, Gloriana's father, will stop at nothing to maintain the rule of the Queen of Virtue. When Montfallcon makes the drastic mistake of insulting Quire's "art" of savage and covert manipulation, Quire leagues himself with a hostile Arabia and sets out to destroy the Empire.

Most of this takes place within a single structure, a gargantuan labyrinth of palaces within palaces, which must rank with the world's strangest dreams of architecture. The castle of the Groans -- GLORIANA is dedicated to Mervyn Peake -- could be tucked away in a sub-basement without anyone being the wiser. Whole tribes of disgraced nobles haunt the forgotten corridors behind the walls, at night peculiar scavengers creep out from vents and grates, and no one is particularly anxious to learn just how deep the foundations run...

And Quire's London, beyond the outermost walls, is a superbly gritty evocation of the Elizabethan underworld.

Like Nabokov's ADA and Carlos Fuentes' TERRA NOSTRA, GLORIANA resists easy pigeonholing. Like ADA, it's an alternate history; I would guess that the Legions never left Britain, and that Rome fell at a later date. In any case, Christianity seems to have never gotten going and Gloriana and her court swear by various pagan deities but seem to worship none. And like Fuentes, Moorcock has ransacked the totality of his nation's culture to meet his own symbolic ends. There's no literal magic in Gloriana's Albion, but madmen from alternate time-tracks have been known to pop in via the roaring constructions of the court artificer. And Moorcock's charming and ubiquitous Una-person has a major role, linking the book to the author's other fantasies.

Prior to GLORIANA, I primarily admired Moorcock as the furious polemicist of NEW WORLDS. While I wouldn't have gone so far as to call his highly polished saga-mongering hack work -- the least of his fantasies are too finely wrought for that -- I did assume that the Corum and Hawkmoon stories were bread-and-butter propositions, and that he was such an expert technician that he could virtually write these things with one hand. And, in a way, GLORIANA convinces me that I was right. This novel is a labor of love, and a triumphant one.

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THE STAR TREASURE
By Keith Laumer
Berkley, 1971, 176 pp., #23196
(Berk Edn, Aug 1976)

Reviewed by Stephen Lewis

Perhaps it's no longer true, but several years ago Laumer's reputation as an author was that he was very fine on first halves and not so fine on finishes. Very intriguing premises were established only to be dissipated in a surfeit of outlandish action with Laumer no longer in control.

While this one has been around for a while, it doesn't fit the pattern. It's so different of what I think Laumer is capable of doing that I thought I must have been thinking of another writer entirely. Ben Tarleton is a career officer in the Space Navy who accidentally stumbles across some plotters deeply involved in subversive activities like mutiny and revolution. He doesn't know what's going on, nor does the reader for that matter, but he's quickly tarred with the same brush. He escapes, he's captured, he's cashiered from the service. In his own words he becomes "a refugee from the outcasts of the exiles". But he's no traitor. He's become the unwilling pawn of unknown forces who want from him a secret he doesn't possess.

What makes this different from Laumer's usual work is how slowly the plot begins to thicken, to yield some meaning, if you will. Little by little the conditions ripening to open rebellion to the Star Lords are revealed, until a spark of understanding and a fantastic discovery combine to burst into a bright flare of cosmic significance. Laumer writes rough, perhaps even crude prose, but he's beautifully effective in convincing the reader that Tarleton is not only a survivor, but that he's sure to succeed on a quest that he doesn't even know he is on.

It's still space opera, but, yes, there's social significance too, even though it may be pertinent only to a single struggling bug trying to avoid being caught underfoot.

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DYING OF THE LIGHT
By George R.R. Martin

Reviewed by Michael X. Maida

Here's hoping that George R.R. Martin continues writing novels for a long, long time. His DYING OF THE LIGHT (Pocket Books) is a damned good read. I had neglected to buy it for several months because it sounded like the type of thing I don't normally go for: a struggle of a civilized man against members of a harsh, primitive society from some back-water planet, with a few spaceships and decaying cities thrown in to make it science fiction. There's even a heroine in distress and a chase scene with aircars. Despite all this it remains a very moving story, for Martin is no simplistic hack. Many times I was sure I knew what would happen next and was wrong, since the author never took the easy way out. Reality would always intrude upon the most romantic situations.

The novel is set on the rogue planet Worlorn, whose lonely course will soon take it into inter-galactic space. Most of the inhabitable planets in the galaxy have already been settled, there had been an empire and a collapse already, and now things were getting rolling again. As luck would have it, Worlorn had recently passed close enough to a star system to sustain life, so the planets at the edge of the galaxy sent in their terra-formers and had a big party.

The action takes place about ten years after the festival. Gwen Delvano is on Worlorn studying its ecology, which is rather unusual since the world had been seeded with lifeforms from 14 different worlds with no thought given to their interaction. Living with her in the fortress city Larteyn, erected by the planet High Kavalaan, are two men, both Kavalaars. Gwen is beteyn to Jaantony Riv Wolf high-Ironjade Vikary (Jaan Vikary to his non-Kavalaar friends.) Betheyn is Kavalaar for heldwife, a woman bonded to a man who is owned and protected by him. She is co-betheyn to Garse Ironjade Janacek, Jaan's teyn or sworn friend and mutual ally. The teyn relationship is the most honored in Kavalaar culture.

At the start of the novel, Dirk t'Larien, Gwen's former lover, receives a summons from Gwen in the form of a whisperjewel, which had been psychically tuned to their minds. Dirk immediately leaves for Worlorn, expecting to find his Jenny ready to rush to his arms upon his arrival. Instead, he learns of her strange relationship with the Kavalaars, and is unsure why he was called. Arkin Ruark, an ecologist colleague of Gwen's, assures Dirk that Gwen really wants to be rescued from the Kavalaar's evil clutches and will let him know when she is ready.

Dirk soon makes his rescue, luckily avoiding a duel with a Kavalaar from another holdfast which would mean certain death for him. A hair-raising chase ensues. Dirk and Gwen are captured but are rescued by the Ironjades, who are the most progressive of the Kavalaar factions. In the process, Jaan violates the honor code of the Kavalaar, branding him an outlaw to be shot on sight. Jaan flees with Gwen and Dirk.

The rest of the novel concerns the conflict of these three, both with the other Kavalaars and with their own ethical codes. All of the characters are presented as human beings with conflicting motivations. Jaan is torn between his love for Gwen and his loyalty to Kavalaar honor and his teyn. Gwen is both angered by her treatment as property of the Kavalaar's yet at the same time is attracted by their sense of honor and commitment. Dirk is initially repelled by the Kavalaar's brutal, violent behavior but becomes sympathetic to the Ironjades as he begins to understand them.

The development of these characters is one of the novel's strong points. All their relationships are dynamic. Dirk attempts to free himself from a cynical outlook on life by reuniting with Gwen and living happily ever after. But his plans change after he realizes how idealized his image of Gwen was and he starts to see her as she really is. Dirk also grows from his association with the Kavalaars, Jaan and Garse, as he learns how deep love and loyalty can be. When Gwen realizes how much of the Kavalaar ethics she has assimilated she turns again to Jaan. Jaan is thrown into great mental turmoil by his rejection from his society. His alienation is so great that it eventually destroys him.

The title is somewhat misleading; Worlorn is dying from lack of light as it drifts further and further into the darkness of the intergalactic void. This image of darkness and death sets the tone of the novel. We see the bright hopes for the future of Martin's characters end in chaos and despair. Finally, death claims its inevitable victory in the end.

Although there's some heavy stuff here, DYING OF THE LIGHT remains powerful and compelling reading. Some spots of it, in fact, are real cliffhangers. On top of that it's got realistic characterization and an excellent depiction of an alien society. What more could you ask of a science fiction novel? Or any novel?

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SURVIVOR
By Laurence Janifer
Ace 79111, 1977, 172 pp.+ xvi

Reviewed by Stephen Lewis

A lot of science fiction is published with little more than a prayer of being noticed. There's just too much of it. If something falls short of being top notch without being out-and-out space opera (for which there's another level of acclamation), chances are that it'll quietly and quickly disappear with few people ever aware of its very existence.

Here's one you might have missed. It's dedicated to Remo and Chiun, and to a Mr. Simon Templar, which might not mean a great deal to SF fans as a whole, but it will to most segments of mystery fandom. In fact, Gerald Knave, occupation: survivor, is molded in pretty much the same image as these other characters, and as a result, not unexpectedly, this is a carefree adventure novel, but with a plus.

The mystery here is what motivates the original inhabitants of the idyllic colony planet Cub IV, who after fifteen years of cohabitation, suddenly decide that the humans on their world must go. Another part of the puzzle is what it is that some humans have that makes them resistant to the mind-controlling telepathic powers of the mysterious Vesci.

As in any good detective story, there are plenty of hints to the answer ahead of time. However, it still bothers me immensely when fictional characters like Knave have a half-formulated solution floating around somewhere in the backs of their minds for most of a book without their ever being able to get a grip on it. Taking a look at it from the lazy author's point of view, the less you put down in print, the less likely the reader is going to be able to come up with your answer too quickly. The vaguer you are, the easier it is to keep a secret.

Still, while no prize winner, the solution is a good one, one worth hunting this book up and reading about a lot of boring warfare to get to.

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IVAN EFREMOV'S THEORY OF SOVIET SCIENCE FICTION
By G.V. Grebens
Illus. by Candice Kensing
NY, Vantage, 1978, 135 pp. $8.50
Order from: Vantage Press, 516 West 34th St, New York, NY 10001
SBN: 533-03611-2

Reviewed by Fred Patten

Ivan Efremov (usually transliterated Yefremov) was probably the best-known Soviet SF author of the 1950s and 1960s. In Russia he was the dean of a new generation of SF writers, replacing those who still followed Jules Verne as their model. Efremov (born 1907) was trained as a paleontologist and scientific philosopher. He began writing fiction about scientific research in 1942 and began specializing in works of and about SF in the 1950s. He died in 1972. Grebens is identified as a faculty member of a Texas university, with a PH.D in Soviet literature, who has "taught Soviet science fiction for a decade".

Grebens appears to have researched his work thoroughly. There are approximately 100 footnotes in each of the five chapters, referring both to Efremov's fiction and to essays about SF by Efremov and others in Soviet literary journals and monographs. (A sample title: A.F. Britikov's RUSSKIJ SOVETSKIJ NAUCHNO-FANTASTICHESKIJ ROMAN; Leningrad, 1970.) Grebens quotes Efremov's own words extensively. Therefore there seems no reason to doubt that Efremov is being interpreted accurately.

There are actually two closely-related theories here. Efremov's theory of biological evolution is that life began in a primitive chaos and has been progressing in an ever-tightening spiral toward an intelligent, egalitarian oneness -- a Communist social system. This is consistent with the doctrinaire Marxist view of history, which is that events are caused by vast social forces, not individuals. (The Russian Revolution would have happened whether Lenin had been present or not; the Fascist interlude in Germany would have occurred even if Hitler had never been born. This makes the coming triumph of Communism inevitable, no matter how many reactionaries may drag their heels.) "And Efremov believes that to foresee all this and represent it in literature is the task of science fiction". (P. 12)

Efremov postulates two perspectives to SF: the long range and the short range. The long range should depict a utopian Communist paradise with all humanity living in enlightened scientific brotherhood. The short range should show the present human qualities which are evolving toward this goal, in conflict with the degenerating remnants of the old order of "individualism, imperialism, petit bourgeois competition in wealth, and the possession of things". (P. 12)

This theory has several interesting ramifications. Efremov holds this view of evolution to be a universal constant. In his novel COR SERPENTIS, Efremov specifically repudiates Murray Leinster's "First Contact", in which the crew of the first human spaceship to meet an alien spaceshi; fears the aliens may be warlike monsters. According to Efremov, any species intelligent enough to have space travel will have evolved to a parallel humanoid physique and a Communistic social order. The concept of intelligent bloodthirsty BEMs is an unscientific fairy tale. ("...it is impossible to create an animal more complete than man.") (P. 15) Socialist mankind will also develop intelligent control of planetary conditions, thus relegating all plots of worldwide disasters, natural or man-made, to the literary dustheap.

Efremov makes a fine distinction between "phantasizing" (constructing realistic predictions based upon sound scientific principles) and "fantasizing" (writing whatever silly stuff comes into your head: "mystics, demons, werewolves, cosmic gangsters, and frightening murders".) (P. 11) As you might guess, he considers most Western SF writers to be fantasists rather than phantasists, and he chides them for their "haphazard imagination".

The writing styles of both Efremov and Grebens are consistent with that of Marxist social philosophy. That is, everything is expounded at great length, in the dullest manner imaginable. A sample:

'Efremov writes that continuous growth and development of the mind can only be achieved in a social environment. But the social sphere must depend on elemental laws of natural selection.[14] Man can develop properly when he and his society are in control of their destiny, for "a society is such as the development of the moral fiber of its members, which depends on the new economy".[15] This is possible only under a Communist social system. (P. 8)'

I am not in favor of encouraging literary pedantry. Nonetheless, I do recognize that this study has value in providing to Westerners a sample of the Soviet philosophy toward SF. Since fiction cannot be published in the Soviet Union unless it can be justified as socially useful, Efremov's rationale has more significance than if it were merely one author's opinion of the meaningfulness of his work. University libraries will probably find this book useful.

COMMENT BY GEORGE GREBENS

September 19, 1978

'Mr. Patten was kind enough to send me a xeroxed copy of the review sent to you. I should like you to make a correction if it is not too late.

'On the second page of Mr. Patten's review he writes "The writing styles of both Efremov and Grebens are consistent with that of Marxist social philosophy". If Mr. Patten would have emphasized a bit more the whole content of the book, he would have noticed that my style in the Introduction and in Chapter five of the book show evidence of Western philosophical methodology and style. This style is of course apparent throughout the book except where I deal directly with Efremov's philosophy.

'I regret that Mr. Patten's review did not cover the content of the whole book -- Efremov's other novels, as well as my conclusions and parallels. This at the same time might indicate to the reason why Mr. Patten wrote "I am not in favor of encouraging literary pedantry," since apparently contemporary philosophical thought both in the West and the East begin more and more to resemble each other.'

MASTODONIA
By Clifford D. Simak
Ballantine/Del Rey, 1978, 233 pp.
1st Edn, ppbk format, Oct., 1978

Reviewed by Stephen Lewis

Simak is the acknowledged master of home-town, back-country science fiction. This story of time-tunnels to the past which are constructed by an alien stranded in the wilds of rural Wisconsin may prove to be one of his best selling novels yet, thanks to the shrewd salesmanship of the Del Reys. Nevertheless, I found it too obviously derivative of too much SF already having passed through the woods this way before. It succeeds admirably well as entertainment, but veteran readers will see plot turnings where there are none, will look for substance where Simak is waving his hands, and will ask questions where there are no answers.

Academic archaeologist Asa Steele's casual acceptance of what he and his dog Bowser find in his back yard is the ultimate in cool. His lady friend Rila's quick instinct for the commercial possibilities is nothing short of staggering. Safaris into the Age of Dinosaurs? Sure enough.

There is a surprising amount of violence, but there is a happy ending. Simak does a smooth, professional job of story telling. I'd have been even more impressed if at any point I'd felt as though I had not read it once or twice before.

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GORDON R. DICKSON'S SF BEST
Edited by James Frankel
Dell, NY, 1978, $1.75, 236 pp.
IBSN: 0-440-13181-2

Reviewed by Clifford R. McMurray

Gordon Dickson is one of the neglected giants of science fiction. He doesn't have the name recognition of Asimov or Heinlein or Brad-

bury with the man on the street, and even in fandom he is known more as a convention personality than as a writer. His shelf boasts only a single Hugo and Nebula. He deserves far more attention than he has received. So if this collection of his short fiction lived up to its title, it would be a publishing event. Unfortunately, far from being the cream of his work, this book represents his talent even less than some other collections which are still in print.

Before I even saw the book I drew up my own list of what I considered Dickson's best short stories. When I finally got my copy, I turned first to the table of contents to compare my judgment with Frankel's. Only two of the sixteen on my list were included. Of course tastes differ, but for the most part, the stories selected by Frankel are not standouts.

There are exceptions, such as "Call Him Lord" which won a much deserved Nebula for best novelette in 1966. The crown prince of the Terran Empire pays a visit to earth, now a rustic backwater of human civilization. He is escorted about the countryside by a hereditary bodyguard, who comes to see that the young man has many character flaws. Only one of these flaws is unforgiveable, and around this the story revolves. The narrative is in that easy, unaffected style of the born storyteller that makes Dickson's stories seem much simpler than they actually are. Silent but deadly, like a curare-tipped blowdart. Cold and clear. It is not for nothing that the man's writing has so frequently been compared to mountain spring water.

"In the Bone" is about the survival of a man stripped of all his sophisticated technology, swatted down from the sky by an incomprehensively vast alien power and left to run naked through the forest of a distant world. It is a story that has to do, as Dickson says, with "the relative importance of the made thing and its maker".

"Act of Creation" is one of the very few stories Dickson has written with a robot in it, and it is far from the typical robot story. Dickson has always been, as he is here, an intensely human writer. While this tale may strain the definition of "best" a bit, it is a quietly excellent story, with the added attraction of being one of the less widely known Dorsai stories -- from that series by which most readers identify him.

The rest of the lot are only average. "Hilifter", about a space hijacker (a privateer, not a terrorist), and "Dolphin's Way", about efforts to communicate with dolphins, are both popular and have been frequently reprinted. They must have something going for them. "Idiot Solvant", an exploration of the subject of genius, is of acceptable quality. So is "Brother Charlie", a tale of humans acting as mediators in a quarrel between two intelligent species, although I could see the punchline a mile away. But "Tiger Green" is just another tired variant of the story where a member of a scouting party saves his companions from an alien menace none of them is able to understand, then leaves them awestruck by his brilliant explanation of how he managed it. Pardon me while I yawn.

"Of the People" is about the only Dickson story I actively dislike.

What each of these stories has in common with the best ones is that consummate craftsmanship of a man who earns his daily bread by his pen. Someone, referring to another artist, once called it "the necessary doing for the necessary living". Even average work from this man makes you sit up and take notice.

What else have we? A nice testimonial dinner type introduction by Spider Robinson, a series of mostly awful illustrations by Rick Bryant (best not to scream too loudly about these, though; Dickson has waged a one-man crusade with the publishers for many years to get illustrations into sf paperbacks, and this is one of his first successes), and a bibliography of Dickson's novels and short stories. If this last item were adequate, it would alone be worth the price of the book for confirmed Dickson fans. But the short stories are only listed alphabetically, with no cross-reference by date of publication, and several stories are not listed at all -- including one in the book!

So, instead of the fantastic buy GORDON R. DICKSON'S SF BEST claims to be, the end product is only a lukewarm "pretty fair". But not to worry. In a few years, when this collection is forgotten, another one will come along with a similar title that is all we could want and more. It will demonstrate Dickson's range, from humor to deepest tragedy. It will include a story or two about man at war, the subject of much of Dickson's writing, but not so many that the reader will be left with the false impression that that's all the man can write about. "Black Charlie" will be there, as will "The Immortal" and "The Man From Earth" and "An Honorable Death" and "In Iron Years". And won't that be a day.

NIGHT SHIFT
By Stephen King
Doubleday, $8.95

Reviewed by Mark Mansell

The purpose of a horror story is to attempt to frighten the reader. To that extent, Stephen King's collection of horror stories, NIGHT SHIFT, is successful. However, he uses the fear of the physical, rather than mental terror, for most of his frights. Rather than Lovecraft's terrors of cosmic abysses, King's terrors are those of gruesomeness, blood and gore. They are quite spine-tingling, and the reader will find him or herself avoiding dark places.

The most memorable stories of the volume are the most gruesome. "Graveyard Shift" is about men cleaning out a rat-infested basement of a mill, only to discover a sub-basement forgotten for over a hundred years in which live strange mutated rats. "The Mangler" makes it difficult to tell whether you are shuddering from fright or from revulsion. It is about a demon-possessed launderette steam ironer and folder which develops a taste for human blood. "Grey Matter" is the story of a man who turns into a squamous thing after drinking polluted beer. "Strawberry Spring" is about a Jack the Ripper-type killer who only strikes during an Indian Summer-

like season, with a not-so-surprising surprise ending.

There are several stories in the book which work for psychological fright, rather than gore. "I am the Doorway" describes an astronaut of the first manned Venus flight who returns to discover alien eyes growing out of his hands. "The Boogeyman" is about a man who has three children who fear closets, for good reasons. "Sometimes They Come Back" is a very chilling tale about a teacher who discovers his childhood tormentors are still high school students, and are in his class. This started out really great, and it had my own worst fear of sadistic gang menbers, but it ended with a plop when the teacher summons a demon to get rid of the punks. "I Know What You Need" is about a boy who can make people love him through black magic. "Children of the Corn" is a very well done tale about a Nebraska town isolated from the rest of the world by miles and miles of corn, where the inhabitants live only to the age of 19 and worship He Who Walks Behind the Rows.

There are two stories which seem to form a mythos (for lack of a better term). They are "Jerusalem's Lot" and "One for the Road". They are about the same deserted, haunted Maine town which was the subject of his book SALEM'S LOT. Alone, neither is very memorable, but together in context with SALEM'S LOT, they are quite interesting.

"Night Surf" is a depressing story about the last remnant of mankind after a plague of the flu. "Battleground" is about a man who receives a box of G.I. Joes in the mail which commence to attack him; he doesn't tell why or how. "Trucks" is about a group of people in a truckstop besieged by various trucks and cars which have mysteriously come to life (and know Morse Code yet!), again without telling why or how. "The Lawnmower Man" is about a man who hires someone to cut his lawn, but who turns out to be a satyr working for Pan.

There are several non-supernatural stories. "The Ledge" is about a man who bets his wife's lover his life against crawling safely along a narrow building ledge. "Quitters, Inc." tells of the ultimate in diet and smoking-control clinics. "The Last Rung on the Ladder" is a semi-nostalgic look at a brother's and sister's trust in each other. In the book's introduction, John D. MacDonald calls it "A gem". "The Man who Loved Flowers" is a short vignette about love and a psychopathic killer. "The Woman in the Room" is a sad tale about euthanasia.

This is an interesting book, though not for the squeamish. The Introduction by John D. MacDonald (author of the Travis McGee Mysteries) is interesting, and the author's foreword is fascinating and informative in what it says about himself and his views on horror. Most of these stories originally appeared in CAVALIER and PENTHOUSE, so most of them will probably be new to horor fans who pay more attention to WHISPERS and WEIRDBOOK.

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THROUGH THE EYE OF A NEEDLE
By Hal Clement
Del Rey/Ballantine, 1978
195 pp., $1.75

Reviewed by Dean R. Lambe

What does one say about a novel that appears to have been written in the early '50s, yet has a 1978 copyright? Not that a contemporary novel with the manners and mores of the past is forbidden -- writers in other genres do that often. But a science fiction story that is dated by 28 years has all the appeal of last week's fish. The juvenile characters are scarcely electrifying either, for the story seems to be "Ozzie & Harriet's son, Ricky, gets an auto-immune hickey from playing with his friendly symbiotic Green Blob"!

If memory serves, the original NEEDLE -- to which this is the "long awaited sequel" -- was a good read. Granted, I was younger than Bobby Kinnaird when I first read about Bobby and his friends on a Pacific atoll, but that story worked. The mystery was there: Where is the elusive Quarry for whom the jelly-like symbiont Hunter must search, search while inside teenager Bobby? Why, nasty Quarry is inside dear-old-dad, Ozzi ... eh, Arthur, and it's no easy task to get Quarry out to do him in. And now it's 7 years later ... uh, well, it's 28 years, but it seems like 7 ... and young Bob has a fresh degree in chemical engineering. Unfortunately, in 7 (times 4?) years, first-class-detective Hunter has learned little about human biochemistry, and has screwed up Bob's immune system. So THROUGH THE EYE is Bob's search for a cure for his terminal condition, and -- rather than a trip to the Mayo Clinic -- Bob returns home, back to that isolated island where Doc Seever talks a good bit of medical nonsense, since Doc is "in on the secret" of Bob's green in-habitant. Also, Hunter hopes to find Quarry's spaceship, which crashed in the ocean, and use the ship to contact others of his race who could cure Bob. Doc's daughter Jenny, has a boat -- an odd kayak -- and she agrees to help Bob look for the spaceship. So Jenny must be let "in". Comes the time when they need a bigger boat, so Maeta must be told too, and the reader begins to wonder why the whole population of that tiny island doesn't catch on. But Hunter and Bob have confused ethics that allow Bob to get killed, but which won't permit contact with anyone who could really help.

OK, like its predecessor, this novel is juvenile SF, so what's wrong with that? Well, even if an adult doesn't care for a juvenile, a kid should enjoy it. Would a contemporary kid understand those references to "Korean troubles", and talk about the newly-invented SCUBA equipment (which never shows up, despite the cover picture)? How about the interminable discussions of morality in terms of white lies vs. black lies, and big lies vs. small ones? And finally, would any normal child spend five minutes with a novel that has absolutely no romance (sure, Jenny and Maeta are wearing Fifties-style bathing suits, but can Bob be that sick)? No, your average nine-year-old would be really turned-off.

Oh, and about that title, Andrew Whyte (in GALILEO) noted that Harry "Hal Clement" Stubbs wanted a terse, appropriate title like "Thread" or "Hook". In the hands of the Del Reys, THROUGH THE EYE OF A NEEDLE emerged (camels ... what camels?). Proof -- were more required -- that editors who mess with a writer's words, like thieves in Bagdad, should have a hand amputated.

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THE EMPEROR OF THE LAST DAYS
By Ron Goulart
Popular Lib., 1977, 189 pp.,#03201
PL Edn, Apr. 1977

Reviewed by Stephen Lewis

What would you do if, as Chief of the Personal Data Wing of the entire United States Fact System, i.e., guardian flunkey in charge of a personable, fun-loving computer named Barney, gained inside-inside information indicating the existence of an internal conspiracy to overthrow the present inane administration (this is the year 2029) and to rule all of Earth after the domino-like collapse of all the other governments of the world?

Create a gang of wild, erratic Mission Impossible agents, that's what. Bring together a psychic cyborg, a hypnotist specializing in

machines, and the best damned telekinetic thief in the world, and the Millenarian Brotherhood stands not a chance. This is a great book to read, or so I found out, while waiting for students not to show up to be advised what courses not to take next semester. Goulart's consistently kinky view of a future that I sincerely hope's not mine still tickles me perversely, but I don't really think there's a lot here that he hasn't said before.

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FIRESHIP
By Joan D. Vinge
Dell, 1978, 191 pp., $1.75

Reviewed by Robert Frazier

Two novellas comprise FIRESHIP ("Mother and Child", ORBIT 16, '75; "Fireship", ANALOG, Dec., 1978). Vinge writes first draft in longhand, comfortable only with the longer forms of fiction (exception: "View From a Height", ANALOG, June, 1978), and this may account for the sparseness of her output. She certainly has no trouble selling to the high paying markets.

"Mother and Child" (100 pp.) concerns a unique woman, the priestess Etaa. Humanity, thrown backward by a plague that blinds and deafens, clinging to a lone colony world, has broken into two castes. The Neaane king, Meron, kidnaps Etaa for a mate: Her metalsmith husband thought dead, already impregnated, she struggles with the bondage as a hated mistress and the fatherless bearing of her child. An anthropologist (from the Colonial Service, who are aliens posing as gods to the Neaane while actually supressing the regrowth of humanity) kidnaps Etaa from Meron. The strategy is: Let the Kotaane, headed by the mysterious Smith, and the Neaane resolve in war the conflict brewing over Etaa's original abduction. On the neighboring moon, Etaa and the very alien "man" are drawn into seeking a solution for this whole, tampered-with mess by their mutual love for each other's children.

"Mother and Child" is constructed in three narrative sections, one by Etaa's husband, one by Meron, one by the alien -- all of whom fall in love with her. The prose is smooth, evenly paced, comfortable to read and often poetic.

Example of background description:

"Etaa spent long hours alone in the days that followed, gazing out across the sighing, broken world from the doorway of the shelter or walking the rim of cliffs with her baby at her back. The clouds that filled the sky now were only wind clouds, dark and licked with lightning, never dripping enough moisture to settle the dust."

FIRESHIP is a first person narrative by a being called Ethan Ring: A synthesis of an extremely sophisticated computer and an extremely ordinary human. A wanted man on Earth for thieving the compact electronic half of himself, exiled in a Martian pleasure resort: Ring awakes with a hangover and a fortune in gambling chips all over the floor. Nothing goes right from then on. Blackmailed by an attractive corporate spy, Hana T., into breaking the computer net of the solar system's richest business potentate, Ring (ETHANAC/Yarrow) struggles to curb his gambling itch, keep his pants straight, and remain witty to the end, which in his case seems to be the bitter end. Most everything comes easily for such a talented brain, except the bit about surviving: There the readout progresses from worse to absurdly bad.

The prose in FIRESHIP is swift, energetic, incredibly concentrated. Example of background description:

"And sitting placidly in the middle of all this potential horror, behind a perfectly ordinary black metal desk, was Salad. On the desk was a set of thumbscrews, temporarily in use as paper-weight. I found myself staring at them with a kind of quivering fascination, the way a cat might look at a string quartet. Somewhere in the back of my mind I could hear Yarrow. Please God, please God, get me outa this and I'll never gamble again...I controlled myself with an effort".

I am definitely schizoid in my opinion. One says, "If it's that damned entertaining, who cares about subtle moods, characterizations, and that stuff?" The other retorts, "But if she can be that rich and deep a craftswoman, why settle for finely tooled jewelry; why not sculpture?" The argument is familiar.

I look for more works combining the talent evident in early works like "Tin Soldier" and "Mother and Child" with the maturity evident in "THE OUTCASTS OF HEAVEN BELT and FIRESHIP. "Eyes of Amber" may be an example; I hope to see others.

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THE BEST OF JACK WILLIAMSON
By Jack Williamson
A Ballantine/Del Rey Book, $1.95

Reviewed by Mark Mansell

THE BEST OF JACK WILLIAMSON is the latest of Del Rey Books' "Best of ... " series. More than just a collection of Jack Williamson's best stories, this volume shows Williamson's development from a talented beginner to his much-deserved status as one of SF's Grand Masters. The stories reflect much about the different "eras" of SF in which they were written.

The first stories show the influence of the Gernsback Zines, although only the first one -- "The Metal Man" -- was published by Gernsback in AMAZING in 1928. It is also Williamson's first published story, although Williamson has revised it a bit to eliminate some of the purple prose of the times. These stories creak a bit, but still hold up surprisingly well.

The next group of tales are from the Golden Age of Campbell's ASTOUNDING. These stories all show the touch of Campbell's editorial taste. Science is shown to be good for mankind, but having its own inherent dangers. The best of these (also the best in the book) is the classic "With Folded Hands". This tale of too helpful robots is one of the best things Williamson (or any other SF writer, for that matter) has ever written and was the basis for his best novel, THE HUMANOIDS. If Hugos had been awarded then, "With Folded Hands" would have won it hands down.

The advent of F&SF and GALAXY in 1949 added a new dimension to SF in both form and content. Nearly every SF zine, including ASTOUNDING, reflected this change. Science became less of a savior to mankind, more satirical styles could be used, and motivations were explored more in depth. Included in this section of Williamson's stories is "Operation Gravity" about an encounter with a collapsed star at the edge of the solar system (a theme later used by Larry Niven) and "Guinevere for Everybody" which is one of the first stories about cloning.

The period of 1954-1969 is bypassed completely. This is somewhat of a shame, since I would have liked to see how the New Wave-Old Wave controversy of that time was affecting Williamson's style. However, the story "Jamboree" shows a little of the New Wave influence in its pessimistic tone. The last story, "The Highest Dive" (1976) shows a return to the Campbellistic style of hard science, which marks a recent trend in science fiction.

None of Williamson's WEIRD TALES writings are included, and there is only one fantasy, "The Cold Green Eye", which is from a 1953 FANTASTIC. But since Williamson's greatest work is in science fiction, particularly "hard" science fiction, this can be excused.

To ice the cake, there is an informative foreword by Frederick Pohl about Jack Williamson and his work, and an Afterword by Williamson himself about the stories chosen for the volume. As a topper, Ralph McQuarrie has done a delightful cover illustration showing one of Williamson's humanoids carrying a bag of groceries down a true-to-life scene of Los Angeles' Redondo Boulevard. This volume is recommended for anyone who likes Williamson's work, and as an introduction to those who've never read him.

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THE FOUNTAINS OF PARADISE
By Arthur C. Clarke
Harcourt Brace Jovanovich
Probable Price: $10.00
Probable Pub. Date: Jan. 29, 1979

Reviewed by Steve Brown

Dawn. A rich tropical jungle washes part way up the side of a mountain. As the eye follows the crags up to the peak...there is no peak. The top of the mountain extends upward in a smooth column that vanishes at zenith. Suddenly, at the top of the column, in the middle of the sky, a streak of light appears moving swiftly downward. As it approaches the mountain, the light resolves into a powerful headlight on a vertically plunging train.

Arthur C. Clarke, in this, what he has said is to be his last novel, has fictionalized one of the grandest and most poetic artificial creations in science fiction: a direct link from the surface of the earth to a geosynchronous satellite 40,000 kilometers overhead. A vertical subway travels up and down the sides of the column, hauling people and equipment into orbit at a cost of twenty dollars a ton.

THE FOUNTAINS OF PARADISE is the story of the genesis, construction, and ultimate fate of what Clarke rather prosaicly terms either the Orbital Tower, or the Space Elevator. The novel is a conceptual cornucopia containing scene after scene of real beauty (the slow ascent through an ultimate auroral display begs for paint, canvas and the hands of a master).

The first third of the story is told in alternating sections that contrast the construction in the Second Century AD of the Fountains of the title, at the time a similarly state-of-the-art engineering achievement, with a picture of 22nd Century life on Clarke's home island of Sri Lanka (Taprobane in the book). The obsessive monomania of Kalidasa, the Second Century king, makes a perfect counterpoint to the heated discussions and political maneuvering surrounding the intitial vision of the Tower. Just as the Tower begins to move from the talking stage, Clarke symbolically joins the two halves of his story with the arrival on-stage of a three thousand year old Buddhist monastery esconced squarely on top of the only suitable peak that the Tower can be tethered to. At this point I settled back for a good, satisfying read. I can't imagine a more Clarkian adversary for the Tower's chief engineer than a Buddhist monk with a desk terminal. Unfortunately, at this point the story undergoes a drastic shift in focus. Clarke arbitrarily disposes of the monks, the monastery, and the conflict. After an interlude consisting mostly of engineering, tension is reinstated with that hoariest of TV adventure cliches -- the accident that strands a group part way up the Tower, and the one man who can save them. The accident is exciting, and the rescue attempt is gripping and masterfully told, but what a work of fiction could have been created if the promise of the beginning had been allowed to mature.

But that is my only major complaint. Clarke's prose hasn't been this good in years, effortless, stripped to the bone, and clear as mylar. Gone is the monotonous tedium of IMPERIAL EARTH, gone is the "gosh-Joe-look-at-that!" comic-book marvelling of RENDEZVOUS WITH RAMA. In its place is a mature appreciation of a wonder that relegates Rama to the status of a toy. The Tower is much more impressive than Rama, (or Niven's Ringworld, for that matter) because it seems so real, something that could, and should, actually be done. Clarke grows his concepts in the most austere of technically speculative soil, and strikes directly to the awestricken teenager that lies just beneath the surface of us all. His total control of his material illuminates every corner of the landscape, in deft little brushstrokes.

I particularly liked the indignant protests of the "industrial archeologists" over the proposed dismantling of the outmoded Antarctic Pipeline, and the brief appearance of the reactor-driven Graf Zeppelin II, complete with swimming pool -- not to mention the powerful little digs at organized religion, deliciously succinct, wonderfully devastating -- but you can find those yourself.

Then the book ends in a short burst of far-future extrapolation that will suck the breath from your lungs.

I am sure, though this is but the first major book of 1979, that it will gather awards to itself with no contest (I am very glad that it's coming out in January -- Tiptree's novel still has a chance). But, as good as THE FOUNTAINS OF PARADISE is, the immense and panoramic potential novel that lies between the lines of this slim volume remains stillborn.

An ironic footnote:

Clarke states (twice) that the Tower is an idea whose time has come, and backs it up with several references to existing treatises on the subject in scientific journals. Freeman Dyson has said: "For any speculation which does not at first glance look crazy, there is no hope". Clarke's Tower is not only one of the craziest ideas I've heard in a long time, but he proves, to my satisfaction, that it is not only inevitable, given the will and the development of some necessary new materials (he uses an extruded carbon fiber, which gives his construction the lovely nick-name of the "Billion-Ton Diamond"), but necessary. A lot of reputable thinkers are seriously considering the idea right now.

So perhaps it is inevitable that someone else would soon try to fictionalize it. Charles Sheffield, almost finished with his second novel, (due from Ace next year), the one that should be his break-through book, is writing the same idea, but from a much different angle. This is one of those literary coincidences that can wreak havoc with careers. The Tower is a grand enough idea, and as inevitable as the steam engine, for a whole shelf of books, and I hope that Sheffield's novel will be received on its own merits. Unfortunately, I fear that a certain element of the reading public will look upon Sheffield's book, and his subsequent work, through a haze of scepticism.

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SIGHT OF PROTEUS
By Charles Sheffield
Ace, Sept. 1978, $1.75

Reviewed by Steve Brown

Back in the fermenting sixties, when everyone was writing incompre-

hensible word patterns and stories exploring variations of angst, Larry Niven earned his reputation with little competition. Now the pendulum is swinging in all directions at once, and there are a small crop of new writers creating fiction from explorations of technology. John Varley is certainly the stand-out example.

Now we have a new one. Charles Sheffield's first novel has the problems and inconsistencies of all first novels (including that of Varley Himself), but he has given us a breathtakingly rich societal tapestry based on a myriad of brand-new speculations.

SIGHT OF PROTEUS concerns Bey Wolf (a clumsy nod to Niven), head of the Office of Form-Control -- an organization that supplies those who can afford it with the ability to willfully change their bodies into any reasonable variation. The old shapeshifting idea given a rigorous modern treatment. As we follow Wolf in his search for the answers to his questions, we move through a highly realized society. Sheffield doesn't just produce an idea, he places it carefully in a logical milieu, and makes us believe that an entire civilization has grown around the concept. Every page has a new marvel to equal the treatment of a Hogan, culminating (for me) with the Pearl, surely one of the loveliest natural artifacts in SF.

Unfortunately, at this stage Sheffield is too entranced with his bag of wonders, and both plot and character suffer. Oddly enough, the most vivid people in the book are either mostly off-stage (Dolmetsch) or are spear-carriers. Sheffield can adequately sketch a person in a paragraph or two, but when they begin to interact at any length, they flatten into an anonymous sameness. Plot also suffers, as Sheffield makes the mistake of building his story with the same vast cleverness with which he builds his settings -- the book is plotted to death, with a bewildering number of mysteries to keep track of, and a climax that is so clever that it is merely implied. It took me two readings to figure out what happened.

There is a scene midway through the book that seems to illustrate Sheffield's central theme. A character has been changed to a form that requires a life-support system, and also triples his IQ. When he is given the choice of reverting to human, and enjoying the infinite range of human experience, or remaining as he is and spending the rest of his life in a tank thinking, he unhesitatingly chose the latter. I lost belief at that point. Intelligence is just one of many reasons to enjoy life. I, for one, would rather run through the woods or bask on a beach than be Einstein and have the rest of life denied to me.

Another important failure, on a mechanical level, was the avoidance of showing an actual, on-stage form-change. Sheffield states that the change is purposive, implying an aware volition during the process, but we never see or feel it. In what was the central plot-pivot, a radical and strange form-change, it all happens between chapters. We don't see the person fear the changes happening to him, or feel their gradual effect, nor do we see him shortly thereafter struggling to cope with a tripled IQ, which must be disorienting, to say the least.

There are many other, lesser, cavils, but the book deserves to be read for its vast and detailed scope with more great new marvels per page than anyone since the heyday of Alfred Bester.

Sheffield will soon mature as a writer, and begin to populate his canvases with real people and genuine problems. When that happens, everyone will wake up and look about them in amazement, wondering where he came from. In the meantime, the apprenticeship Sheffield shows in this novel (and in the dozen or so short stories scattered around) is worthy of the career-peak of most of the other toilers in the vineyards.

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WILDEBLOOD'S EMPIRE
By Brian M. Stableford
Daw, 1977, 192 pp., #263/UW1331
First printing, Oct. 1977

Reviewed by Stephen Lewis

The mission of the Daedalus is to re-establish contact with Earth's lost colonies and to offer what limited assistance one ship can bring. On this, their third landing, it appears that for the first time the problems of surviving on a new world have been solved. It takes only a few days for questions to arise. How long should they allow a despotic rule to keep its power by benevolently drugging its citizenry? An underground revolution is brewing, and the crew of the Daedalus is about to be caught in the middle. There is one hope, and that is to successfully decipher the coded message left to the colony by someone in its past.

Stableford continues to ask a lot of interesting questions, but even more remarkably, he comes equipped with a few answers as well. The intelligent amphibians living in curious isolation on the planet are also part of the ecological jigsaw pieces not yet fully assembled. One working definition of politics is that it's the art of achieving the attainable. Here the slickly maneuvered result is an upbeat ending for the inhabitants of a world about to decay into ashes.

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ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SCIENCE FICTION
Consultant Editor - Robert Holdstock
8 3/4 x 12", $16.95 (U.S.) HC, 1978
Octopus Books, 59 Grosvenor Street
London W1, United Kingdom
Foreword by Isaac Asimov
Articles by: Robert Holdstock, Brian Stableford, Douglas Hill, Michael Ashley, Alan Frank, Chris Morgan, Patrick Moore, Christopher Priest, Malcolm Edwards, Harry Harrison.

Reviewed by James J.J. Wilson

This 8 3/4" x 12" book is British Fandom's answer to the rash of expensive coffee table SF books over the past few years. It is very similar to David Kyle's books, A PICTORIAL HISTORY OF SCIENCE FICTION and SCIENCE FICTION IDEAS AND DREAMS (Hamlyn, 1975 & 1977 respectively).

If you're looking for an in-depth study of SF in this format you would be far better off to consult the Kyle books or James Gunn's ALTERNATE WORLDS, but if it's SF art you're interested in, this is one of the two best general books I've seen. The other is Ian Watson's TOMORROW AND BEYOND, which is also a must.

The articles, although generally competent, are very vague and serve only to show the British viewpoint on fandom. The art, on the other hand, is virtually unsurpassed. There are many reproductions from American SF magazines, but most of the art is by many British painters whose magnificent craftsmanship is virtually unavailable in the U.S. As for the reproduction, this book was superbly printed in Italy, and of the 189 pages in the main section of the book, only one does not display a full-color illustration.

This book is not recommended for anyone in search of an SF reference book, but is highly recommended for admirers of SF art because of the high-quality reproduction and the inclusion of many wonderful pieces which most Americans would not otherwise get the chance to see.

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AN INTERVIEW WITH NORMAN SPINRAD

By Charles Platt

"Whenever he comes up here he looks as if he wants to bite someone." That's how an editor I know described Norman Spinrad, after a visit in which Spinrad ordered his name larger on the cover of a forthcoming book.

Certainly Spinrad has built a reputation for being "difficult". His first major novel, BUG JACK BARRON, was abrasively radical, challenging the science fiction establishment at a time when the so-called new wave had already roused anger and suspicion. Editor Donald Wollheim called the book "depraved, cynical, utterly repulsive, and thoroughly degenerate". Serialized in NEW WORLDS, the novel's explicit sex scenes and crude language caused the magazine to be banned in Australia and South Africa. Published in the U.S.A. by Avon Books, it offended some people and antagonized hardcore science fiction fans who saw it as an attack on the values of their literature -- as, in a sense, it was.

Spinrad went further with "Fiawol", a notorious magazine article which (as he now describes it) "Defined science fiction fandom as a warped subculture that was fucking up the publishing of science fiction". This diatribe offended amateurs and professionals alike, to the extent that one magazine editor spent an entire editorial attacking Spinrad and condemning him, as an influence, as a writer and as a person.

Other miscellaneous incidents followed (such as Spinrad's telling science fiction fan, Bruce Peltz, that he was a "fat fascist prick" at the Los Angeles science fiction convention that Peltz had helped to organize). To some people Spinrad seemed to be contemptuous of the science fiction world. Certainly it was a radical stance, coinciding with the anti-establishment mood of the late 1960s generally.

Most radicals of that decade have long since sold out or subsided. Norman Spinrad himself did go through a period of reduced visibility; his last new science fiction novel was published back in 1972. But 1979 will see two new novels from him and one of them, A WORLD BETWEEN (due from Jove in April), is science fiction at least as controversial as BUG JACK BARRON. Spinrad's vacation from the field is over, and there is every indication that he is just as ready to bite someone now as he ever was.

The obvious question is, why? Does he relish conflict for its own sake? Or does he harbor sincere dissatisfactions with the status-quo? Either way, is he, like the heroes of his novels, really the no-bullshit macho wheeler-dealer scheming to manipulate his world?

####

Certainly he lives more modestly than his fictional characters. His Manhattan apartment is a "railroad flat", a string of four tiny interconnecting rooms on the fourth floor of an old walk-up apartment building in the West Village. It is the kind of 1880s house that was once full of poor immigrant families, before the Village became fashionable.

Spinrad's apartment has been partially renovated by some previous tenant (a shower installed, a loft-bed built). He took it over three years ago; there are few signs of his having made it his own since then. The furniture is simple and basic: yellow plastic chairs in the kitchen; a rather grubby pillow-couch in the living room; discount-store bookshelves. I have the impression that he lives there as he would live in a hotel room, and as we begin to talk it becomes clear that, indeed, he has always tended not to commit himself inextricably to any one place -- or any one field.

"I'm from New York City originally. I grew up part of the time in the real hard-core Bronx, and part of the time in a backwoods section of the Bronx, a countrified part. I lived other places as well; I do not want to have to go down the whole long list."

His curriculum at City College was just as varied -- or indecisive. "I took courses in short-story writing, constitutional law, Japanese civilization, oriental art. I got out with a pre-law major by lumping everything together and getting accepted by some law schools, though I never went to any of them. I went straight into writing short stories, which I started selling after about a year. In the meantime I worked in a sandal shop, a carpentry shop and at the Scott Meredith Literary Agency."

A colleague at the agency sold Spinrad's portion-and-outline of his first novel, THE SOLARIANS. "I was collecting unemployment insurance, writing the novel under contract and being paid under the table, so I saved enough to travel. I'd always wanted to see California so I loaded all my shit into my car and drove out there. I found my-

self an apartment in Culver City, a pismire-dull place. Lived there for half a year, then San Francisco, then back in L.A. because I liked it better."

He wrote pieces of film criticism. He wrote THE MEN IN THE JUNGLE and AGENT OF CHAOS. He was offered a lucrative scriptwriting assignment on STAR TREK. And he wrote BUG JACK BARRON, which drew on the interest he had already developed in the movie/TV scene. However, "The visual stuff I'm interested in is secondary to novels, and always has been. You go too crazy chasing after screenplay deals. It drives you nuts".

Still based in Los Angeles, Spinrad wrote numerous articles on contemporary social and political themes for KNIGHT men's magazine; he contributed regularly to the LOS ANGELES FREE PRESS; and he followed BUG JACK BARRON with THE CHILDREN OF HAMLIN, a novel that was serialized in the FREE PRESS but has never been published anywhere else. "It's all about the East Village and drug dealing, and a literary agency that operated in a certain manner", he says. The Scott Meredith agency? "I refuse to answer that question on grounds that it might tend to incarcerate me". The novel has been rejected by all the major New York publishers; it was bought by MacDonald, in Britain, but they subsequently decided not to print it, even though they had paid Spinrad for it. "I don't know why it never made it into print as a book anywhere, though I have a lot of paranoid theories. Maybe there are political reasons or people afraid of being sued by the Literary agency, I don't know. I've thought of self-publishing it, which I might end up doing. The theme of the book is the correspondence between dope-dealing, gurus, cults, and the way that the business world operates. It's set in 1965, so there's stuff about the birth of the counter-culture, as well. In the end the hero throws it all up and goes to work for a porno publisher in California".

His next novel was THE IRON DREAM (heroic fantasy written as if by Adolf Hitler, recently reissued by Jove). And then came the ill-fated PASSING THROUGH THE FLAME, a Hollywood novel that reaped poor reviews and was the cause of a violent dispute with Putnam/Berkley who, Spinrad felt, almost went out of their way not to sell the book. The dispute was so acrimonious that Spinrad is sure he'll never again be published by Berkley, whether he wants to be or not -- at least, so long as Walter Minton is running things there.

Finally, the two novels that are forthcoming from Jove: A WORLD BETWEEN and THE MIND GAME. The latter book is not science fiction. "It deals with my own made-up cult and takes aspects of Scientology and est and Synanon. I think my cult is better than their cults. The book is about a guy whose wife gets sucked into one of these things, and his subsequent odyssey through it trying to find her and get her out. He had to be processed in order to get into the cult, to find her; so they're playing games with him and he's playing games with them."

A WORLD BETWEEN, on the other hand, is set on an alien world that has been colonized by Earth people and made into a Californian-style, media-conscious utopia, featuring a Jeffersonian democratic system and almost total equality of the sexes. The idyllic status-quo is threatened, however, first by a deputation of "Transcendental Scientists" and then by a faction of "Femocrats". Both are extremist groups attempting to impose their philosophies on all colonized worlds in the galaxy. The Scientists appeal to what Spinrad sees as male traits, abstract dreams of power, ambition, discovery and destiny. The movement is autocratic and subtly male-supremacist. The Femocrats, conversely, are ultra-radical feminists aiming to foment revolution, instate a matriarchy, and use men for breeding purposes only.

A three-way battle ensues between the male-supremacists, feminists, and the moderate utopian government. The democratic freedoms of speech allowed by the government are taken advantage of by the extremists, and the battle of ideologies is mainly fought via political TV commercials, which Spinrad describes almost in script form, at some length.

The book does not pretend to be "objective"; there is no doubt that it would offend a Gloria Steinem far more than an Archie Bunker, and Spinrad's Femocrats are caricatures typifying the most extreme male fears of feminism. They are lesbians, they are unattractive, they spout dogma, and of course many of them secretly crave to be fucked. Their leader soon forgets her ideological hatred of all men when she spends some time alone with an arrogant, hulking male cop. Just the sight of his "long, throbbing piercer" (the book uses an odd amalgam of science fictional sex terms and 1950s euphemisms) is enough to rouse deep, instinctual desires in her, making her want to ... suck it.

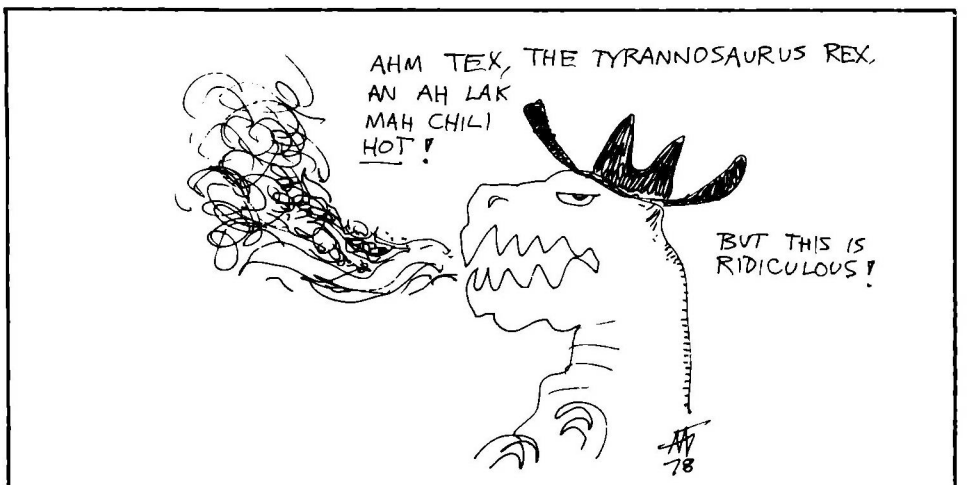
I asked Spinrad if he would agree to being biased against feminism. "Only to the extent that feminism becomes an 'ism'. I distrust all ideology, any 'ism'. When any movement becomes an ideological mindset it becomes just another form of fascism. Any philosophy that becomes a prescription for the way the world should be ... that's a fascist trip and I don't like any of them, including feminism.

"Men and women both have their techniques for getting their own way. Where I particularly object to feminists is their attempt to get rid of this dialectic. There are psycholpogical differences between men and women; trying to create a unisex 'personhood' will not work, for psychological reasons if not for physical or biochemical reasons. We're different -- and, that's not bad.

"We're in a period where all the old values aren't valid any more, and nothing that really works has coalesced to replace them. That's part of the thing with feminism now: they're trying to find something that works, but actually it doesn't seem to work for them very well. I think most women who are really into it are not all that happy."

And is there an overall message of the book?

"Part of what it's about is the



paradox that faces all democratic systems when confronted by totalitarian systems trying to subvert them: How do you preserve your liberties while fending off a system that isn't playing by your rules? How do you destroy the enemies of democracy without losing what it is you're fighting for?"

I point out that the book shares interests and themes with other novels that Spinrad has written. There seems to be a recurring obsession with power-games, cults, scheming, ambition, fascism.

"Well, I believe there are only four things, basically, that you can write about," he replies. "Sex, love, power and money. To that you can add transcendence -- higher consciousness, psychology. That's all there is."

Certainly his male characters seem to be motivated only by this assortment of basic qualities. Their dreams are bold; their style is macho. And yet they all have another level too -- an almost self-conscious, apologetic gentleness, as if Spinrad, though attracted by the idea of ruthless men of power seducing the inevitable glamorous women, isn't happy to present the type in its purest form.

Is this a reflection of his own personality? Are his heroes modelled on himself in any way? "Only insofar as I identify with all my characters, because I write from various viewpoints. I don't think any of my characters are me, but on the other hand nothing in any of them comes from anywhere else. The major characters are never based on people I know. They're theoretical. Yes, I have been obsessed with powerful and charismatic figures, and how love and sex fits in with this. But only because, as I say, I don't see much else to write about, outside of the sex-love-power-money-transcendence framework".

I feel he isn't happy with my question, in that it demands self-analysis of a kind that he is reluctant to indulge in -- in an interview, anyway. I ask instead about his love-hate relationship with science fiction fandom. This question puts him immediately back on easy territory; he launches into what is obviously a familiar polemic. "I think fans are okay in their place, which is to be fans -- go to conventions, read the stuff and produce amateur publications. I don't like it when it goes beyond this -- when science fiction fans influence professional publishing. So many of the editors and writers started as fans and still think of themselves secretly as fans. Writers who didn't start as fans have discovered fandom and gotten sucked into that pocket universe and had their subsequent work judged by fannish standards. They think of science fiction as their own genre, and it isn't, it's a field of literature. I don't think science fiction fans as a group are competent to control the evolution of a field of literature. That's a ridiculous notion. It's as if all the rock groupies got together to decide the future of rock music."

This attitude was relevant in Spinrad's running for office in the Science Fiction Writers of America (he was Vice-President for two years). "The organization was really fucked up -- it was being run in an amateur fashion and there was excessive fannish influence. It was a question of either resigning, like other people who were resigning, or trying to do something about it. Actually, I think despite its shitheadedness, despite squabbling about membership requirements and Nebulas, it's done an awful lot. The SFWA got a quarter-million dollars out

of Ace Books, it got Tolkien the money he was entitled to ... when it has functioned as a quasi-union it has worked well, and when it has functioned like an amateur jack-off society it's worked ... like an amateur jack-off society."

Spinrad is now, once again, involved with the SFWA, this time as its East Coast Publicity Director. But his main preoccupation these days is his work. He has started on another science fiction novel, whose outline was recently bought by Pocket Books. "It's called SONGS FROM THE STARS, and it's a post-catastrophe novel of a kind, postulating a world in which science is divided into black and white sciences, and there are remnants of the O'Neill space people ... instead of the usual sword-and-sorcery set-up of science-versus-magic, here, because the world has been destroyed by the evils of certain kinds of sciences, those are the sciences, especially physics, atomic physics in particular -- the people who practice those sciences are regarded as sorcerers. It's taboo to make artificial molecules, to use power other than natural power derived from sun, wind, water and human muscle, and so on."

Beyond this novel, he has ideas for other books, including: "A book about Cortez's conquest of Mexico, written from a modern sensibility, and not entirely realistic. Something on the order of GRAVITY'S RAINBOW in a funny kind of way. And another vague plan that I have is to do a kind of Arabian Nights novel."

Behind this work, I sense a renewed ambition. Certainly Norman Spinrad is producing more fiction now than during the middle years of the 1970s, selling it for much larger advances, and planning his writing career. He maintains a close concern with the publishing process: the sales of his work, the reviews it receives, the impact he is making, and yes, the size of his name on the covers. A WORLD BETWEEN seems to have been written with talk-show appearances in mind (he agrees he'd enjoy debating someone like Joanna Russ), and he tries to ferret out the hard figures involved in book promotion and publicity -- an area that many authors feel they have neither the stomach nor the time to investigate.

To this extent, perhaps, it is fair to portray Norman Spinrad as a would-be media-manipulator. Certainly he is at his meanest and angriest when he feels the media have manipulated him, as in the Putnam/Berkley mishandling of PASSING THROUGH THE FLAME. It comes down to a question of who is going to push who around. If Spinrad suspects he may be the one who gets pushed, whether by a careless art director, an unenlightened editor, or a convention organizer who wakes him unnecessarily early in the morning -- the notorious ire and abuse are at once drawn forth. At other times, when he feels fairly treated, he can be more than reasonable.

The power fantasies of his novels do not translate accurately into his own life. I ask about his private ambitions; he says "I have a dream about making movies over which I have complete creative control, as both producer and director, or writer and director -- you have to occupy at least two of the major positions to have any assurance that things are going to be done your way." To me this sounds more like a fantasy about freedom from interference -- freedom from getting screwed -- than a fantasy about power.

And: "I also have a fantasy lifestyle of being able to hold onto a house in L.A. and my apartment here and bouncing back and forth in airplanes as much as possible. I like fluidity. I like mobility. One main reason for being a writer is not having to be in any particular place when someone tells you to." Again: Freedom from interference.

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ALIEN THOUGHTS CONT. FROM P. 30

2-7-79 This may be the last entry this issue. Yesterday the 'New Directions' issue of FANTASTIC arrived with a new look I approve of.

The cover has a "hand-made" logo now, and reads FANTASTIC Science Fiction. Price is $1.50. Quarterly schedule.

Inside is a revamped two-page contents page, very visual. The cover, by the way, is blah, but it probably will grab a few eyes.

The new policy at FANTASTIC and AMAZING is to reprint stories from the past and buy one or two new stories per issue. Paymment is 1¢ per work on publication. Editorial address is: Box 642, Scottsdale, AZ 85252.

The new editor,listed as Omar Gohagen, is a fiction,I suspect. I think Associate Publisher Alan P. Bernhard is the real editor.

The new look involves lots of large black and white illustrations by Elinor and Scott Mavor. Most are quite good.

The text is printed in larger type and in a single column, like a book page.

The magazine now has heavy impact, a strong plus.

Gone are all the features: reviews, editorials, letters.

We'll see how these changes fly. The required statement of ownership and circulation printed in this issue shows 65,000 copies printed (most recent issue to filing date of Oct. 1, 1978), and total sales of 18,370. This is a slight improvement for the year, on average.

The figures next year at this time should be interesting.

I suppose SFWA will again be up in arms over the reprinting of stories by such as Tom Disch, Edmond Hamilton, David H. Keller, and Rog Phillips without some payments to the authors---or their heirs.

One of the new stories this issue is a 'First Sale' by Jennifer H. Orr. It's a pain in the ass to read; her style is Clumsy Amateur.

BOTH Elton Elliott's news column, and Bill Warren's film column were late, and both ran a page or two longer than I expected. So I had to cut an article and reschedule it for next issue; that one is "On The Edge of Futuria" by Ray Nelson. I also have a carryover of good letters to next issue: those by Charles R. Saunders, Luke McGuff, Harry Andruschak, Glen T. Wilson, and Diane E. Duane.

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STEPHEN WALKER
701 N. Hamner
Marshall, MO 65340

JAMES J.J. WILSON
1215 30th St.
Des Moines, IA 50311

LEE WEINSTEIN
2108 Magee Ave.
Philadelphia, PA 19149

NEAL WILGUS
Box 25771
Albuquerque, NM 87125

Where They Live

THE CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE OF SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW

STEVE BROWN
((Not available at this time.))

ORSON SCOTT CARD
117 "J" St.
Salt Lake City, UT 84103

MARK COFTA
Box 101 Schoelkopf Hall
SUNY at Buffalo,
Buffalo, NY 14214

STEPHEN FABIAN
4 Sussex Road
Wayne, NJ 07470

ROBERT FRAZIER
Box 491
Nantucket, MA 02554

WILLIAM GIBSON
3180 W. 3rd Av.
Vancouver, B.C.
V6K 1N3 Canada

MICHAEL GILBERT
203 Gatzmere
Jamesburg, NJ 08831

WADE GILBREATH
4206 Balboa Av.
Pinson, AL 35126

ALEXIS GILLILAND
4030 8th St. South,
Arlington, VA 22204

KEN HAHN
R.D. 5
Auburn, NY 13021

TEDDY HARVIA
POB 5402
Ft. Worth, TX 76108

CATHY HILL
619 N. Holliston #2
Pasadena, CA 91106

RICK JANSEN
7118 Wiser Shore Lane
Lynden, WA 98264

JASON KEEHN
38 Hannum Dr., #1B
Ardmore, PA 19003

WAYNE KEYSER
1111 Army-Navy Dr., #A-710
Arlington, VA 22202

TIM KIRK
((I need his new address Somebody help!))

VIC KOSTRIKIN
12236 Checkerboard Rd., NE
Gervais, OR 97026

ALLEN KOSZOWSKI
217 Barrington Road
Upper Darby, PA 19082

DEAN R. LAMBE
10 Northlake, Route 1,
Vincent, OH 45784

STEPHEN LEWIS
62 Chestnut Road
Newington, CT 06111

MICHAEL MAIDA
505 Cypress Point Dr., #35
Mountain View, CA 94040

MARK MANSELL
15120 Ragus St.
La Puente, CA 91744

TAD MARKHAM
2919 NE 13th Dr.
Gainesville, FL 32601

GEORGE R.R. MARTIN
2266 Jackson
Dubuque, IA 52001

PAUL MCGUIRE
214 Rosalia St.
Oshkosh, WI 54901

CLIFFORD R. MCMURRAY
((Not available at this time.))

CLIFF MOSER
181 Fourth Av., #1
Salt Lake City, UT 84103

LARRY NIVEN
3961 Vanalden Av.
Tarzana, CA 91356

FRED PATTEN
11863 West Jefferson Blvd.
Culver City, CA 90230

CHARLES PLATT
POB 556, Old Chelsea Sta.
New York, NY 10011

L. CRAIG RICKMAN
R.R. #2
West Paducah, KY 42086

BILL ROTSLER
POB 3126
Los Angeles, CA 90028

RANDY RUSTIN
1806 Joplin St.
Joplin, MO 64801

JOE SANDERS
((Not available at this time.))

DARRELL SCHWEITZER
113 Deepdale Rd.,
Strafford, PA 19087

JOHN SHIRLEY
POB 42292
Portland, OR 97242

LEE SMITH
528 Golden, #21
Long Beach, CA 90802

KEITH SOLTYS
Suite 115, Block 1
Regency Court
Grand Prairie, Alta.,
T8V 3R6 Canada

DONN VICHA
6444 North Glenwood Av.
Chicago, IL 60626

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