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LAST MINUTE MATTERS

LETTER FROM I.G. PENHALL
P.O. Box 463
Kingston, A.C.T. 2604
Australia

6 July, 1980

I write to seek your assistance in resolving a rather sad state of affairs which has arisen in connection with subscriptions (or attempted subscriptions, I should say) to DELAP'S F&SF REVIEW and EMPIRE SF. Almost two years ago now (on 6 August 1978, to be precise) I wrote to both magazines, enclosing a subscription check to EMPIRE SF and making enquiries of DELAP'S. However, despite a reminder letter to both in April last year, I have not seen hide nor hair of either;

I have not even had an answer to my letters....'Can you help to sort out the bottleneck? I would appreciate anything you can do.'

((DELAP'S doesn't owe you anything; non-response is an answer in itself. EMPIRE SF, however, does owe you some accounting, and I hope this publication of your letter will accomplish what your private letter could not.))

By the way, our policy here at good ol' SFR is to send a copy of the current issue with a subscription form and return envelope; if the enquirer likes the magazine and returns the subscription form with a check, that copy he received is the first one of his sub. If not...we lose a copy and postage. But 90% subscribe. A copy of SFR is its best advertisement.

ALL SUBSCRIPTIONS, NEW AND OLD, ARE HONORED AND FULFILLED ON AN ISSUES NUMBER BASIS.

Next Issue....

THE AFFAIR OF LOGICAL LUNATICS
By Philip Jose Farmer

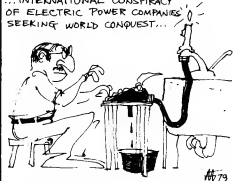
Introduction to WE'RE COMING THROUGH THE WINDOW
Plus the complete story
By Barry Malzberg

TERRY CARR REVIEWS WARHOON 28

I'M SURE YOUR COLLECTION OF OLD ZIP CODES IS OUTSTANDING MR. GEIS. ITS JUST THAT THE SMITHSONIAN DOESN'T HAVE ANY ROOM IN THE ATTIC RIGHT NOW.



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ALIEN THOUGHTS

BY THE EDITOR

ILLUSION AND REALITY

I get phone calls... I hear things... I know things I dare not tell in specific words, using names, for fear of lawsuits, perhaps personal assault.

These bits of knowledge, gleaned over the years and added to my own personal experiences, add up to what most of you would judge a sickening, revolting situation in the editing, agenting, publishing industry.

Agents who double-cross their clients, who have sweetheart, kickback arrangements with editors and publishers... Agents who refuse to heed the wishes of their clients... Agents who outright steal from their clients....

Editors who take kickbacks from agents, from authors... Editors who buy from lovers... Editors who deliberately sabotage a book out of envy, hatred... Editors who blackball certain authors....

And publishers! Publishers who steal manuscripts, who chronically violate provisions of a publishing contract. Publishers who falsify sales figures and underpay or ignore royalty payments... And publishers who do indeed decree that "So-and-so will never sell another word in New York again!"

This is the reality. And this reality reaches to the highest, most powerful publishers and editors in the United States.

There are many bitter, disillusioned writers who can give chapter and verse to all these assertions---in private.

Unless you are a top-selling, best-selling author who can force editors and publishers to yield on contract terms and keep their word upon pain of court action, you are going to get screwed.

The world of writing, editing, publishing is one where, for 99% of the published, professional authors, the publisher is master, the editor is his servant, and the writer is his slave.

Surely, Geis, you say, hopefully, you jest. Surely you exaggerate.

No. The lawsuit Harlan Ellison and Ben Bova just won against two BIG corporations shows that even at the top of the corporate system of this country this sort of shit happens. Not once in a while, but often. Some crimes-against-authors are chronic.

In the matter of contracts it is largely a matter of sign-it-and-hope



for most writers. Two sets of books are not uncommon in publishing--one set of records for the IRS and the authors, another set for the miking, skimming, laundering process.

[How would you make dirty gambling, dope, prostitution money "clean"? Simple: buy a publisher and claim millions of dollars more sales and profits than were actually made. You pay taxes on these money profits, and lo! the remainder is made real and honest by the dirty money substitution. With all this clean money you can invest in legitimate business, buy stocks, do anything you want.]

What's the point to this editorial? To point with disgust? To view with alarm? To turn your ideals to dust? To urge you to not be a writer if that is your dream?

No.

My intent is to urge you to realize that in any industry or business where big money is involved, where a group of suppliers are individually virtually at the mercy of the buyer, abuse will be rampant. It will occur at every level of the industry.

Power corrupts. It always has, and it always will. In publishing, since the beginnings in the 1800s, authors have been ripped off every day of the week and twice on Sunday.

OF COURSE not all agents, editors, publishers are bastards and/or thieves. (At least, not until it is "necessary" or convenient.) And of course not all writers are cheaters.

But the percentages, I'm convinced, are shockingly high. The history of science fiction is often a history of publisher theft, publisher defeat, publisher lies.

And usually the publishers get away with it because there isn't a damn thing the average writer can do about it. Who can afford to hire investigators, a top lawyer or two, for a year or two?

Again, what's the answer? Is it an organization like the Science Fiction Writers of America?

SFWA has done wonders for its members with its grievance work, but it has only so much power, so much willingness by its officers to risk their careers, their future sales, by offending--seriously offending--a given publisher/editor/agent.

The truth is unpalatable. The truth is there is no answer to agent-editor-publisher abuse of the author. The screwing will continue and may grow worse as the depression closes its fist even further on the publishing industry. Agents will do anything to make a sale and insure a few extra bucks...editors will do anything to keep their jobs...and publishers will do anything to stay alive, to keep going.

Foreign sales will go unreported or undervalued, contract payments will be delayed, ignored...and royalties will be (more than usual) a rare event.

This is the real world of writing for a living. You may be extremely talented and become a star, a best-seller overnight, and get a relatively honest agent who will work for your best interests. But like as not you'll toil in the fields for years before (if ever) hitting it big and being able to command big money and honest treatment.

Writing is a tough, merciless, often heartbreaking life. Do not go into it--or continue in it--with illusions. You're in a jungle filled with greedy, consciousness animals, and you don't have a gun.

You have been warned.

NEW YORK IS A DISASTER AREA

That's the word from many well-known professional sf writers. "Nobody is buying anything!"

One major house, it is said, upon instructions from its German owner, has cancelled 60 book contracts and written off that many first and second advance payments on those contracts. Why would this publisher waste that much money?

Because book sales---even sf sales---are way down, and in the face of high publishing and distribution costs almost any new book will lose money.

I HEAR VOICES....

BY THE EDITOR

YONDER

Seven Tales of the Space Age read by the author, Poul Anderson
Caedmon TC 1643

Poul has the reputation of being a nuts-n-bolts, conservative, insensitive man...

But the overwhelming impression one receives from this record is of poetry, grace, idealism, hope, a magnificent sweep of imagination and optimism...and sensitivity.

His prose is perhaps more effective read aloud because his figures of speech are somehow more vivid, more compelling...more visual and sensual.

He is correct---his voice and stage presence are not of a trained, professional calibre...but are in their way very effective.

I enjoyed this recording far, far more than I expected, and suffered an eye-opening new awareness of Poul's skill as a writer.

THE FABULOUS IDIOT

Theodore Sturgeon reads from his
MORE THAN HUMAN
Caedmon TC 1634

The first surprise is that Theodore Sturgeon sounds like a man in his twenties in spite of that d/j photo showing him to be about 60.

The second, if you haven't read MORE THAN HUMAN for eleveny-seven years (like me) is how fine a story it is. THE FABULOUS IDIOT is the first part of MORE THAN HUMAN, and it will drive you to the bookshelf to finish the story or to your nearest sf/fantasy bookstore to get a copy.

AN HOUR WITH ANNE MCCAFFREY

Interviewed by David Gerrold
Hourglass Productions, \$.98 + 50¢
P.O. Box 1291
Garden Grove, CA 92643

In this skilled, convivial interview David draws Anne McCaffrey into discussions of her beginnings as a writer, her move to Ireland, and most especially into her Dragon series.

Anne is revealed as a warm, open, articulate person, someone you enjoy listening to, someone you'd like to know personally.

I'M LOOKING FOR KADAK

Written and read by Harlan Ellison
Cassette Recording
Hourglass Productions, \$.98 + 50¢
P.O. Box 1291
Garden Grove, CA 92643

Harlan doesn't just read this hilarious fiction, he performs it, complete with a broad yiddish accent, and complete with dozens of yiddish words you wouldn't know, God forgive you unless you're a monzer.

This is Jewish sf, with an alien cast, caste... It is about Evise, the Zsouchmold, who is, you should pardon the expression, up shit creek as his planet, Theta 996:VI, is about to be moved (for the greater good of galactic society) and he has an impossible mission and damn little time to do it in.

Harlan is superb in his reading/acting. The story is gentle satire in its way, and loving and respectful, too, of religion and the baffling, irritating aspects of a putz personality...and others.

There is a drawing by Tim Kirk of Evise the Zsouchmold the improbable alien---and Ellison's Grammatical Guide and Glossary for the Goyim. Most of the words are marginally familiar, and the others can be understood in usage and context in the story.

DUNE, THE BANQUET SCENE SANDWORMS OF DUNE

THE BATTLES OF DUNE
Read by the author, Frank Herbert
Caedmon, TC1555, TC1565, TC1601
\$.75

Reviewed by Mark Mansell

The science fiction recording field, despite the Bermuda Triangle-ish vanishing of founding company Alternate Worlds Records (Roy Torgeson having gone on to bigger things at Zebra Books) is booming under the auspices of the spoken-word recording company, Caedmon. Caedmon has come out with a number of science fiction and fantasy recordings lately, mostly read by the authors, though in a few cases better-known names such as Leonard Nimoy, William Shatner and others have done the honors.

One such set of recordings are excerpts from the Dune trilogy as read by Frank Herbert himself. So far, three of these records have been issued.

Unlike most of Alternate World's

Records, and a good number of Caedmon's own, these three records do not try to cover any straightforward segment of the novels, and are not self-sufficient in themselves to the listener's understanding. Rather, they are a sort of introduction to aspects of Dune.

DUNE, THE BANQUET SCENE, which is the only lengthy reading in the set, is a segment from the first novel, and is used here to give the listeners some basic background as to the characters of Paul Atreides, his family, and those around him, both friend and foe.

SANDWORMS OF DUNE serves to introduce the awesome sandworms, which Herbert describes as "the mindless guardians of the terrible treasure". In the record, which is made up of excerpted scenes from the trilogy, mainly the first volume, there are passages which describe the monstrous worms, their habits, riding them and the dangers to the unwary on the desert from them.

THE BATTLES OF DUNE is, as the title says, about the battles on Dune. Although, to be more exacting, Duels on Dune would be more precise, since the record is made up of excerpts from the trilogy mostly describing one-on-one encounters between Paul Atreides and his opponents in sword or knife fights, although there are a few other scenes such as the account of the stoneburner in Dune Messiah, the end of Aleia, and the tigers from CHILDREN OF DUNE.

Although it is fascinating and instructive to hear how the author interprets his work, for which reason I recommend these records despite their hefty price, they are meant more as companion-pieces to the books than as independent entities, self-contained. You cannot really understand the scenes and excerpts read in them unless you are already familiar with the novels themselves, and the liner notes give more help inasmuch as the philosophy behind the excerpts is concerned rather than what is contained in the excerpts.

Nonetheless, Frank Herbert has a pleasant reading voice, and gets into the spirit of things. Also, the record jackets have lovely cover art, the first by Kelly Freas, the other two by premier Dune-artist John Schoenherr (the art for Sandworms being my favorite). So, with the warnings mentioned beforehand, the Dune records are worth a hear.

REALITY IN DRAG

A PROFILE OF PHILIP K. DICK BY CHARLES PLATT

The aim of a speculative writer should be to see what other people have not seen. The few writers who manage this offer more than entertainment, more than inventiveness. They give the reader a sense of revelation.

It takes a trace of genius or insanity to see what nobody else has seen, and it takes formidable writing talent to present such visions graphically, in human terms. Philip K. Dick has this talent, and a bit of genius, or craziness, or both. His best books are revelatory almost in a mystical sense.

He remains under-rated (especially in his native America) because he is an unpretentious man who has yet to live down a reputation for having produced some undistinguished novels in the 1960s. Certainly at that time he wrote a lot of books very quickly; but even his most superficial work tackled fundamental questions of perception, philosophy and religion, and in his latest, ambitious books he has become one of the few science fiction authors whose insight can be called profound. He shows infinite compassion for his characters; their situations may be science-fictional but their problems are real, and Dick's prose painfully but gently, explores basic questions of life that affect us all. At the same time, he mocks himself with an endearing, quixotic sense of the absurd.

Almost all of his work starts with the basic assumption that there cannot be one, single, objective reality. Everything is a matter of perception. The ground is liable to shift under your feet. A protagonist may find himself living out another person's dream, or he may enter a drug-induced state that actually makes better sense than the real world, or he may cross into a different universe completely. Cosmic Law is subject to sudden revision (by God, or whoever happens to be acting that role) and there are multiple truths.

These surreal ideas, and the hallucinatory quality of his writing, led to Dick being labelled an "acid-head" author. His obsessive anxiety about forces of political oppression resulted in his being

dismissed as "paranoid". Recently, references he has made to mystical influences in his life have prompted some contemporaries to refer to him, sadly, as "mentally unbalanced".

When I went to visit him in Santa Ana, just south of the vast sprawl of Los Angeles, I wanted to pin down the truth in these matters. Foolishly, I went looking for objective clarification, from a man who does not believe in objectivity. A few hours later I came away feeling as if my mind had been warped. Like a character in one of Dick's paradoxical, unresolved novels, I am left with more questions at the end than I had at the beginning.

* * *

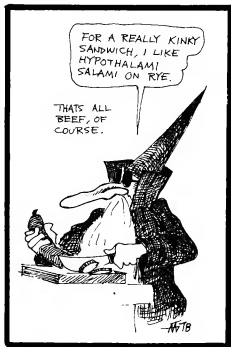
Mr. Dick is a dignified, thoughtful, slightly portly figure, with black hair, graying beard and an informal but distinguished presence. He is erudite, intimidatingly well-read, but has none of the pretensions or detachment of an academic. He lives in a plain, modest apartment with two cats, some slightly run-down contemporary furniture, heaps of reference books, and an expensive

stereo system. As I unpack my tape recorder I realize that he has already set up his own; a high-quality Shure microphone is on the black-glass table-top, and he will be recording me at the same time that I record him. He seems slightly evasive about this, and says casually that he always makes his own tape whenever he is interviewed. I suppose one could regard this as paranoid behavior; I don't, but it does look as if he is intending to check up on me, to see if my tape transcript is accurate -- or am I being paranoid now? Already, it is hard to define the reality of the situation.

We begin by talking about his life when he first started writing science fiction, as a student at Berkeley, also working part-time in a radio-TV retail store.

"I was in a curious position. I had read science fiction since I was twelve years old, and was really addicted. I just loved it. I also was reading what the Berkeley intellectual community was reading. For example, Proust or Joyce. So I occupied two worlds right there which normally did not intersect. Then, working in the retail store the people I knew were TV salesmen and repairmen; they considered me peculiar for reading at all. I spent time in all kinds of different groups; I knew a lot of homosexuals; there was a whole homosexual community in the Bay Area even then, in the 1940s. I knew some very fine poets, and I was very proud of them as my friends: they thought of me as strange because I wasn't gay, and the people in my store thought I was strange because I knew gay people and read books, and my communist friends thought I was odd because I wouldn't join the communist party ... so being involved in science fiction didn't make all that much difference.

"It was a small divergence compared to some of my other divergences. Henry Miller said in one of his books, other children threw stones at him when they saw him. I had that same feeling. I managed to become universally despised wherever I went. I think that I must have thrived on it, because it kept happening so many times in so many ways.

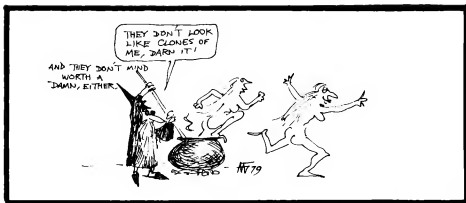


"I got married when I was nine-
teen, and it wasn't until a little
later that I really began to write.
I got married again when I was 21.
A point came when I began to feel
that science fiction was very impor-
tant. Van Vogt's *THE WORLD OF NULL-*
A -- there was something about that
which absolutely fascinated me. It
had a mysterious quality, it allud-
ed to things unseen, there were puz-
zles presented which were never ad-
equately explained. I found in it
a numinous quality; I began to get
an idea of a mysterious quality in
the universe which could be dealt
with in science fiction. I realize
now that what I was sensing was a
kind of metaphysical world, an in-
visible realm of things half-seen,
essentially what medieval people
sensed as the transcendent world,
the next world. I had no religious
background. I was raised in a Quak-
er school -- they're about the only
group in the world that I don't have
some grievance against; there's no
hassle between me and the Quakers --
but the Quaker thing was just a life-
style. And in Berkeley there was a
religious spirit at all.

"I don't know if Van Vogt would
agree that he's essentially dealing
with the supernatural, but that's
what was happening in me. I was be-
ginning to sense that what we per-
ceived was not what was actually
there. I was interested in Jung's
idea of projection -- what we expe-
rience as external to us may really
be projected from our unconscious,
which means of course that each per-
son's world has to be somewhat dif-
ferent from everybody else's, be-
cause the contents of each person's
unconscious will be to a certain ex-
tent unique. I began a series of
stories in which people experienced
worlds which were a projection of
their own psyches. My first publish-
ed story was a perfect example of
this."

For a while Dick attempted to
work both inside and outside of
the science fiction field: "I wrote
many novels which were not science
fiction or fantasy. They all contain-
ed the element of the projected per-
sonal unconscious, or projected col-
lective unconscious, which made them
simply incomprehensible to anyone
who read them, because they required
the reader to accept my premise
that each of us lives in a unique
world."

Such books proved difficult to
sell. One, *CONFESSIONS OF A CRAP*
ARTIST, was finally brought out in
1975; the rest have never been pub-
lished. "There are nine or ten man-
uscripts extant, over at the Fuller-
ton special collections library", he
says, apparently without rancor. I
ask him if he is really as philoso-



phical about this situation as he
seems. "Well, when *CONFESSIONS OF*
A CRAP ARTIST appeared, that took
the sting out of it, and I didn't
feel so bad. But of course it did
take 19 years to get that published.
It's been a long road; but science
fiction offered me a route by which
I could publish the kind of thing
that I wanted to write. *THE MARTI-*
AN TIME-SLIP is exactly what I
wanted to write. It deals with the
premise that was, to me, so import-
ant -- not just that we each live
in a somewhat unique world of our
own psychological content, but that
the subjective world of one rather
powerful person can infringe on the
world of another person. If I can
make you see the world the way I see
it, then you will automatically
think the way I think. You will
come to the conclusions that I come
to. And the greatest power one hu-
man being can exert over others is
to control their perceptions of real-
ity, and infringe on the integrity
and individuality of their world.
This is done, for instance, in psy-
chotherapy."

"I went through attack-therapy
in Canada. You get a lot of people
all yelling at you, and suddenly
the mystery of the Moscow purge
trials of the 1930s becomes very
clear -- what could possibly make a
person get up and say in a most sin-
cere manner that he had committed a
crime, the penalty for which was ex-
ecution. Well, the answer lies in
the incredible power of a group of
human beings to invade a man's world
and determine his image of himself
so that he can actually believe their
view of him. I remember in attack-
therapy there was one guy dressed
kind of nattily, and he was French.
They said, you look like a homosex-
ual. He started crying. I thought,
this is very strange, because I know
this guy is not homosexual. And yet
he's crying and admitting to this
thing -- not to cause the abuse to
stop, the screams of these people
all yelling at him, You fairy, you

fruit, you homo, admit what you are.
By confessing to it he didn't cause
them to stop, he caused them to yell
louder and say, We were right, we
were right. We was simply begin-
ning to agree with them.

"All this can be viewed politic-
ally or psychologically. To me it
was all viewed dramatically in my
writing, as the eerie and uncanny in-
vasion of one person's world by an-
other person's world. If I invade
your world you will probably sense
something alien, because my world is
different from yours. You must, of
course, fight it. But often we do
not because a lot of it is subtle,
we just have intimations that our
worlds are being invaded, we don't
know where this invasion of our per-
sonal integrity is coming from. It
comes from authority figures in gen-
eral."

"The greatest menace of the
twentieth century is the totalitar-
ian state. It can take many forms:
left-wing fascism, psychological
movements, religious movements, drug
rehabilitation places, powerful peo-
ple, manipulative people; or it can
be in a relationship with someone
who is more powerful than you psycho-
logically. Essentially, I'm plead-
ing the cause of those people who
are not strong. If I were strong
myself I would probably not feel this
such a menace. I identify with the
weak person; this is one reason why
my fictional protagonists are es-
sentially anti-heroes. They're al-
most losers, yet I try to equip them
with qualities by which they can sur-
vive. At the same time I don't want
to see them develop counter-aggres-
sive tactics where they, too, become
exploitative and manipulative."

I ask what his response is, when
people tell him he is being over-
anxious about authority figures and
is simply paranoid. In reply he
refers to the harassment he suffered
while he was an anti-war activist,
culminating in a bizarre break-in at
his home which local police in ef-
fect refused to investigate. "I was

told I was paranoid before my house was hit. Then I remember opening the door, and finding nothing but ruins everywhere, windows and doors smashed in, files blown open, all my papers missing, all my cancelled checks gone, my stereo gone, and I remember thinking, well, it sure is a hell of a mess, but there goes that 'paranoid' theory".

"Actually I was told by a fairly good analyst that I'm not cold-blooded enough to be paranoid. He said to me, 'You're melodramatic and you're full of illusions about life, but you're too sentimental to be paranoid'".

"I took the Minnesota Multiphasic Psychological Profile Test once, and I tested out as paranoid, cyclothymic, neurotic, schizophrenic ... I was so high on some of the scales that the dot was up in the instructions part. But I also tested out as an incorrigible liar! You see, they'll give you the same question phrased in several different ways. They'll say something like: There is a divine deity that rules the world. And I'd say, yeah, there probably is. Later on they'll say: I don't think there is a divine deity that rules the world. And I'd say, that's probably correct. I can see a lot of reasons for agreeing with that. And later they'll say: I'm not sure if there's a divine deity that rules the world. And I'd say, yeah, that's about right. In every case I was sincere. I think philosophically I fit in with some of the very late PreSocratic people around the time of Zeno and Diogenes, the cynics, in the Greek sense, those who live like dogs. I am inevitably persuaded by every argument that is brought to bear. If you were to suggest to me at this moment that we go out for Chinese food I would immediately agree it was the best idea I ever heard; in fact I would say, 'You've got to let me pay for it.' If you were to say suddenly, 'Don't you think that Chinese food is over-priced, has very little nourishment, you have to go a long way to get it, and when you bring it home it's cold', I'd say, you're right, I can't abide the stuff. This is a sign of a very weak ego, I guess. However ... if I say that each person has his unique world is correct, then if you say Chinese food is good, in your world it's good, and if someone else says it's bad, in his world it's bad. I'm a complete relativist in that for me the answer to the question, 'Is Chinese food good or bad?' is semantically meaningless. Now, this is my view. If your view is that this view is incorrect, you might be right. In which case, I would be willing to agree with you."

He sits back, happy with his exercise at eliminating any foundation for an objective structure of values. He has talked easily, engagingly, as if entertained by his own conversation. A lot of what he says sounds playful at the same time that it seems sincere.

I ask how much of his thinking was influenced by LSD experiences, and which of his books, if any, are derived from acid trips.

"I wrote TIME OUT OF JOINT in the 1950s, before I had even heard of LSD. In that book a guy walks up to a lemonade stand in the park, and it turns into a slip of paper marked Soft Drink Stand, and he puts the slip of paper in his pocket. Far-Pucking-out, spacey, that's an 'acid experience'. If I didn't know better I'd say that this author had turned on many times, and his universe was coming unglued -- he's obviously living in a fake universe.

"What I was trying to do in that book was account for the diversity of worlds that people live in. I had not read Heraclitus then, I did not know his concept of ideos Kosmos, the private world, versus Koinos Kosmos, which we all share. I didn't know that the PreSocratics had begun to discern these things.

"There's a scene in the book where the protagonist goes into his bathroom, reaches in the dark for a pull-cord, and suddenly realizes there is no cord, there's a switch on the wall, and he can't remember when he ever had a bathroom where there was a cord hanging down. Now, that actually happened to me, and it was what caused me to write the book. It reminded me of the idea the Van Vogt had dealt with, of artificial memory, as occurs in THE WORLD OF NULL-A where a person has false memories implanted. A lot of what I wrote, which looks like the result of taking acid, is really the result of taking Van Vogt very seriously! I believed Van Vogt, I mean, he wrote it, you know, he was an authority figure. He said, 'People can be other than whom they remember themselves to be', and I found this fascinating. You have a massive suspension of disbelief on my part."

I ask to what extent he was ever, really, into drugs.

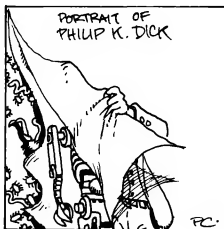
"The only drugs I took regularly were amphetamines, in order to be able to write as much as I had to write to make a living. I was being paid so little per book that I had to turn out a very large number of books. I had an extremely expensive wife and children ... she would see a new car that she liked the looks of and just go off and buy it ... un-

der California law I was legally bound by her debts and I just wrote like mad. I think I turned out 16 novels in five years at one point. I did 60 finished pages a day, and the only way I could write that much was to take amphetamines, which were prescribed for me. I finally stopped taking them, and I don't write as much as I used to.

"I used to talk like I was really into acid. But the fact of the matter is that I took it two times, and the second time, it was so weak a dose, it may not even have been acid. The first time, though, it was Sandoz acid, a giant capsule I got from the University of California, a friend and I split it, it must have been a whole milligram of it, we bought it for five dollars, and I'll tell ya, I went straight to hell, was what happened. The landscape froze over, there were huge boulders, there was a deep thumping, it was the day of wrath and god was judging me as a sinner. This lasted for thousands of years and didn't get any better, it just got worse and worse. I felt terrible physical pain and all I could talk was in Latin. Most embarrassing, because the girl I was with thought that I was doing it to annoy her. I was whining like some poor dog that's been left out in the rain all night and finally the girl said, Oh, barf, and walked out of the room in disgust."

"About a month later I got the galley proofs for THE THREE STIGMATA OF PALMER ELDRITCH to read over, and I thought, oh dear, I can't read these, they're too scary. That book of course is my classic 'LSD novel' even though all I had had to go on when I wrote it was an article by Aldous Huxley about LSD. But all the horrible things I had written seemed to have come true under acid."

"That was in 1964. I used to beg people not to take acid. There was one girl who came over one night,



and I made her an amateur Rorschach ink-blot, and she said, I see an evil shape coming to kill me. I said, 'You'd be a damned fool to take acid.' So she didn't take it then, but she did take it later, and she tried to kill herself and was hospitalized and became chronically psychotic. I saw her in 1970 and her mind was gone; it destroyed her. She said that taking the acid had destroyed her.

"I regarded drugs as dangerous and potentially lethal, but I had a cat's curiosity. It was my interest in the human mind that made me curious about psychotropic drugs. These were essentially religious strivings that were appearing in me. By the time of THREE STIGMATA I had become a convert to the Episcopal Church"

I interrupt a moment, to ask, "Why Episcopal?"

He adopts the gruff expression that I suspect means he's putting me on -- maybe just the opposite -- or maybe he's not actually sure himself. "My wife said if I didn't join the church she'd bust my nose. She says, 'If we're going to know judges and district attorneys and important people, we have to be Episcopalian.'"

If this anecdote is told half in fun, it's the last joke of the interview, because at this point he continues on a kind of confessional, which I suspect he planned to make at this time if only to see what reaction he would elicit from me, as a relative stranger.

"I was walking alone one day". His tone is sincere now. "I looked up in the sky and there was this face staring down at me, a giant face with slotted eyes, the face I describe in THREE STIGMATA. This was 1963. It was an evil, horrible-looking thing. I didn't clearly see it, but it was there. I finally identified it, years later; I was looking through a copy of LIFE magazine and I came across a picture of some French forts from World War I. They were observation cupolas made out of iron, with slots where the soldiers could look out and see the Germans. My father had fought at the second battle of the Marne; he was in the 5th U.S. Marines, and when I was a little kid he used to show me all his military equipment. He would put on his gas mask and his eyes would disappear, and he would tell me about the battle of the Marne, and the horrors he went through. He told me, a little four-year-old child about men with their guts blown out, and he showed me his gun and everything, and told me how they fired till their guns were red-hot. He had been under gas attacks, and he told me of the terrible fear as the

charcoal in the masks would become saturated with the gas and they would panic and tear their masks off. My father was a big handsome man, a football player, tennis player. I have read what the U.S. Marines did in that war, and those farm boys underwent what Remarque describes in ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT as unspeakable valor, unspeakable horrors. And there it was in 1963 looking down at me, a god damned fortification from the Marne. My father may even have drawn a sketch or had photographs of it, for all I know.

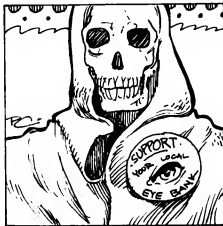
"I actually sought refuge in Christianity from what I saw in the sky. Seeing it as an evil deity I wanted the reassurance that there was a benign deity more powerful. My priest actually said that perhaps I could become a Lutheran because I seemed to actually sense the presence of Satan. And this has continued to plague me, as an intimation that the god of this world is evil. The Buddha, seeing the evil of the world, came to the conclusion that there could be no creator god, because if there were, it could not be this way, there could not be so much evil and suffering; I had come to the conclusion that there was a deity in this world, and he was evil. I had formulated the problem again and again in books like MAZE OF DEATH and UBIRK and THREE STIGMATA and EYE IN THE SKY.

"During World War II, when I was a kid, I remember seeing in a theater a newsreel film of a Japanese soldier who had been hit by a flame-thrower by the Americans, and he was burning to death and running, and burning and running, and burning and running, and the audience cheered and laughed and I was dazed with horror at the sight of the man on the screen and at the audience's reaction, and I thought, something is terribly wrong. Years later when I was in my thirties and living in the country I had to kill a rat that had gotten into the children's bedroom. Rats are hard to kill. I set a trap for it. In the night it got into the trap, and the next morning, when I got up, it heard me coming, and it screamed. I took the trap out with a pitchfork and sprung the trap and let the rat go out in the pasture, and it came out of the trap and its neck was broken. I took the pitchfork and drove the tines into the rat, and it still didn't die. Here was this rat, it had tried only to come in and get food, it was poisoned, its neck was broken, it was stabbed, it was still alive. At that point I simply went crazy with horror. I ran in and filled a tub with water and drowned it. And

I buried it and I took the St. Christopher medal that I wore and buried that with the rat. And the soul of that rat I carry on me from then on, as a question and as a problem about the condition of living creatures on this world. I could not exorcise the spirit of that rat which had died so horribly. In my novel, FLOW MY TEARS, THE POLICEMAN SAID, the armed posse is approaching a building where Jason Taverner is shut up in the dark. He hears them and he screams, and that is the rat screaming when it heard me coming. Even in 1974 I was still remembering that rat screaming.

"Even then, at the trough of my life, where I saw only inexplicable suffering, there came to me a beatific vision which calmed all my sense of horror and my sense of the transcendent power of evil. My mental anguish was simply removed from me as if by a divine fiat, in an intervention of a psychological-mystical type, which I describe in my new book, VALIS.

"Some transcendent divine power which was not evil, but benign, intervened to restore my mind and heal my body and give me a sense of the beauty, the joy, the sanity of the world. And out of this I forged a concept which is relatively simple and possibly unique in theology, and that is, the irrational is the primordial stratum of the universe; it comes first in time and is primary in ontology -- in levels of essence. And it evolves into rationality. The history of the universe is a movement from irrationality -- chaos, cruelty, blindness, pointlessness -- to a rational structure which is harmonious, interlinked in a way which is orderly and beautiful. The primordial creative deity was essentially deranged, from our standpoint; we are, as humans, an evolution above the primordial deity, we are pygmies but we stand on the shoulders of giants and therefore we see more than they see. We human beings are



created and yet we are more rational than the creator himself who spawned us.

"This outlook is based not on faith but on an actual encounter that I had in 1974, when I experienced an invasion of my mind by a transcendently rational mind, as if I had been insane all my life and suddenly I had become sane. Now, I have actually thought of that as a possibility, that I had been psychotic from 1928, when I was born, until March of 1974. But I don't think that's the case. I may have been somewhat whacked-out and eccentric for years and years, but I know I wasn't all that crazy, because I'd been given Rorschach tests and so on.

"This rational mind was not human. It was more like an artificial intelligence. On Thursdays and Saturdays I would think it was God; on Tuesdays and Wednesdays I would think it was extraterrestrial; sometimes I would think it was the Soviet Union Academy of Sciences trying out their psychotronic microwave telepathic transmitter. I tried every theory, I thought of the Rosicrucians, I thought of Christ It invaded my mind and assumed control of my motor centers and did my acting and thinking for me. I was a spectator to it. It set about healing me physically, and my four-year-old boy, who had an undiagnosed life-threatening brain defect that no one had been aware of.

"This mind, whose identity was totally obscure to me, was equipped with tremendous technical knowledge -- engineering, medical, cosmological, philosophical knowledge. It had memories dating back two thousand years, it spoke Greek, Hebrew, Sanskrit; there wasn't anything that it didn't seem to know.

"It immediately set about putting my affairs in order. It fired my agent and my publisher. It re-margined my typewriter. It was very practical, it decided that the apartment had not been vacuumed recently enough, it decided that I should stop drinking wine because of the sediment -- it turned out I had an abundance of uric acid in my system -- and it switched me to beer. It made elementary mistakes such as calling the dog 'he' and the cat 'she', which annoyed my wife; and it kept calling her 'ma'am'."

At this point I interrupt, just to be sure I'm getting this right: the presence, the voice, that he heard in his head, took over control of his body, his speech and his decisions?

"That's right."

My first impulse is to suspend judgment. My second notion is to



look for a second opinion. In March 1974, Mr. Dick was married; what did his wife think about all of this?

"My wife was impressed", he says, "by the fact that, because of the tremendous pressure this mind put on people in my business, I made quite a lot of money very rapidly. We began to get checks for thousands of dollars -- money that was owed me, which the mind was conscious existed in New York but had never been coughed up. And it got me to the doctor, who confirmed its diagnosis of various ailments that I had ... it did everything but paper the walls of the apartment. It also said it would stay on as my tutelary spirit. I had to look up 'tutelary' to find out what it meant.

"I have almost 500,000 words of notes on all this. I'm quite reticent about it, normally. I've talked to my (Episcopalian) priest about it, and a couple of close friends. I tried to discuss it with Ursula LeGuin, and she just wrote and said, 'I think you're crazy.' She returned the material I had sent her. Of course, when VALIS comes out, a lot of all this will be in the book. VALIS is an attempt to formulate my vision in some rational structure which can be conveyed to other people."

I have been listening to all this in a state of confusion. I had come to this apartment for what I assumed was just another in a series of interviews about the business of writing science fiction, and now I find myself caught up in a Dickian reality-war. I'm listening to what sounds like wild fantasy but is being narrated as fact, with obvious, self-conscious sincerity. I don't know what to believe; my world -- my ideas Kosmos -- has been invaded by his, as if I have become a character in one of his novels, and he is Palmer Eldritch, dreaming up a new reality for me to live in.

But I can't live in it, because I can't accept it. I can't suddenly believe that there really are extraterrestrial entities invading the minds of men. I can't believe you can learn secrets of the universe by visiting a science fiction author in Santa Ana.

And yet he is so plausible! In print it may sound absurd; but sitting listening to his shy, matter-of-fact description of events that are totally real to him, I would like to find a way to accept it all, if only because I find him so immensely likeable, and because I have respect for his intellect generally. As his recent books have shown, he has a practical, lucid insight into the workings of the world. In no way is he a seer or a "psychic" delivering a messianic message or recipe for salvation. He admits readily to his tendency to dramatize life, but basically he is a carefully rational man who questions any concept with persistent logic. He is quite ready to discuss the possibility that his paranormal experience might have been nothing more than one half of his brain talking to the other half; he's reluctant to accept this explanation only because it doesn't adequately explain all the facts of his experience.

These facts are numerous. I can't begin to summarize them. He's had five years to live with the phenomenon of the "presence" that temporarily invaded his mind (and still communicates with him intermittently). He had accumulated notes and records, all kinds of research data, so much of it that, no matter what you ask or what objection you raise, he's already ahead of you, with relentlessly logical deductions, facts of all kinds.

I myself have never seen evidence to make me believe in any psychic phenomena or pseudo-science, from telepathy to UFOs. My faith is that the universe is random and godless. I am the last person to believe that there is a higher intelligence, and that Philip K. Dick has a private connection with it.

I do believe that something remarkable happened to him, if only psychologically; and I do believe that the experience has inspired a rather beautiful vision of the universe (or *Koinos kosmos*) and a strange, unique book which may enhance the lives of its readers. This is the minimum with which Dick must be credited. To debate his "mental stability" is missing the point; what matters is the worth of his insight, regardless of its source. There have been men far more deranged than Philip K. Dick who nevertheless produced great art of lasting relevance to the lives of millions of un-deranged people.

Dick remains much the same personality as before his vision. He has not metamorphosed into a religious zealot. His perceptions, and his ironic, skeptical wit, are as sharp as ever.

A couple of days after the interview, I returned for a purely social visit, without tape recorders (so my remaining reportage is from unaided memory). During our conversation I mentioned a whimsical notion I enjoy, that if I'm far away from somewhere, and can't see or touch it, it doesn't really exist.

"Oh, sure," he said, "they only build as much of the world as they need to, to convince you it's real. You see, it's kind of a low-budget operation: those countries you read about, like Japan, or Australia, they don't really exist. There's nothing out there. Unless of course you decide to go out there, in which case they have to put it all together, all the scenery, the buildings, and the people, in time for you to see it. They have to work real fast."

At this point I am treading carefully. "let's get this straight," I say, "are you describing, now, a fictional concept, such as might occur in one of your novels? Or is this ... serious?"

"You mean, do I believe it?" he asked in apparent surprise. "Why, no, of course not. You'd have to be crazy to believe in something like that!"

And then he laughed.

The Philip K. Dick profile by Charles Platt is one of 30 profiles of sf writers that will be published by Berkley this November, in one volume titled PROFILES IN SCIENCE FICTION. There will be a subsequent Gregg Press edition.

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SMALL PRESS NOTES

BY THE EDITOR

QUESTAR--AUG, 1980, \$1.95

Most of this issue is about THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK, with a very good interview with Mark Hamill on the making of the picture.

The other standout this issue is an interview with Robert Bloch.

QUESTAR is most interested in visual sf and fantasy--and horror.

This issue arrived with a heavy white mailing cover to protect the magazine. A good idea as it probably saves some envelope money and work. Mailed third class bulk rate, I note. With its bi-monthly schedule the publishers could save even more if they got a second class permit.

Address: MW Communications
247 Fort Pitt Blvd.,
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

BETTER THAN ONE

By Damon Knight and Kate Wilhelm
To be published by Noreascon II
on Aug. 29, 1980. \$5. by mail from
Noreascon II,
POB 46, MIT Branch Post Office,
Cambridge, MA 02139.

A small hardbound book, a special collectors item, it contains Introductions by each of the authors, poems by each, a story by each. Damon's story is "Semper Fi," and Kate's is "Baby, You Were Great."

Both stories involve the consequences of feeding experiences to the mind or allowing the mind to create its own alternate real solipsist world--by technology, by means of a helmet (more or less).

[Another variation of this idea is my novel CANNED MEAT.]

I think Kate Wilhelm is a very good poet: her "Alternatives," "Four Seasons" are wrenching insights into despair and desperation under the mask.

Damon Knight and Kate Wilhelm will be the Pro Guests of Honor at Noreascon II, the world sf convention for 1980.

THE BRIDGE OF CATZAD-DUM and Other
Stories by Mark E. Rogers. \$5.75
The Burning Bush Press
POB 7708
Newark, DE 19711

Rogers has quite a range; we have here three different stories--a traditional mythological horror story (lotsa gore!), a tale of three brains in one skull (and three minds cohabi-



tating?), and a funny heroic fantasy satire involving animals (as if they were humans). All are well handled, all move! and all have a lot or a little violence. There's something so wholehearted, so joyous and unabashed about Mark Rogers' killing and maiming--and yet so real--that it is a wonder. Plainly he likes violence in his writing, isn't ashamed of it, and even seems to relish it.

I do, too.

THE BLACK LION

By Patricia & Lionel Fanthorpe
Greystoke Mobray Ltd., [\$1.95]
30, Boverton Street,
Roath Park, Cardiff. CF2 5ES.
Wales, UK

Mark Sable, a lonely and alienated ex-convict, encounters an old mystic who gives him a curious medalion. This strange talisman transports Mark from the hostility of Earth to his rightful home on Derl.

Here, as the Black Lion, re-incarnate feudal King of Iar, and royal brother to the Golden Tiger, Mark sets out in quest of the great power sphere of Kalun. He learns that the shining tower of the citadel is part of the crippled space ship that brought him to Derl in his first incarnation centuries ago.

So sayeth the back cover. The writing is action, action, action! Kill, run, kill, go, kill... The style is 5% archaic, 95% modern in phrasing.

There is of course a lovely young woman or two involved. The amateurish cover painting probably will doom the book.

THE EMPRESS OF THE EARTH & THE
PURPLE CLOUD Plus Some Short Stories
By M.P. Shiel
J.D.S. Books,
P.O. Box 67 MCS,
Dayton, OH 45402

An ambitious gathering of two of Shiel's best-known novels, and eight short stories, all published in the 1890s. The text is page reproductions from the original serializations on the weekly SHORT STORIES [price: One Penny!] and from other magazines. These include the original illustrations, mostly by Lawson Wood and John Cameron.

I find Shiel's 19th Century narrative style and phrasing not to my taste, but am captivated by the excellent artistry of Wood and Cameron; especially Cameron, who could give lessons to the best magazine illustrators of today. I'm surprised, too, at the quality of reproduction given the artists in the 1890s--far, far better than given "pulp" artists of today.

Essentially this volume (the first of three projected) is for Shiel admirers and collectors. These are small limited editions available in two bindings: a sewn clothbound edition (\$35), and special ring binder (22 rings) edition with silk-screen cover and tabbed sections [\$30].

EBON ROSES, JEWELLED SKULLS

By James William Hjort
Weirdbook Press
P.O. Box 35, Amherst Branch,
Buffalo, NY 14226

If you like/liked Clark Ashton Smith's style you'll probably like this book of short stories written in the Smith mode by J.W. Hjort, an admirer.

These stories are illustrated by the author. He is supposed to be a commercial artist, but judging from this work he is fudging; I'd rank him amateur; certainly the botched wraparound cover painting points to incompetency/lack of skills.

He's a better writer than artist. There are ten stories, and he seems to have a fair talent at the typer.

This large-size book is available in a paperback edition: \$5.75---and a hardcover edition: \$16.50.

STARSHIP - Summer, 1980. \$2.50
P.O. Box 4175,
New York, NY 10017

The recession/depression in the book industry has trapped Andy Porter in an untenable position: His

advertising monies have shrunk drastically, forcing a cutback in pages until now he is at 48 pages plus covers, down from 52 plus covers, down from 64 plus covers. In that period he has raised his cover price to \$2.50 from \$2.25.

If he follows the lead of our major corporations he will go to 32 pages plus covers and raise his price to \$2.75.

Nevertheless, this current issue of STARSHIP is handsome with a beautiful Paul Lehr cover and is interesting with items by Harlan Ellison, Robert Silverberg, an interview with George RR Martin, analysis of Phil Dick by Michael Bishop, and the Vincent DiFate art column.

THRUST #15 Summer, 1980, \$1.95
Thrust Publications
11919 Barrel Cooper Ct.,
Reston, VA 22091

Editor Doug Fratz has gathered into himself a lineup of very interesting, outspoken columnists--Michael Bishop, George Alec Effinger, Charles Sheffield, Dan Steffan, Ted White--and they say their mind!

Add an interview with Kelly Freas, book reviews, letters....and you have a pretty damned good magazine. Try a copy; you'll probably like it.

Note: this issue is a few pages longer than last, though it feels thinner due to a change to a lighter weight paper.

THE DUENDE HISTORY OF THE SHADOW
MAGAZINE By Will Murray
Odyssey Publications, \$8.70 postpaid
P.O. Box G-148
Greenwood, MA 01880

This could be subtitled: Everything you ever thought of knowing about the Shadow and his writers and his magazine...

And then some.
This large softcover quality book is replete with fine illustrations, photographs of magazine covers, the people involved--mainly Walter Gibson, who wrote the stories (and there are two interviews with him), the illustrators...

There is also an index of all the stories (T. Tinsley and B. Elliott also wrote some of the Shadow adventures, but not many...).

There is even included a new Shadow story by Walter Gibson, "Black-mal Bay".

And more. And more.
This is for anyone who carries a fond nostalgia for Lamont Cranston and who wants to know everything about his origins and life.

ETERNITY #2, \$1.75
P.O. Box 510
Clemson, SC 29631

It's a good thing this column is titled "Small Press Notes" rather than "Reviews." Most of the material I read all the way through, but some is skimmed, some is 'spot-read' and some, under press of time strictures as now, is "Noted".

Let it be noted that ETERNITY #2 is available now, that it has fiction by Orson Scott Card, John Shirley, Grant Carrington, and others, and an interview with Gregory Benford by Darrell Schweitzer. Also many departments (mayhap more interesting than the fiction!) by Andy Offutt, Orson Scott Card, Roger Zelazny, Edward Bryant and others.

This magazine is 80 pages plus covers, typeset, professional in layout and etc. Fair artwork. In short, you get your money's worth, and unless ETERNITY is to sink out of sight and become just another failed small-press experiment, you will have to buy a copy.

SCIENCE FICTION & FANTASY BOOK REVIEW [Borgo Press] has been killed by its publisher Robert Reginald, and its editor Neil Barron. Press of other work is given as the reason, but I suspect it was a money-loss endeavor and all concerned decided to cut its losses.

The last published issue of SF&FBR was February, 1980.

Paul Allen's FANTASY NEWSLETTER has taken over all SF&FBR's subscription obligations as of FN's July issue.

This termination of the last all-review publication in the sf & fantasy field proves my judgement that an all-review magazine is inherently unworkable using the standard review format.

GALAXY's new editor, Floyd Kemske, has sent a Status Report letter to authors whose work had been accepted for GALAXY by the former publisher.

The first issue of the new GALAXY was supposed to have been published in April, 1980. This letter promises June publication, followed by an issue in October and December. 1981 is to see regular bi-monthly publication.

But don't hold your breath. Most insiders and professionals in the field think the publisher is having horrendous cash-flow problems and that the odds are GALAXY will never be published again. The deepening recession and severe drop in maga-

zine and book sales seems to insure that view as correct.

Kemske [in his letter] tells the writers that the new publisher took over a 400,000 word fiction inventory and all this is being re-evaluated for use in the new GALAXY format.

If a story is kept it will be paid for on publication at 1¢ per word, or higher, depending on the judgement of the editor. If a story is no longer suitable it will be returned to the author with a "kill fee" of 1/2¢ per word. But it will take a long time to work through all this material.

THE WHOLE FANZINE CATALOG #14-15
Edited and published by Brian
Earl Brown, 16711 Burt Rd., #207,
Detroit, MI 48219. This issue \$1.

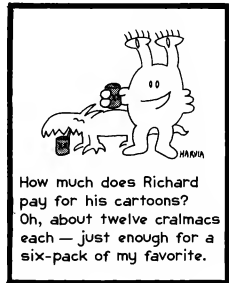
Fanzines listed by country, by function (Newszines); a listing of the WoFan poll results; letters; articles.... important adv. flyers [Yes, dammit, some ads are newsworthy and their offerings important.]

A worthwhile zine, is WoFan, especially if you are new to fandom and need a key mailing list.

THE WORLD ENDS TOMORROW AND YOU
MAY DIE!

---SubGenius Foundation

No more room, alas. This is a very crowded issue and Small Press Notes was short-changed by at least a page. As were my "Alien Thoughts" come to think. We'll do better next issue.



CONDUCTED BY NEAL WILGUS

SFR: Since you're a man who needs no introduction I'll skip my usual background questions and get right to the meat of things. As one of the top names in the field, what do you see as the role of science fiction today? Where is it headed? Is the Golden Age yet to come?

ZELAZNY: I think that the role of science fiction is pretty much the same as it has always been -- entertainment of a variety which exercises the imagination and perhaps expands the intellect somewhat through its play upon ideas and its requirement that the reader make the effort to set up a new world in the mind's eye for the working out of each story.

Where is it headed? Forward, in a temporal sense, but in a somewhat cyclical manner. It has its fads and fashions the same as anything else. Certain situations or things seize the fancy and take the stage for a time. Dragons, I think, are about to shuffle off into the wings, belching fumes, for another decade or so. The movement of life down time's corridors will shift moods -- pessimistic-optimistic, pro-science, anti-science -- from year to year; it is the developments in the world about us -- scientific, political, social -- that will create the swings in emphasis which produce continued growth.

I'm not much on Golden Ages. I think there's always some of the bright mineral around if you're willing to dig for it.

SFR: It seems to me that in spite of the popularity of STAR WARS and the newly found academic respectability of science fiction, that the field is still locked in a so-called ghetto status in the majority of minds. Do you think SF will be the literature of the future, as many have predicted? Will we overcome?

ZELAZNY: This is a consideration which has never much mattered to me. Years ago, I answered a similar question in the DOUBLE: BILL SYMPOSIUM with a quote from Santayana which I still consider appropriate: "To attempt to give such things a wide currency is to be willing to denaturalize them in order to boast that they have been propagated". It would have to be pretty watered-down stuff to catch on in general and hold the attention of the public at large for a very long time.

I believe, basically, that the general popularity of science fiction (watered-down or otherwise) or any other type of story is a cyclical, faddish thing. We get our turn periodically. I don't see anything wrong with this.

SFR: One of your own contributions toward that literature of the future is the introduction of mythological themes into SF. Do you think this will grow into a dominant force in the field? A new new-wave?

ZELAZNY: It has always been there to some extent, and I think that it always will be. I doubt it will become a dominant force, though.

SFR: It seems like a contradiction in terms for an individual to be writing myths, since mythology traditionally has been something built up over many generations and contributed to by countless storytellers. Yet when SF/fantasy writers collaborate on some mythological framework such as the Cthulhu Mythos or the Conan Saga the results tend to be rather trivial. Is there any hope that some grand "future history"

mythology will develop that all writers, SF or otherwise, could use to their own purpose? Something comparable to the Greek myths that still have relevance today?

ZELAZNY: I don't think so, and I wouldn't like to see it, anyway. It seems to me that it would be a restrictive rather than a liberating influence. I would rather see a plurality than a grand scheme.

SFR: Do you hold with the Jungian idea of the collective unconscious where mythological archetypes dwell, waiting to be drawn upon by some questing mythmaker or artist? Do you feel your own creativity comes from such levels?

ZELAZNY: To some extent, for people of a common cultural background. But I like to feel that what creativity I possess is intellectual as well as intuitive; that is, I am willing to challenge an inspiration with reason, invert it, twist it about a bit, to see whether I can't improve upon it by non-intuitive means.

SFR: In writing on mythological themes it seems obvious that you're trying to do something more than just entertain. What is your view of the "entertainment vs. message" controversy?

ZELAZNY: I do not see it as a dichotomy. I write mainly to entertain, but other things do find their ways into my work. I have never written simply to promote a message, but if I were to I've a feeling it would be garbled in transmission by story values which I could not keep out.

SFR: In DAMNATION ALLEY and your latest novel ROADMARKS, as well as short stories like "Devil Car" and "Auto-Da-Fe", you've explored the modern obsession with automobiles. Is there a mythology of the motor vehicle that has developed over the past couple of generations? Were you consciously contributing to such a mythology when you wrote those stories?

ZELAZNY: Possibly. I was not cons-



ciously contributing to any such mythology, but I have been involved in some very unpleasant automobile situations and I suppose I might have been exorcising a few traumas in those stories.

SFR: Are there mythologies of radio and TV or movies or comics or whatever, also developing?

ZELAZNY: I do not feel qualified to answer this one.

SFR: Several of your stories have been adapted to comic book form or illustrated with comic-type artwork -- are you satisfied with these interpretations of your work?

ZELAZNY: As satisfied as one can be, I guess, with transference to another medium. I do like Gray Morrow's work.

SFR: I see there's a new critical study of your work out by Carl B. Yoke. What's your reaction to this kind of critical attention?

ZELAZNY: I'm pleased with that book. He is fair and very perceptive. He is also my friend of over 35 years and knows me better than anyone else who has ever written about me or my works.

SFR: With all the changes taking place in the status of women and especially with women assuming a large and important role in SF in recent years, I'm surprised that your female characters are so relatively minor and undeveloped. Why are Zelazny characters mostly macho supermen -- why not some wonder women now and then?

ZELAZNY: Someone just pointed out to me an article in the Winter of 1979 issue of *EXTRAPOLATION*, where Professor Carolyn Wendell said that in "The Doors of His Face, the Lamps of His Mouth" I depict the heroine "as possessing some degree of autonomy and, just as importantly, as being involved in an interdependent relationship, rather than one in which the male takes the lead and the female is the submissive follower". Who is the poor author to believe?

SFR: Along the same lines, I've read criticism to the effect that your lead characters are mostly interchangeable and not very deeply individualized. From what I've read of your work this seems a justified criticism -- with significant exceptions such as Conrad Nikmoks in *THIS IMMORTAL* and Fred Cassidy in *DOORWAYS IN THE SAND*. In general, though, is depth of characterization of little importance in your view?

ZELAZNY: I disagree. I don't think Gallinger or my baitman, say, could have solved Angelo di Negri's problem in *TODAY WE CHOOSE FACES*, or vice-versa. Charles Bender, in *THE DREAM MASTER*, would have been useless as the protagonist in any of my other books. Hell Tanner was only fitted for the role he played in *DAMNATION ALLEY* and would not have been able to resolve, say, Francis Sandow's dilemma in *ISLE OF THE DEAD* or function in the role of my nameless detective in the *MY NAME IS LEGION* stories. But I agree with you in that I feel that depth of characterization, in terms of psychological motivation, is not important in all stories. If the emphasis is on spectacle or adventure, one can get along with external characterization and let it go at that. It depends on where the accent is to lie in a particular piece.

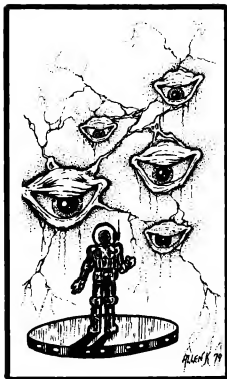
SFR: I've noticed that your Avon titles such as *LORD OF LIGHT* and the Amber series are almost the only Zelazny books on the newsstands and that NAL titles such as *JACK OF SHADOWS*, *TODAY WE CHOOSE FACES* and *BRIDGE OF ASHES* are conspicuously absent. In the flood of reissues presently drowning the stands, why aren't all of your works in print? Or do I just frequent the wrong stands?

ZELAZNY: *JACK OF SHADOWS* is about to be reissued. The other two NAL titles (*TODAY WE CHOOSE FACES* and *BRIDGE OF ASHES*) are currently out of print. I recently queried the publisher on this matter. They say that the other two will be reissued but that the dates have not yet been set.

SFR: One theme you've returned to repeatedly is longevity or immortality -- which, of course, has endless possibilities. Have your immortals been influenced by Robert Heinlein's Lazarus Long? Or by earlier treatments of the theme such as Shaw's *BACK TO METHUSELAH*, the utopian classics -- or even the legend of the Wandering Jew?

ZELAZNY: I don't think so. I'm familiar with the ones you mentioned, but I've not consciously patterned anything I've done on any of them.

SFR: There's serious talk going around about conquering death in our lifetime -- do you expect to see some kind of biological breakthrough in the next decade or two that will greatly extend the human life span? Do you look forward to living forever?



ZELAZNY: Possibly so. And a long life would be nice, considering the alternative.

SFR: What about some of the other optimistic predictions that are being banded about, such as space colonization in the next 20 years, cloning of human beings or large scale improvements in intelligence?

ZELAZNY: I believe that there will be manned satellites within the next 20 years -- not as fancy as O'Neill's maybe, but some things up there with people in them. I'm less confident on human cloning, or at least on hearing about it if it were to occur. I have never considered intelligence, per se, that great a virtue, beyond a certain point. I've known too many brilliant people who spent most of their time talking about how brilliant they were, cases of an excess of genius and a lack of application. I've seen lots of persistent plodders build better houses of intellect in the long run.

SFR: How about some of the longer term SF themes such as time travel or contact with alien intelligences? Care to hazard a guess as to when such developments might develop?

ZELAZNY: Too many variables. I'd be shooting in the dark.

SFR: You have long been one of the best stylists in SF -- how important do you think style is in writing SF? In writing in general?

ZELAZNY: It is important to me, less important in general. I am not disturbed if a good story is badly told, where it might have been dressed up more. There is a point of diminishing returns on the amount of polishing one does, especially if one is writing full-time. If the story is strong enough, it can shine through a lot. On the other hand, I'm a sucker for an interesting style, even if the story is weak.

SFR: Do you think it is fair to say that your work is toward the "escapist" end of the spectrum? There are many SF writers, after all, who express their political, religious or philosophical beliefs in their stories, but your books strike me as almost pure story-and-style -- and thus immensely readable -- but are mostly devoid of sociopolitical content. Even in *BRIDGE OF ASHES* the ecological concerns seemed mainly story motivations rather than message. Or do I read you wrong?

ZELAZNY: True. I've never considered myself a polemicist.

SFR: Can style be learned -- or is it something that is too individual and unique to be communicated or taught?

ZELAZNY: I don't know to this day. I think that it just grows, but that it can be pruned. I recall a professor whose literary criticism style intrigued me. He said, when asked, that for a long period of time he read some Gibbon every night before going to sleep and he felt that this had influenced his style in the manner he desired. Only, if he desired that strongly to be influenced in that manner I'm not at all sure he needed to read the Gibbon every night.

SFR: Highly stylized prose such as yours often borders on poetry and in fact I've seen some of your poetry in the *ANTHOLOGY OF SPECULATIVE POETRY*, so I know you have some interest in the subject. Why has SF poetry never been popular? Do you think it will be someday?

ZELAZNY: It's not just SF poetry. Poetry in general does not sell very well in this country. Pity. I don't know why. Temper of the times, perhaps. I'd like to think that there's a big cycle at work here, too, and that it may make it into greater prominence one day. But I don't know.

SFR: Would you join the Science Fiction Poetry Association in urging the professional magazines and

anthologies to use poetry? Will *OMNI* ever be a verse market?

ZELAZNY: Yes. I join them in urging it. It would be nice to see more in print. *OMNI*? Hard to tell. Possibly a small one.

SFR: One thing that bugs the hell out of me about your characters is that they all smoke too much. It may be a good dramatic gesture if not overused, but isn't such stereotyped behavior the opposite of what you're striving for? Do you smoke that much yourself?

ZELAZNY: In my next novel -- *CHANGELING* (Ace, June 1980) -- no one smokes while living. I didn't notice that until afterwards. I'm a pipe smoker myself, though years ago I did smoke cigarettes fairly heavily. It was partly unconscious injection and partly conscious device -- I would light a cigarette, the character would light a cigarette, etc.

SFR: How much were your early short stories prototypes for your novels? For instance, "Love is an Imaginary Number" struck me as the seed from which the Amber series might have grown. "The Man Who Loved the Fair-oli" seemed to foreshadow *TO DIE IN ITALBAR*, and "Devil Car" seems surely an early vision of the *DAMNATION ALLEY* nightmare. In other words, are your novels a conscious working out of themes you first approached in short stories?

ZELAZNY: There is a relationship between "Love is an Imaginary Number" and the Amber books -- yes. And probably the others. Not always a conscious working out, but sometimes it is. For that matter, *ISLE OF THE DEAD* was for me, in a number of ways, an extension of "This Moment of the Storm".

SFR: In an interview published back in 1973 in *SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW* (when it was called *THE ALIEN CRITIC*), you made the following remark: "Short stories were, and still are, my first love in SF. I will eventually get back to them". Would you say that short stories are still your first love? Have you ever gotten back to them?

ZELAZNY: Yes, I'm still that fond of them, and I'm doing more per year now than I was back in '73.

SFR: You also described in that interview your rather unusual work habits. Do you still type in a semi-reclined position? Any change in the four typewriter situation?

ZELAZNY: No, we're still going steady that way.

SFR: The "About the Author" blurb in the back of *ROADMARKS* says you are working on an animated film incorporating elements of American Indian mythology. Is this project complete yet? What's it all about?

ZELAZNY: I did the film treatment, but it's now on the shelf. C'est la vie.

SFR: What other projects do you have going? Will there be a new Zelazny title out soon?

ZELAZNY: *CHANGELING* -- an Ace trade paperback, in June, as I'd mentioned earlier, with lots of fancy artwork by Esteban Maroto. And *THE CHANGING LAND* (Ballantine) -- a Dilvish novel -- no date yet set, but probably early '81.

SFR: The *SF REVIEW* referred to earlier, also contained a piece in which you commented on each of your books up through *TODAY WE CHOOSE FACES*. Would you care to bring that list up to date?

ZELAZNY: I don't recall what I said, but my next book out after *TODAY WE CHOOSE FACES* was *TO DIE IN ITALBAR*, which I'll admit is a weak one and let it go at that, followed by *SIGN OF THE UNICORN*, followed by *DOORWAYS IN THE SAND*, which had a character I liked, a structure I had fun with and some pleasing (to me) ideas, followed by *MY NAME IS LEGION*, where I employed the tighter plotting of a mystery format with ideas I liked, followed by *BRIDGE OF ASHES*, where the ideas may have run away with the story a bit, here and there, followed by *DEUS TRAE*, with Philip K. Dick, which I considered a successful collaboration, defining such as being an effective work neither of the collaborators could have produced solo, and not sounding exactly like either, followed by *THE COURTS OF CHAOS*, followed by *ROADMARKS*, which was harder to write than to read. The Amber books were a pleasant series of relaxations between the others -- and I believe I've gotten more fan mail on them than on the total of everything else I've written. I will refrain from commenting on the books that aren't out yet.

SFR: Thank you, Mr. Zelazny.



OUTSIDE THE WHALE

[First published in SF COMMENTARY, April 1980]

BY CHRISTOPHER PRIEST

ANYBODY GETS
LOST, THAT'S
TOO DAMNED
BAD.



I originally joined the Science Fiction writers of America for the same reasons as I write science fiction. I believe in SF as a valid and radical form of literature. I find the company of other SF writers stimulating and enjoyable. On the whole, SF writers are alert to the vicissitudes of the publishing industry and freely exchange helpful information about markets, contracts and so on. I presumed, when I joined SPWA, that what I would find would be a concentration of such pleasures and interests, that there would be a certain purity of intent, a sense of radicalism and progressiveness, and above all, a propagation of the general good mood and high principles that so many SF writers manifest in person.

However, I am British and I live in Britain, and so of necessity my role as an SPWA member is from a distance. Becoming perforce an observer, I have had for the last decade the opportunity to watch as an interested party while SPWA has expanded at more or less the same rate as SF itself has expanded.

The expansion of the SF genre has been an acquisition of fatty tissue rather than a hardening of muscular flesh. SF is now over-produced, with writers and markets galore, series and sequels and film tie-ins and comic-book versions and illustrated novellas, and all the other decadent symbols of a declining literary form. In my role of SPWA-watcher, in but not really of,

I observe that SPWA has encouraged this decadence by putting "market" considerations before literature, by concentrating on, say, the sort of success attached to making a lot of money rather than the sort of success attached to writing well.

SPWA, like all writers' organizations, exists for three reasons: Firstly, to work for the common good by creating a lobby. Secondly, to provide a social context within which isolated writers can contact their peers. Thirdly, to promote an ambience, both commercial and artistic, within which creative freedom is encouraged.

It is in the last of these, for reasons both specific and general, that there has been the greatest dereliction of duty.

I have at last escaped from the floundering cetacean that is SPWA, by the simple expedient of failing to renew my membership this year. Now I am away and free, it seems to me that it concerns the SF community at large to know something of SPWA. I am a partisan, minority voice, admittedly, and I have not left SPWA without reason. (But a caveat: SPWA as a collective entity is greater or lesser than the sum of its parts. I have been in personal contact with many SPWA members over the years, and I almost invariably find that on this personal, individual level, few people are in agree-

ment with the collective mind. Such is the momentum of the collective, though, that this seems to have absolutely no effect. It is a curious but real phenomenon. (Therefore I must point out that my comments on SPWA are directed at the collective, not the individuals.)

Firstly, then, how does one join SPWA? Qualification for membership is obtained by publishing in the USA a piece of work that is recognisably science fiction. It does not have to be in an acknowledged SF outlet, such as one of the genre magazines, but in cases of doubt it does have to pass the subjective test of one or more officials of SPWA. In general, this is managed sensibly and well. The result is, in theory, that the membership is made up of active professional SF writers.

However, there's a thumping great presumption behind this philosophy. Briefly, it presumes that entry to the American market is the only test of professionalism. The sale of a 100,000-word novel to, say, Sanrio in Japan, or Calmann-Levy in France, or Victor Gollancz in Britain, does not count. The sale of a 600-word vignette to ISAAC ASIMOV'S SF MAGAZINE does.

The argument in defense of this philosophy goes that the "A" in SPWA stands for "America", that it is principally an American organisation, and that if people elsewhere feel resentful of this they should start their own writers' organisations.

This is a sound defense so long as you believe that America is the only place in the world where science fiction is written. It is indeed the largest single market, and there are certainly more SF writers living there than anywhere else. The indications are, though, that this is merely a socio/geographical phenomenon, the product of a large, populous country enjoying a high standard of living. If you view the facts in a different light they take on different shapes.

For instance, if you express the number of writers actually working as a function of overall population, you discover that Britain has, per capita, more SF writers and more full-time SF writers than the States. In Australia, a nation with a population smaller than New York, there are proportionately more writers than in the States. In countries like France and Holland there are writers who enjoy the same sort of status and following as (just for example) Brian Aldiss or Chip Delany, yet whose names are all but unknown to the English-speaking SF world. The best-selling SF author in the world lives in Poland, the world's best-selling SF series came from Germany.

All these authors are permitted to join SFWA so long as their work makes it across to the States. But if it doesn't? If their work has the disadvantage of being written in a "foreign" language, if it is "too British", what then? I know of several instances where successful writers, many of whom live by the pen, have been barred from entry to SFWA simply because American taste was not congruent with their work. Is a successful French author any less of an author because ANALOG or Ace Books doesn't like his stuff? Apparently so.

The first reason for clubbing together to form an authors' society is to gain some kind of collective muscle. Because there is a multitude of writers in the States, their numbers and influence should provide the cornerstone of a collective presence. Fifty British writers make a weak lobby of their own, as do thirty in Australia or fifteen in France. But those writers joining with the Americans would make a powerful worldwide lobby. American authors enjoy considerable success in booming translation markets of Europe, yet these major markets are countries where SFWA is barely represented.

SFWA is at present a chauvinistic collection that accepts some and rejects others, and consequently it enfeebles itself.

Moreover, there is a persistent

feeling within SFWA that what they call "overseas" members are more trouble than they're worth. Last year, an author (who is extremely famous, and who writes long boring books about old men) circulated a memo to a number of people in SFWA saying, in effect, that "overseas" members were an expensive nuisance, and should be charged a levy for the privilege of joining. In this particular author's worldview, "overseas" is a place for tax exiles and loonies ... and thus he ignored the fact that the majority of the world's population was born "overseas".

In its attitude to membership, SFWA is inward-looking, isolationist and self-serving.

This inherent conservatism extends also to political bias. To its eternal dishonour, SFWA has acted in the recent past to suppress freedom of speech and to silence those whose opinions did not conform to what was presumed to be the consensus of the collective mind.

SFWA publishes a fanzine called FORUM. This is distributed to all writer-members (there are other kinds of member, incidentally, mostly publishers and agents), and contains the gossip of the society. The contributions to FORUM are supposed to be confidential, and each issue prints a statement prohibiting any quotation from the text. Before you die of excitement at the thought of what this must contain, you can take it that most of FORUM is intensely boring and trivial, and the prohibition serves not to protect confidence but embarrassment. The dialogues in FORUM are at approximately the intellectual level of arguments in the public bar, and reveal the same order of prejudices.

In the early 1970s, the work of the Polish writer, Stanislaw Lem began to appear in the West. It attracted a lot of attention. The United States was one of the last places in the world where his work was published, which was ironical because by then he was already selling more books than most American writers (and today is the top seller of all). Realising that Lem was in a country lacking hard currency, the incumbent SFWA committee invited Lem to become an honorary member. Lem accepted. In due course he started receiving SFWA mailings.

One can only presume he read FORUM with a surprised expression. Certainly he did read it, because after two or three years he wrote an article for a German newspaper, scathingly describing the attitudes of the collective SFWA consciousness. He made free and easy with many of

the contributions to FORUM, notably one in which Paul Anderson quoted Robert Heinlein's perceptive literary pence: that writers are in competition for the readers' beer money. For all the sarcasm of Lem's article, he wrote it from an impassioned point of view, and his own expressed attitude to writing was written in a civilised manner and was modest, moderate and balanced.

SFWA's reaction to this was one of revenge. It was felt: (1) Lem should not be quoting from FORUM, (2) Lem was being discourteous to the society that had honoured him, (3) Lem was preaching dangerous heresy. (1) is arguable, (2) is agreed, and (3) has never been admitted by the SFWA mind. With the hearty approval of the mob, by now howling for vengeance, the SFWA committee (composed by then of different people from the relatively liberal committee that had made the initial invitation) slung him out on his ear.

When the cries of protest were heard, and SFWA realised it had embarrassed itself, a searching of the bye-laws went on and a face-saving rule was found. The Official Newspaper version of Lem's banishment is, these days, that his honorary membership was revoked on a technicality.

It is not admitted that Lem was kicked out for political reasons: that he questioned and derided the complacent assumptions on which SFWA is based. Nor will SFWA accept that in acting in the way it did it was lowering itself to the level of the State-controlled writers' unions that pre-censor and control writers in communist countries.

From the time of the Lem Affair the writing has been on the wall. There is an influential political faction within SFWA, conservative and regressive, one that feels threat-



ened by ideas and minority opinions, one that sees the present boom in the SF market-place as vindication of their attitudes.

It was with something approaching surprise that I discovered, at this time, that I had "radical" ideas. Until then, I had assumed I was moderate in my views. Yet I aligned with Lem (a writer of whom I know nothing). It came as a personal shock to realise that I was at odds with the collective mind, and from that time it was inevitable that I should leave SPWA. I stayed on as long as I did on the principle that it might be better to work for improvement from within than from without. I no longer think this.

If this realisation came late, another did not. Almost from the time I joined SPWA I have been an opponent of the Nebula Award. It is a fraud, and the more people who know this the better.

Working within SPWA to abolish the Nebula is a waste of time and breath, although it has taken me ten years to realise this. The machinery of the Nebula wallows on and, like a mindless, mechanical whale.

While in SPWA I did my bit to try to turn off this juggernaut. I have published two articles in criticism of it; I have consistently voted "No Award" in every category; I have in recent years followed a policy of withdrawing any work of mine that has looked as if it might come within a mile of competing for the prize. (I have found the last an unpleasant thing to do, because it runs the risk of seeming an inverse way of drawing attention to yourself. However, if the award exists, and you oppose it, your opposition must be comprehensive.)

Yet the Nebula is criticised at personal peril. Honourable men like Brian Aldiss and Harry Harrison -- whose integrity is beyond question -- have put plausible, impassioned cases for its abolition, using words like "crooked" to describe it, and have either been ignored or their motives have been impugned. Because the collective assumption is that the Nebula is *per se* a good thing, it is further assumed that anyone who speaks out against it has some kind of underhand motive. To take two relatively recent examples:

In 1978, a well-known SF writer and former SPWA official said this: "(I suggest we) stop wasting time, energy, and trees on debating changes in the Nebula rules. We have 500 members and 4 annual winners, therefore 496 people will be dissatisfied with the results of any Nebula procedure."

received before leaving, someone with rather less clout, but again a former SPWA official, said this: "I find it most interesting that the most vocal opponents of the Nebula award are either people who have already won one or maybe even a handful, or others who have so far demonstrated a distinct lack of ability to ever produce something good enough to win one."

It is possible to detect a kind of primitive logic in both these remarks (and they are not exceptions, but representative of many others similar). What is interesting about them, though, is the inherent attitudes they reveal. Both of these writers are assuming that any Nebula is better than no Nebula, and that it is unquestionable that all authors recognise their value, both as tributes to their skill and as an important step towards reaching a wider audience. Therefore, the assumption seems to go, anyone who criticises the system must have a base motive. And if there is no underhand motive, then the only other explanation must be the tasting of the sour grapes of failure.



I find this attitude deeply offensive, not only to myself but to the other men and women who have spoken out.

So the very existence of the Nebula is divisive, engendering suspicion, cynicism and hypocrisy. This could of course be argued about any important award, but the Nebula is one inflicted on writers by writers.

Moreover, it is a sham. It is wide open to corruption. Its manner of working is cumbersome and suspect. And although it was presumably conceived for idealistic motives, it represents an incontrovertible dishonesty about the nature of such awards.

That the Nebula has been corrupted is an "open secret", one freely acknowledged in private by many people. Nothing can be proved,

but there is hearsay and circumstantial evidence from the past, and in the present there is abundant direct evidence that vested interests seek to influence the way the Nebula is worked. Writers occasionally draw attention to their own work, offering to send Xerox copies to anyone who would "like to make up their own minds". Publishers circulate free copies of novels in which they have invested heavily, "suggesting" that they be "considered" for the prize. In the past, until it was stopped, editors of anthologies were known to nominate stories from their own books.

(This morning, while typing out this article, I received a package from a publisher who evidently has not heard yet of my defunct status. In the package was a Xerox of a story, and the following letter: "Dear SPWA Member: The enclosed novelette, RAY-GUN RANCH by Ignatius Hackenbacker, will most probably be on the Nebula Award final ballot. We think it's a brilliant and important story and we would like you to have a chance to read it if you haven't already. RAY-GUN RANCH made its first appearance in BOGGLING SF in May, 1979, and has just been reprinted in GRAB-BAG, Ignatius's new collection published by us." Can anyone doubt that a Nebula for this story -- actually written by a generally unassuming author, so presumably this was sent out without his connivance -- will not help the publisher?)

Incidentally, the free books sent out to SPWA members are now institutionalised. At the end of 1979 a letter was sent to every SPWA member, prompting renewal of membership for 1980. It included the following insight into the universe: "If you're like me, the free books alone mount up to much more than the dues (and if you're not getting many, try Nebula-nominating and see how popular you get) -- and those lists, too, are taken from our membership files."

All this is harmless enough on the face of it, but the other well-known fact about the Nebula is that only a relatively few SPWA members bother to participate in either the nominations or the voting. To ensure a prize for any particular title, all that is needed is a small swing in its favour. Authors who have the nerve to draw attention to one of their stories do often pick up the prize. Books heavily touted by publishers do indeed collect.

Any author wondering how to go about launching an effective campaign should consult LOCUS 229. This contains a detailed article by Norman Spinrad on this very subject.

Award-grubbing has now become so commonplace that it is developing into a science.

The manner in which the Nebula is worked from day to day is also suspect, for different (but connected) reasons.

As the year proceeds, individual titles are "recommended" by apparently disinterested ordinary members. A "recommendation" is not intended to be a vote for the title, but is merely bringing it to the attention of other members, suggesting they read it for themselves. Those who "recommend" have their names attached to the story ... so it appears democratic, open and above suspicion. However, as the months tick by it becomes obvious that some titles are more popular than others, as the "recommending" names accumulate. This de facto counting thus turns the simple "recommendations" into nominating votes, encouraging interested parties (as opposed to disinterested ones) to campaign.

(Mr. Hackenbacker's publishers are doubtless acutely aware that at this very moment, RAY-GUN RANCH is leading its category.)

Under old rules, this concealed nomination system was acknowledged by the fact that the works with the most "recommendations" went on to the final ballot. Under newly introduced rules, the SFWA committee has bowed to pressure and changed this. Now all stories with more than one or two recommendations are listed as the basis for a preliminary vote to establish the composition of the final voting form.

Procedures can be changed, and in fact the Nebula rules change with the wind. They are irrelevant, though, because no matter how much the detailed rules are juggled, the central objection to the whole system cannot be denied.

That the Nebula was dreamed up from the highest motives is not questioned, but now that it exists we can see that it is conceptually impossible to work.

The idea is, of course, that the prize is awarded to a few writers by the majority verdict of their colleagues. It symbolises, in other words, the recognition of one's peers. If other science fiction writers, the reasoning goes, think such-and-such story is the best of the year, then surely it must be? After all, they should know, etc., etc.

The besetting sin of genre science fiction is its inbred nature. Since the creation of the SF pulp magazines, the history of SF has been one of imitation piled on imi-

tation, of accepted themes and idioms and tropes, of unwritten rules and shorthand and jargon.

The best science fiction is, and always has been, that which has broken with the idiom of the day, that which has taken a few chances, that which has stepped forward or outside, that which enlarges and advances. We admire and remember originality.

The worst science fiction is always that which is derivative or imaginatively borrowed. Bad SF is secondhand SF. In short, SF writers are at their least original when they have been reading too much SF.

Yet here is a prize, the Nebula, which by its lights demands that those SF writers who award it have read every science fiction novel in a year, every novella, every novelette and every short story.

It is, or should be, self-evi-

A novel is defined as a work of fiction in excess of 40,000 words; a novella is between that and 17,500 words; a novelette is between 17,500 words and 7,500 words; a short story is anything below 7,500 words.

If we assume that all these recommended titles have a word length at the minimum of their categories (and the short stories are all, say, 5,000 words long) then we can work out just how many words a voting SFWA member will have to read.

In the Novel category: 2,600,000 words. Novella: 210,000 words. Novelette: 390,000 words. Short story: 505,000 words. A grand total, in fact, of 3,705,000 words.

This is roughly equivalent to about forty novels of the same length as Ursula LeGuin's THE LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS.

Remember: These figures are



dent that if anyone did read all that science fiction in a year, he or she would be incapable of telling day from night, let alone be retaining a sense of literary perspective.

And if an award made by writers is not based on literary principles, what other reason could there be?

Anyone who casts a vote for a "best" work in a year is tacitly saying that everything has been read. Not just the titles listed on the voting form ... everything.

To give some idea of the scale of reading necessary in any one year, consider this:

For the 1979 Nebula, the following numbers of titles have been recommended: NOVELS: 65. NOVELLAS: 12. NOVELETTES: 52. SHORT STORIES: 101. (NB: These are just the titles that have been singled out; it is not by any means a count of everything published in 1979.)

the lowest possible estimates. They do not in any degree represent the total amount of fiction published.

Can anyone claim to be able to read even this small sample of the year's output?

Can anyone claim to have read everything? (Never mind whether they should.)

Can anyone who votes without reading everything not admit that they are deceiving themselves, deceiving the authors, deceiving the readers?

Most of what is in this article I have already said in SFWA circles, either in the form of letters or articles published in SFWA publications, or in direct correspondence with officials. So none of this should be new to SFWA ears, and consequently I feel free to bring it into the public forum. I was tempted to resign quietly, just to let SFWA drift away from my profession-

all life as once I had drifted into it, but I believe the collective SPWA mind is representative of an important body of thought in the SF world. SPWA stands for the lazy consensus view, the received idea, the narrow mind. It is unadventurous, unquestioning and distinctly anti-radical.

Everything I have said here of course has opposing arguments, and in SPWA circles they are often voiced.

The defense of the membership requirement, for instance, is the insular one of the "innate American-ness" of science fiction ... an assumption that is wrong and dangerous, both in practice and as an idea. The Lem Affair is best left undiscovered and avoided ... awkward and embarrassing business, that. The usual defense of the Nebula is that it makes a lot of money for those who win it.

So ... does any of it matter? I believe it does, although by confining myself to three specific issues I have so far evaded what is for me the central failure of SPWA. This is the failure of the spirit, and because this is a nebulous concept, one for which neither arithmetic nor assertion will work, I have to approach it indirectly.

In spite of the conservative consensus, SPWA is not a monolithic entity, unchanging and unyielding. The committee changes personnel from year to year, and each new committee sets out with an earnest attempt to improve matters. The writers who become SPWA officers usually put in a year's hard service of thankless labour. They are rarely unresponsive to criticism, although the response too often is sympathy rather than action. Even the Nebula has often gone to deserving works, without coercion.

In recent years, SPWA has scored two major victories, neither of which can be gainsaid, but the nature of these victories should be clearly understood. In the first case, SPWA, alone of all writers' organisations, stood in the face of a pernicious new contract dreamed up by Pocket Books, one of the major American paperback publishers, and it won. It won too when it confronted Ace Books, whose former owners had been getting their royalty calculations wrong for a number of years.

These victories were tactical: the outcome of professional writers acting in concert for the common good. They required expertise and skill.

But in addition they required the nebulous sense of the spirit, of principle, and, to use an un-

fashionable word, of morality. At times like these, SPWA became a force for the good, extending an influence far beyond the matters I have been discussing here.

When SPWA fails in matters of the spirit, when it no longer keeps the faith, it becomes a lapse that is keenly felt. It betrays the very people it was set up to represent. By indecision and inaction, by obedience to what it interprets as the safe consensus, by mistaking the short-term gain for long-term strategy, it allows standards to slide and principles to become sullied. It condones the sham of the Nebula, it punishes the heretic, it applauds the quick buck.

In the moral climate it has by default helped create, the preening need for SPWA Suites becomes not only accepted but inevitable. This is the context in which authors squabble with convention committees over their presumed status, in which grown men sulk because they haven't been given a paper hat to wear, in which big-heads become spokesmen.

If SPWA has not directly contributed to this decay of the spirit, then certainly it has not been felt as a force that resists it. This is its principal failure, and one to which it has never addressed itself.



ITEMS OF INTEREST

ODE TO BEN & HARLAN

The Imagi-Nation hears a cry Of Victory! "We scotched their lie!" The ripniks had to pay and fry. "In FUTURE, COP no more such works!" The BRILLIANT team chastised the jerks!

---4sJ

'The soundtrack album for DESTINATION MOON was released in 1950 along with the film and since then has been a valuable collector's item among sf fans. An excellent re-issue of the album has just been released by Varese Sarabande Records, Inc., 1801 Avenue of the Stars, Suite 640, Los Angeles, CA 90067. It was released, ironically, just a few weeks before the death of the film's director, George Pal, and is a fitting tribute to him.'

---James J.J. Wilson

'(Richard -- WATERSHIP DOWN -- Adams' new book, GIRL ON A SWING, was due out in mid-May. This was the book I mentioned a few years ago which Adams said would be a breakthrough in erotic bestsellerdom. So far as I can gather it's a mystery with super-natural overtones. Why mention it? Well, a week before publication, fast and furious letters from the publishers demanded the return of every book. It won't now be out till October. They said it was the binding ... but somehow, nowadays, I don't trust such benevolent removal of books ...)

---Ian Covell

'I weary unto death of this endless caterwalling about 'quality' fiction vs. 'commercial' fiction. The truth about fiction is there are different audiences for fiction, and each audience commands different types or levels of fiction. Within each type of fiction skill and art in writing can be objectively superb---or terrible...in Juveniles, pulp-level, or intellectual/symbol pieces.'

---A.L. Terego

OTHER VOICES

A STONE IN HEAVEN

By Paul Anderson
Ace Books

Reviewed by Elton T. Elliott

A STONE IN HEAVEN is the capstone story in the Saga of Dominik Flandry.

The Flandry books, of which there are six others (ENSIGN FLANDRY, FLANDRY OF TERRA, AGENT OF THE TERRAN EMPIRE -- available from Ace -- and currently out-of-print; THE REBEL WORLDS, A CIRCUS OF HELLS and A KNIGHT OF GHOSTS AND SHADOWS), have to rank among the most popular of the seventy-five-plus books that Anderson has written.

The stories are in the same Future History series as that of another of Anderson's popular characters -- Nicholas van Rijn. This series, commonly called the Technic Civilization, begins with the outburst of humanity from Terra's system following the discovery of an FTL drive. Gradually a trade organization, the Polesotechnic League, is developed to regulate interstellar commerce. The Nicholas van Rijn stories take place near the end of this period. Finally, the League breaks up and Earth itself is invaded by aliens. This period is known as the Time of Troubles. Finally, humans win out and a more autocratic form of government, the Terran Empire, is born.

The Terran Empire, however, is only a faint shadow of the former human coalitions before the Time of Troubles. The Polesotechnic League operated over a sphere of roughly 800 light years, whereas the Terran Empire claims control of a sphere about 400 light years in size. The main obstacle standing in the way of expansion is the aggressive alien lizard-like race, the Merseians. The Merseians were a race that humans helped during the Polesotechnic days. Now, however, they are humanity's sworn enemies, determined to eradicate all Terrans. It is during the latter days of the Terran Empire that Dominik Flandry is born.

The situation by the time he begins his service is this: if the Merseians win, the Earth will be catapulted into something called the Long Night, which will make the Time of Troubles seem like a taffy pull in comparison. Flandry becomes a secret agent whose job it is to protect the "Pax Terra" at all costs.

The series was not written in chronological order. "Tiger by the Tail" was the first Flandry story published (in the Jan. 1951 issue of PLANET STORIES), ENSIGN FLANDRY (Chilton, 1966), was the first episode in Flandry's career. A very helpful chart is supplied at the back of A STONE IN HEAVEN.

Flandry's depth and complexity as a character has grown with Anderson's ability as a writer. Flandry is far from the rakish, devil-may-care hedonist of the early tales; he is, by the time of A STONE IN HEAVEN, a mature discerning intellectual with a slightly fatalistic view of his civilization and a startlingly sober assessment of his part in keeping it alive. This reflects Anderson's perception of the series. What started out as little more than slapstick adventure for PLANET STORIES has now become an arena for a serious look at society in the future, as well as our world today and in the past.

Terra and Merseia in this context stand as symbols for present-day U.S.A. and Russia, or if that parallelism sticks in your craw, try the Eastern Roman Empire and Sassanid Persia. Anderson has adopted some of John K. Hord's views (the book is dedicated to him) on the cyclic or spiral-like nature of the future. This view is quasi-Spenglerian in that it does not attempt to draw the same tight parallels as Spengler did, although it does allow for the future reflecting the basic patterns of the past. The above should not be taken to mean that Anderson has neglected the derring-do that made past Flandry titles so exciting; these extra dimensions of concern only add depth and spice to Sir Dominik's cloak and laser adventures.

A STONE IN HEAVEN, like the recent books in the series, does deal with one basic question of human nature, one especially important to a man like Flandry. The question is, where does a person's prime responsibility lie: to himself, to others near him, or to society as a whole. Before Flandry undertakes any adventure he has to ask himself this

IT MAY BE FUNNY,
BUT IT IS THE
MEANING OF LIFE!

STOP LAUGHING
YOU FOOLS!



question and weigh all the answers, because no matter which one he picks he will sacrifice a part of his life. And it is part of the brilliance of Anderson as a writer that the choice will in the end feel like most of the choices we have to make in our own lives: bittersweet at best.

In A STONE IN HEAVEN Flandry rides to the rescue -- literally -- to save a planet from the designs of a would-be dictator. The storyline is understated and Flandry is shown as an elder agent on the verge of retirement who is ostensibly an advisor to the emperor. And at the end of the book Flandry finally finds in Miriam Abrams (daughter of his first military commander) somebody with whom he can settle down and spend the remaining years of his life. But the normally romantic and carefree Flandry is quite serious and almost somber when he tells her:

"Let's be honest with each other, always. We're not a boy and girl in love. We're both a little old, more than a little sad, and friends. But we make one crackling hell of a team. A pity if we disbanded. Would you like to continue?"

In A STONE IN HEAVEN Anderson answers the question of individual responsibility. The answer is: with dignity and (in Flandry's case especially), a dash of panache.

Several words about the book itself. My edition is a trade paperback (6 by 9 inches) printed on easy-to-read white paper, with a beautiful cover by Michael Whelan and chock full of nicely-done illustrations by Estaban Moroto. The newsstand paperback edition ought to be out by the time you read this, but buy the trade if you can; the illustrations have more impact on the larger page. This larger edition

also has an Afterword by Sandra Miesel, and like all of her essays, it adds depth and enjoyment to the book or books she discusses.

DAUGHTER OF THE BRIGHT MOON

By Lynn Abbey

Ace, 13876-4; c.1979; 1st Ace printing/trade edition, July '79; 1st mass market edition, Feb. '80; 11-los by Steve Fabian; 410 pp., \$2.25.

Reviewed by Steve Lewis

Make no mistake about it, this is not a science fiction. It is straightforward swords-and-sorcery fantasy -- with slightly more emphasis on the sorcery, if you will. Its main character is a heroine named Rifkind, a warrior and a healer whose telepathic powers are still growing. Her people, a desert clan, have all been killed. She is on her own, forced to find her own destiny.

Aha, Red Sonja comic book stuff, you say. Not so. It happens that her allegiance falls on the side of a political conflict that is fighting to save the throne from the wiles of a sorcerer named An-Soren. The hefty middle portion of the book consists of long winter months as she tries to perfect her disguise as a lady of the court. The humor of the situation could have been played up. It is not. It is all very serious business. It is also not mere idle swordplay.

Rifkind has a ruby An-Soren desires, and her powers derived from it are still increasing, at times nearly out of control. Here the comic book character, Dr. Strange, is instead the one who comes to mind, he who can pull a needed spell out of his ever-ready stockpile of special incantations at a moment's notice. So also with Rifkind.

But so also does her consciousness grow, and her conscience, and it makes what could have been a dreary tale much more greatly bearable. What she learns the hard way about friendship and mutual respect on page 406, for example, is a paradox such as all life is filled with. For this particular subcategory of fantasy fiction, here's a better than average example.

SABELLA: OR THE BLOOD STONE

By Tanith Lee

DAW Books, paper, 157 pp., \$1.75

Reviewed by Susan M. Shwartz

Sabella is a neurotic nymphomaniac and a Jesus junkie. Sabel-

la is also a Martian and a vampire. Born in Novo Mars colony, Sabella is brought up in isolation by her mother, who suspects Sabella's promiscuity and the reason for so many deaths in their neighborhood before they escape. A bequest from Sabella's aunt, another neurotic with religious blues, drives Sabella out of isolation to claim the money and to meet the Vincent brothers, Sand and Jace. Sand, a parasite, attempts to disclose what Sabella is, but falls in love with her and dies of it -- literally: since Sabella prefers to kill while making love. Jace, however, is another of Tanith Lee's dark-haired, golden-skinned and very masterful heroes who understands everything, like Ramm Zavid in THE BIRTHGRAVE or a cross between a sexual virtuoso and a Heinlein individual with a fondness for Aubrey Beardsley.

What Jace knows about Sabella and helps her understand comes straight from Leigh Brackett's Mars and THE SECRET OF SINARAT: Sabella's family are not just living on Mars; they are Martians of the old, true race.

As in DON'T BITE THE SUN and DRINKING SAPPHIRE WINE, Lee shows herself the mistress of a breezy, ironic first-person style that doesn't hide the torment of the speaker: Sabella is wretched throughout most of the book and it shows. At its end, a happier woman speaks. She is satiated, dominated ... and yet, she is still restless and still plotting. So, apparently, is Tanith Lee.

THE VISITATION

By Elma Stone

Jacket Design by Manny Paul
St. Martin's Press, 1980, Hardback
314 pp., \$11.95

Reviewed by Paulette Minare'

The author of THE VISITATION, a lifetime Southerner herself, vividly portrays the characters and local conventions of the people of Lanier, Alabama, 1947.

The protagonist, Stella Lidell, a highschool teacher, is one of four people who encounter a spacecraft a mile and a half from town as it is landing in a cotton patch, bathing the surroundings in red light. None of the four can remember anything about that hour when they entered the spacecraft.

As for the three others involved: Miss Mattie Shepard, a widow and highly religious town busybody lives with her sister, Miss Eunice,

and is slowly dying from cancer, using pain pills to maintain her active life; J.T. Clayton, non-religious, raises cotton and operates a still on the side; Warner Fox disappears completely, leaving no scent for Sheriff Perry's dogs. His abandoned car is found in a driveway with driver's door hanging open, keys in it, plus a hat, a pearl-handled revolver and a case of expensive ladies' clothing, although he is unmarried. A shot has been fired, so the suspicion is murder.

Gwynell Moore, secretary to Dr. Taylor, comes from a very strict religious order: The women wear drab, high-necked, mid-calf-length dresses, black cotton hose, flat-heeled shoes and no makeup, perfume or jewelry. She is carrying Warner Fox's baby and now he's disappeared. Her strict father will whip her to death if he finds out. He has already given her a vicious strapping for "insubordination".

The visitation has strange results: Stella becomes a healer of serious diseases; Miss Mattie, the busybody, becomes a leader to whom nobody can say "no" and J.T. can no longer tell a lie if questioned. All these talents lead to strange and life-changing consequences to many.

Cousin Edith Alexander lets Misses Mattie and Eunice, whom she has never met, know she's coming for a visit and arrives with enough clothing for a prolonged stay. She has a high, nervous titter and yellow, shifty eyes -- always she insists on accompanying Miss Mattie on her many errands and visits. Another strange thing about Cousin Edith: She doesn't know how to operate scissors, pins or can-openers!

Gwynell's pregnancy has now started to show. The father, Warner Fox, is still missing, presumed dead. She is to be courted by her father-chosen-beau this evening. As Dr. Taylor is out of the office, she takes a bottle of sleeping pills out of his desk drawer, hoping he won't miss them for tonight, at least. Then she goes home to -- not what you think!

There is a second spacecraft landing with further unexpected developments.

Was this spaceship landing an experiment? Why in Lanier?

This book has much love interest (not Victorian), much suspense and many interesting characters. There is never a dull moment; you will not want to put this book down once you have begun reading it. After reading this book, I am anxious to read Elma Stone's first book, THE VISIONS OF ESMAREE.

THE MONITOR, THE MINERS AND THE SHREE

By Lee Killough

Del Rey/Ballantine, 1980, 214 pp.

\$1.95

Reviewed by Dean R. Lambe

Ms. Killough's output has always been a peg above simple entertainment, and her third time at bat for the Del Reys is a home run. Despite her overfondness for "em" sounds and a title that would be awkward even with the right number of commas, this story of alien culture shock and "Earthman's Burden" is very fine indeed.

Chemel Krar, young planetary Monitor for the multi-species Galactic Sodality's Department of Surveys and Charters, heads a team of scientists on the planet Nira. For centuries, the Sodality has protected Nira's proto-sentient race of flying hexapods from exploitation, and Chemel's team returns to a hidden observation post to update data on the bat-like Shree. When the research team is attacked, Chemel becomes isolated from her colleagues, and realizes with horror that Sodality directives have been violated. Not only has a mining corporation illegally plundered the mineral wealth of Nira, but the miners have been guilty of cultural interference with the Shree. Although the miners try to recapture Chemel's people, the Shree hides them, and Chemel struggles to re-unite her team and find a way to warn her superiors of the true situation on Nira.

Again, Killough has chosen a strong female protagonist and developed her well. The creation of the Shree -- an intelligent flying race more plausible than Poul Anderson's Ythri -- raises this work far above average level, and the thoughtful presentation of Shree evolutionary biology contains only one probable error. Killough has matched Gordon Dickson in skillful SF extrapolation from animal behavior studies. Don't miss this one.

SCAVENGERS

By David J. Skal

Pocket Books, 1980,

204 pp., \$1.95

Reviewed by John DiPrete

Skal's pure SF is fast-paced, emotional, exciting. There's solid writing, along with firm and flowing prose; well-put metaphors. The language has tough, knotted force.

Simple, straightforward plot -- earth's drug cult produces memory/

personality transfers of deceased brains for "tripping" purposes. Man tries to regain lost (dead) love through a drug-taker (the latter a surrogate for his dead lover). Strangely credible.

The characters are spent, exhausted neurotics, yet they command interest. One is a glazed-over fanatic who opts for cult-suicide. She was once a talented and charged artist -- now she "exists" as disembodied brain-cells. Another is a drab, empty being without a self, whose low self-esteem leads to futility and compliance, but fails to hide a gut-charm and respectability. The third is a man trying to resurrect the dead. A hunted, haunted soul with asthma who uses brute force to slake his drives.

Sounds hideous -- but it's not. These are people; their less-than-human characteristics evoke -- if not pity -- bizarre intrigue. Definitely readable (style is reminiscent of William F. Nolan...).

TIMESCAPE

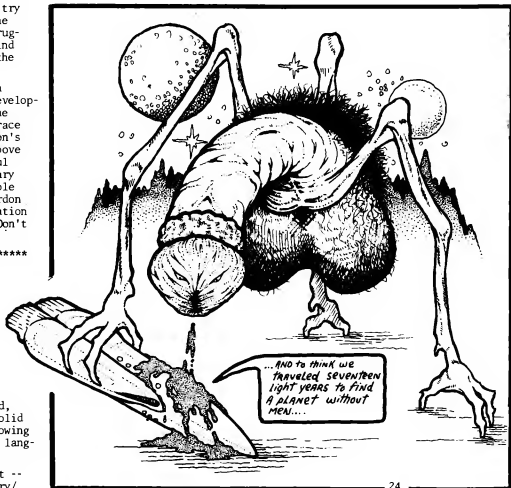
By Gregory Benford

Simon & Schuster, \$13.95

Reviewed by David N. Samuelson

Is it really appropriate for science fiction to be about science? Ever since Hugo Gernsback, someone's been arguing over whether the first word in "science fiction" is anything but an honorific, or -- in Alexei and Cory Panshin's book -- a curse. Gregory Benford has been known to straddle that line himself, declaring himself a "hard science fiction" writer, a member of a class of which there are no members, since fantasy is essential, requiring fancy footwork to cover over the questions science cannot (yet) answer.

But being a practicing physicist and a conscientious artist, concerned with the knowledge won from experience, Benford has tried at times to make science central to his fiction, almost to the point of excluding the fantasy altogether. Only a careful reading reveals that "White Creatures" (NEW DIMENSIONS 5) actually has a future setting, and changes outside the obsessions of its central character. The forthcoming "Exposures" is almost entire-



ly limited to the speculative hypotheses of its narrator's internal monologue.

Benford has relied on hard science in previous novels, too. But they were all space opera, to a greater or lesser extent, involved with planetary exploration (JUPITER PROJECT), communication with aliens (IN THE OCEAN OF NIGHT, IF THE STARS ARE GODS), even interspecies warfare (THE STARS IN SHROUD, NEE DEEPER THAN THE DARKNESS). All take place far enough away to make the science almost a curiosity, fantastic data from alien sources which barely impinge on the here and now.

At moments, a character might stop and reflect, taking time out from other adventures to actually do some science, observing, hypothesizing, testing, before he had a result worth announcing. For some readers, this slowed up the action, as in for example, IN THE OCEAN OF NIGHT. But in TIMESCAPE this is the action, in so far as it departs from living in the real world with all of its demands and distractions.

The science fiction of TIMESCAPE is, loosely speaking, time travel, complete with paradoxes, both potential and actual. Technically, it's time communication, by means of a technique that's dramatically plausible but theoretically impossible. Scientists in Cambridge, England (1998) try to bombard indium antimonide in La Jolla, California (1963), with tachyons, theoretical particles that can only travel faster than light, hence backwards in time, directed in space to where Earth was at the target time. Success is urgent, since life, or at least civilization, is threatened by a biochemical reaction that might be reversible before it gets started, i.e. "if only we knew then what we know now".

Doesn't sound promising? Sounds like an interminable lecture? Like one of a dozen past novels of ecotastrophe? Or a story in which a nameless technician discovers a strange message, precipitating a successful rescue by some equivalent of the U.S. Cavalry coming over the rise? It's nothing of the kind, any of those kinds.

What Benford has done to spotlight this action is to write a full-fledged novel about people who live, who make love, who fight for their identity and survival, in the context of doing for a living an intellectually obsessing activity known as science, with all of the attendant politics of the scientific community, past and future.

The people of 1998 are, understandably, on the edge of despera-

tion. Cambridge is beset by shortages -- of food, electricity, raw materials, law and order -- but the academic middle class is surviving, in a civilized, barely flappable way. Signs of the times include squatters occupying deserted homes, the new king playing down his coronation ceremony, John Renfrew accompanying his son on a father-son mercury-scavenging hunt through the city's sewers.

The most serious threat, a new cloud-borne life form resulting from ocean pollution, is officially known to very few beyond the Emergency Council, whose efforts to fight on all fronts at once both the causes and effects of the past's profligacy seem doomed. But that Renfrew's tachyon experiment is worth supporting is agreed by Council member Ian Peterson and visiting American physicist Gregory Markham, who seek help from British, American and Continental sources. Crossing paths in the laboratory and elsewhere, they are not all consumed by the experiment; they also live their own lives and make their own plans, some of which come to naught.

The situation in La Jolla, thirty-six years earlier, seems contrasting in the extreme. America has just entered the Sixties (the book's action starts in 1962, making 1980 a midpoint between its two presents), ebulliently optimistic. Nowhere is it more so than at the La Jolla campus of the University of California (now UC San Diego), madly recruiting science faculty, with Nobel prizewinners seemingly around every corner.

Heady with this atmosphere, Gordon Bernstein is an Assistant Professor of Physics, dependent on the good graces of senior faculty not only for tenure and promotion, but also for research grant support and approval. A recent arrival from New York, Gordon is also taken with the hedonism and eccentricity of Southern California, most blatantly embodied by his live-in girl friend, but he is not completely emancipated from his ethnic and geographic roots.

Bernstein is the reluctant recipient of Renfrew's inexplicable and garbled message, for which he must fight for acceptance and interpretation, against the weight of the scientific establishment and the publicized wrong guesses of well-meaning colleagues and competitors. Against the background of rising cultural malaise (American "advisors" are in Vietnam, Goldwater conservatism is rising, the counterculture is just getting off the ground), Gordon risks his future for the sake of a puzzle that won't go away, and

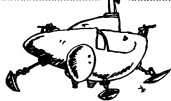
that turns out to involve the risk of everybody's future.

All of this is treated with loving, sensuous detail, much of it taken from life. A physics professor at U.C. Irvine, Benford is familiar with both Cambridge, where he has taught and studied, and La Jolla, where he was a graduate student at the time of the novel. Numerous real-life scientists make cameo appearances, including Benford and his brother (under another name) and a headline-hunting send-up of Carl Sagan.

The imaginary details are also in place, however, from Bernstein's confrontations with his mother and family over living with a shiksa, to Peterson's fulfilling long-aid plans to survive the catastrophe on his family's country estate. But central to the book is the recurrent experience of doing science, in the laboratory, in the classroom, in the colloquium, in the board room and especially in the mind.

Science is not a swashbuckling adventure, but an intellectual activity, and one in which a single flash of revelation may lead to endless philosophical repercussions and even mystical overtones, but seldom before a thousand obstacles, rebuffs, distractions, wrong turnings and after-the-fact reservations. For all of its vaunted teamwork, science is also an essentially solitary activity, like life: in TIMESCAPE the "community of scholars" continually threatens to turn into a school of sharks, just as the traditionally sought-after "love of a good woman" can be transformed into a model of miscommunication.

The result is a thoroughly engrossing novel, about interesting and real-seeming people, in an intellectually and emotionally charged setting, or pair of settings. At the least, it's the best science fiction novel since A CANTICLE FOR LEIBOWITZ, but there really is no precedent for TIMESCAPE in science fiction. The closest competition outside science fiction, the novels of C.P. Snow, are no match for Benford in vision or style. If Simon and Schuster and Gollancz are at all successful in marketing it as general fiction, it should be the next big book about which people will say "This can't be science fiction ... it's good!"



THE FANTASY ALMANAC

By Jeff Rovin

Published by Elsevier-Dutton Publishing Co., Inc., 2 Park Avenue, New York, NY, 10016, U.S.A.
1979, 312 pp., \$9.95, U.S.A.
\$12.95 Canada

Reviewed by W. Ritchie Benedict

If I were a psychologist (which I am not), I would be tempted to call this a very archetypal book. An archetype, for all those not acquainted with the works of Dr. Carl Jung -- an associate of Sigmund Freud -- is simply a universal figure who is recognized by cultures everywhere -- whether a hero-type such as Captain Kirk of STAR TREK or a repressed nightmare such as the creatures in most of H.P. Lovecraft's horror tales. Ancient mythology is full of these figures, as are many modern science fiction, fantasy and occult works. The names and the faces may change, but the underpinnings remain the same.

I cannot help but feel that perhaps this book is a bit too ambitious for its size as it attempts to cover classical mythology, folklore, horror, history, science fiction, fantasy, comics, motion pictures and television, and literature in just 310 pages. However, if it is intended as a general overview of the whole field, I must admit that in this context it is most interesting and entertaining. Every school library should have one instead of those rather stuffy texts on ancient gods and mythology. There is perhaps a danger in confusing younger readers by combining actual authors and film directors, creatures such as the Sasquatch and Loch Ness monster which could be real, along with totally fictional creatures as hobbits and snarks.

Each entry is cross-indexed for easy reference and others that are

related, then catalogued as to source. Unfortunately, there are a number of fictional lands and characters as well as those of more probable existence which could be mentioned but are not. I am thinking of Roger Zelazny's Amber, Marion Zimmer Bradley's Darkover, the Seven Cities of Cibola and even Sherlock Holmes and Watson. As Mr. Rovin is still in his twenties perhaps the predominance of movies and TV is thereby explained. Or, it may be that he is saving some for a sequel. After all, if you are a beginning writer or anthologist, it makes sense not to put everything into your first book, as if it is a success you will want enough material for a second book or even a third.

As an example of a typical entry consider the following:

"VARNEY (1) -- The vampire featured in Thomas Preskett Prest's massive 868 page novel, VARNEY THE VAMPIRE OR THE FEAST OF BLOOD (1847). Written before DRACULA, VARNEY THE VAMPIRE is a story of Sir Francis Varney. With eyes that resemble 'polished tin' and teeth 'hideously, glaringly white and fang-like'. Varney is so emaciated as to be almost skeletal. After 220 chapters of bloodletting, the fiend dies by tumbling into the yawning crater of Mt. Vesuvius. See: DRACULA: Vampire."

I found that the real oddities such as the above provided the most interest for me personally rather than run-downs on shows like THE FLYING NUN, which is within recent memory and a not-particularly distinguished example of pop culture.

The black and white illustrations serve to highlight the text but are of only average quality. One thing that is potentially very useful is the distilling of these myths down to crisp concise terminology so that you thereby might gain an instant recognition of what they are all about.

One is constantly struck by the imaginative capacity of the human mind that has allowed itself the freedom to develop all these ideas, most of which have no real existence. There are a number of creatures in this book that I would not care to meet on a dark night while walking alone through a deserted wood.

Despite the flaws in its development, this book provides useful references for other writers and is entertaining to dip into. I rather hope we will be hearing more from Mr. Rovin in the future, as he shows much promise as an encyclopaedist.

UNISAVE

By Axel Madsen
Ace Books, \$1.95

Reviewed by Renfrew Pemberton

Ordinarily I would not bother to trash this turkey. But Ace had the temerity to advertise it, full-page, in LOCUS, and that kind of sheer arrogance calls for a little judicious retaliation.

Let me say a good word for the cover. It looks interesting, thus promising story interest. Unfortunately, through no fault of its own, the cover lies.

I don't know what the title means, because throughout 260+ pages no one ever explains it. The problem is, of all surprising things, overpopulation. The dreaded but apparently inevitable solution is "gericide". The protagonist's consort is illegally pregnant. Nobody seems to have any good answers. (Are you bored? I was, immediately. This is the worst book I have ever read all the way through. My reason is that I became utterly fascinated about seeing how much worse it could get. My fascination paid off.)

The prose is hard to believe. I quote two excerpts from a page opened at random. "Their minds fluttered around each other like butter-flies while he told her about the Bo Lim interview he had just seen on the 0800 news. Jammu himself had toiled out to the skyport at dawn to greet the new man". AND, "They looked at each other and she thought of her husband, of how much Tunde had taken from her in the end. Tok and she were also a way of healing, a way of putting the past behind her. Their love was not only sweet, unsuspected cravings and mutual regards, but a curious new gravity".

What you can't see from the mere quotes is that it doesn't make any sense in context either. It is, in a word, blather. Because none of the purple prose is ever explained.

The protagonist's name is Tok Sort; the name leads off the first page. On the second we see the names (but no meaningful identification along story lines) Tunde, Iyabo, Misha Sev, Sal, Zeke Dua and Soong. That's merely for starters; stick around.

I'd like, before we get to the joyous topic of The Author's Favorite Word (no, not that one), to treat you to some more of his incomparable nomenclature when it comes to characters. Do consider that Soong is Soong Ast; note Kikki, while "Zeke Dua" was still meeting with President Hoo" and Sal Belem is elsewhere.



Quickly jot down that Ank and Ise are apparently someone's offstage children, and that Sal (Belem) has 'his ubiquitous deputee, Nilo'. Deputee, yes. Jammu (remember Jammu?) is Jammu Nagpur. Oh, hell, Gil Por, Patel Nobu, Professor Las, 'old Javan', Vernon or Sarah Akhamanova (oops, the ref is to two persons), and Ro Twer and Iyabo Att and Nasiba Riss and Flo Hoo (wife of the President Hoo) -- and for Pete's sake, Madsen!

But now we reach the magic point (page 31) with a quote that should stun you while it introduces you to the Author's Favorite Word: 'Today's UN was not nationalism multiplied by a couple of hundred nation-states; it was not world government but world symbiosis. And ecosystems were not neat overlays of former countries. Homogenization, which had made everybody look like premordial Hawaiians, had erased tribalism and the colonies had given a merged humanity a focus and a future'. *P* *M* *M* *M* *M* *M* and upon you I defecate not; from this point the word haunts the text, seldom in a way that would make sense with correct spelling. Fifty times, I betcha, the author socked 'premodal' in there, and neither the editor nor the copy-editor fixed it, even once. The word appears to mean, in the author's mind, anything that occurred before page one of this book; there are premordial U.S. political parties mentioned, and even premordial television. (I know you think I must be kidding, but I'm not.)

In the name of mercy, let's cut this short, here. Well, here come Egi Tzu and Ann Shita and Rani Mazure (deceased) and Barnal spheres and Zad Gran and Viv Bord and Dal Far and Nilo Dor (who must be the deputee we noted earlier; I forget). Eti Par, Fel, Lim ... This kind of mess is too easy to bushwhack, if one has time to do so.

The crux is that this schmeer goes for 260+ pages and has exactly two scenes that carry any excitement at all. One is about two-thirds of the way through and the other is quite near the ending. These two scenes give me to think that Madsen isn't hopeless if people wouldn't buy his stuff without editing it.

Toward the end, but not quite close enough to it, the big problem is solved. But the only surprising thing about the solution is that somebody didn't come up with it by about page eight.

I've read worse science fiction short stories; two, at least, maybe three. But never a worse SF novel. Even premordially.

THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

By Donald Glut (based on a story by George Lucas). Ballantine-Del Rey, 214 pp., \$2.25, paper. ISBN: 0-345-28392-9. LC 80-80518

Reviewed by Susan M. Schwartz

When the Empire strikes back at Luke Skywalker, Han Solo, Princess Leia and all the other characters of George Lucas' STAR WARS, it strikes, you might say, with a vengeance. THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK, based on Lucas' characters and story (and on Leigh Brackett's draft of the script), is action-adventure, fast-paced and special-effects all the way. Unlike the first book and film, which were affectionate parodies of the pulp tradition, THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK attempts to revive the grand, tacky sweep of space opera.

In this story, which begins on an icy rebel Base, Luke Skywalker (Commander Skywalker, one should say) is much more aware of his responsibilities and shortcomings. Still desiring to be a Jedi like his father, he by-passes rendezvous with the scattered Rebel fighters in favor of a quest to the Planet Dagobah where he meets and studies with Yoda, eight-hundred-year-old teacher of the Jedi. Yoda has a low opinion of Luke: He is too impulsive, too emotional, and too odd (!) to begin Jedi training, but he is overruled by the disembodied spirit of Obi-Wan Kenobi. While in training, Luke discovers in himself a dangerous affinity for the dark side of the Force.

Han and the Princess set off from the besieged Base and wind up on the cloud city of Bespin, which is capably administered by Lando Calrissian, one of Han's old partners in crime, and former owner of the MILLENNIUM FALCON. Amid the usual wisecracks and insults, backed by appropriate howls and hoots from Chewbacca, Han, the Princess and Lando engage in some preliminary sparring and mild romance before we discover that Darth Vader has intimidated Calrissian into turning Han over to a bounty hunter, the infamous Boba Fett.

Meanwhile, sensing this parscs away on Dagobah, Luke interrupts his training at a critical moment and goes racing to their rescue, only to discover ...

To tell more would be to give away what Lucas and Glut obviously hope are the great Surprises in the plot. Whether or not these are Surprises depends on whether you like action/adventure, sentimentality that verges on total bathos, and



shock effects. For myself, I do, and I was reading just as happily as I expect -- after May 21 -- to be munching popcorn in movie theatres while I watch Luke battling it out with lightsabers and making a death-defying leap away from Darth Vader -- and all the other amiable goodies Lucas has clearly supplied.

THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK isn't just pulp-adventure; it's trying to be significant. I'm not sure it succeeds, but it certainly has fun trying.

CHARISMA

By Michael Coney
Dell, 11404; c. 1975; 1st pub. in UK by Victor Gollancz Ltd; 1st U.S. printing, Dec. 1979; 250 pp., \$1.95

Reviewed by Steve Lewis

Even though research into temporal phenomena is still in its infancy, the nature of parallel worlds being what it is, it is a reasonably safe conclusion that the only chance a human being might have to travel from one to another would occur when his corresponding double in the other world is no longer alive. There are standard theories of time travel, and almost all of them say that it is impossible to travel backwards in time to meet yourself. It follows that the same would hold true when passing from one alternative universe to another.

There is an immediate corollary. If the girl you are in love with on one world has died, she may still

be alive on another. And, just maybe, when you find her, she may be able to return with you back to your original world. The nature of the time flow being what it is, however, there is an irresistible tendency for overall history to merge into a single pattern. This will be so, even if individual events never completely match up in a single one-to-one correspondence. The implications are sobering. If you die on one world, that will be your eventual fate on every other world. And of course, the same applies to the woman you love. Fate is destined to catch up with you both. It cannot be tempted.

And so, this exercise into an infinitude of parallel worlds results in a perfect example of the dreaded star-crossed romance. More than that, it is also a detective story, complete with a quietly efficient detective-inspector who always gets his man by the end of the book.

If it doesn't quite work out that way this time, it's because even the intellectual capabilities of Scotland Yard are not enough to untangle the solution to a crime of murder that has its roots in -- well, I can't say more, except that it is clear, is it not, that here for once the chances of establishing the perfect alibi are more than a vague possibility.

Except for one passage I admittedly read the wrong way and was forced to come back and re-read a few pages later down the way, Coney juggles and jerry-builds his house of cards in fine fashion. It's strenuous reading, in slightly snobbish British style, but stimulating, that it is, indeed.

THE HOUNGAN

By J.N. Williamson
A Leisure Book published by Nordon Publications, Inc., Two Park Avenue, New York, NY, 10016.
1980, 304 pp., pb, \$2.25

Reviewed by Paulette Minare'

If you like the occult, you will love the detailed credibility of THE HOUNGAN.

The Horace DeSilvier Corporation seldom hired any new personnel, but when it did, the founder, Horace DeSilvier, a well-educated, black native Haitian, hired only business failures, of no religious affiliation, and, of great importance at this time, especially one with a young, teenage son.

Van Cerf filled the qualifications, and to his surprise, was hired

ed at a much better salary than he had ever commanded.

Horace DeSilvier, tall, ageless, athletic, handsome and well-dressed, poised and confident, paid his employees handsomely, and demanded they embrace Horace's religion, Vodun, (an up-dated Voodoo), of which Horace was the houngan, or a priest.

Mysteriously at first to Van Cerf, each work day the employees went for two hours to meditation in a room called a "houmfor".

In time Van Cerf began the same practice of meditating in the "houmfor", a dimly-lit, incense-perfumed prayer room, containing pews, altar, statuettes, a cross entwined with colored beads and lighted candles.

Haiti's principal faith is Voo-

AND JUST WHY
ARE YOU AFRAID
OF EVILS?



do, Van Cerf learned, and the Haitian native, Horace DeSilvier procured from Haiti the source of his perfume, "Bondage", from which the corporation reaped vast profits. Only a select few knew of other secret properties of the perfume, besides its fragrance.

Horace explained Vodun to Van Cerf:

"We do not poke pins in devil dolls, never did in Brazil, among other locations. Indeed, the thrust of Voodoo is not toward eliminating our fellow man but enlightening, even saving him." "Vodun, or, if you will, Voodoo, is an international religion. It is spreading despite an intentional lack of publicity and the fact that it is not better accepted in the United States, except for relatively backward, superstitious segments of the south, is this nation's loss." "A temporary one," "for by comparison with the Moonies, as they are called, Vodun is well-organized and better disciplined."

How was it that things, persons, who opposed Horace or his employees, always were "diminished"? How

was this done and where did they "go"?

What was the power of the sexy receptionist, Maryette Hubley, secretly the Vodun "mambo" or priestess? What was the hideous secret of the third floor?

Spirit forces, Van Cerf learned, called "loas" were able to possess worshippers at compulsory Saturday evening services. Other spirit forces were prayed to and used in various ways; for instance, "loup-garous" or "bakas", for good or evil.

Nobody every left the DeSilvier Corporation family, Van Cerf found, and he later began to realize that he, his son, and his co-worker/intended bride, Connie, were in dire danger through the houngan's powers, with intention to use them for his own expected immortality.

There is only one thing which may lend an air of low-quality to the book -- liberally scattered throughout are a host of typos/mis spellings.

Fortunately, I cannot hold this against a really powerful book on the occult. A winner!

A DEAD GOD DANCING

by Ann Maxwell
Avon, 44644; c. 1979; 1st printing, June 1979; 281 pp., \$2.25.

Reviewed by Steve Lewis

The back cover has one major fact wrong -- it is not Tal-Lith's sun that is going super-nova, but rather a neighboring star that has already -- but in any case, as a result the life that has survived on Tal-Lith is hanging in the balance. A major flare-up by their own un-stabilized sun will assuredly wipe the planet clean.

The story that follows is a simple one, but the problem is complex. Five quickly assembled members of the Contact branch of the space federation which governs much of the rest of the galaxy must nurse the inhabitants of Tal-Lith through exodus -- the entire remaining population must be transferred to another home planet, and without the accompanying trauma that sudden contact and forced resettlement would ordinarily bring.

Their plan involves the recreation of a legendary goddess who first appeared at the time of the original disaster, and the creation of new myths to sustain the waning civilization of the planet through to its survival on another world.

But, the team is hastily assem-

bled, and before they can succeed they must also successfully fight their own fears, inadequacies, and hopes for the future. The pace is slow, stately, often understated. The story is in successive parts beautiful, haunting, and sometimes even incomprehensible. It is the story of change, and of the expectation of renewed hope.

Simple as the story is -- and I do not mean to sound snobbish -- it is unfortunate that only dedicated readers of science fiction are likely to come to a proper understanding with the marvelous book, such is the state of the art. Do keep an eye out for Ann Maxwell again.

IN JOY STILL FELT

By Isaac Asimov
Hardcover, Doubleday, 1980, \$19.95
828 pp., 24 pp. illos.
ISBN 0-385-15544-1

Reviewed by James J.J. Wilson

I used to have a job. Whenever I happened to be reading a particularly large book and someone would come up and ask what I was reading, I would say, "Oh, it's just Asimov's autobiography". It usually went over well if the person knew anything about Asimov. Last week I was reading this huge book on the train and someone asked me what I was reading. Without realizing what I was saying I replied, "Oh, it's just the second volume of Asimov's autobiography". It then dawned on me that Asimov had once again proven an exaggeration about him to be conservative in the end.

Basically, I found this book as enjoyable and as hard to put down, once I really got into it, as the first one. As I said about the first volume (SFR #34), despite the length of the book, there are several areas where Asimov could have gone into even more detail. He neglects to mention most of the television interviews and other occasions that most writers would brag about and there were several places, such as his account of some of the SF conventions he attended, where he could have included more anecdotes but didn't.

IN JOY STILL FELT picks up right where the first volume, IN MEMORY YET GREEN (Doubleday, 1979, now available in paperback), left off. We go through Asimov's experiences with Boston University where he was an Associate Professor but resigned the position (but not the title) enabling him to become a full-time writer. We go through his personal life in meticulous detail. We get to know all his close friends

and relatives (I think I developed a crush on his daughter while reading the book). Most of all, we get to know Isaac Asimov. More than in any other of his writings, we are allowed to see Asimov in three dimensions. We see him first as a human being, a person, one with as many flaws as the rest of us. We then see him as the writer, the personality, the legend.

The one thing about this book that could have been a little different was that it should have ended no later than the mid seventies. Once Asimov gets close to the present, he starts to lose that unhurried, retrospective objectivity that sets the tone of the first volume and most of the second. He should have left the last few years for his third volume.

I highly recommend this volume, unconditionally, to all Asimov fans.



For everyone else, however, I suggest you obtain the first volume as soon as you can. This volume should be enjoyed by anyone who enjoyed the first volume since it is, basically, a continuation. This two-volume (so far!) autobiography, taken as a whole, is not to be missed.

REVIEWS IN HAND FOR NEXT ISSUE

RHEA; THE MASK OF THE SUN; THE MAKING OF STAR TREK THE MOTION PICTURE; THE DEVIL WIVES OF LI FONG; THE GATES OF HEAVEN; THE FADED SUN; KUTATH; IF YOU COULD SEE ME NOW; GHOST STORY.

THE INFINITE OF GO

By John Brunner
Ballantine/Del Rey, 28497; c.1980;
1st edn, Feb. '80, \$1.95, 154 pp.

Reviewed by Steve Lewis

Brunner is not nearly so prolific as he was in his younger days -- but how many of us are there who are? Based on page count alone, you will have gathered already that this is no STAND ON ZANZIBAR, but doing only minor entertainments or not, Brunner is always worth reading. And in more than passing, here is as fine a study in parallel worldism as you could ever hope to read.

I hate giving even that much away. A problem arises with the first use of a new experimental matter transporter on humans, and you should read about it just as you'd read a detective story. I take comfort in the fact that (as always) the blurb on the back cover undoubtedly does as much damage, if not more. But what it is that carries the story along (emphasis here) is the sheer excitement of intellectual curiosity. Brunner was never very strong on mindless action.

He also conveys a wondrously strong feeling that reality has about as much substance as a one-ply sheet of tissue paper. Is that a chair you're sitting so comfortably on? Don't count on it.

SERPENT'S REACH

By C.J. Cherryh
Selection of SFBC
Doubleday Edition by agreement with
DAW Books, 312 pp., \$2.49.

Reviewed by Susan M. Schwartz

Out in the star sector called the Serpent's Reach, the clan called the Kontrin live, off-limit to almost all humanity. Immensely long-lived thanks to their dealings with the majat, bee-like creatures that dwell in four Hives, they manage trade in the Reach, and occupy their long lives with diversions like plotting, murder and the creation of the human-descended beta, who in turn create clones called azi to serve as guards, toys and nurses till their bodies automatically kill them at age forty.

Her family killed in a power struggle among the Kontrin, Raen a Sun Meth-Maren retreats into the Blue Hive to which the Meth-Maren were allied and, as a vengeful, rash child, teaches the majat vengeance and the slaying of the Kontrin who speak for them. Her actions are observed by the rest of the clan, and



subtly abetted by Moth, the Eldest, for reasons comprehensible only to her. As Raen travels, first aimlessly, and then with growing determination, she attracts followers -- among them Jim, high-grade azi, who becomes first a sexual plaything, then a friend; Pol, a Kontrin of a sept hostile to her own; the support of many beta and azi; and the allegiance, finally, of all the Hives. Ultimately, her actions overthrow civilization as it has gone on for seven centuries under the Kontrin in the Serpent's Reach ... but that doesn't end the story.

Cherryh excels in creating aliens; the Hive-minds and the working out of individual castes within the majat are intricate and menacing; the majat certainly are not Americans dressed up to look like honeybees. Her Kontrin, with their immensely long lives, simply think differently than the betas, who most closely resemble humans as we know ourselves, and the azi, as one of the Kontrin remarks sadly, the azi are the only innocents. Because of Cherryh's success in creating alien patterns of thought, however, sometimes the motivations of her characters emerge only as one rereads the story: I still cannot quite understand why Pol Hald betrays his family to help Raen, or just what it is that the Tallens, from outside the Reach, want. And while I was deeply touched by the story of Jim, the azi, I have difficulty discovering how he was able to transcend the limitations bred into him.

Cherryh's protagonist, Raen, is another of the ferocious, predatory women, like Chimele of HUNTER OF WORLDS, Djan in BROTHERS OF EARTH, and Morgaine, who prove to have strong senses of morality and compassion underlying what looks like a completely unscrupulous love of power ... but which never is. Cherryh ably makes Raen seem alienated from almost the entire reach, able to reach out and touch only the majat, her azi-lover, Jim, and Pol. Because she is so alone, her reticence is intense, once again generating

difficulty in knowing what she actually feels.

This reticence -- and the resulting difficulty in grasping personal relationships among Cherryh's characters -- is typical of C.J. Cherryh's works. Here, as in her other books, it confuses, but more often than it confuses, it lends an odd poignancy to any contact the characters succeed in establishing with one another. Such limited, frustrating relationships -- as much as the political machinations and Cherryh's gift for fashioning glittering worlds and civilizations -- lie at the center of SERPENT'S REACH.

STILL FORMS ON FOXFIELD

By Joan Slonczewski

Del Rey/Ballantine, 1980, 214 pp. \$1.95

Reviewed by Dean R. Lanbe

Within SF we learn to accept the unusual, so how about a Quaker with a Polish name who has written an extraordinary first novel at age 21? Well, why not. And don't be misled in thinking that her religious theme must be "soft" science fiction; this woman's prose juggles quantum mechanics with the best of the "hard" literature.

In the 21st Century, the Pennsylvania Society of Friends escapes war-threatened Earth for the Tau Ceti system in the last UN sublight starship. The small Quaker colony struggles to repeat William Penn's freedoms on their new world of Foxfield. Instead of Indians, the Friends survive with the aid of Commensals, a sentient plant species with mobile Fractions and a hive-mind One. After a century of isolation, Allison Thorne is shocked to discover that Earth survived nuclear holocaust and has sent a United Nations Interplanetary FTL ship to re-new contact. The Foxfield Friends have been under observation for

years, as the Earth Psychosynchronic Adjustors strive to reintegrate the Quakers with the new world order. Allison finds herself in the middle -- attracted to the technological benefits of UNI citizenship, yet fearful of Earth's atheism, Ultra-feminism, and condescension toward quaint "primitives". Allison's lover, Seth, is even more disturbed by Earth's attitude toward the Commensals; and the whole colony is shaken by the implications of computerized majority rule vs. Quaker consensus.

Comparison will -- and should -- be made with James Blish's A CASE OF CONSCIENCE. What Blish did with a conflict between Catholic theology and alien creation, Slonczewski has done, thoughtfully and movingly, for Quaker beliefs in the face of strikingly different world-views. Save for an occasionally awkward dialogue exchange, the human characters are well drawn and the aliens are simply unique. Whatever your beliefs, pray that this lady writes more -- when she's not too busy in the biophysics kitchen at Yale.

RAVINE

By Susan Coon

Avon 75044; c. 1980; 1st Avon printing, Jan. '80; \$1.95; 206 pp.

Reviewed by Steve Lewis

Fletcher is the single surviving member of the human colony on Ravine. The others have all been killed, not by any sort of hostile being or enemy force discovered on the planet, but by an attack of Raiders from space. Out in the surrounding galaxy a war is going on, and Fletcher and his planet fully intend to sit it out in splendid isolation.

The native Kanadoith who firmly control their world and most of its inhabitants are willingly giving up that control to Fletcher. His burgeoning telepathic powers are steadily increasing, and he is becoming closer and closer to being as one with the planet itself. In his empire of global proportions he has all that any emperor could ever wish -- there is but one flaw. There is no woman on the planet, no one to become his mate. Nor of course can he avoid the war that continues to take place around his world.

Ecology is a science, obviously an increasingly important one, and that's why this is science fiction. As for myself, I really prefer a story whose details are more firmly based in fact than in passing fancy -- and no, you've got me wrong, I don't mean ecology. I like my fic-

tion less mystical and magical in concept, and yet -- Coon describes real agony in her story, and real tension. Real decisions have to be made, and real characters have to make them. If somehow this book had been published back in the 1940s -- and it has the distinctive feeling that it very easily could have been -- it would most assuredly be considered a classic today. But being published today, or even just earlier this year, I fear it's close to already having passed from sight without notice.

It's not a classic, but I hope there's a better future in store for it than that.

CITY COME A-WALKIN'

By John Shirley
Dell Books, 1980, 204 pp., \$1.95

Reviewed by William Gibson

In a near future San Francisco dominated by an electronic credit cartel, stocking-masked vigilantes, and the Mafia, Stu Cole is an iconoclast; not only is he the proprietor-bartender of the city's raunchiest angst-rock joint, but he's also opposed to plastic replacing cash, vig-violence, and the Mob. And so far, you'll agree, we're talking stock parts; this could be shaping up as yet another One Man Against The System story, SF's hoary (or classic) equivalent of the Billy Jack routine (and long may it wave). But what we get from Shirley is something else again, because something called City turns up one night in Cole's club, something with a torn trenchcoat, a slouch hat and mirrored shades that seem to grow out of its face. It walks like a man, but, for want of a better term it's an eidolon of the mass unconscious of the city called San Francisco. It's angry; it wants Cole's help.

This is Shirley's third novel, his first from a major publisher, and the first to show him fully in control of his material. The stylistic unevenness of TRANSMANACON and the lack of direction evident in DRACULA IN LOVE have both vanished; CITY is a tightly written book that knows where it's going.

In the thirties, writers like Leiber were asking themselves if supernatural horror could be conjured up out of the materials of a modern urban setting. For a writer like Shirley, working in an urban tradition established by writers as diverse as Leiber and William Burroughs, there's no more likely locale. And Shirley knows the nighttime of cities; he knows the street.

City, genius loci of San Francisco, enlists Cole's aid in a campaign against the forces that are threatening the city's integrity as an urban entity. Cole's visions of the city as a vast electromagnetic organism are Shirley at his crazed best, while City's ability to enter and control the various machines and systems of the city provides a fine array of plot devices. Driverless taxis glide through the night, City manifests over derelict payphones and on the screens of dead television sets, and black rusted claws of sewer pipe rake up through pavement to crush fleeing enemies.

This isn't SF proper, but some latterday variant on the Unknown school of modern fantasy. Strange stuff. I highly recommend it.

ZELDE M'TANA

By F.M. Busby
Dell, 316 pp., pb, \$1.95

Reviewed by Joe Sanders

The raw material of Busby's story is standard space opera stuff: interstellar civilization run by a tyrannical corporation, mutiny on a starship, naive (but Tough) youngsters growing up fast. The telling isn't at all typical, though. If you expect familiar, well-worn characters who sit there obligingly while you plug in your values and cravings, you'll be frustrated. Busby's characters are sometimes likeable, sometimes not, but not easy to judge or go along with. If you expect a familiar breakneck rush to action, lulls after one climax serving mainly to build anticipation for the next fight, you'll be disappointed too. Busby gives himself a lot of room to work through the plot. Action scenes are separated by long stretches of routine shipboard life, personal maneuverings, accumulation of information.

Disconcerting as it is, this

approach lets Busby do some rather interesting things. At the novel's beginning, Zelde is just a gang kid from Earth, disposed of by being shipped off with a bunch of other potential whores to a distant colony. She's freed during a mutiny, does well in the fighting, and moves in with the new captain. Busby handles very well her eagerness to learn and to find a secure place for herself; personal interchanges are sharply done, as is Zelde's increasing competence. Her emotional growth is less convincing, since Busby sticks close to what he does best -- concrete description of action. In fact, the characters generally are so busy doing things that they have little opportunity (not to mention ability) to feel about what they're doing. However, there are compensations for that flatness. I was impressed, for example, at how the setting is presented through Zelde's eyes, so that a reader gains understanding as she does. That's sometimes confusing, but ultimately it's convincing. We do learn things that way. And the apparently random events in the plot (one main villain is unexpectedly disposed of offstage by an apparently peripheral character, another isn't even introduced until the middle of a crisis, etc.) is convincing in the same way -- that's how things do happen.

I suspect that Busby is trying, painstakingly, to ask: Given the basic situation, what would happen? What would it be like? Sometimes I disagree with his answers, and sometimes I don't much care. But I respect the effort to see things freshly and honestly. The overall novel is compelling. I got quite interested in Zelde and her career, and I'm looking forward to reading the earlier novel RISSA KIRGILLAN, to which this is a prequel. Busby seems to be developing an interesting approach to storytelling that needs only characters of more depth to be really stunning.



AND THEN I SAW....

BY THE EDITOR

THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK (PG) is an even better picture than STAR WARS. It has more pace, more wonders, more of an underlying theme-made-clear.

The cable that now holds these pictures together is the personification of Evil---Darth Vader---and his Good opponents---Luke Skywalker, Obi Wan Kenobi and other (not necessarily human) Jedi Knights.

But Luke has special meaning for Darth Vader...there is a heretofore hidden relationship I won't reveal.

All through the picture we are given large portions of what we want: much bandinaghe with the robots, a lot of the Wookiee, Hans Solo, the Princess....many alien creatures and alien intelligents, and lots of evil Vader as he pursues relentlessly Luke Skywalker.

The wonders are many and some mindblowing: the small alien goblin/gnome who turn out to be--- The sky city....the horrible freezing method using carbon that puts Hans Solo in an eternal stasis....

From the opening sequences on Hoth, the ice planet where Luke is almost eaten by an animal of huge size and ferocity...to the final incredible escape from the air-born city....from his sojourn on a jungle planet to learn more about the Force...to the wild escape through the asteroid field (and the brief respite of Hans, the Wookiee and the Princess in a large asteroid tunnel that turns out to be...).

Ahh, I can't tell you. This movie moves so fast, it is filled with so many delights for a SF fan/reader, and is so well done that to tell about it is a disservice. SEE IT!

There are a few grunches: I boggle at the swiftness and ease with which a fighter craft manages to flit from star system to star system...the delightful but weirdly clumsy attack machines used by the empire on Hoth (Wait till you see them!)...the incredible way empire fighter craft manage to miss hitting escaping craft (I mean, don't they have computers directing those close-pursuit laser cannons?).

But you'll forgive all the deliberate implausibilities because of the delights, the wonders, the struggle of good vs. evil that carries this movie and which will carry all



the Star Wars movies of the future ---as long as George Lucas is in control.

And shit---now I have to wait probably two years for the next Star Wars film!

IT'S ALIVE (R) IT'S ALIVE AGAIN (R)

is a continuing saga of mediocre horror films, concerning a series of mutated infants born to a savage, clawed, fanged template. Ordinary young mothers give birth to these monsters for no apparent reason.

These "human" babies sense danger to themselves and attack with intent to kill those intent on killing or hurting their survival. They slash a lot of throats. They are extraordinarily strong.

IT'S ALIVE AGAIN (originally IT'S ALIVE 2) continues the premise of the first movie...only this time the father of the first monster is attempting---with the help of well-meaning idealists---to make sure the mutated/monster baby is able to live long enough to attain its full potential. The government has set up a task force to make damn sure all the mutated monsters are killed, feeling they are a threat to mankind as we know ourselves. [A credible threat, by the way.]

Well, in a SoCal hideaway three of the babies get free of their cages and attack all and sundry, having sensed the govt. forces closing in.

The monster infants are never shown clearly---brief flashes, partial views, etc., and most of the violence is off-camera. No sex. No nudity.

The acting in both films is competent, and Sharon Farrell in the first, as the mother, and John Marley as a govt. agent/father of a previous monster in the second film are good.

The last scene on the second film sets up a second sequel if Larry Cohen, the writer/director/producer of the first two decides to go ahead. The second film, IT'S ALIVE AGAIN is the better of the two, but since they're paired in a double feature, you're forced to see both. They'll be on late-night TV in a few years, so keep these comments in the back of your mind.

ALMOST HUMAN (R)

is a ripoff, a con; the advertising shows a humanoid face with unhumanly large eyes. The blurb says: THERE IS A REASON FOR EVERY LIVING CREATURE...WITH ONE EXCEPTION.

You expect a sf film, eh? Or at least a horror film. What you get is a cheapo Italian-made film with dubbed voices in English which is about a young male psychopath---a homicidal maniac who cannot stand to be called a shithead...or a pig...or a coward.

The film is an excuse for brutal killing with knives, guns, sub-machine guns....

It is a cops-and-psycho-killers movie, with Henry Silva imported to give the film some legitimacy in this country. He plays the frustrated cop.

Do not waste your money.
[Note: this was teamed with THE LEGACY, a supernatural/occult film, which lent credence to the expectation that ALMOST HUMAN would be in similar vein. Never trust distributors!]

THE LEGACY (R)

brings a young Los Angeles couple (unmarried) to the huge estate of a billionaire Englishman. They are prisoners there while the old man (kept alive by modern medical science and black magic) decides to kill off his other guests one by one in a manner appropriate to their past sins.

Finally the girl is the one who is to inherit his wealth and evil supernatural powers. In a climactic scene she accepts and becomes the ruler of all.

Katherine Ross and Sam Elliott are good as the leads.

Good gore and effective suspense. Worth seeing.

RABID (R)

is better than you might think. Made in Canada, starring Marilyn Chambers (she of porno fame), it tells the story of a girl terribly burned in an auto-motorcycle accident who is saved by means of experimental surgery and skin grafts at a nearby plastic surgery clinic.

After a month in a coma, however, she awakes with a great hunger for blood---and she gets it by means of a phallus-like "stinger"---a kind of biological hyperdermic syringe which emerges from a puckered opening under her left arm. The embraces she gives various men are deadly, for as she takes blood she transmits to them a fatal disease which makes them into insane, ferocious, mindless creatures intent only on eating human flesh.

Soon the clinic is a shambles and she escapes to Montreal where she tries desperately to resist the Urge and to not believe she is responsible for the spreading epidemic of rabid people and the martial law that results.

Chambers is a better actress than you might expect, and the supporting cast is highly professional. There are many nice occasions when her nice, big-nipped breasts are bared.

Rabid delivers tits and gore and a logical story---once you get past the incredibility of her developing that blood-sucker under her arm.

THE SHINING (R)

is a very good horror/occult film. It begins with Jack Nicholson signing on to be the winter caretaker of a large, isolated, summer mountain resort hotel.

He, his wife and small son must stay there for five long, often snowbound months.

The hotel manager mentions that the hotel was built on an indian burial ground...and that a recent previous winter caretaker had gone mad, axed his wife and two little daughters, and blown his head away with a shotgun.

We learn early on that Nicholson's son is psychic and has telepathic powers. Scatman Crothers, who plays the departing hotel chef, is also telepathic but hides the ability. He senses the boy's talent and makes friends. He calls the ability "shining."

The boy sees the ghosts of the two axed girls...and as time passes sees the former caretaker's wife.

After a month, Jack begins to be affected by the evil in the hotel...

Terror upon terror, vision upon vision...and Jack Nicholson is horribly convincing as a maniac whose duty is to axe his own wife and child.

Shelley Duvall as his wife is very good and sensible and courageous through her fear and hysteria. Thank God for a woman who doesn't swoon and do all the wrong things!

Danny Lloyd is very good as the son who has coped with his psychic/telepathic ability by giving it to a separate personality ("Tony") who "lives in my mouth".

But the picture belongs to Nicholson who is insane and evil and murderous so realistically that he'll probably be nominated for an Oscar.

Scatman Crothers as the chef who senses the boy's terror and tries to rescue him may be nominated for best supporting actor.

The scenes of grue and the hallucination episodes are superbly handled. Near the end the power of the evil in the hotel is so strong it is able to impose visions even on the wife (perhaps because of her terror).

The final scene suggests an element of reincarnation... Well, the film leaves it to the viewer for a final piecing-together of past and present, motives, influences. You'll want to see the movie twice, to catch small clues here and there, and to watch the superb acting.

The film doesn't slow down and doesn't let go. See it.

THE DARK (R)

was the second feature with a new horror film released. THE DARK was released in 1978 and I missed seeing it. I wish I'd missed it again.

Co-produced by Dick Clark, it is a formula sf monster movie and the R-rating is for violence; no sex, no nudity. [Clark didn't want to dirty his image.]

A single humanoid alien of ferocious meanness who can only go "ROWWWWWW!" but who is smart enough to dress coherently in human male clothes and hide during the day each night grabs a human and tears off the head and/or horribly mutilates the body.

There is much antagonism between the media and the police and a famous father of one of the victims. The police are helpless and do not believe lab reports that indicate the killer is not human and has no blood.

The producers decided to throw in the kitchen sink: the alien has superhuman strength which increases with each kill, it is impervious to bullets and has laser-beam eyes.

William Devane, Cathy Lee Crosby, and Richard Jaeckel labored with a plotful of cliches and came up empty.

The creature, immune to a five-minute long hail of heavy caliber slugs and shotgun blasts, is vulnerable to fire, and upon being touched by a burning 2 x 4 starts to burn like a torch and then explodes into nothingness.

Do not bother with it if it gets on TV.

DON'T GO IN THE HOUSE (R)

uses the homicidal psycho plot as a vehicle for murdering young women---again. This time a weird young man whose mother punished him as a child by holding his arms over a flame goes on a revenge-against-women rampage (when his mother dies) by luring girls to his house, tying them up in a metal-walled room he constructed, and frying them with a flame-thrower.

The first murder is shown in horrible detail. The rest are shown before and after. There is the ritual death of the psycho in flames as his house burns down around him.

A bad movie, badly made. But it does provide basic horror and suspense...especially for a young audience of girls who scream and cling to their dates.

mack reynolds

SCIENCE FICTION AND POLITICAL ECONOMY

The more serious science fiction world was thrown into a mild tizzy in the winter of 1974 with the issuing of Volume 1, Part 2 of SCIENCE-FICTION STUDIES, a literary publication put out by the Department of English of Indiana State University. It all began with an article by Franz Rottensteiner, of Vienna, who has edited VIEW FROM ANOTHER SHORE, an anthology of SF stories from both East and West Europe.

It was first answered by the late James Blish and then, in turn, various others got into the act including Ursula K. LeGuin, H. Bruce Franklin, Chandler Davis, Damon Knight and your present writer. Without rehearsing the whole matter, we'll just give the gist by quoting from Damon Knight's letter:

"It seems to me a mistake to treat Franz Rottensteiner as a serious critic (when he writes) 'that no American or English author has written a story that would endorse a Marxist view of change, or at least contain an intelligent discussion of it.' Mack Reynolds, in a long series of stories published in ANALOG in the sixties, has done just what is demanded in the second clause."

Damon could have added, of course, that there have been others. In Part Three (Spring 1974) of the same publication is a review of Ira Levin's THIS PERFECT DAY in which he contemplates a specifically Marxist "utopian" society and does a job of ripping up the pea patches of both Marxism and Capitalism. Then, of course, Jack London considered himself a Marxist and proved it in some of his work such as THE IRON HEEL. Then, too, there was Olaf Stapledon of SF fame, and Upton Sinclair, who considered himself a socialist and wrote several utopian novels.

Your author, somewhat indignant after sweating out ten years under the editorship of John Campbell, doing a triple dozen or so stories based on socioeconomic themes, wrote, in part:

"I simply can't understand Mr. Rottensteiner reading much SF without running into at

least some of these (my stories), including some that 'endorsed a Marxist view of change,' for example, RUSSKIES GO HOME! (F&SF Nov. 1960) which foresees a future in which the Soviet Union has realized all its goals and has become the most affluent country in the world. If you are interested in an attack on the Soviet Union from the Marxist viewpoint, try REVOLUTION (ASTOUNDING, May 1960) in which a new Russian underground is attempting to overthrow the bureaucracy to form a new government more in line with the teachings of Marx. Or read UTOPIAN in Harry Harrison's anthology THE YEAR 2000 (Doubleday 1970) in which a Marxian Socialist is thrown forward by a time-travel gimmick into the world he has worked for all his life."

However, if the truth be told, there is considerable in what Herr Rottensteiner had to say, in spite of the fact that he was too sweeping in his accusations. Nor does it just apply to Marxism but to the

field of political economy in general and, indeed, to other social sciences as well.

The following is to be found under the title THE UTOPIAN DREAM REVISITED, in the British journal FOUNDATION (No. 16, May 1979). It is by English SF novelist Brian Stableford, who, according to LOCUS, has recently taken his doctorate in the social sciences at the University of Reading where he lectures in sociology.

"No writer can produce an image of future society without speculating about the politics of future society and the economics of future society, yet there are very few genre writers who have ever felt the need to refer to political or economic science before embarking upon such speculation. In some cases this refusal has proved pernicious, in that we still come across images of future society based on such stupid and obsolete assumptions as those of crude social Darwinism; in other cases it has simply resulted in the unthinking translocation of present-day political and economic systems into the future (even into the far-flung futures of galactic civilizations)."

"The reasons for this reluctance to use sociological theory are various. Partly, it is a simple failure of imagination. Partly, it reflects a genuinely unsatisfactory situation in modern sociology as regards theories of social change. Partly, however, it is due to the fact that science fiction as a popular genre is American in origin and inspiration, and that American social philosophy has always been allergic to discussion of theories of social change because it is difficult to begin such discussion without taking into account the most influential theory of social change, which is that of Karl Marx. Marxist social theory and Marxist political rhetoric (though there is no



necessary logical connection between them) are so closely associated and interwoven that hostility to the latter inevitably engenders hostility to the former, and this hostility tends also to stifle discussion of subsequent contributions to the theory of social change which, even if they are opposed to Marxist thought, nevertheless have to take it into account. The political climate in America, which has conditioned this allergic response during the last half century, is largely responsible for the awkward predicament of American sociology as well as the failure of American science fiction to pay any real attention to the possible contribution of social science to the art of speculative extrapolation.

"One might imagine that the situation in Eastern Europe would be very different, in that the governmental systems of those countries openly espouse Marxist theories of society. Unfortunately, this is not the case, for here too the attitude to the political rhetoric of Marxism dominates and determines attitudes to the theory of social change. The 'official' position of such governments is that social change has, in accordance with Marxist theory (though this claim is highly dubious), been brought to its appropriate conclusion, and that there is therefore no further scope for speculation about the changes which might overtake society in the future. Soviet SF, therefore, presents a consistent tone of optimistic self-congratulation while being utterly devoid of any serious socioeconomic speculation. The simple fact is that no political system is inclined to tolerate the thought of its own mortality, and that socio-economic speculation in fiction or non-fiction is always likely to be construed as being subversive.

"In the West, such speculation is far from being completely stifled, but diplomacy makes much of it rather weak, and stimulates much activity in the realm of apologetics. In science fiction, which is a mass-market genre, diplomacy usually rules despite a persistent tendency to parodic iconoclasm. The fifties produced a great number of stories which commented, at



least metaphorically, on issues of contemporary political concern, and this trend has continued to the present day, but what is involved is generally the expression of opinion on particular matters (civil rights, the space programme, etc.) rather than attempts to analyze fundamental issues concerned with socioeconomic change. The number of stories which deal with post-capitalist society (however this is envisaged) is really very small, and few of those that do exist refer explicitly to any assumptions about mechanisms of social change."

Harsh words, colleague, however, it is to be noted that Eastern as well as Western writers take their thumps. And, indeed, the present writer can't recall ever having read a story by any of the Soviet country authors adequately, or even inadequately, dealing with a future with a valid socioeconomic system that wasn't, surprise, surprise, that which they misname Marxist.

The matter came up back in 1965 when two Russian writers, E. Bradis and V. Dmitrevskiy, wrote a critique of American science fiction which appeared in the KOMMUNIST, the organ of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. It was entitled THE FUTURE, ITS PROMOTERS AND FALSE PROPHETS and singled out in particular for criticism Poul Anderson, Ray Bradbury, Isaac Asimov and your author.

Theodore Guernon, who is well acquainted with Russian, spotted the article, translated it and turned it over to the MAGAZINE OF FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION which promptly printed it and asked the four of us who had been criticized to respond.

The article said in part:

"In the West, and in the USA in particular, science fiction serves as one of the means of ideological indoctrination of the broad masses of the people. Currently several specialized magazines (science fiction) enjoy mass circulation in the United States.

"The most striking feature of the social prophecies of the American and British fantasy writers is that they are not based on any concept of the progressive development of society, but involve regression, decline, degeneracy, backwardness and the destruction of mankind. Modern Western science fiction writes of an anti-Utopia, and it is significant that bourgeois critics and writers themselves use this term in speaking of social science fiction ...

"... These dark prophecies are perfectly consistent with the pessimistic views of many bourgeois scientists and writers who do not believe that the nations can forestall universal suicide. Following in the footsteps of the philosophers and sociologists, the bourgeois writers preach relativism, the hopelessness of the mind against the mysterious and unknowable universe and the illusory nature of social progress. They regard history as a never-ending cycle. What has been will be again.

"The characteristic aspect of contemporary science fiction by Anglo-American bourgeois writers is the projection into the future of present state relations, social problems and events and conflicts inherent in modern capitalism. These writers transfer imperialist

contradictions to imaginary space worlds, supposing that they will be dominated by the old master-servant relations, by colonialism and by the wolfish laws of plunder and profit."

Our Russian friends thereupon take apart individually Anderson, Azimov, Bradbury and Reynolds, mentioning, in particular, Poul's "Progress", the good doctor's introduction to his anthology SOVIET SCIENCE FICTION, my novel SPEAKEASY and all of poor Bradbury's work in general.

Ray Bradbury, the prose poet that Ray is, attempted to give the gentle answer that turneth away rats. His reply began, "My one reaction to the comments of Brandis and Dmitrevskiy is sadness".

The good doctor's reply led to snide suspicions on the part of your author that Isaac Asimov is one of the few American writers who actually gets royalties out of the Soviet Union. (My own work which has appeared in Russia has been pirated as has that of most of the other SF writers I know of, though it does seem that Fred Pohl once mentioned that he had a deal whereby they deposited rubles to his name in a Moscow bank but he had to go there to spend them.) At any rate, Azimov ended his reply with the final lines of his introduction to the anthology:

"On the whole, though, what I would like to believe is that the Soviet citizen would really like to see the coming of a reign of love when 'nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more'.

"Why, after all, should we not?

"If only we could believe it is what they really want, and if only they could believe it is what we really want, then perhaps things would yet end well."

Now, Poul Anderson, being Poul, was another thing. He wasn't having any and said, in part:

"Unfortunately, Communism -- more accurately, Marxism-Leninism -- makes human improbability a dogma rather than a theory, hypothesis, or pious wish. Then Communism adds the further dogma that there is one and only one correct way to achieve improvement, and it has already been discovered."

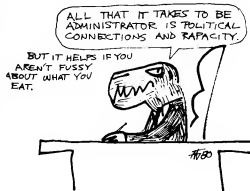
From this, the conclusion follows logically that men who know that way are duty bound to make their fellow man car-

ry out the indicated measures. Of course, one prefers to persuade them, by reason and example; but if this fails, then coercion is not only permissible but imperative ...

"Science fiction in the West operates in the area of what man does not yet know and has not yet experienced. In the nature of the case, these things are unknowable before they come to pass. Therefore, our science fiction, unconfined by dogma, treats of many conceivable situations, some pleasant, some unpleasant. It has no more ideological significance than that ... Totalitarianism consists in denying anyone, anyone at all, the right to his private beliefs and his private exploration of reality."

Largely, in my reply I followed along the same path Poul had taken, though in a little nastier vein, and said in part:

"Actually, I find a certain amount of validity in this



brief article on Western science fiction ... Certain it is that when SF writers extrapolate in the field of political economy they are more apt to wind up with an anti-Utopia rather than an upbeat society of the future. For every Bellamy's LOOKING BACKWARD there are several Orwell's 1984. And possibly one of the Reasons for this is that a majority of our writers are convinced that our present social institutions are so superior that any change must be of a negative nature.

"Personally, I don't agree. I am of the opinion that the socioeconomic institutions of the world -- including those of the Soviet Union --

are in a condition of flux. I am optimistic enough to believe that we have a good chance of making this a pretty damn fine world, by the standards of the past, but I am also not so blind as to realize that if the present policies of the great powers are continued we more likely will see world chaos in our time.

"My novelettes REVOLUTION and COMBAT, which appeared in what was then ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION both deal with the future of the Cold War, both are laid in the Soviet Union and both are up-beat in their dealing with the future. I would say that the average informed Soviet citizen would not find them objectionable -- I am not speaking of party hacks.

"A science fiction writer specializing in extrapolating in socioeconomic has as wide a field as writers in more exact sciences -- at least. In my time I have published stories that involved the world of the future being based upon anarchism, technocracy, socialism, communism (Soviet Union variety), communism (Yugoslavian variety), syndicalism, theocracy, industrial feudalism, meritocracy, state capitalism, and various combinations of these. Sometimes they are up-beat, sometimes not. It's according to the story and its needs. Nor is my background material based solely on Western propaganda. I have traveled in more than 75 countries, including seven communist ones, and have been a life-long student of political economy.

"One thing I have found. Conformists in any society have a difficult time projecting themselves into a future in which the institutions they favor have been changed. A desirable future in which these institutions have been found outmoded is practically impossible for them to handle.

"So I offer this challenge to Messrs. Brandis and Dmitrevskiy:

"Admitting that many American and British science fiction writers find it difficult to produce an up-beat story of the future in which capitalism is no longer the prevailing social system but has been superseded by something more in keeping with developments of tomorrow, show us then a story by a

Soviet Union science fiction writer that projects beyond what you call communism.

"Or do you contend that you have come to the end of the road of social evolution? That there is nothing beyond that could possibly be superior to the present system of the Soviet Union?"

* * *

Few science fiction writers today would dare deal in a story with a "hard science" with which they were not well acquainted. Or, at least, not until they had diligently researched it. Twenty-five years ago, yes. Our intrepid space cadet would jump into his rocket ship and take off for Mars at a clip faster than the speed of light, and the hell with physics. Once there, he'd find the air and gravity identical to that of Earth, and the hell with astronomy. He'd also find humanoid Martians good guys and bad guys and shapely girls to boot, and the hell with biology.

But no more. Except on the lowest level of cartoon strips and TV shows, SF writers today are expected to know what they are writing about. Even if they're going to exceed the speed of light, they'll have some gobbledygook explanation which seems to make it reasonable.

Except, of course, in the field of political economy.

I could use many examples but I'll choose one from Robert Heinlein, the science fiction story teller par excellence and admired and honored as much as any writer in the field.

The example comes from STARSHIP TROOPERS, one of Heinlein's best known and most controversial novels. In it he has one of his sympathetic characters, Lt-Colonel Jean V. DuBois, a teacher of History and Moral Philosophy, in lecturing to his class, say:

"Of course, the Marxian definition of value is ridiculous. All the work one cares to add will not turn a mud pie into an apple tart; it remains a mud pie, value zero. By corollary, unskillful work can easily subtract value; an untalented cook can turn whole-some dough and fresh green apples, valuable already, into an inedible mess, value zero. Conversely, a great chef can fashion of these same materials a confection of greater value than a commonplace tart, with no more effort than an ordinary cook uses to prepare an ordinary sweet.

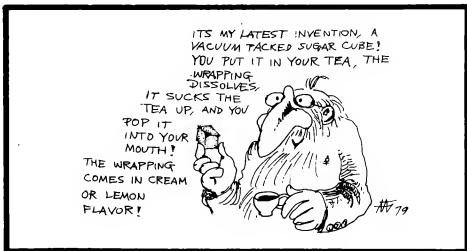
"These kitchen illustrations demolish the Marxist theory of value -- the fallacy from which the entire magnificent fraud of communism derives -- and illustrates the truth of the common sense definition as measured in terms of use."

In the first place, Bob Heinlein shouldn't call the Labor Theory of Value, Marxism. If you wish to hang a label on the theory, you might better call it Franklinism. Karl Marx never claimed to have discovered the Labor Theory of Value. He gives the credit (in Chapter One of DAS KAPITAL) to Benjamin Franklin who, in his first essay, A MODEST ENQUIRY INTO THE NATURE AND NECESSITY OF A PAPER CURRENCY, published in 1729, stated the concept in some detail. It was also accepted by highly regarded capitalist economists Adam Smith and David Ricardo, long before Marx. It is true that

If you gave a stenographer the job of plowing a field, she would add no value to the commodity involved because since she was unskilled she was not providing "socially necessary labor".

Marx himself answers Heinlein's attack in his pamphlet VALUE, PRICE AND PROFIT (New York Labor News, 914 Industrial Avenue, Palo Alto, CA) as follows:

"It might seem that if the value of a commodity is determined by the quantity of labor bestowed upon its production, the lazier a man, or the clumsier a man, the more valuable his commodity, because the greater the time of labor required for finishing the commodity. This, however, would be a sad mistake. You will recollect that I used the word "Social labor", and many points are involved in this qualification of "So-



Marx too adopted the theory, but he didn't originate it. His contribution to economics was the Theory of Surplus Value, which is an entirely different thing.

The Labor Theory of Value can be stated: "The exchange value of a commodity is determined by the socially necessary labor involved in its production."

The key words are "exchange value", "commodity" and "socially necessary labor".

A mud pie has no exchange value because it has no use value and hence is not a commodity. So important is the definition of "commodity" that Marx devotes the whole 55 pages of the first chapter of CAPITAL to it. Among other things, he states that a product must have use value before it can be called a commodity.

cial". In saying that the value of a commodity is determined by the quantity of labor worked up or crystallized in it, we mean the quantity of labor necessary for its production in a given state of society, under certain social average conditions of production, with a given social average intensity, and average skill of the labor employed."

The above mentioned pamphlet is to be recommended to anybody who would like to read a summation of Marx's economic theories in an easily understood ten thousand words or so. It's one of the old boy's speeches and amounts to a condensation of CAPITAL. I doubt if it will make a Marxist of you but at least from then on you'll know what is being talked about when the word is used.

By the way, had Bob Heinlein wanted to do a more efficient job or criticism of the Labor Theory of Value he might have taken it from a different angle. If the exchange value of a commodity is determined by the number of hours involved, what kind of labor are you talking about? Is a ditch digger's hour worth as much as that of a highly trained and experienced construction engineer? Marx answers this by saying all labor should be reduced to common labor. Fine. But who decides what kind of labor is worth more, or less, than another? Is Einstein's time worth five times as much as the laborer's, or fifty times as much, or a thousand?

* * *

It will be remembered that in both the paper of Brian Stableford and the Russian writers' article in the KOMMUNIST, the major complaint against American science fiction writers was their depiction of the socioeconomic systems of the far future. In actuality, the point is fairly well taken. There seems to be no field in which we extrapolate so awkwardly.

Let us take another masterpiece of another SF master. Surely the FOUNDATION trilogy of Isaac Asimov is one of the best known and best loved of all science fiction classics.

The story takes place thousands of years in the future. In fact, in Part One of FOUNDATION, the first of the trilogy, it is revealed that the Galactic Empire is over 12,000 years old, and consists of nearly 25 million inhabited planets. Needless to say, there has been a bit of progress. In fact, science has taken off in all directions. Man has even discovered hyper-space and can travel from one end of the galaxy to the other instantly. He evidently also has such little items as anti-gravity.

And what is the socio-economic system?

Feudalism.

They don't even have capitalism. They've gone back to feudalism, one of the most inefficient socioeconomic systems the human race has ever devised.

In the first paragraph, it is revealed that Hari Seldon was born to middle-class parents. To have a middle-class presupposes an upper-class and a lower-class. So, in the twelve thousand years plus, between our times and those of Hari Seldon, man has not come up with a method of ending class divided society. And a class divided society based on family and inheritance, by

the way, not on merit. The "great families", continually feuding among themselves, control the Empire.

* * *

Right at the beginning, the character Gaal Dornick takes a cab from the spaceport to a hotel and, when he gets there, pays the driver with coins and gives him a tenth-credit tip. So, as a means of exchange they're still using coins, evidently having forgotten the credit card, and they're still giving tips. Damn. I'd hoped that would be one institution the human race would abolish, given time.

The politico-economic system the good doctor has prevailing thousands of years from now isn't the only indication of what Stableford called a failure of imagination when applied to the social sciences. It would seem that in the Galactic Em-

IM IN THE CATABOLIC
SIDE OF THE
BUILDING
INDUSTRY.

ARSON, TO
BE PRECISE.



pire women's lib has come a cropper. Not one major character in the first volume of the FOUNDATION trilogy is a woman. In fact, there's only one woman character at all, and she's the bitch wife of one of the dictators of a planet.

One is reminded of both STAR TREK and STAR WARS. Have none of the feminine STAR TREK fans ever put up a complaint of the crowing of the ENTERPRISE? All the senior officers are men. There are a few junior officers that are women, or, at least, girls. Pretty young girls at that. One might wonder at the real purpose of all female crew members being pretty, sexy girls, in view of the fact that the ENTERPRISE remains in space for long months at a stretch. We never had it so good when your present writer was a seaman here on Earth.

In STAR WARS, once again the prevailing socioeconomic system is feud-

alism and, once again, the major characters are men -- except for the pretty girls. The background is, as so often, inter-stellar war, a concept as ridiculous as it is horrifying and a theme of a major percentage of all science fiction.

* * *

I do not wish to give the impression here that there aren't American and British science fiction writers who have a thorough basic knowledge of not only Marxism but other and sometimes more interesting facets of socioeconomics. Off hand, I can think of several who most certainly do, including Fred Pohl, Judith Merril, John Brunner, Brian Stableford, Harry Harrison and Ted Cogswell, among others.

Ursula K. LeGuin has proven in THE DISPOSSESSED a thorough knowledge of anarchism and has without doubt perused Prince Kropotkin, Bakunin and Proudhon, among other pioneer anarchists. My only unhappiness with this sympathetic portrayal of an anarchist society of the future is that the scene is a very inhospitable planet and, as a result of the lack of suitable raw materials, the society is poverty stricken. I would like to see her present us with an anarchist society on a rich planet.

Among others who have explored potential socioeconomic systems of the future is to be listed the British writer Dr. Michael Young with his fascinating THE RISE OF THE MERITOCRACY. Projecting himself into the year 2034, Young foresees a society in which, what it amounts to, the computers select the correct persons to take over given jobs. Experts in education and selection apply scientific principles to sift out the leaders of tomorrow. You need intelligence rating, qualifications, experience and application. In short, you have to show "merit". It doesn't make a damn bit of difference who your family is, who you know, or how much money you have. Meritocracy is run by the Meritocrats and they don't put up with such nonsense as poverty, wars, racism and various of the other problems that confront us today. This is a Pelican Book, published by Penguin Books in Great Britain. I am not sure that it has been published in the United States but I consider it a must for anyone interested in science fiction and the political economy of the future.

* * *

It should be pointed out that there are strong proponents of the "historical cycles" conception of history, defenders of the right of Asimov to project feudalism as the

socioeconomic system prevailing in a Galactic Empire many thousand years in the future.

Poul Anderson is possibly chief among these and well appreciated for his "future history" stories involving Nicholas Van Rijn and Dominick Flantery. He supports a system of rise-breakdown-decline-fall. In short, historical cycles. From time to time we clash (friendly clash, we have known each other for some thirty years, and entered the SF field at approximately the same time). For instance, he has this to say in a letter to THE DIVERSIFER, Nov., 1976, in answer to a short piece I had contributed:

"...when he (Mack Reynolds) denies that the future can possibly hold anything like laissez-faire capitalism, feudalism, empires under hereditary rules, subjugation of women or other features of the real past, he is guilty of the same lack of imagination he describes. Indeed, in my opinion he misreads history. These things have appeared, over and over, in civilization after civilization. Institutions we today consider desirable have been invented before ... Women in pre-Christian Scandinavia had a freedom they would not regain until the nineteenth century. Slavery flourished in the New World, early died out in the medieval West, and was massively received because of the discovery of the New World and later technological advances such as the cotton gin. The career of Mao Tse-tung parallels with almost every precision that of Shi Huang-Ti in the Third Century B.C. I could go on, but the point should be pretty obvious. Conceivably we are now so wise and moral that we will never repeat any of the mistakes of our ancestors. Conceivably we have become so much more intelligent than they that when troubles arise in the future, we will respond in wholly original ways which have no deleterious side effects of their own. Conceivably. No doubt it is a legitimate assumption to make for the purpose of telling a science fiction story. However, the opposite assumption is equally legitimate, and it can be just as interesting to work out the consequences of. Since nobody knows what the future will really be like, we can

and should explore every idea that comes to us...."

Well, perhaps. It would be ridiculous to deny that various institutions have repeated themselves down through history. For instance, the freedom of women in primitive society is beginning to manifest itself again in the modern world. And democracy as a political system has repeated over and over. Primitive communism (example: American Indians), was democratic. A form of democracy prevailed even under Chattel Slavery (Athens, Republican Rome). A form was practiced under Feudalism in some Italian city-states. And certainly under Capitalism we have had democracy in quite a few nations, for longer or shorter periods of time. Off hand, I can't think of a democracy in the parts of the world today under State Capitalism (read "communism") unless it might be Yugoslavia, and that's stretching the definition.

However, that's not quite the same as economic systems repeating themselves. Slavery might have weakened in the Western world, including North America, but it didn't die. The coming of the cotton gin, as Poul points out, revived it with a vengeance, but it still prevailed before Eli Whitney. Nor can I agree that Quin shi Huang-ti, of the short-lived Qin Dynasty, and the first emperor of China, was that similar to Mao. They presided over two entirely different socioeconomic systems. Quin shi Huang-ti brought to an end the feudalism of the period before him and established the empire. Mao brought State Capitalism ("communism") to China. Because they both dealt with hordes of people, in fantastically huge state enterprises such as the Great Wall and Mao's dams and other projects, does not mean a duplication of socioeconomic systems.

I cannot think of a single case in history of a people who had achieved to Capitalism ever going back to Feudalism. Nor of a single case of a people who had evolved from Chattel Slavery, to Feudalism, going back to Chattel Slavery. Nor can I think of any people who ever rose from the institution of Primitive Communism to that of Chattel Slavery ever going to man's original socioeconomic system.

Social evolution has never gone backward, so far as I know. Has biological evolution? Has a species ever become extinct and then been revived?

It seems to me that the sciences more or less march shoulder to shoulder, a good many starts and stops, of course, but if, for instance,

physics makes a big breakthrough it soon results in chemistry doing the same and even, say, biology, which might then result in a series of medical breakthroughs. Nor are the social sciences immune. If, for instance, nuclear fission is discovered, then we had better soon revise our socioeconomic systems to the point where warfare becomes passe. We better, if we know what is good for us.

I thoroughly subscribe to Harlan Ellison's impassioned call in his speech at the Iguanacore for the science fiction world to more strongly participate in such social problems as the emancipation of women, the fight against racism and the ending of war. And we could go further. For me, it is all but unbelievable that the future will condone politico-economic systems that lead to war and social systems based on class divided society and the exploitation of man by man. Somehow, we've got to evolve to a higher ethic. Why shouldn't science fiction lead the way, as it has in so many other sciences?



The range of possible human government and economic systems is limited, probably by our brain/mind and body structures. They have all been tried and found, idealistically, wanting. Tough shit.

A.L. Terengo

AND THEN I READ....



BY THE EDITOR

THE MAGIC LABYRINTH
By Philip Jose Farmer
Berkley/Putnam, \$11.95

This is the fourth, and final book in the Riverworld saga, and it answers all the questions and settles all the hash---at great cost to a lot of people.

Famous people die, famous people live.

As you may know, the Riverworld is a giant planet upon which runs a giant river valley. In the valley on the banks of the giant river that is tens of thousands of miles long, live teeming billions of humans---resurrected humans who had died previously on Earth.

They are fed by huge Grail Stones which thunder and flash three times a day and provide billions of meals and drinks and other small necessities.

Among these billions are the famous and infamous of Earth's past: Samuel Clemens, Sir Richard Burton, Cyrano de Bergerac...kings, queens, soldiers....

The Riverworld saga is the story of groups of men and women who must attempt a journey to the headwaters of the immense river and discover the secrets---the answers to their questions about this world, about their new lives.

Several attempts are made to penetrate the vast physical and mechanical obstacles.

There are civil wars, "agents" of the creators working at cross-purposes, terrible rivalries and hatreds....

But still a few determined people persist---and in this book a handful penetrate the final tower and find....

Before that, however, there is an all-out naval battle between two huge modern warships...there is the slaughter of half the human population when the Grail Stones on one side of the river fail to produce food.

And in the final chapters there are wonders, vast structures, horrible revelations...monstrous cunning.

The final book seemed a bit mishapen to me, but it pays off and is a fitting conclusion to this series. Phil Farmer delivers.

The first three books in this very popular series were: TO YOUR SCATTERED BODIES GO, THE FABULOUS RIVERBOAT, and THE DARK DESIGN.

STRANGE SEED by T.M. Wright.
Playboy Press 19673, \$2.25

At first (after reading half the book) I was outraged at the "testimonial" on the cover:

"The best supernatural novel since INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE. You'll be a long time forgetting this book---if you ever do!"

---Stephen King.

Then I realized King was sending a message a few readers will get, anyway. Since INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE was a dog, this is even more a dog, and you'll be a long time forgetting it because it's so memorably bad!

There isn't much plot: somehow children are created by a small patch of forest in a northern state, and they have a kind of psychic power over some nearby residents. The children are like annual flowers---they die come winter. In the spring another crop grows...we presume.

One child, adopted by a local family, somehow survives, is taken away to New York City after his "parents" die mysterious deaths.

Twenty years later, drawn by unconscious forces, the young man, with his wife, return to the house his "parents" owned and become involved with the forest children.

Paul and Rachel are frightened by the mysterious events around them, by the warnings from an old hermit, and after the hermit's death try to leave...but cannot. Paul is compelled to stay.

The ending is predictable and unsatisfactory.

The writing is an abomination of vagueness, pretentious obscurity and angering, padded dialogue:

"Rachel, are you asleep?"

"I'm awake."

"They're...gone, Rachel."

"Gone?"

"Yes."

"For good, Paul?"

"For now, Rachel. Until spring. I don't know. Until spring."

"And us?"

"Us?"

"You said we would talk. You said we would make plans."

"We're going to leave, yes. Not right away, not tomorrow. In a week or so. We have to be sure, you see."

I have to be sure."

"You're not sure?"

"Yes, yes, I am."

"Then why not tomorrow? Why not right now?"

"I'm sorry, I just have to be sure."

"You said you were sure, Paul."

"I am."

"Okay, then. I trust you, Paul."

"And I love you, Rachel. Always remember that."

"I will, Paul. I'd like to sleep now. I've been waiting for you; you're back now. I'd like to sleep."

Of the 28 chapters half could have been cut 50%, at least. And as to answers to a host of questions raised in the reader's mind---forget it; this is an occult/horror novel, and TM Wright & the editors of Playboy paperbacks agree that the supernatural is inherently inexplicable, so you can get away with all kinds of sloppy, careless, amateur writing. The makers of occult/horror movies get away with it, don't they? Same audience, right? Let's shit on them and insult their intelligence, if any. HO HO HO.

THE SHADOW OF THE TORTURER

By Gene Wolfe
Simon & Schuster, \$11.95

It's a book which will leave you in awe and anger. Awe because it is so damned good, and anger because it has stopped and the next volume of this four-part saga won't be published until next year!

This is not an obscure novel, not ambiguous, not opaque, not in the least (so far) a New Wave saga. It is rich, deep, tantalizing, colorful, gripping.

It is about a young apprentice Torturer in a medieval, degenerate, far-future Earth ruled by an all-powerful Autarch. There are some remnant technologies from a previous high-tech era.

Severian, the apprentice, schooled in a part of an enormous, ancient metal Citadel, is gradually ript from his seeming predestined life by love for a beautiful woman doomed to torture, by his allowing her to die by her own hand, by his awakening to the worlds of books and knowledge---[the scenes and encounters with the blind master librarian in the virtually endless Citadel library are superb]---and by his exile to serve as an executioner for Thrax, a distant city.

Armed/equipped with an ancient executioner's sword, Severian sets out from the vast Citadel into the even more vast, seemingly limitless City surrounding, and his encounters, his adventures as he journeys through the City to the countryside and on the way to Thrax, are wonders, enlightening, terrifying.

This first of four novels in a series titled THE BOOK OF THE NEW SUN opens paths for Severian (and the reader) that promise vast adventures, struggle, greatness with strange, mysterious forces coming into play.

Reading this novel you realize you're in the hands of a master writer. THE SHADOW OF THE TORTURER is the first facet of a science fiction diamond--a masterpiece.

Yes, damn it, it's that good! The title of the next volume, for which we must wait too long!, is THE CLAW OF THE CONCILIATOR.

PULSAR 2 Edited by George Hay. Penguin Books, [75p in UK], [\$2.50 in Australia], [\$2.25 in Canada].

An original anthology of 'Science Fiction and Science Futures'.

It's "hard" science fiction, with an exceptionally good and revealing interview with A. E. van Vogt by Christopher Evans. The final piece, an article on atomic power in and out of sf, by Richard Weholt, is part rehash and part plea for more nuclear power and less hysteria.

The fiction starts off with "High Pressure" by Rob Holdstock which says it's okay to murder in the name of progress.

"A Warrior Falls" is a fine ANALOG-type alien-contact story in which a practical man makes the right decisions in a tough situation in spite of government idiocy. The aliens shown here are a neat switch on our biology/robot setup. This deserves reprinting.

"On the Mud-Flats of Rhuma" by Robin Douglas is an interesting depiction of the mating ritual of the cofics, and a kiss-kiss to dedicated scientists who risk life to observe things like that. [On the whole, Pickering, we are a marvelous profession.]

"What Do the Simple Folk Do...?" is Alan Dean Foster's cutesy written acid answer: they like blood-n-sex on TV, and the more real the better!

Perry Chapdelaine's anti-war, anti-government story, "The Return of Prince John Israel Mcwayizeni Shaka" is good and gripping until he cannot resist killing his admirable characters. Damn knee-jerk Serious Message fiction.

"Rotating Frame-Up" by Robert M. H. Carver is a tedious murder-in-

space story, solved as usual by a security man whose job is hanging in the balance.

A short-short short, "The Knife," by E.C. Tubb, is something grotesque and overwritten he wrote for George Hay, probably as a favor.

This anthology is not as good as PULSAR 1, but is readable. I preferred the original format of #1.

GUARDIANS OF THE UNIVERSE?

By Ronald Story
St. Martin's, \$8.95

The further destruction of Erich von Daniken's theory of space god visitations to Earth, and a further documentation of von Daniken as a lying fraud.

Also assaulted is Robert Temple's book, THE SIRIUS MYSTERY.

This book is very tough on misrepresentation of evidence and deliberate avoidance of contrary evidence and findings by people with one eye on grinding an axe and the other on big book sales.

However, in the last chapter, "UFOs: A Genuine Mystery," the author does decide there's something in the UFO phenomena which cannot be explained or ignored.

This book is a sequel (or follow-up) to Story's previous debunker, THE SPACE GODS REVEALED.



SONGMASTER by Orson Scott Card
Dial Press, \$10.95 (tentative)

It may have been my age, my mood, my life experiences...self-pity...but I wept a bit as I was finishing reading this novel. And I can count on the toes of one hand the times that has happened.

Orson is a powerful writer; he deals with emotion beautifully, with love, honesty, sincerity, truth...sentimentality. And with the dark side of our selves--lust, rage, murder, ambition, betrayal...greed.

For his years he's unusually mature and skilled, and SONGMASTER is a superior novel in any league, in any genre.

The core of the novel---the basic premise---is questionable: that gifted children can be taught to read subtleties in tone and pitch and meaning from a person's speech and know the truth or lie of a statement; that they can sing words or more likely melodies--sounds--so effectively as to literally make strong men weep, or laugh, or experience other emotions...and can make them understand the message---a complicated, subtle message---by singing (sounds) alone...and that the greatest of these singers, called Songbirds, could drive a strong-willed emperor of all mankind [a thousand planets] to insanity and a ruthless assassin to an incredibly self-brutal suicide.

I couldn't swallow the skills and talents of Anset, the beautiful little Songbird, schooled in the legendary Songhouse of the planet Tew, who is assigned to be the Emperor Mikal's Songbird.

But it didn't matter much. The novel is so much about people---those who want to kill the Emperor, use his Songbird, those who love Anset and hate him, those who lust for him---that the incredible science fiction element is like a pretty box that encloses the meat and potatoes. [Cooked to perfection.]

This is a fine novel. It hits on basic gut levels. Orson knows people---loves people---but doesn't blink at their flaws. That is his power and greatest strength as a writer.

This novel follows Anset through his life---an exciting, marvelous life in the highest levels of interstellar government---and it is deeply moving.

THE SHERIFF OF PURGATORY

By Jim Morris
Doubleday \$8.95 [1979]

In 1996 the federal government is a shambles and the Mafia is coming on strong. But in Purgatory

County, Arkansas, the sheriff, Frank Spurlock, has achieved a workable law and order based on cooperation, applied psychology and adroit manipulation of force or threat of force.

He's a kind of Zen hippie, a war veteran, and in his way an idealist.

Everything worked fairly well in the county until a Mafia chief arrived to begin a takeover, and Frank decided to go to New York--- a disease and vice and crime pest-hole even worse than we see in the worst slums today---in order to try to save his son and daughter (now teenaged) and living with his ex-wife.

With the countryside infested with armed guerillas the journey is very interesting as he travels with his woman friend (who refused to be left behind).

What happens in New York is incredible but somehow convincing, as Frank applies his philosophy and skills to gain his ends. But before that it looks like the end as street gangs at war, the Mafia, the government and a guerilla leader seem intent on killing him like dead, man.

A good "western" sf novel, exciting, detailed, with a different viewpoint you'll find interesting and challenging. It won't blow your mind, but some cracks may appear; it forces you to think in other viewpoints.

STOREHOUSES OF THE SNOW by Edwin Woodard & Heather Woodard Bischoff
Leisure 746, \$1.95

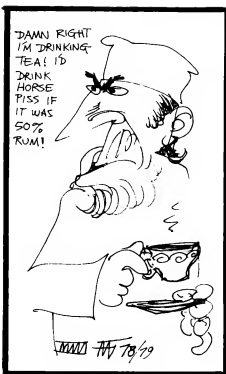
Simultaneously the Earth is slipping and the miles-deep ice cover of Antarctica is melting, breaking up, at a terrifying rate.

The result is monstrous tidal waves that drown every seaport in the world, sweep over lowlying lands like Florida, and wreck the world's economy and civilization. The Antarctic region becomes a new temperate zone, and the USA is quickly on its way to becoming the new north pole.

All this with many, many points of view, some incredible rescues, some horrendously bad dialogue, and clumsy pacing and unexpected plotting (which wastes some dramatic potential).

Even so... it's a pretty good read. Somehow. Maybe I'm a sucker for disaster novels. And the descriptions of those gargantuan swells hitting Florida and New York were powerful in their fashion. The authors have a way of keeping their people human by means of small-time, petty concerns in the midst of horrifying doom.

The ending was absurdly optimistic-



ic---I can't believe they'd have enough seed or food to serve them for two years---and the incredibly fast melt of a continent of ice in a matter of days boggled me--- and the conjecture that God was cleaning house for a new start (fore-told in the Book of Job) seemed awkward and mystical...but people think and do weird things in high trauma situations.

The story is told mainly from the viewpoints of people aboard two ships in the Antarctic region.

THE HALF-A-MOON INN

By Paul Fleischman
Illustrations by Kathy Jacobi
Harper & Row, \$7.95 [1980]
[Juvenile--ages 10 up]

An exceptionally well-done very short novel about a 12-year-old boy who cannot talk.

He is dependent on his widowed mother and is afraid to leave their house by the sea. Yet when he doesn't return home from a trip to town after a snowstorm he forces himself to go looking for her.

He loses his way and comes to be indentured at a disreputable inn owned by an evil hag, Miss Grackle.

His muteness is an advantage for the criminal woman---and a terrible disadvantage for Aaron in his attempts to escape her.

This is a story of character, maturing, and morality. It is so well done---not written down---that an adult can [and will] enjoy it, and become very involved with Aaron, his

fears, his triumphs, his learning about life.

The pen drawings by Kathy Jacobi are low key, 19th Centuryish, distorted for atmosphere and character.

The book is recommended.

THE MARTIAN CRYSTAL EGG

Written & Illustrated by Fred Win-kowski. Harper & Row, \$6.95 [1980]

A science fantasy about Pik, a Martian, who saves a crystal egg from destruction in the lost city of another Martian race---the flying things. In time the egg hatches, and Pik and Atri become friends.

This is a children's book with some subtle, somewhat advanced science fictional elements involved. Yet its format is for the six to 10 year old, I estimate. The large pen illustrations are well-done, but suffer for lack of color, I think.

The story teaches tolerance and open-mindedness. Nice, nice, very nice.

But I learned/practiced reading the funnies in the daily paper, and a child of 6-7-8 who can read the funnies and can handle the vocabulary of this thin book (28 large pages, 1000 words of text, thirty + big page illustrations) will go through the book in a few minutes, toss it aside and pick up something meatier and longer.

I don't think this book is worth the price. [Even as I understand the economics of publishing a limited edition hardcover.]

THE GREAT ROCK 'N' ROLL SWINDLE

By Michael Moorcock
Virgin Books, 75p.
61-63 Portobello Road,
London W11 3D, England

A surrealistic "novel" (about 25 thousand words long) about an English rock group

rock group whose members seek to be paid by a very elusive promoter/manager. They...

Based on a movie of the same name, this fiction brings in some of Mike's favorite characters---Jerry and Frank Cornelius, Miss Brunner, Mrs. Cornelius...

The "book" is printed on newspaper/tablet format, and is mostly photos of the Sex Pistols and clips from the movie. It...

Helter skelter action involving a resurrected Jerry who is a decaying (literally) former musician assassin employed now to fight the forces of evil and monopoly...

Satire, jape, joke, jick, juck... oh, fuck!

Alternate time tracks, alien 'bugs' who monitor the action/behavior of these puzzling humans...

And who's got all the money, tell me that, lov."

"Oo the bloody 'ell do they expect ter clear up this fuckin' mess, then?"

Rosebud.

I would like to see the movie, though.

This weird fiction was written by Mike between April 24th and May 2 this year. Printed on May 9th. Max-in Jakubowski, editor of Virgin Books, sent me a copy in early June if memory serves. [But my memory serves 90% fouls and netters.]

The Sex Pistols represent uncouth rebellion, anarchy, filthy, shocking songs... THE BARBARIANS ARE HERE-- AND THEY IS US!

This thing is a collectors item. Christ, the things people collect! No, you can't have my copy.

CHANGELING by Roger Zelazny
Ace 10256-S, \$6.95

Illustrated by Esteban Naroto

This entrancing novel is one of sorcery vs. science, with the message that any large focus of power is liable to be misused by immature, flawed humans.

And that the conservative, ignorant, superstitious villagers of this alternate Earth are actually correct in first going to war against a wizard who practiced evil black magic and became too powerful, as well as trying to kill a scientific genius mistakenly imported (as a child from our Earth) by a well-meaning magician.

Zelazny's sorcery is rationalized, fascinating, credible; in fact more believable than the science and technology it opposes.

The dragon Moonbird is more real and human than the stereotyped young scientist villain. The secondary character, Mouseglove the thief, is more interesting and likeable than the nominal sorcerer hero.

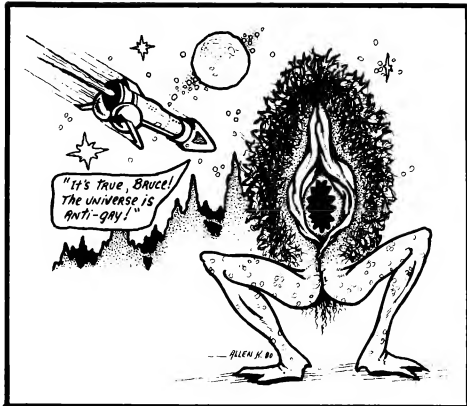
Zelazny might characterize this book as an 'entertainment': non-pretentious, a romantic adventure. It's a damned good one.

The Naroto illustrations complement the text marvelously.

THE ENNEAD By Jan Mark
Pocketbook 82948-3, \$2.25

Freedom vs. disguised slavery is the theme, and the vehicle is a small, arid, stony planet which imports workers when needed and departs them when not needed.

Because jobs are so precious and deportation to the hell-hole



"mother" planet so terrible, fear is constant and security paramount.

Isaac, a cunning but also innocent young steward, has schemed to import Eleanor, a sculptor, in an elaborate, error-prone plan to insure his future.

But she is a terror: rebellious, stubborn, iconoclastic, hard-as-rock. A damned trouble-maker who seeds others to think unthinkable thoughts and threatens to undermine the Establishment.

Push any Establishment too far and it gets ruthless.

There is a Jewish let-my-people-go element in this novel, but the values are universal, and the writing is very good; engrossing characters, realistic behavior and action. You won't like the ending.

SINS OF OMISSION

By Chelsea Quinn Yarbro
Signet E9165, \$2.25

You could cut the first half of this novel about a lovely psychic woman and the neurosurgeon who falls in love with her-- and throw it away without losing any significant story information. In this one Yarbro pads outrageously.

Payne Schoenfeld is the target of a strong satanist coven in the Berkley-s.f area; they want to use her strong psi/psychic talents.

Dr. Giles Todd, called in to

attend when she has a "seizure" during some psi testing at a nearby university, falls for her...a long, drawn-out process.

In the end there is a formula kidnap of Payne from a hospital, a chase, a search, a confrontation with the coven, a rescue, a black moment when the maniacal leader of the coven almost kills Giles in a one-on-one battle in the surf...

A piece of hackwork.

RICHARD E. GEIS

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REG #19 nearly ready for mailing

LETTERS

LETTER FROM DARRELL SCHWEITZER
113 Deepdale Road
Stafford, PA, 19087
May 2, 1980

'A comment you make in SFR #35 leads from the specific instance to a more general cliché I think is long overdue for destruction.

'The specific is that I think you're too hasty in your assumption that FANTASTIC is aimed at a juvenile audience. The April issue isn't as telling as the July one, admittedly, but I don't think the latter was a sudden reversal of policy. The July issue has quite a bit in it which would alienate the hypothetical "14-year-olds and their mommies", to use the common phrase.

To wit: The final installment of THE WHITE ISLE contains some low key fucking which is downright chaste and euphemistic by today's standards, but there it is. Also an off-stage castration and somebody going to bed with a skeleton, a la "A Rose for Emily". Also the Hero, who should have been the male daydream character turns old and crabby and unsympathetic and gets killed in the end because it needs doing. "The Imprecise Delights of Love" is about the difference between love and lust. The protagonist has a device one can only call an orgasmatron, and he spends most of his time preoccupied with it. There's a weird scene inside a garbage disposal vehicle for the fetishists. "The Compromise" by Vinicoff and Martin is about sexual deviance, and two of the characters are sympathetically portrayed lesbians. "The New Member" by David Bunch is difficult and literary, and someone fresh from reading THE SPLINTER IN THE MIND'S EYE and two issues of STARLOG won't be able to make much sense out of it.

'In other words the issue has enough to give the proverbial socially inept, early adolescent reader a heart attack and considerable confusion. None of it is at all daring or sensational by modern standards, but it isn't what one puts in to material specifically aimed at juveniles.

'Which brings us to the general point. It is constantly claimed by various writers and editors that a large percentage, even the majority of science fiction readers (or perhaps, specifically, science fiction magazine readers) are juveniles. I see no evidence that this is true,

or that it has ever been true. Perhaps it was for THRILLING WONDER during the days of Sergeant Saturn, but the lettercolumns don't give the impression overwhelmingly. (Actually the only lettercolumns which do are those in the GEMSBACK AMAZINGS.) In fact a lot of readers during the war years were servicemen, who had to be 18 and up.

'John Campbell took a poll around 1950 and discovered that his readers tended to be scientists and technicians, or at least science students in the colleges. (Indeed, a friend of mine who was there a few years ago, tells me that aside from technical material, the Princeton Physics Department reads little but science fiction.)

'Now turn to NEW WORLDS 37 (July 1955), which contains the results of one of the Carnell polls. Average age: 31.7 years.

'NEW WORLDS 141 (April 1964) has results of another, and for comparison, the data from the 1958 poll. Average age, 1964: 26.1; 1958: 30.8.

'Some data here is irrelevant to the present (education for the post-World War II generation of Britons) and employment (about 35% technical and scientific) may be a matter of economics. The male readership has been changing over the years. (95% in 1955, 90% in 1958, 92% in 1964). But the age distribution is fairly constant.

'Recently Davis Publications took such a poll for its fiction magazines. I saw the results. Most of them didn't surprise me. For one thing, the mystery magazines really are read by older women. (If you wonder what the mothers of SF fans read, this may be it.) But the age for the ISAAC ASIMOV'S SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE spread out like this: A full 50% were between 25 and 50. About 60% were male, a big change from earlier polls of this sort. Only 15% were juveniles. It tapered off rapidly over 65.

'Virtually all the readers were college graduates. That didn't surprise me. But I was a little surprised to learn that 25% had some sort of graduate degree beyond 4 years of college.

'You might argue that this is only a poll of people who bother to



answer polls, but then, to find out who the average SF reader is, you may take the direct observation method. Stand in a science fiction book store for an hour or two and note who the browsers are. You'll find there are virtually no high-schoolers. The customers are all adults, and their ages tend to bear out the ASIMOV'S figures. You can get the same results anywhere SF is sold.

'In other words, by all indications, science fiction is read mostly by adults who have graduated college, who reach into the highest education brackets, and are at least average in income. A surprising number of people who write in to the magazines let this sort of information out. I see a lot of professionals, architects, doctors, dentists, lawyers, etc. writing on their official stationery.)

'I suspect that a lot of SF writers and editors remember when they started reading SF (roughly 11-14 years) and work from the assumption that this represents the typical reader. Yet it is only the exceptionally bright kids who read it at that age (the sort who are likely to grow up to be SF professionals, something most people cannot achieve) and this is completely overlooking the fact that those kids don't stop as they get older (thus becoming part of the 25-50 mass, which must be larger unless the country is riding the wave of an enormous baby boom, which we are not at present) and other readers enter the picture later on. It would be very interesting to see a poll asking when people started reading science fiction. I suspect a lot would be found to have started in the late teens (senior highschool or early college) or early 20s.

'Of course any claim that 90% of SF readers are under 25 and 50% are under 16 is simply runaway lunacy and not worth serious consideration.

'We might consider some of the SF novels which have been best sellers in recent years: THE LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS, THE DISPOSSESSED, THE FOREVER WAR, DHALGREN, LUCIFER'S HAMMER, RENDEZVOUS WITH RAMA, none of which are particularly simplified, toned-down, or aimed at a juvenile audience. If this is what 15-year-olds who can barely read are reading, I think that's a triumph for the American educational system.

'Frankly, I don't have that much faith in American education.

'Onward. The news story about Gor is interesting. Do you suppose that the works of John Norman could have genuine value as a tool for diagnosing certain types of psychos? No, seriously, I don't, or

else somebody would have done it with de Sade before that. As long as fans are finding equivalents between SF and mainstream writers (Poul Anderson is our Kipling, De Camp our Wedekind, etc.) I suppose Norman is our de Sade, but he isn't such a spectacular crackpot that his works will survive that long, I suspect. He'll probably go the way of the great mass of 20th century porno, except where he is incorporated into the lore of SF fandom. (e.g. a Boskone play in which a "typical Gor reader", a dirty old man in a raincoat, was chased around the stage by a knife-wielding amazon.)

'Not much other news. My first Starblaze Book, WE ARE ALL LEGENDS, will be illustrated by Fabian. I had hoped to place a couple of the stories in AMAZING/FANTASTIC right before the book comes out (August), but they've changed policy and won't take any small press or foreign reprints.'

((After looking through the July issue of FANTASTIC Science Fiction (as the cover says) I have to agree--the package and the stories are essentially adult. In fact, the fiction in this magazine is probably more adult in theme than that of any other magazine and 98% of the books.))

((Too bad the reputation of AMAZING and FANTASTIC have suffered for so long as low-end fiction outlets and kid-stuff. If this is a what-the-hell, we've-got-nothing-to-lose policy change to try and save the magazines and promote a different image I applaud it. At the same time I fear it is too late.))

((The Davis poll results are surprising. Does this mean ASIMOV'S is going to aim a little higher, now?))

LETTER FROM GEORGE HAY
38B Compton Road
London, N. 21, UK
June, 1980

'Got to thinking the other day about the American Presidency. What, I asked myself, are the characteristics that Americans must be seeking in a new incumbent? Let's see -- well, leadership, decision, personal magnetism, determination, an understanding of the wider forces of nature and above all, a firm grasp of foreign affairs. Now, what name springs to mind? Can there be one moment's doubt?

'DARTH VADER FOR PRESIDENT!

'But when I enquire of 20th Cen-

tury Fox whose permission I need to turn off a score or so of suitable badges, what do I find but that I have to write to LUCASFILMS in the States. I ask you -- is this the way to treat a Great Leader?

'Support for/suggestions on this campaign appreciated.'

((You have to keep in mind that the real Darth Vader is two people: a big body and a separate voice (and a script). That's what we have now in the Presidency, and will have in the future: a figurehead president like Nixon-Ford-Carter, a Voice who tells the figurehead what to say and which polities to follow (Hatig, Kissinger), and of course the script is provided by the international financial empire who war among themselves and use puppet governments and peoples as extensions of their interests.))

LETTER FROM LARRY NIVEN
April 9, 1980

'I've got three collaborations going with Jerry Pournelle and one going with Steven Barnes, and my part in each of them has slowed to a crawl. Which leaves me trying to answer the ever-popular question, "Don't you have something of your own to work on?"

'Well, no. Not in the form of writing a story. What I've been doing is adding to or correcting notes on half a dozen potential stories, hoping one of them will jell into something. It's kind of irritating. Maybe the problem is that I'm having too much fun these days; there's less incentive for serious wish-fulfillment daydreaming.

'THE RINGWORLD ENGINEERS will compete for the 1981 Hugos. A limited edition, scheduled for December 1979, first saw the light of day in January 1980, and the decision was made on that basis. My own opinion: A limited edition shouldn't count anyway. Less than five hundred people will see it, for Pete's sake! If it costs an author a Hugo to publish a limited edition, Fantasia Press would be driven out of business.

'But that's going to be a very hairy year. BEYOND THE BLUE EVENT HORIZON, THE SNOW QUEEN, THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST, THE RINGWORLD ENGINEERS all scheduled to emerge in 1980. Losing in 1981 will be like just missing a Nobel Prize: Something to brag about.'

LETTER FROM SANDRA MIESEL
8744 N. Pennsylvania Street
Indianapolis, IN, 46240
April 28, 1980

'Nice to see the Saberhagen interview (and a favorable review of BERSERKER MAN). Neal Wilgus must have been persistent to get mild-mannered, self-effacing Fred to say that much. (The mind boggles at the thought of a taped conversation between Fred and John Schoenherr -- a confrontation between two friendly rocks.) Saberhagen is an admirable example of how to build a writing career by steady mastery of craft and patient effort. Good to see him getting some of the popularity he deserves.

'One place he's unexpectedly popular is the junior high set. My devour (if that's the most tasteful verb) Saberhagen's Dracula books. What do this portend?

'Let me second Darrell Schweitzer's lament for bookbinding. The other week there came into my hands an intact 15th C book still in its original binding (calfskin over oak boards, with bits of the original clasps still in place). It was written on paper by non-professional scribes for private use and not the sort of thing to attract solicitous preservation. Aside from a little yellowing and the occasional worm hole, this 500-year-old book was in sound condition, not a signature loose anywhere. (We also have a 1000-year-old Koran leaf on paper that looks no worse than a page from an old SF paperback.) But economics preclude durability.

'Should you be curious why I was examining a medieval book, I'm now doing research for an art dealer -- a neat sideline for an unemployed medievalist. I can date, locate and explicate Latin manuscripts, identifications which make them more saleable. For instance, what would you make of the inscription:

xi^m virginū m

'It means "eleven thousand virgin martyrs". (At which my daughter exclaimed, "There aren't 11,000 virgins!" Such cynicism!)

'But what would a scholar five centuries hence make of a miraculous-ly preserved SFR?'

(Probably a fire.)



LETTER FROM JAMES J.J. WILSON
4814 Seelye
Downers Grove, IL, 60515
June, 1980

'Some bad news. AMAZING and FANTASTIC are being combined, according to Editor Omar Gohagan, into one magazine which will be larger and appear more frequently. The bad news is that they only need one fan columnist and they have opted to continue Fannestalk's more traditional column than my versatile information and opinion column.

'I was getting a little tired of the poor editorial relations and the meager pay but it was nice to have my own column for a little while. Do you know anyone who needs a column? I'd rather do an opinion/criticism/review column in which I could talk about any SF or fantasy-related subject but would not be tied down to what was little more than a third-grade-level course on fandom for uninitiated pre-teenagers.'

LETTER FROM JAMES J.J. WILSON
4814 Seelye
Downers Grove, IL 60515
1980

'The only news I have is that Harlan Ellison says that the SHADOW comic book he is writing for the publishers of COMICS JOURNAL might be out as soon as early July. Also, THE LAST DANGEROUS VISIONS will almost definitely be out by Christmas 1981. Yes, that is 1981. Well, I guess if we've waited this long another year and a half can't make that much difference.'

LETTER FROM DONN VICHA
6444 N. Glenwood
Chicago, IL, 60626
May, 1980

'You might want to mention in SFR that, according to VARIETY, Lawrence Saunders' TOMORROW FILES is looking for a cast and director, and is going to be a movie! I loved that book and remember reading your review which was quite favorable.'

LETTER FROM JOHN SILBERSACK
SENIOR EDITOR
BERKLEY PUBLISHING CORPORATION
200 Madison Avenue, New York,
New York, 10016.
May 16, 1980

'I'd like to clear up a very unfortunate situation regarding the Phantasia Press edition of Philip

Jose Farmer's THE MAGIC LABYRINTH. Alex Berman of Phantasia purchased the rights to a limited signed first edition of the novel from Berkley/Putnam. It was our mutual intention that the Phantasia Press edition would be published at least one month prior to the Berkley edition. Unfortunately, a miscalculation of printing and shipping dates on Berkley's part resulted in the pre-shipping and sale of the Berkley/Putnam edition in some parts of the country a few days before the publication of Phantasia's collector's volume. This occurred through no fault of Phantasia Press.

'I very much regret that this mishap has inconvenienced Phantasia and the collectors who purchased the limited edition and I want to publicly thank Alex who has been unfailingly gracious during a trying situation. I'm looking forward to working with Phantasia on other projects in the future and especially now that we know where the pitfalls lie.'

LETTER FROM IAN WATSON
Bay House, Banbury Road
Moreton Pinkney (near Daventry)
Northamptonshire NN11 6SQ
England
18th June 1980

'Many thanks for SFR #35. I was quite intrigued by Barry Malzberg's disguised short story "The Science Fiction in Science Fiction" which takes as pretext that well-known Silverberg tale about 21st Century anthropologist Schwartz on a jet-rocket to Papua fantasizing about exotic aliens because there are no more exotics among Earth's population, and transmogrifies this into the tale Barry Malzberg would have written: about a 22nd Century physicist and rabid SF fan en route to Luma, failing dribblingly with the air/space stewardesses -- unlike the much-ogled-at Schwartz. "What Silverberg is saying -- if I read him correctly and I usually do -- is that science fiction in any era is going to be a junk medium."

'Oh, marvellously witty! But is it quite fair to present this wily fictional proof to foreign readers (Italians in this case) who mightn't be in on the joke? They might just really take it as "The Way it Is"... in which case Italians would seem to have no more substantial reality for the author than Schwartz's Antareans or Capellans. Still, a cunning fiction this -- albeit cruel to its readers.'

((The truth is always cruel. And

since 90% of every medium is junk, Barry is correct. But, then, it all depends on one's definition of junk...and whether there can be good junk as well as bad.

(Personally, I like certain kinds of junk. Good, well-made, unpretentious junk has its place in culture, and some of it lasts an astonishingly long time.)

CARD FROM RAY NELSON
333 Ramona Avenue
El Cerrito, CA, 94530
May 9, 1980

'Public acceptance of science fiction seems to bring forth strange contortions in the "SF ghetto" mentality, as we see in Malzberg's THE WAY IT IS. Once we liked to say science fiction was too good for the big world out there. Now Malzberg is telling us it is too crappy.

'Either way, SF remains our little thing, we happy few who might be able to understand the real thing if it came along. However, his list of five taboos has given me plot germs for my next five books so I guess I ought to thank him.'

((Do s-f plot germs qualify as a social disease?))

LETTER FROM JOHN BRUNNER
The Square House, Palmer Street
South Petherton, Somerset
United Kingdom TA13 5DB
24th May 1980

'I have been more or less gently taken to task by a friend who is something of an expert on ballgames and indeed has just published a booklet concerning the "fives" game played around here, which I referred to in my piece about South Petherton.

'The "fives tower", or "pallott wall", can't be as old as I believed. The game itself is a lot older than I thought -- he cites a reference in 1278! -- but apparently until comparatively recent times it was always played against the church tower itself. Purpose-built walls came in only about two centuries ago.

'And that was chiefly because of damage caused by the ball: at Taunton Sessions in 1633 people complained about broken windows, "much torren and defaced to the great dislike of the inhabitants, especially those whose seats were adjoining, by reason of the foul drift in the weather".

'At all events, our tower isn't 500 years old after all. More like 200. Sorry.'

((Whatthehell, what's 300 years between friends?))

LETTER FROM ROBERT S COULSON
Route #3
Hartford City, IN, 47348
May 9, 1980

'Surprise! Comments from me on SFR #35.

'The Brunner article was interesting because it wasn't all that many years ago, when I was touting the rural life, that he told me that he needed the atmosphere of a big city to spark his creativity. Admittedly, I haven't seen all that much work from him lately, but if he retired I missed the notice.

'His guests from Dayton don't seem to have known much about mid-western small towns, but I suppose that's par for the course with city types, particularly the liberal creative sort. "... maybe a gas station," eh? Well, we live 7 miles from Montpelier, Indiana, which is also a bit under 3,000 population (pop. 2093 in the 1970 census, if we want to be precise). I see nothing in John's list that isn't available in Montpelier except a hospital -- the only hospital in this county is in Hartford City (population 8207 in 1970), which is the only other town in the county.

'On the other hand, Montpelier does contain a furniture store that will sell you the "heavy consumer durables" that he mentions South Petherton not having. Or, if the furniture store doesn't have the item desired, the hardware store probably will. And John doesn't mention South Petherton having its own newspaper; Montpelier does. Plus a grain elevator, lumber yard, auto repair facilities (several of those in addition to a half-dozen gas stations), a couple of small factories, school, an annual art show in addition to the annual carnival, etc.

'I have serious doubts that similar-sized towns in Ohio contain fewer amenities; I have severe doubts that John's guests knew what they were talking about.

'I suppose from the date given, the English civil war John mentioned was the Cromwellian one; Cavaliers and Roundheads. Of course, England's Wars of the Roses and even Bonny Prince Charlie and the Jacobites could be also considered civil wars, but maybe they don't count.

'Of course, nothing over here is as old as much of the scenery in South Petherton; only man-made structures of comparable age in this country would be the Indian mounds, and while there are quite a few of those in Indiana, there aren't any locally. But age is important mostly to tourists and the tradition-minded, and John doesn't really strike me as either one (Well, he could be a tourist, but not in his home town.

'(Oh, yes; we don't get fish delivered to our door -- but we do get milk and bread, and we're 7 miles from the nearest town)

'You missed a point in your prediction of "manhives". With computer-directed robots performing the actual labor, why do you need workers living close to the factories at all? String some wires and you can program a computer from your home. Barring the invention of a matter transmitter, the problems of food delivery may require most people to live in small-to-medium-sized towns, but electric wires take care of work and recreation. Food delivery is theoretically simpler to smaller separated communities than in one oversized glob of humanity, where congestion defeats the purpose of physical proximity. Suburbs may well die, but be replaced by the large town or small city rather than the "hive".

'Might as well nitpick Brunner's letter, too. I quote from the AMERICAN HERITAGE DICTIONARY: "rise (riz) v. rose (roz), risen (rizen), rising, rises. -- intrn. 1. To assume a standing position after lying, sitting, or kneeling. 2. To get out of bed." And so on. "To rebel" is definition 19.

'Of course, in Europe the student rising (or rebellion) is a fairly common part of the culture, but it isn't here. The English have this casual assumption that their way is the only way there is. (Yes, I know what he means, but some of us do think first of traditional grammar and second, if at all, of revolutionary oratory.)

'Oh, well. Brunner is still one of the best writers, but I don't want him getting smug about it.'

((The usual future for robots and man is work for the robots and leisure for mankind. But mass use of robots will only compensate for the increased costs of raw materials. Human workers will (as you say) be forced more and more into service jobs--mental jobs--jobs involving the care and feeding of (in this country, at least) hundreds of millions of unemployed and unemployable morons and dull-normals. The

costs of food distribution, power and shelter for the people will force society to seek the cheapest forms of warehousing: existing big cities changed into manholes. Only the upper middle-class and the wealthy and a lucky few others will live Outside...in those ideal little hamlets full of electronic convenience.

(This is the trend, as I see it developing.)

(The robots are very expensive, and their use will force greater uniformity of product to get the most work-life from the robot. Product changes will be minimized and new products will be fewer. There will be a greater and greater concentration of ownership/control of production, greater and greater centralization of government.)

((There certainly will be great leisure but it'll be much like the leisure of a prison. The manholes will develop some remarkable cultural and social phenomena.))

CARD FROM BOB LEMAN
2615 Broad Street
Bethel Park, PA, 15102
June 22, 1980

I think notice should be taken in your pages (and wherever else possible in the microcosm) that THE NEW YORKER has a review in its June 23 issue, of Ursula LeGuin's THE BEGINNING PLACE, by no less a personage than John Updike. It's a highly laudatory review, and -- I have to say -- probably more perceptive than anything likely to be seen in SF's regular review media, unless A.J. Budrys or possibly Malzberg reviews it. He lumps her with Bradbury and Vonnegut, says she recently passed through the same "cultural space-warp" they did into the mainstream. Okay. Maybe that sort of thing doesn't help the genre, per se, but it can't hurt, and it's great for her.

'Updike calls it "sci-fi", and condescends, but not to her.'

((Updike welcomed Ursula to the thin creek known as American Literature (Modern) which is held fiercely in the clutching hands of a coterie of academics and fashionable writers. She has the family, academic, literary, schooling and writing credentials to join the club. Now maybe she can bore from within....))



LETTER FROM JOEL DAVIS
President and Publisher
Davis Publications, Inc.
380 Lexington Avenue
New York, NY, 10017
May 12, 1980

'I thought it might be worthwhile to comment on your article referring to our recent purchase of ANALOG in your Edition #35.

'I must tell you in all honesty that I share with the loyal readers of ANALOG, not to mention the loyal readers of ISAAC ASIMOV, their concern over the non-wrapper situation on subscription copies. If the problem were easily solved I assure you that we would have solved it, but unfortunately that is not the case.

'Very simply, the printer that we use on all of our digest magazines utilizes an outside mailing house to perform the subscription mailing operation. Unfortunately, this firm does not have the equipment necessary to affix the wrapper. We are hopeful that in the beginning of 1981 the printer will have purchased the necessary equipment to do this operation himself which will obviously simplify matters.

'We are attempting to place the label over the UPC symbol which will of course not deface the artwork but still remain on the front cover. It is obviously impossible to place it on the back cover because of our fourth cover advertiser who would hardly want his advertising message obliterated by a label. We are also looking into the possibility of a peelable label, although as yet we have not been successful in locating one.

'To insure the best possible condition of both ANALOG and ISAAC ASIMOV to our subscribers, we have utilized a stiffer cover in order to protect the copy and although this does not directly answer the problem of the defaced front cover, it at least protects the most important ingredient we have, namely, the editorial content.

'In closing, I do appreciate your comments in the latter part of the article and I am hopeful that we will eventually be able to correct this particular labeling problem to everyone's satisfaction.'

((Thank you for the information. As a matter of record: the 'Comment' in SFR #35, in Elton Elliott's news column, was Elton's, not mine. He raised some tough, legitimate concerns, and I'm glad you could respond to them.))

LETTER FROM JOHN W. THOMPSON
POB #291
Palm Desert, CA, 92260

'The epigrams by Malzberg struck a nerve because I've been an epigramite for years. Here's a few for your collection:

'If you call a tail a leg, how many legs has a dog? Five? No! Calling a tail a leg doesn't make it a leg. --Abraham Lincoln

'Write 'til thy ink be dry and with your tears, moist it again. --William Shakespeare

'All that stands between most men and the top of the ladder is the ladder. --Anon

'Junk expands to fill any given volume. --Thompson's Law

'Have you considered that the light at the end of the tunnel may be an onrushing train? --Anon

'Applause is the echo of a platitude. --Ambrose Bierce

'One of these days is none of these days. --Anon

'Democracy substitutes election by the incompetent many for appointment by the corrupt few. --G.B. Shaw

'Better a good enemy than a bad friend. --Yiddish Proverb

'Forgive your enemies but first get even. --Irish Proverb

'An honest man does not make himself a dog for the sake of a bone. --Danish Proverb

'No one is satisfied with his fortune nor dissatisfied with his intellect. --French Proverb

'Wouldn't th' way things are goin' these days make a fine argument in favor of woman suffrage if we didn't already have it? --F.M. Hubbard

'When the audience comes to see us authors lecture, it is largely in the hope that we'll be funnier to look at than to read. --Sinclair Lewis'

((Why didn't you include a paramoia quote?))



ROBERT A. HEINLEIN

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY DAVID A. TRUESDALE

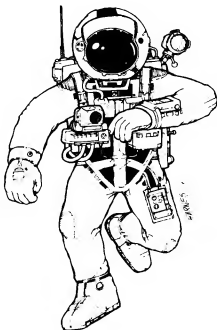
Robert A. Heinlein's triumphant return to the town of his birth, Butler, Missouri, was, in his own words, a "day I will never forget". April 17th was proclaimed Robert Heinlein Day in the small farm community (pop. 3,984) and the entire town turned out to greet their favorite son, the SF world's first acknowledged Grand Master of the form.

Even as short a time as one year ago, however, such a festive occasion would have been at best dampened, at worst difficult to bring off at all, for science fiction's most influential author was in poor health and admittedly senile. As Guest of Honor at the World Science Fiction Convention hosted in Kansas City in 1976 he appeared but as a walking simulacrum of his former self. Difficult, forgetful, rambling, he was even roundly booed while in the midst of his Quest of Honor speech following some reactionary remarks he had made.

Then, last year, thanks to one of the miracles of modern science that in years gone by would have seemed science fictional itself, Heinlein was not only restored to full health and mental alertness but has now produced a new novel, *THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST*, and a retrospective collection of stories forthcoming this summer, *EXPANDED UNIVERSE*. The latter will probably be the closest thing to an autobiography we will ever see from the 72-year-old Heinlein.

As detailed by Heinlein in the March issue of *OMNI* magazine, it was a dangerous and delicate brain operation involving micro-laser surgery to by-pass a blocked artery that saved him.

Having just returned the previous day from his fourth global cruise from which he was in convalescence, the chipper and jovial Heinlein privately began his day by visiting the Bates County Museum, then enjoyed a luncheon with relatives prior to speaking to students at Butler High School. He then sat in review while a brief parade consisting of a marching band, several theme floats and local groups wound its way around Butler Square to pay homage to their hometown hero, who accepted the tribute with smiles and applause, obviously pleased with the whole affair.



Mid-afternoon saw Heinlein presented with several plaques during a reception at City Hall (one from the Kansas City Science Fiction and Fantasy Society, bestowing upon him lifetime membership). He then graciously signed scores of autographs for enthusiastic fans and even granted several interviews with visiting media representatives, a boon that reporters who vainly attempted to interview him several years ago will readily appreciate. Following a semi-private dinner, the rejuvenated Heinlein attended a public meeting at the Butler public library, rounding off a thoroughly rewarding day for those lucky enough to have attended.

Having just finished a bound set of uncorrected advance proofs of *THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST* I was most anxious to speak with Mr. Heinlein about the book. To be quite honest, I felt the book to be terribly overlong. There was no plot to speak of, the characters were flat, interchangeable and difficult to relate to on any reasonable level, and what Mr. Heinlein felt to be amusing, those irritating bickerings among the four protagonists as to who would cap-

tain the ship (along with the boring and repeated inner-workings as to how the ship, Gay Deceiver, would jump from one universe to the next), I felt were so much wasted space. In short, I found the book to be nothing more than an overlong working exercise, a study in how to become proficient in auctorial overindulgence. I have rarely read so poor an effort from so good a writer, and am left with the hope that his next novel has to be better.

I spoke with Mr. Heinlein as he was signing autographs for fans in Butler, kneeling beside him with my cassette picking up anything and everything -- from crowd noise to his pleasantries with well-wishers and fans, and yes, even my few questions and answers. Despite my adverse feelings toward *THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST*, I was totally taken with Heinlein and was grateful for the rare opportunity to speak with him. Herewith, our brief conversation:

SFR: Why was the detailed, repeated explanations as to the programming of the computer Gay Deceiver each time the ship "jumped" from one alternate universe to another? Were the mechanics for each jump necessary?

HEINLEIN: I didn't realize I had explained it too much. I felt it was necessary to show how they swapped around. I thought it was necessary, that's all.

SFR: There seemed endless bickering among the four protagonists as to who would captain Gay Deceiver. There were at least four changes of command, each time preceded by pages of arguing and decision-making that seemed to slow the development of the book. Any reason for this?

HEINLEIN: The story was intended to be entertaining. I did not set out to teach any lessons. I set out to entertain. If it entertained you then, it was successful.

SFR: You seemed to have had a lot of fun while writing this book, especially so in the latter chapters when so many SF personalities were name-dropped in. Was it a particularly fun book for you to write?

HEINLEIN: Oh, I had fun in writing that book. Sometimes writing can become a bit tedious, but that was a fun one practically all the way through.

SFR: On one of the worlds Zebediah and the crew briefly visited you once again professed the belief that there is justice in strict punishment for criminals -- and even go so far as to have this particular alternate world's police cripple a hit-and-run convict by breaking his legs with a drawn cart. Isn't history shown that "eye-for-an-eye" retribution doesn't deter crime?

HEINLEIN: I have portrayed all sorts of cultures in the course of my stories. I don't necessarily favor that particular culture per se. But I do believe in punishment. I do not think that our present method of patting criminals on the head and saying, "Now, dear boy, don't do it again!" works. We have too many people committing murders who've already committed murders. Out in California we've got 'em by platoons. And I don't think that history has shown that retribution doesn't work. One thing that history does prove is that if you hang a murderer he never commits another murder. History has proved that.

SFR: It seems as if, after briefly introducing the evil aliens, the "Black Hats", that you just dropped them from the book (for all intents and purposes). Aside from sporadic, brief referrals to them during the course of the book, was there a reason you ignored them? Were they really necessary?

HEINLEIN: I thought they were necessary or I wouldn't have put them in there.

SFR: Now that science fiction has blossomed economically, do you believe, as Fred Pohl does, that Bigness may indeed be bad for a writer?

HEINLEIN: I don't see why it should be bad or good. There has always been a market for anybody who really had good stuff to print.

SFR: You don't think it spoils a writer into writing only what the audience wants, instead of being creative?

HEINLEIN: You have a hidden premise in your question. You assume that writing what the audience wants is not being creative. You have to be extremely creative to write what the audience wants, instead of writing what everybody else is and the audience is tired of.

SFR: Would you say a little about the novel upcoming, after THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST?

HEINLEIN: I never have anything to say about a book until after I've finished it and it's ready for publication. I do have a retrospective collection appearing in July, and it's the closest thing to an autobiography I expect to write. It's called EXPANDED UNIVERSE.

SFR: How do you feel about critics and reviewers?

HEINLEIN: You've read THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST? You'll find the answer in the last chapter.

SFR: You don't hold many of them in the highest regard then, do you?

HEINLEIN: I have never seen anything that was ever any use to me from a critic; nothing that would enable me to write a better book the next time.

SFR: Several years ago, Phil Klass--

HEINLEIN: The one who's a college professor?

SFR: Yes. In an argument he had with you many years ago, he expressed the view that the liberated social structure in STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND was correct for the short term, but definitely not for the long run. You espouse this same sexually liberated viewpoint in NUMBER. What do you think of his assessment?

HEINLEIN: I say it's a bunch of twaddle.

SFR: Do you keep up with the science fiction being written today?

HEINLEIN: Oh, yes, I've just finished A HERITAGE OF STARS by Clifford Simak. Everything Clifford Simak does is good. The man's very intelligent, and he always does a good job.

SFR: Could you tell a little about your brain surgery?

HEINLEIN: Get hold of the March issue of OMNI. I have an article in there that's based on the testimony I gave before Congress. It has all the details that a layman would be interested in, plus a reference to the technical description of the operation. They sawed through my skull right here (pointing to the left temporal region), went in and rearranged the arteries. I was senile before that. It's one of those go-for-broke operations. They either fix you up or they kill you; that was the bet. I took the gamble and won.

SFR: Are you a gambler?

HEINLEIN: You have to be a born gambler if you want to be a free-lance writer.

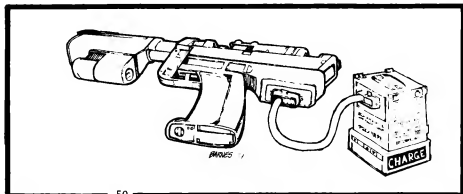
SFR: And an optimist?

HEINLEIN: Not necessarily. I tend to be a pessimist rather than an optimist, except for an abiding conviction that the human race is too tough to kill.

SFR: Do you think the human race deserves to spread itself among the stars?

HEINLEIN: There's no "deserve" about it; it's whether or not you can do it. Since the human race has remained mean, ornery, stubborn for all these many, many millennia, I assume there must be survival value in it. I do not expect us to become sweetness and light. If we ever become sweetness and light, we move over, dinosaurs, here we come.

SFR: In your Goli speech at Midamericon in 1976 you said you believed this planet was all used up and we should find another place to live. Does what you just expressed go along with this view? Do you still believe it's time we moved on?



HEINLEIN: I believe very strongly that we've got to get viable colonies on other planets for the safety of the race. We know that even if we don't blow up this planet now, that eventually it's going to be worn out; that our star is going to live for the next 30 billion years we've got to have more room and more baskets for our eggs. We can be wiped out on one planet by natural catastrophes as well as man-made catastrophes, so we need to have more places to live.

SFR: Do you stay abreast of all the new developments in the sciences?

HEINLEIN: I work very hard at it. As Alice said in *THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS*, you have to run as fast as you can just to stay in one place. The art is increasing much faster than I'm able to keep up with it.

SFR: Do you think, as Arthur C. Clarke does, that those alive in the year 2000 will most likely be able to live another 100 or 200 years?

HEINLEIN: It's possible. I think the time is coming when the question of how long we will live will be a matter of personal choice, but I don't know when that will be and I'm not qualified to have an opinion.

SFR: What do you feel about cryogenics?

HEINLEIN: (Chuckling) Pretty chilly. In *TIME FOR THE STARS* I suggest one use for it -- not original with me -- that cryogenics could be used to put a man on the shelf until science or medicine has solved the problem.

SFR: Have you ever considered being frozen?

HEINLEIN: I hadn't planned on it. I plan on being cremated.

SFR: One final question, please. Do you have any feelings one way or the other -- to change the topic from science fiction for a moment -- on the Iranian situation? About President Carter's handling of it?

HEINLEIN: This is not a political interview, and I am hindered by the situation from using scatological language, so let's leave the matter alone. (A short pause) I'm sore as hell.

SFR: Thank you very much, Mr. Heinlein.

LETTERS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 48

LETTER FROM ROBERT A. BLOCH
2111 Sunset Crest Drive
Los Angeles, CA, 90046
May 2, 1980

'Reading the review of THE SCIENCE FICTION ENCYCLOPEDIA, one sentence intrigued me -- "Open any page at random and you'll probably learn something you didn't know". How true! I opened it to page 216 and learned Ralph Milne Farley was a state senator from Wisconsin. Even Farley himself never knew that; he always told me he'd served in Massachusetts.

'Page 446 informs me that Ray Palmer, when appointed editor of *AMAZING STORIES*, was a Chicago resident. By golly, that imposter living in Milwaukee sure had me fooled!

'On Page 58 I discover that J.G. Ballard coined the term "inner space" in 1962. And here I thought I heard it first in a several-times reprinted speech issuing from the mouth of the 1948 Worldcon's Guest of Honor, who happened to be me!

'I'm afraid that as a reliable reference, this book is a crock. Hoping you are the same --'

((I want to say this to the American people: I am not a crock!))

((I am, however, half-crocked some of the time.))

LETTER FROM JOHN E. BAER
6039 Hazelwood Lane
Bellevue, WA, 98006
May 8, 1980

'A note on the proposal by Rich Dodge (SFR #35, p. 53): I'm afraid his theory is too good to be true. The flaw is that relativistic velocities do not add in the normal manner, namely:

$$V_3 = V_1 + V_2,$$

'but rather:

$$V_3 = (V_1 + V_2) / (1 + \frac{V_1 V_2}{c^2})$$

'So that if we have $V_1 = .5c$ and $V_2 = .3c/4$, then V_3 is NOT $.5c/4$, but only $10c/11$ (always less than c). Therefore, the electrons in Rich's torus do not restrict the freefall velocity of the torus; the torus can fall at any speed (less than c) without the electrons moving faster than light. The removal of that vital link destroys the further reasoning.'

((I knew it wouldn't work all the time! Thanks for the math and scientific reasons. Several other correspondents wrote to make the same points, more or less.))



LETTER FROM DR. DEAN R. LAMBE
Route 1, Northlake
Vincent, OH, 45784
10 May 1980

'#35 arrived yesterday; seemed a little late but nothing about the Post Awful surprises me anymore. This issue seemed shorter, somehow; don't know why, although there didn't seem to be near enough Alien Thoughts and putting all the letters together into one lump felt strange. Funny, as you strive to un-clutter your cover, OMNI does the opposite. Must have a word with Bova about that, as the OMNI cover lines are obviously produced at a different time than the final contents, and the contrast is getting silly.

'Having done two separate reviews of the new Heinlein, I must disagree with both you and Pinto. While I freely admit that my notes on THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST include: "Agh, the rumors are true, H. is senile!" and "Only H. could have gotten this mess past a publisher!", I soon got past that point and started laughing again. I left that book with the warm feeling that he wrote it just for us in the SF community, with full knowledge that while he may have made a successful end-run around one blocked artery, he still could drop dead at any moment. Ever seen the stuff Picasso did in his last frantic years? Methinks mortality is a heavy, nay, wordy and turgid, burden when you ain't got much of it.

'Should the book have been 30,000 words thinner? Perhaps, yet I'd have hated to miss something that soon may be irreplaceable. Of course, "Joe Smith" couldn't have published it; no "Joe Smith" has been as pivotal a part of the history of American SF and could have as much fun saying so in the final chapters. Happiness is a warm Heinlein, and since Lazarus Long is too much of an independent cuss to sit in a rocking chair next to his neurosurgeon, why don't we all chip in and get him a portable satellite data link and MedEvac chopper. Geez, and NEWSWEEK thinks Johnny Carson is a "national treasure".'

YOU GOT NO FRIENDS IN THIS WORLD

A Review Of Short Fiction By Orson Scott Card

I am burned out. The type has become rhythmic repetitions of old familiar shapes; I read and nothing enters my head. For salvation I have turned to reading eighteenth-century essays and poetry, trying to recover by immersing myself in Swift, Pope, Addison and Steele.

It is not that the stories have got worse -- they haven't. Nor have I lost the ability to discern good from bad in science fiction. What's changed are my definitions of good and bad, what I look for in a story. At once my definitions have grown looser and tighter.

Looser, because the "goodness" or "badness" of a story depends on what the reader wants. Action? Thought? Beautiful language? Irony? A convincing milieu? Awe? Catharsis? All are perfectly legitimate things to look for in literature, and no two readers look for exactly the same proportion of satisfaction in each area -- nor do I, on any two days, look for exactly the same combination. Where is the impartial standard?

Tighter, because through years of editing badly written articles and reading students' stories, I primarily read science fiction now from a diagnostic point of view: What is the writer trying to do, where does he fail and how can he fix it? This is fine for helping students get control of their stories. It's even appropriate for editing an anthology. But it isn't particularly helpful for reviewing short fiction.

This short-fiction review column as I envisioned it and largely as I carried it out, is not diagnostic at all. A reviewer's stance is not that of a teacher -- it's that of a guide to the reader. In this column I had to speak to readers, not to writers. And the more I learned, the less I had to say to readers. -- It became frustrating to stand outside Hell like a cowardly Virgil, pointing at the entrance and telling Dante, "There's a bunch of circles in there, lots of suffering, a few familiar faces, and good luck".

Not that the column hasn't been worth doing. I hope someone else will carry it on in my place -- Dick assures me that there is already a queue of readers who thought my taste was execrable and wanted to show how it should be done -- and I will read

what my successor writes because such an overall, superficial guide to current short fiction does fill a need.

I just can't read stories that way anymore. I can't write that way anymore.

A TALE OF THREE STORIES:

In this last column, instead of an overview, I want to talk about only a few stories, the three pieces of fiction in the May, 1980, issue of OMNI: "Josie and the Elevator", by Thomas M. Disch; "Men Like Us", by David Drake; and "Some of My Best Friends", by Francois Camoin.

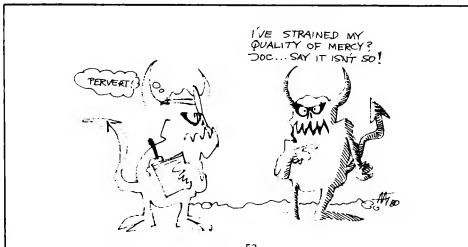
My guess is that few readers will like all three. Some, of course, will like none; most will like one or two; but rare indeed is the reader so schizophrenic as to be pleased by all of them.

"Josie and the Elevator" is the cynical, ironic story of a spoiled brat named Josie who vandalizes an elevator, which sends her to hell as a punishment. Hell is a very nasty place: "exactly like the world we all live in, the only difference being that everyone you meet there is completely inconsiderate and rude. Judging by appearances, they are the same people you knew above, but they behave quite differently, which Josie was soon to discover". The story is, of course, ironic: Hell is not at all different from where we are now. In fact, when Josie at last returns to her real home, it is a quite unrealistic heaven, which may be satirizing the Christian idea of repentance and grace (she is restor-

ed to heaven merely by showing a bit of remorse, whereupon the whimsical elevator, in God's place, restores her to her proper home); or may be satirizing typical happy endings; and certainly carries on the original irony by being the world the implied author thinks our world ought to be, but isn't. (Levels under levels: The implied author paints this ideal world with such broad strokes, and it is such a hackneyed liberal utopia, that one is either depressed at the banality of the author's vision or confident that the real author, at one remove, is sneering even at the heaven in the story.)

"Men Like Us" begins with three men approaching a village; one of them, Smith, goes on ahead. The village is powered by a nuclear generator, one of the few surviving since the holocaust. The author rather clumsily lays the groundwork for us to believe in the existence of some people somehow miraculously changed by the nuclear explosions of the war to become immortal shape-changers, implacably opposed to the proliferation of nuclear power. And, to no one's surprise, Smith and his comrades turn out to be Changelings, and in a bang-up action-adventure ending they wreck the power plant.

"Some of My Best Friends" is a quietly written story of a one-handed American trying to survive in a New York City run by Arabs under Muslim law, where being a Jew is a capital offense and those who don't collaborate are treated like scum. The voice is subdued, and events unfold without fireworks, until through



an almost inevitable accident the narrator is caught stealing and loses his other hand. Ironically, he has actually been involved in a conspiracy against the Arab rulers, for which he could be subject to the death penalty, yet it is not for his actual crimes but for an accidental non-crime that he is punished. Without gimmicks, the narrator speaks affectingly: "It wasn't going to hurt, I told myself. I hugged my hand. I thought about the palm trees (in California) and that wonderful, warm blue ocean. There would only be the prick of the needle and then the numb feeling that crept slowly up the arm. No real pain. I thought about the beaches. The naked women walking. The sea."

Under normal circumstances, I probably would have reviewed only the Camoin story, because it was the only one that satisfied me as being an excellent work of art that was worth reading. The Drake story is seriously flawed; the Disch story is so over-ironized that it negates itself and gives me nothing.

Yet all three of these stories were purchased by an editor -- probably by the same editor, though I can't be sure where Bova leaves off and Shekley begins in the selection of OMNI's fiction. As my writing students pointed out last quarter: All three stories were obviously good enough to sell, and that's good enough for us. And if two of them aren't very good, why were they bought?

Why do you read?

Which leads directly to a digression. When you and I approach the reading of science fiction, what are we looking for?

1. Some readers are looking for a convincing, satisfying milieu. Some call this reason for reading escapism, but that's a pejorative and I don't think it really fits. The frontier is gone in America, and with it the space, the anarchy that the frontier has always provided. Where in America today can anyone find a place to be a hero? Kissing-er finally got his lone-cowboy dream fulfilled, but how many others? Those of us who do not fit well with in organizations and clubs and groups and families, where is our home? So we look for fiction as a place to go home to. Wild adventures in space, travel through time, trips into fantasy worlds -- but all with this in common: The milieu that satisfies us is the one where the individual's choices make all the difference. We'll put up with a nincompoop like Conan, a noncharacter like Spock or Skywalker, silly plots and pedestrian language, just so the world is rich and real and convincing. But let a speculative world contain one sci-

tific flaw or one inconsistency, and the illusion shatters, we throw the book or magazine across the room and we write angry letters and reviews because the world was not habitable; the milieu was not convincing.

2. Some readers are looking for fun -- for the sudden twist, the dazzling effect, the punch ending. We look to literature as we would look to an amusement park -- for a little fear, a sudden plunge, an explosion, a wild spin and then everything neatly wrapped up when the ride's over. But let a story leave something hanging, let the danger be unfrightening, the twist predictable and slow and we impatiently move on to the next story, hoping that this time we'll get the thrills.

3. Some readers are looking for self. Not, of course, their own self or the author's self, but the self of a character they can identify with, one with nobility enough for them to



wish to be him, with flaws enough for them to believe they might become him, with initiative enough to change his own life, with doubts enough for them to fear for him. In short, we who read for self are looking for a character to whom we can give, not just love, but a portion of our self-love, and from whose experiences we can grow as if they were our own. But let the character be shallow or unmotivated or too good or too bad or, God forbid, let him be thrown away meaninglessly or left in pointless despair, and we feel despair, and we feel personally offended by the author, for it is our own self he had denigrated.

4. Some readers are looking for philosophy and ideas, and are unconcerned with the story itself except as it reveals a utopia or a dystopia or a theory or a machine or a history or a language or -- whatever the story is entranced by. But let a story deal with mere characters or

events, or toss in machines that aren't explained or ignore the social or historical background, and we become convinced that the writer is too stupid to satisfy us and we go on looking for a writer who has ideas.

5. Some readers are looking for a joyously personal voice: a Vonnegut who laughs at everything until he weeps, a tiredly intellectual Disch, a mad and gleeful Lafferty, an impetuously sentimental Bradbury. Let a writer withdraw his voice from the work and we get bored, for it's the conspiracy of reader and writer we're looking for, someone to put our own feelings into a voice that might be our own, so that we identify, not with the characters, but with the implied author of the story, seeing the world as he sees it and taking pleasure from at last finding a kindred spirit.

6. Some readers are looking for language, the well-made sentence, flowing paragraph, the apt metaphor, and when a writer is clumsy or vague or pedestrian, we get impatient and go on to someone who knows his way around the English language.

7. Others are looking for catharsis, however that's achieved -- a profound emotional experience that cleanses us and yet lingers in the memory like an unrequited love. We reread the works that gave this experience to us, trying to remember; and when we read stories that achieve only lesser things, we are inevitably disappointed.

8. All of us, I think, are looking for story, or we would not turn to fiction in the first place. The tale, the myth, the series of events happening to the same person or people or group -- that alone draws us in, however else we might hope to derive our satisfaction. History satisfies much of our need for story, but it has the drawback of being true, so that it never achieves closure. The Civil War does not end at Appomattox, it lingers on even in racial conflicts, contempt for Southerners, party alignments. Did the Norman Conquest begin with William's birth, or with Edward's exile in Normandy, or with Rolf's trip up the Seine? Fiction, however, imposes order on events. Only certain characters are involved and not others; only certain events apply and not others; only certain information is necessary and not other; and at the end, with even the most vague story, there is some sort of closure, and when we put the story down, we know there is no more. Because a story is an artifact, it can be held and used.

It is not just that you and I are looking for different things to satisfy us. It is also that we find it impossible to agree even when which stories satisfy which desires. I love both beautiful language and idiosyncratic voice; and yet, though I'm told Disch has both, I find him dissatisfying on both counts. And while it is painfully obvious that "Josie and the Elevator" means to be philosophical, to me the philosophy of unstable, open-ended irony is morally equivalent to nihilism and I am repelled. I am sure, however, that there are other readers -- perhaps Disch himself -- who would be baffled at my reading of the story and be convinced that I simply didn't understand what was going on. How can I argue with them?

I am as susceptible to action and adventure, to fun and thrills as anyone -- why else did I enjoy STAR WARS so much? (Parenthetically, much of what I liked about SW was the directorial voice, Lucas's conscious and clever parody of old-time SF.) Yet, character means more to me, and because in "Men Like Us" Smith was nothing more than a body occupying a place in a series of events manipulated by the author, I didn't give a damn. Philosophically I did not approve of blowing up the power source for a community; nor did I believe in the plausibility of the Changelings, which rather ruined the story. And the twist Drake tried for, the "surprise", was predictable and pedestrian to me. Yet there are doubtless others who thought the Changelings a marvelous idea, were utterly surprised and are now writing letters to Drake pleading for more Changeling stories, which will soon be out in a collection, quickly to be followed by "another fine novel in the Changeling series". If, of course, there are enough such readers. Who am I to tell them they are wrong?

And even though I found the narrator of "Some of My Best Friends Are Americans" believable, likeable, a kindred spirit; even though I found the milieu convincing and laden with implication and stable irony; even though I found the language perfectly appropriate, the images beautifully drawn and the experience cathartic, there will undoubtedly be many who will be bored by the story's slow pace, who will find the narrator unlikeable, who will regard the milieu as impossible, who will look in vain for a big effect or a surprising twist ending. How can I tell a bored reader that a story is not boring, or an unsympathetic reader that the character is really loveable?

All three stories had some virtue that led the editor to buy them.

For all that I found "Josie" negative and trivial, as an editor I might have bought the story. If I wanted to be snide, I could suspect that it was bought because Disch is in among the artsy set. In fairness, however, I must admit that I could conceive of buying it myself, in part because I would know there was an audience for it, in part because, despite the weakness of the whole, it does have intriguing ideas and some entertaining moments and, after reading a slushpile for several hours, turning to a professionally written story would be a great satisfaction despite the emptiness of the story itself.

And even though I found "Men" clumsily executed and implausible and predictable, I might have bought it, too. After all, the writing is, word for word and sentence for sentence, competent. There are some ele-



ments in the story that can't help but grab an audience: the crucified frog at the opening (though not a damn thing is done with it); Smith's being forced to strip in front of a crowd of strangers (always a good thing to do if you want the reader to identify with your hero's vulnerability and unshakeable confidence). The foreshadowing of the Changelings only seems clumsy to me because it was so obvious -- at least the author had sense enough to prepare for his later revelation of Smith's real identity. And if you happen not to like nuclear generators, the story would be just about perfect for you. (There is also the chance that the author means the main character to be unsympathetic -- for the story to be taken ironically. That reading does not seem to me to be suggested by the text, and would make the action-adventure aspects rather stupid. Drake is clearly not a subtle writer and so I discount that possibility.)

Then Why Review At All?

If my reading of stories is so

inevitably different from yours, why should I review? My answer might seem to be, I shouldn't -- after all, this is my last column. But then -- I'm still hoping someone will carry on the idea of reviewing the best short fiction, reading all of it in order to sift out those stories worthy of comment. It's not because I believe the next reviewer will have a vision superior to mine -- different, certainly, but what I see I see fairly well. It's because not everyone can be a Virgil, leading Dante through Hell and Purgatory and Paradise, pointing out every feature along the way. Some of us also must serve as mere signs, saying, "Abandon hope, all ye who enter here". I'm quitting because I no longer enjoy filling that role -- but it's not because the role should not be filled.

And it is not just for readers that reviews should be continued. Writers send out their stories into absolute silence, except for the reviews. No applause, just the silence of turning pages, the magazine and anthology sales figures that say nothing about the individual story. Sometimes it is better even to be criticized negatively than to be left in silence: I would rather know that I was read and hated than to be treated courteously and never read at all. As Samuel Johnson described those of us who write:

"Prodigious madness of the writing race!
Ardent of fame, yet fearless of disgrace."

Negative reviews can sting, especially when the critic gets cute and writes his invective more to show his own cleverness than to illuminate the story that he pretends is his subject. But the real sting of bad reviews is that they might well be true, something that is hard for the fragile ego of the creator to bear. Nevertheless, the writer has to bear it, because it is incapable that even the best of writers will, occasionally, at least, write something mediocre. And if a writer refuses to admit that possibility, he does himself no favor.

At the same time, however, the reviewer has a responsibility to treat the act of writing itself with respect. No matter how bad a story is, by one standard or another, all stories are good at least this far: There is some value within the work that impelled the author to write it. And while a reviewer can congratulate himself profusely on finding weak characters or clumsy sentences -- not a remarkable achievement, actually, nor particularly telling -- the critic must, to be able to speak intelligently at all,

also find the value that the author found. If the critic cannot get inside the story enough to find any value at all, it is his flaw, not the author's, and the critic would be well-advised to set the work aside and confine his comments to those stories whose appeal he can at least understand, if not agree with. Otherwise the reviewer will speak from ignorance, condemning ban because it doesn't taste like beef.

(My thanks to Dick Geis, not only for providing a space for me to publish for the last year and a half but also for publishing the sort of magazine where readers can turn in the expectation of occasionally finding intelligence. It makes for good company. SFR hasn't been immune from the feuds and petty name-calling of other fanzines, but Geis has never let these become the main thrust of the magazine; he has always reserved space for things that might have value, and it is encouraging that readers have responded, both with subscriptions and with Hugo votes.)

***** GEIS COMMENT

Orson's eventual flame-out was in the cards from the beginning. Each issue I held my breath---would he be able/willing to do one more column...one more...more...?

I'm surprised he lasted this long. He's a remarkably dedicated, professional, idealistic writer. I thank him in behalf of all of you who found his reviews of value and interest. And I thank him personally for gracing SFR's pages.

So---who's next?

Coincidentally with Orson's handing on the torch of reviewing short fiction has come a significant shrinkage of short sf and fantasy story outlets. It's fairly safe to expect there'll be no more (or very, very few) appearances of GALAXY, GALILEO, AMAZING (combined with FANTASTIC), ETERNITY...

We find ourselves now with ANALOG, ASIMOV's, F&SF, and OMNI as monthly publishers of sf and fantasy.

Beyond these an occasional original anthology, an odd issue of a moribund magazine or three. And some small press efforts such as WHISPERS, WEIRDOBOOK, etc.

I suspect strongly that we can expect perhaps two of the four monthlies to go bimonthly in response to slack recession/depression sales. Take your pick.

But who will carry on the reviewing chores?

I have no idea.

But here's how I want to present

short fiction reviews in the future: I want a different reviewer for each magazine or area [such as original anthologies, small press, the rare issue of almost-dead prozines...].

Thus one or two burned-out reviewers will not cause too much dislocation of coverage overall.

To this end I ask applicants for the short fiction reviewing slots to send a sample review with your second choices for reviewing slots in case you are chosen but your preferred magazine or category is already taken.

The reviewing slots open are:

ANALOG

F&SF

ASIMOV'S

OMNI

Small Press Short Fiction

Original Anthologies and Other Magazines.

If that last category is too full in practice, I'll divide it.

Each category is allowed 1000 words per SFR. [But I won't need a full 1000 word column sample to judge your effort; just give me a few opinions/reviews. I'll read the stories you've covered and see if I agree with you and if your writing is professional level. Thus I insure the voice of SFR is the voice of ~~the~~ Geis.]

It may be that finding a Small Press Short Fiction reviewer will be difficult, since that person must have access to most of the material published, a situation rare unless the reviewer is also a small press publisher who trades with others.

I may end up doing that category myself.

I'd prefer short fiction reviewers concentrate on the best fiction in their chosen category, with occasional outrage when a Name writer (and the editor) publishes a turd.

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THE VIVISECTOR

BY DARRELL SCHWEITZER

FAR FUTURE CALLING

By Olaf Stapledon
Edited by Sam Moskowitz
Published by Oswald Train
Box 1891, Philadelphia, PA, 19105
1979, 275 pp., \$12.00

Inevitably, sometime after any important author's death, somebody compiles a catch-all volume of uncollected material. I recently did one for Lord Dunsany. (It's called *THE GHOSTS OF THE HEAVENSIDE LAYER*. Owlswick will publish it in July, 1980, \$20.00) In 1978 there was the spectacular *PEAKE'S PROGRESS*. Volumes of uncollected Mark Twain were still appearing in the 1960s. Of course, the quality of such books varies widely, depending on such factors as how hard the writer worked to publish everything, where his reputation stood late in his career, etc.

I am happy to report that this Stapledon catch-all is quite good. It is also important because it gives readers a chance to sample his writing without committing a lot of time to one of his huge novels. His short stories have never been collected before because he was virtually forgotten when he died, and simply because he wrote so few of them. Five, it seems, of which one at least appears here for the first time (another "East is West", is unaccounted for in the introduction), and another appeared first in *F&SF* last year.

Stapledon was, undeniably, one of the seminal influences in SF. Similar status can be claimed for Wells and Mary Shelley. I really suspect that Jules Verne has not made as much a mark on modern SF. Readers coming to Stapledon for the first time through this book will find him a fairly polished stylist, but otherwise primitive. His ideas were advanced, and it is through them that he has exerted such vast influence. His basic storytelling method is the lecture-studded Tour of Wonders. For example, in "East is West", the protagonist finds himself in an alternate world in which the Orient has moved in on a backward Europe, and actually there is no story in the sense of character development, conflict and resolution. The reader's interest is kept through the very deft use of details, the elements of Oriental culture

mixing in with the English, the same way any non-Communist Oriental city today looks half-Western, but only half.

A radio play, from which the book's title is taken, basically takes a couple of present-day characters on a tour through the future, complete with colonization of Neptune and species which have evolved from present-day mankind. (Yes, it's an adaptation of *LAST AND FIRST MEN*.) There is a distressing tendency for the visions to end with "it was all a dream". The only stories to really be stories are "The Man Who Became a Tree" (which is almost reminiscent of Dunsany) and "A Modern Magician" (a rather rudimentary account of the abuse of psychic powers). Also included are an essay, "Interplanetary Man" (interesting, dated, sometimes impractically fuzzy), and two essays by Sam Moskowitz, "The Man Behind the Works", an informative biography, and "Peace and Olaf Stapledon", about Stapledon's visit to the United States in 1949. The illustrations by Stephen Fabian are attractive, although sometimes inappropriate for this sort of material. Recommended for Stapledonians, serious students of SF, and anyone who wants to sample the author.

BRIDGE OF ASHES

By Roger Zelazny
Gregg Press, 1979
154 pp., \$10.00

I am reviewing this reprint (first hardcover) of a 1976 novel because of the amount of attention it received when it first appeared, which is to say exactly none. There was one Signet printing and the book vanished. I've met Zelazny fans who don't even know it exists. Which is a shame because it's rather good.

BRIDGE OF ASHES is one of those novels which, I think, in the perspective of a few years, will be seen to have marked the transition between the old Zelazny and the new. It is not another elaborate mythological exercise, but it does feature not one, but two Guardian/God-figures. The primary one is the weakest yet, a veritable basket-case



among supermen, and all the more interesting for it. Our hero, Dennis Guise, is the most powerful telepath the human race has ever known. He was born that way, which is the problem. He was so bombarded with uncontrolled signals from the people around him that he never developed any personality of his own, remaining a vegetable until he can be slowly helped to piece himself together.

This is certainly a novel approach to the old subject of telepathy, and the slow integration of Dennis, as first he learns to assume single identities (of others) and then distinguishes himself from those, is beautifully done. And then ----

Then there are problems. There is another plot, clever enough in its own terms, about aliens who have created mankind for the purpose of transforming the Earth to suit their needs. Man kills himself off with pollution and the aliens move in, you see. There is a mysterious Dark Man, possibly immortal, with an undisclosed array of powers at his disposal, who has been combatting the scheme, and it seems he created or at least manipulated Dennis to prove to the aliens that they couldn't control mankind anymore, so they'll quit and depart. All this is dealt with in a very rudimentary manner, at the beginning and end of the book. The bulk of it has to do merely with Dennis becoming himself, and is more interesting. The secondary plot seems tacked on, and as a result, the primary one (concerning Dennis) doesn't come to much of a resolution. It has the feel of a large fragment. But it's a very good fragment, and it holds up well for its own sake, and is considerably better than the more recent *ROADMARKS*, which is a series of short fragments which don't hold up at all.

WATCHSTAR
By Pamela Sargent
Pocket Books, 1980, 238 pp., \$2.25

I'm sorry to say this one didn't work for me at all. I have enjoyed several of Ms. Sargent's shorter pieces, but this novel strikes me as a complete washout. The characters in it remind me of an actress I saw once, who emoted with eyebrows. Anger, fear, love, sorrow, joy, all came from wriggling her eyebrows, making phony expressions and hurling herself around the stage like a bag of cement. (She was rather heavy.) The actors who worked with her told me that after a while they would recognize the signals, but neither they nor the audience would actually receive any sense of the emotion being conveyed.

In WATCHSTAR we know that everyone is supposed to be feeling, but it's so much dead verbiage. The characters do not come alive. Just as bad, there is no sense that the setting is actually real. It's an interesting setting -- Otherness, a primitive society in some ways, where everybody who lives to adulthood has various psi powers (specifically telepathy, telekinesis and levitation). Those who are born without these powers are killed at once, and lots of people don't make it through an Ordeal in adolescence.

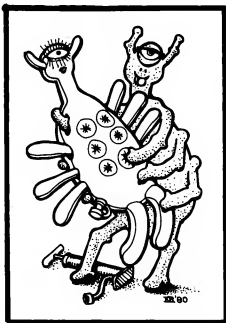
But this society seems to exist in a complete vacuum. They have no history save for a brief explanation that nothing ever changes. There is no mystique about the Ordeal. You'd think this would be a central fact of life, around which much myth and ritual would center. No. The day-to-day details which make something seem like lived-in, concrete setting just aren't there. Remember how well LeGuin did it in the Earthsea books, THE DISPOSSESSED, and THE EYE OF THE HERON, to the point that the reader felt he/she had been there? Sargent doesn't come close. I confess I found WATCHSTAR rough going and I never finished it. I will be interested to see what Sargent does in the future, but I really can't recommend this one.

There's an attractive cover by an uncredited artist. At least this book doesn't look like everything else that's being published.

THE SKYLARK OF SPACE
SKYLARK THREE
THE SKYLARK OF VALERON
SKYLARK DUQUESNE
All by E.E. "Doc" Smith
Berkley Books, 1980, \$1.95

Authentic gee-whiz science fiction, comic books in prose, just this

thing for your ten-year-old. E.E. Smith's works are only readable by audiences wholly innocent of realism, sensibility or what critics futilely call "literary values". The dialogue does not sound like people talking. Descriptions don't describe. Characters are grotesque cutouts. Ideas and assumptions are not examined in any intelligent fashion, and ultimately the sound and fury signifies nothing. E.E. Smith is the James Fenimore Cooper of science fiction: outrageously bad, but he did something important, and he did it first. Like Cooper, he is still read, even though standards of craftsmanship have been raised to the point that if he were to start all over today, with similar "skills", he would be totally unpublishable.



C.M. Kornbluth has adequately demonstrated (in THE SCIENCE FICTION NOVEL) that there is nothing in these books which is congruent with adult reality. The passions, the intellectual states which real adults go through while facing the conflicts of this life never intrude. And yet: Cooper wrote about the American West, and heroic settlers battling savage Indians, and he did it when the public was craving for such, when there also was a big demand for anything which might be called "American literature", no matter how bad it might be. He couldn't write. His powers of observation were nil. It didn't matter. The same is true of Smith. What readers forget these days is that Smith's contemporaries were fully as bad, for the most part, or worse. (The first three came out in 1928, 1930, and 1934. The fourth, in 1965, was a visitor from the

Stone Age.) Science fiction had sunk to a very degraded state at the time, and there didn't seem to be an editor on hand with the vision or the know-how to do anything about it. This set things up nicely, as it did for Cooper, with what I call the Audience Starvation Syndrome. If you starve them long enough, they'll ignore the grossest failings. Smith had a spark of imagination which the others lacked. He gave the audience the stars. (Edmond Hamilton did the same a little earlier, but apparently the insular SF fans of paleolithic times did not read WEIRD TALES.) The SKYLARK books are the first important space operas. Basically the plot consists of Jack Armstrong/Thomas Edison building a Grandiosity Machine and conquering the universe with it.

Some while later the same material fell into the hands of literate writers. Why is Smith still read? I suspect there is a huge audience out there that can't tell the difference, the sort of people who don't really read, but just skim pages for "content". To these any human sensitivity is lost, and any character development "gets in the way of the plot". Then, if adult reality never intrudes, there are always children. And the nostalgic. Unfortunately I never managed to get into the latter category, because I didn't discover Smith until I was 14, by which time I had already read Ray Bradbury, Arthur Clarke and some adult Heinlein. It was too late.

I found the SKYLARK books considerably more bearable than the LENSEMEN series, which defeated me after the third volume. I was also reading Edgar Rice Burroughs at the time. He too is a top-selling author, considered a literary horror by many. But he had an ability to keep a story moving, to get his hero into at least momentarily convincing danger, and an overall vividness which escaped Smith, who could only pile up silly effects. (Sure enough, the SKYLARK series concludes with the joyous destruction of a whole galaxy of disgusting, icky, nasty critters devoid of redeeming social value.)

Just great for certain segments of the audience. Useless for the



rest. These new editions have covers featuring a very macho, curiously half-clad Richard Seaton who looks more like John Carter of Mars. The Jack Gaughan paintings for the old Pyramid versions were truer to the books, and more attractive.

THE DANCERS OF ARUN

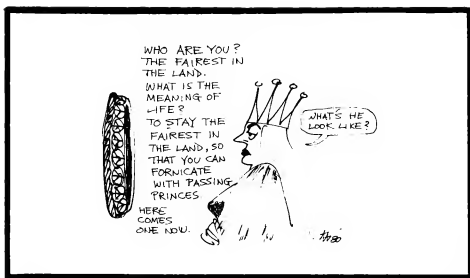
By Elizabeth Lynn
Berkley-Putnam, 1979, 263 pp.
\$10.95

Another reviewer recently expressed grave disappointment in this book, and warned that the author had best get her act together before praise spoils her and she becomes completely rambling and self-indulgent. The problem, said the reviewer, was that she didn't pick up where she left off in *WATCHTOWER* and we never found out what happened to so-and-so. The problem, says I, is that the reviewer is trying to review the book he wants the author to write, not the one the author wanted to write. The subject matter of this book held the author's interest enough for her to write it, and if someone wanted something else, that is just too bad.

THE DANCERS OF ARUN is not a sequel to *WATCHTOWER* in any normal sense. It takes place well after all the characters in the first book are dead, and its thematic concerns are different. The only things in common are the specific setting (at the beginning, Tormor Keep, which we rapidly leave and never see again) and the more general setting, the land of Arun. I suspect this book resulted when the author wanted to get beyond the limited range of the first book and explore a bit.

The question of belief-systems (or a Belief Vacuum) which I raised in my review of *WATCHTOWER*, is answered to some extent. We follow a band of the martial arts dancers, the chearis, around, and before long get to know how they live and how they perceive the world. (As a pattern, with everything in its place and balance.) This is complete enough, and believable. We encounter several social systems and see them interact. The picture of the world is being filled in.

What else is good about this novel, and what isn't? There isn't a strongly-driven plot this time, as there was before. In *WATCHTOWER* a throne was usurped, and for all the sidetracking, you knew we were going to get back to the matter sooner or later. Now we follow Kerris, a boy who lost an arm while small, who lives as an outcast in Tormor Keep. His long-lost brother shows up with a band of chearis to take him away, and we have the old story



of suddenly widening horizons and an adolescent growing to understand himself. It's an old story because it's a valid one, and it has been happening as long as mankind has existed. The neanderthal boy suddenly led out of the cave and taken on the long and exciting chase after the mastodon herd would understand it, except for the details. And Lynn tells it beautifully, with great sensitivity. She runs into trouble later on when a subplot (an irresponsible cheari, blackmail by nomad raiders who insist on being taught psychic secrets) threatens to push Kerris into the background. But then this subplot dovetails back into the main one, and Kerris learns how to interact with other people on a fuller level at the same time that he helps resolve the other conflicts.

I suppose this book is more like life. It doesn't follow a ready plot outline. People wander through settings and events happen in their lives, and gradually they are changed, and patterns emerge, but this is a much harder sort of book to write without getting boring than one which has a clear-cut action plot which is just as clearly over when the bad-dies get theirs. If such a book is

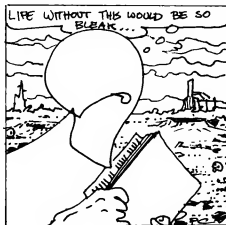
to work, it has to stay with the developing character all the time. Lynn has enough sense not to shift away entirely (e.g. into other viewpoints), but there are times when she seems to be losing focus.

The other characters are interesting, and the death of one of them is very moving, and the functional utopianism of the chearis' way of life is an accomplishment in itself (as far as I'm concerned, any depiction of a society the author seems to think is ideal, which refrains from long lectures and remains an integral part of the story, is an accomplishment), but a little more unity wouldn't have hurt.

One ironic note: Kerris is telepathic. This is something he suffers through in adolescence, something from within him which he fears and does not understand, until his brother explains it to him, and he learns to use his talents. (Then there is a deep-rooted barrier of childhood trauma to be overcome.) At the same time, the sexual mores of his society are quite different from ours. Homosexual relations with his brother are no big deal, and pleasant, like learning to swim.

A highlight: In the Galbareth Fields, Kerris, who is used to the closed-in Keep and the mountains around it, suddenly feels the mystery and awe of the vast, silent plain around him, in a beautifully handled passage, which in the hands of a lesser writer might have made the place seem no more mysterious than Wisconsin. This is first-class writing on a subtle, yet powerful level. And there are dozens of other particularly vivid moments, and times when the characters seem particularly human and alive in a way that fictional characters seldom are.

Decidedly first class.



THE HUMAN HOTLINE

S-F NEWS BY ELTON T. ELLIOTT

REMEMBER THE ADDRESS FOR THIS COLUMN IS: ELTON T. ELLIOTT, SFR, 1899 WIESSNER DRIVE N.E., SALEM, OR 97303.
PHONE: (503) 390-5421

ORYCON 80 has asked me to be their Fan Guest of Honor. The convention will be November 14-16, Portland, Oregon, at the Hilton Hotel. Guest of Honor is Fritz Leibler and Toastmaster is F.M. Busby. For more info write:

OREGON SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION, INC.
POB #14727
Portland, OR, 97214
Telephone: (503) 761-8768
(I'll have more info next issue)

CORRECTION: You know I hate it when things go wrong which are not my fault, but I get the blame -- witness the ASIMOV matter in SFR #34. I had intended headings for both ASIMOV'S and ASIMOV'S ADVENTURES, with ASIMOV listed as a monthly, ASIMOV'S ADVENTURES reporting publication had been suspended and they (Davis Publications) had previously a non-subscription policy. When the column appeared, the two items had magically combined -- with parts of each left out -- the ASIMOV item mentioned that they had a non-subscription policy. I apologize to George for not spotting the error immediately and making rectification in SFR #35. (I understand George's irritation.)

Hey, I make mistakes, and when that happens I get ticked off at myself; when somebody else does it and I get nailed, I don't become chagrined, I just curse a lot. Let he who is perfect cast the first stone or asteroid. I can't promise mistakes in this column won't occur, but I ask that if they do, you write me and I'll correct it next issue.

DEATHS

George Pal, age 72:
Noted Film-maker (SF films included THE TIME MACHINE and THE WAR OF THE WORLDS), died of an apparent heart attack at his home in Beverly Hills, May 2, 1980. Forrest J. Ackerman presented the eulogy.

Kay Tarrant, septuagenarian:
Long-time assistant to John W. Campbell at ASTOUNDING/ANALOG, died in Hoboken, New Jersey, March 23, 1980.

Wallace West, age 79:
Writer whose first story appeared in 1929, died in the Bahamas on March 8, 1980. His works included THE BIRD OF TIME and LORDS OF ATLANTIS.

Joan Thurston, age 38:
Wife of SF writer Robert Thurston, died on May 9, 1980, from a long-standing cancer condition.
(The above info from SF CHRONICLE)

MAGAZINES

ASIMOV'S, ANALOG, FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION appear monthly. GALAXY and GALILEO are apparently still in abeyance: GALAXY was scheduled to appear last March, then June, but as of the first of July it hasn't appeared in the Willamette Valley area -- GALILEO and GALAXY have not appeared since late last year.

LATE NEWS---FANTASTIC has been merged with AMAZING. The single magazine will be titled AMAZING with an above-logo heading that reads: Combined with Fantastic. The announced publishing schedule, beginning with the November 1980 AMAZING, will be bi-monthly.



Other magazines in different formats include OMNI, which appears monthly, DESTINIES, a paperback from Ace, quarterly. The second issue of ETERNITY is out.

I would appreciate all information I can get about semi-professional fiction magazines for expansion of this column's coverage of them.

NEWS

The Harlan Ellison/Ben Bova lawsuit against ABC-TV, Paramount and Terry Keegan went to the jury April 22, 1980, the plaintiffs seeking \$5 million in damages on the charges of plagiarism on the story, 'Brillo'. Two days later the jury ruled a settlement of \$337,000 in favor of the plaintiffs.

Ellison and Bova agreed to a settlement of \$285,000. Some reports had the split being 90/10 to Mr. Ellison, but Bova in LOCUS #234 said "that won't be decided until the money is actually in hand". Payment of the lawyers and court costs has been assumed by Mr. Ellison.

After the settlement was announced, a large billboard had been planned to be erected opposite Paramount with a statement mentioning the ramifications of the case. SF CHRONICLE mentioned it could be along the lines of: "WE WON! We caught the SOB's with their hands in our pockets! You can fight the conglomerates and come out ahead!" The report continued that the wording was being worked out by the various lawyers.

However, ABC/Paramount has not yet signed an agreement not to appeal, presumably because of comments made on the TOMORROW SHOW and in TIME magazine by Ellison; in fact, the last reports available had the defendants contemplating a libel and/or slander suit against Ellison. The upshot is that Ellison may be blackballed from Hollywood.

I tried to get the latest from Mr. Ellison for this column, but he demurred, saying, "The only thing to do" was to talk to his attorney, Henry W. Holmes. I have not yet been able to do so.

COMMENT: This is a precedent-shattering verdict. All writers owe Mr. Ellison and Mr. Bova some gratitude for going to battle over their rights to protection for their stories. The verdict might also help A.E. Van Vogt in his talks with 20th Century Fox over the remarkable similarities between his stories, "Black Destroyer" and "Discord in Scarlet", and the film, ALIEN.

1980 NEBULA AWARD WINNERS:

Novel -- THE FOUNTAINS OF PARADISE Arthur C. Clarke
 Novella -- "Enemy Mine" Barry B. Longyear
 Novelette "Sandkings" George R.R. Martin
 Short Story "Giants" Edward Bryant

WINNERS OF SF AWARDS AT THE AMERICAN BOOK AWARDS:

Best Hardcover SF -- JEM
 Frederik Pohl
 Best Paperback SF -- THE BOOK OF
 THE DUN CON
 Walter Wangerin, Jr.

John Kessel has received a \$10,000 grant by the National Endowment for the Arts in the year 1980. Kessel, a member of the SFWA and a published fiction writer in GALILEO, plans for the money to enable him to work on several novelettes, to make up part of his Ph.D. dissertation in English Literature at the University of Kansas.

George Zebrowski is doing a new novel for Harper & Row, FREE SPACE. His novel, MACROLIFE, will be out in paperback from Avon in May, 1981, with the Sternbach cover that graced the Harper & Row edition. He is also editing a collection, THE BEST OF THOMAS N. SCOTTIA for Doubleday. He will be doing another book review column for F&SF, was recently Guest Speaker at Urcon II, held on the University of Rochester campus the weekend of April 5, where over a thousand people attended. Frederik Pohl was the Guest of Honor.

Pamela Sargent has sold a 15,000-word novelette to F&SF. Her novel, THE SUDDEN STAR, has been renamed THE WHITE DEATH by her British publisher, Fontana.

Gregory Benford's, TIMESCAPE, has been delayed, in the British edition, from June until October. Gollancz, the publisher, has asked Benford to revise certain references to the Royal Family, since it is technically illegal in Great Britain to describe the Royal Family's private life. The law is usually not enforced, but Gollancz was taking no chances. Benford agreed to the revision, which he termed "insignificant". The softcover British publisher, Sphere, stuck to the American edition.

Frank Herbert has sold Berkley two books, plus options on future ones for a rumored sum of around \$750,000 -- Mr. Herbert would supply no amount. One of the books will be the fourth Dune novel, tentatively titled, SANIWORKS OF DUNE. At that time he was 460 pages through the third and final draft. The complete manuscript will run 550-600 pages, on which he has worked two years, although he took a six-month hiatus to do the screenplay for the Dune movie.

He described the movie as being "on track" and Dino DeLaurentis' involvement in it as just that of a "financier". H.R. Gieger will also be involved. Director is Ridley Scott, director of ALIEN. Mr. Herbert is also editing the latest Nebula Awards anthology for the SFWA.

The LAST DANGEROUS VISIONS is scheduled for late 1981 publication.

L. Sprague de Camp and wife, Catherine, are completing work on DARK VALLEY DESTINY, a biography of Robert E. Howard. This information from FANTASY NEWSLETTER.

DRAGONS OF LIGHT, edited by Orson Scott Card, will have a unique format: It will match an artist to each writer. The combinations include George R.R. Martin/Alicia Austin, Roger Zelazny/Geoffrey Barrow, Jeffrey Carver/Clyde Caldwell, Shaw Gardner/Gini Shurtleff, Michael Bishop/Val Lakey, Stephen McDonald/Ron Miller, Jessica Amanda Salmonson/Glen Edwards, Greg Bear/Greg Bear, John M. Ford/Judy King Rieniets, Allan Bruton/George Barr, Stephen Kimmel/Tom Miller, Jane Yolen/Don Maitz and Jean Stevenson/Tina Bear.

Terry Carr's, THE YEAR'S FINEST FANTASY, has moved from Berkley to Pocket where it will be retitled FANTASY ANNUAL.

Jack L. Chalker has sold a four-volume SF series to Del Rey, LORDS OF THE DIAMOND, each book to be independent but interconnected.

Stephen Goldin has a novel, AND MAKE NOT YOUR MASTER, about the dream

broadcast industry, coming out from Fawcett. He also has a novel out from Doubleday in February, 1980, A WORLD CALLED SOLITUDE.

The juvenile SF line from Harlequin will be tested in specified areas in the U.S. and Canada; the first test will be around 2,000 copies, the second of 20,000. If successful, a contract will be made for 24 books, with Mr. Goldin creating the characters and the background world, but other writers invited in to write individual books. Each book will be 40-45,000 words long. This program along with several other possibilities, Mr. Goldin reports, shows that the "the concept of doing SF is not dead at Harlequin".

Stephen Goldin and his wife Kathleen Sky are also co-authoring a book on the business side of SF writing, which grew out of the class they taught at Cal-State Northridge several years ago.

Steve Perry, Orycon's 79s Toastmaster, has sold a novel to Fawcett titled THE TULAREMIA GAMBIT -- they will be marketing it as a near-future-SF-suspense-thriller. He is also working on a contemporary parapsychology novel, SHADOWDANCER.

Ray Nelson's Petrarchan Sonnet, "The Dancing Masters", took third prize for serious poetry in the California statewide annual Ina Coolbrith poetry contest, and will soon appear in the Little Review, "Blue Unicorn".

Larry Niven will edit and Ace Books will publish a fantasy anthol-



ogy set in the universe of Niven's, THE MAGIC GOES AWAY. Authors involved include Poul Anderson, Mildred Downey Broxon, Robert Asprin, Dean Ing, Steve Barnes, Fred Saberhagen, Roger Zelazny and Bob Shaw. Larry Niven will also be penning THE DREAM PARK MURDERS with Steven Barnes.

It has been reported that a lot of resistance is developing at Simon & Schuster over the SF line, edited by Dave Hartwell, and its hardcover titles which go through Simon & Schuster.

BOOK NEWS

ACE

August:

Gordon R. Dickson.....LOST DORSAL
(Trade size, includes title story, plus the novelette "Warriors", an excerpt from his Dorsai novel-in-progress THE FINAL ENCYCLOPEDIA, afterword by Sandra Miesel.)
Jerry E. Pournelle...A STEP FARTHER
(Non-fiction, first mass market edition)
Robert Asprin.....TAMBU
(First mass market edition)
Ellen Kushner, Editor.....BASILISK
(Fantasy by Michael Bishop, R.A. Lafferty, Ursula K. LeGuin, Joan D. Vinge and others; illored by Windling.)
G. Harry Stine...THE SPACE ENTERPRISE
(Non-fiction, trade size)
Ursula K. LeGuin...ROCANNON'S WORLD
Robert Silverberg...TIME OF THE GREAT
.....FREEZE

SPECIAL ISAAC ASIMOV PROMOTION:

Six non-fiction titles: IS ANYONE THERE, JUPITER, OF MATTERS GREAT AND SMALL, ONLY A TRILLION, SCIENCE, NUMBERS, AND I AND TWENTIETH CENTURY DISCOVERY.

September:

Hal Clement.....THE NITROGEN FIX
(Trade size, illored by Janet Aulisio)
Andre Norton.....VOORLOPER
(Trade size, illored by Alicia Austin)
H. Beam Piper.....THE FUZZY PAPERS
(Includes under one cover, for the first time in paperback, LITTLE FUZZY and FUZZY SAPIENS with five illored by Victoria Poyser.)
Fred Saberhagen.....THORN
(A horror novel)
Robert Shekley (Ed.)...AFTER THE FALL
(“End of the World” stories by ... Philip Jose Farmer, Roger Zelazny, Harry Harrison, Thomas M. Disch, Ian Watson, William F. Nolan, Robert Shekley and more)
Roger Zelazny.....THIS IMMORTAL
Andre Norton.....THE DEFIANT AGENTS
Jerry E. Pournelle...EXILES TO GLORY
Petr Beckmann...THE HEALTH HAZARDS OF
.....NOT GOING NUCLEAR
(Non-fiction)

October:

Frank Herbert.....DIRECT DESCENT
(Trade size illored by Garcia)
Marion Zimmer Bradley...SURVEY SHIP
(Trade size, illored by Stephen Fabian)
Orson Scott Card, Ed....DRAGONS OF
.....LIGHT
(The first book of a two-part anthology about Dragons; contents listed on Page 61.)
Gordon R. Dickson...MASTERS OF EVERON
(First mass market edition)
Ursula K. LeGuin & Virginia Kidd, Editors.....INTERFACES
(The first mass market edition of Ms. LeGuin's first anthology features stories by Vonda N. McIntyre, James Tiptree, Jr., Edward Bryant, Gene Wolfe, Michael G. Coney, D.G. Compton, Michael Bishop, John Crowley, Avram Davidson, Grania Davis and many more.)
James Patrick Baen, (Ed.)...DESTINIES #9
(Fall, 1980, featuring material by Gregory Benford, Charles Sheffield, Jerry E. Pournelle, Frederik Pohl, James Gunn, Robert A. Heinlein among others)
Andrew J. Offutt.....KING DRAGON
(Illored by Esteban Maroto)
Robert Prehoda...YOUR NEXT FIFTY YEARS
(Non-fiction, first mass market ed.)
Harlan Ellison.....BLOOD'S A ROVER
(Illored by Richard Corben -- expanded version of A BOY & HIS DOG)

ACE July listings from SFR #35 should include THE TIME TRADERS by Andre Norton. FUZZY BONES by William Tuning has been removed from the schedule at least through December. SCIENCE FICTION STUDIES IN FILM is now tentatively set for August.

Upcoming titles include: ANZAI! by Dean Ing, the second novel in the Buck Rogers series (not connected to the NBC TV show) by John Eric Holmes, a new novel in the Dracula series, A MATTER OF TASTE, by Fred Saberhagen, and the Dorsai novel, THE FINAL ENCYCLOPEDIA, by Gordon R. Dickson.

Ace has moved to: 51 Madison Ave., New York, New York, 10010

BANTAM

August:

Thomas M. Disch.....ON WINGS OF SONG
M. John Harrison...THE CENTAURI DEVICE
September:
David A. Kyle.....WORSEL: LENSMAN
William Kotzwinkle.....FATA MORGANA

October:

William F. Logan.....LOGAN'S SEARCH
David Gerrold...GALACTIC WHIRLPOOL
(A Star Trek novel)
Thomas M. Disch...FUNDAMENTAL DISCH
(Edited/introduced by Samuel Delany)

FALL TRADE SIZE PAPERBACKS:

Joy Chant.....GRAY MANE OF MORNING
Eric Seidman (producer).....WANTED
(Poster Book of alien criminals, involving a dozen or so artists.
Text by Ed Naha.)
New Eye Photography.....THE STAR
.....TREK MAPS
(Maps showing the five voyages of the Enterprise)

Bantam has purchased the paperback rights to LORD VALENTINE'S CASTLE by Robert Silverberg for \$75,000.00.

Although the spine on Poul Anderson's novel, CONAN THE REBEL, indicates that it is the sixth of the series, you haven't missed CONAN #5. Cover problems caused a rescheduling of L. Sprague de Camp's CONAN AND THE SPIDER GOD to December.

THE SNAIL ON THE SLOPE by Boris & Arkady Strugatski was pulled from the bookstores, concerned that the back cover blurb could cause the Strugatskis problems at home with the Soviet government. The blurb states of the Strugatskis "... are now in disfavor with the Soviet government for the bold, outspoken ideas in this novel!" and goes on to describe the plot as dealing with "a stupid, mindless bureaucracy ..."

BARONET

Baronet has suspended operations, apparently for lack of capital. Publisher and founder, Norman Goldfind, is making efforts at refinancing and reorganization which could rescue the company -- the present outlook is bleak.

Baronet started by publishing two magazines, COSMOS, an SF magazine, which sold fairly well, and BIJOU, a movie magazine, which flopped. Both lasted less than a year, a blow from which Baronet never fully recovered.

Next Baronet embarked on an ambitious program with ANALOG magazine and Ace Books, with Baronet to publish the trade size paper editions of books that Ben Bova, then editor of ANALOG, would purchase; Ace would reprint the titles after a suitable length of time, in a mass market edition. Delays kept Baronet from printing all the titles before Ace was scheduled to bring out their editions, hence some titles were printed by Ace almost a year before Baronet brought them out.

CAPITOL, by Orson Scott Card, is a case in point, brought out by Ace in January 1979 -- the Baronet edition was in November 1979. Collectors who would ordinarily buy a substantial portion of a "luxury" item as a \$4.95 softbound book, were turned off

because it was a second edition; average readers aren't likely to buy a \$4.95 book if a \$1.95 edition is already out on the stands -- a \$3 difference had to hurt sales. I suspect a conglomeration of factors caused the collapse, or near-collapse.

Left in the lurch were several projects. Two in particular are disappointments: The Lord Tetric series, adapted from an outline of E.E. "Doc" Smith's by Gordon Eklund, was to be a ten-book series, also printed by Ace in the mass market edition. The first three books in the series had been printed by Baronet and the fourth was scheduled for this spring; Ace had printed the first two. According to Ace they have contracted to publish four books and no more. The second project concerns the second volume of the illustrated edition of Alfred Bester's, THE STARS MY DESTINATION. The first volume, illustrated by Howard Chaykin and edited by Byron Preiss, did not sell as well as Baronet's two earlier illustrated books, THE ILLUSTRATED ROGER ZELAZNY and THE ILLUSTRATED HARLAN ELLISON. Around 800 advance orders were processed for Volume Two; the subscribers will be offered \$20 worth of Baronet Books in settlement in lieu of cash refunds.

BERKLEY

THE JESUS INCIDENT by Frank Herbert and Bill Ransom is in its second printing, with over 300,000 copies already in print. THE BERKLEY SHOWCASE, VOLUME I, sold out its first printing.

Due to rescheduling, the listing in SPR #35 for Berkley and Putnam was inaccurate:

The updated May list featured only MANIFEST DESTINY by Barry B. Long-year and STARFALL by David Bischoff, both paperbacks. The June list included a reprint of the four "Doc" Smith Skylark novels.

The July releases are A WOMAN A DAY by Philip Jose Farmer and THE LIGHT BEARER by Sam Nicholson. Also released was GOLDEN VANITY by Rachel Pollack.

The reason for the schedule change was a switch in distributors. It was felt that the old distributor would not have placed enough emphasis on promotion of the titles.

August:

Elizabeth Lynn...THE DANCERS OF ARUN
(Second in the Chronicles of Tomorrow Trilogy.)

Glen Larson & Robert Thurston
..... BATTLE STAR GALACTICA 4:
.....THE YOUNG WARRIORS

Victoria Schochet & John Silbersack...
.....THE BERKLEY SHOWCASE: NEW
WRITINGS IN SF AND FANTASY: VOL. 2

September:

John Varley.....THE BARBIE MURDERS
.....AND OTHER STORIES
Michael KurlandPSI HUNT
Gordon Eklund...THE GARDEN OF WINTER
Ursula K. LeGuin.....MALAFRENA
(To be released as regular fiction)

October:

Poul Anderson...THE MERMAN'S CHILDREN
Gregory Benford...THE JUPITER PROJECT
(revised)
Joseph Payne Brennan.....THE SHAPES
.....OF MIDNIGHT
(Story collection)

DAW

August:

Ron Goulart.....HAIL HIBBLER
Lin CarterLOST WORLDS
Dray Prescott.....BEASTS OF ANTIARES
(#23 in the series)
C.J. CherryhSERPENT'S REACH
C.J. CherryhHUNTER OF WORLDS

September:

Andre Norton...LORE OF THE WITCH WORLD
Tanith LeeKILL THE DEAD
Jack VanceNOPELGARTH
(A three-novella collection)
A. Bertram ChandlerSTAR LOOT
Tanith Lee.....DRINKING SAPPHIRE WINE

October:

M.A. FosterWAVE
Isaac Asimov & Martin H. Greenberg..
.....ISAAC ASIMOV PRESENTS
.....THE GREAT SF 4: 1942
Brian N. StablefordOPTIMAN
Michael Moorcock...THE GOLDEN BARGE
(First American edition)
M.A. FosterTHE WARRIORS OF DAWN

DELL

August:

Philip K. Dick.....DR. BLOODMONEY:
OR HOW WE GOT ALONG AFTER THE BOMB
(Cover by Richard Courtney)
Gardner Dozois, (Ed.).....BEST SCIENCE
.....FICTION STORIES OF THE YEAR:
.....EIGHTH ANNUAL COLLECTION
(Cover by Richard Mello. Also
featured, 14 illus by Jack Gaughan)

September:

Edgar PangbornA MIRROR FOR
.....OBSERVERS
Theodore SturgeonTHE DREAMING
.....JEWELS

October:

Spider RobinsonANTIMONY
(A collection of 11 stories, plus
songs, cartoons and a weapons list.
Cover by Larry Kresek.)

Philip K. Dick & Roger Zelazny
.....DEUS IRAE
(Cover by Richard Corben)

DEL REY

August:

Roger ZelaznyROADMARKS
E. Hoffman Price... OPERATION MISFIT
Terry Carr (Ed.)... THE BEST SCIENCE
..... FICTION OF THE YEAR #9
William Sloane...THE EDGE OF RUNNING
.....WATER
Robert Silverberg.....SON OF MAN
Thorne Smith..... THE STRAY LAMB

September:

Brian Daley...HAN SOLO'S LOST LEGACY
Justin Leiber.....BEYOND REJECTION
Scott Asnin... A OLD WIND FROM ORION
Thorne Smith.... RAIN IN THE DOORWAY
Ansen DarnayA HOSTAGE FOR
.....HINTERLAND
Jack L. Chalker...A JUNGLE OF STARS
Alan Arnold..... ONCE UPON A GALAXY
(The making of THE EMPIRE STRIKES
BACK)

October:

Jack L. Chalker.....TWILIGHT AT THE
.....WELL OF SOULS
(Fifth and final Well World Book)
Lyndon Hardy...MASTER OF THE MAGIC
Terry Carr (Ed.)... THE BEST SCIENCE
..... FICTION NOVELLAS OF THE YEAR #2
Thorne SmithTURNABOUT
William TennTHE SEVEN SEXES
George O. Smith...THE COMPLETE VENUS
.....EQUILATERAL

DOUBLEDAY

August:

Gordon R. Dickson ...THE IRON YEARS
(A story collection)
Terry Carr (Ed.)...UNIVERSE 10

September:

Fritz Leiber & Stuart David Schiff..
...THE WORLD FANTASY AWARDS: VOL. 2
Thomas MonteleoneGUARDIAN

October:

Parke Godwin.....FIRELORD
Craig Strete.....ALL ELSE FAILS
(Story collection)

FAWCETT GROUP:

CREST

October:

Andre NortonHORN OF THE HORN

COLUMBINE

August:

Robert A. Heinlein THE MARK OF
.....THE BEAST
(Trade-sized paperback, illustrated
by Richard Powers)

GOLD MEDAL

September:

Hank Lopez...THE HIDDEN MAGIC OF UXMAL

POCKET

August:

- Nancy SpringerTHE SILVER SUN
(Cover by Carl Lundgren)
Suzette Haden Elgin COMMUNIPATH
.....WORLDS
(Collection of three shorter Coyote
Jones adventures)
Fritz Leiber HEROES AND HORRORS
Chester Anderson...THE BUTTERFLY KID
Damon Knight.....THE BEST OF DAMON
.....KNIGHT

September:

- Marta Randall.....DANGEROUS GAMES
Richard Lupoff WHAT IF: #1
(Anthology of Hugo runners-up)
Andrew J. Offutt & RichardTHE
.....EYES OF SARSIS
Dennis R. Caro THE MAN IN THE
.....DARK SUIT
Robert Silverberg..... THE BEST OF
.....ROBERT SILVERBERG

October:

- Fritz LeiberTHE SINFUL ONES
Joel ZossCHRONICLES
Richard Cowper...OUT THERE WHERE THE
.....BIG SHIPS GO
(Story collection)
A.E. Van Vogt THE HOUSE THAT
.....STOOD STILL
Andrew J. Offutt & Richard Lyon
.....THE DEMON IN THE MIRROR

SIGNET

August:

- Robert A. HeinleinASSIGNMENT IN
.....ETERNITY
Roger ZelaznyJACK OF SHADOWS

September:

- Arthur C. Clarke...THE NINE BILLION
.....NAMES OF GOD

October: (No titles)

SIMON & SCHUSTER

July:

- Gregory BenfordTIMESCAPE

August:

- Suzy McKee Charnas THE VAMPIRE
.....TAPESTRY

INCOMPLETE LISTINGS

HARPER & ROW

August:

- Robert Silverberg (Ed.)NEW
.....DIMENSIONS 10
Ursula K. LeGuin.....THE LEFT HAND
.....OF DARKNESS

PLAYBOY

August:

- Gene Snyder THE OGDEN ENIGMA
Jayce Carr LEVIATHAN'S DEEP

AVON

August:

- Susan CoonCASSILEE
Isaac Asimov, Martin H. Greenberg &
Joseph D. Olander...100 GREAT SF
.....SHORT SHORT STORIES

ST. MARTINS

August:

- Gary Bennett STAR SAILORS

ZEBRA

August:

- Poul Anderson THE GOLDEN SLAVE
David C. SmithORON

FINAL WORDS:

Thank you so much for your cards
and letters and especially your
kind words. See you next issue.

ALIEN THOUGHTS

BY THE EDITOR



According to BUSINESS WEEK, the weekly take-home pay of the average worker in 1967 was \$90.86. In April of 1979 the real pay [purchasing power] was \$89.44, and in April of 1980 it was \$83.46.

That shrinkage has been overcome by the use of credit/debt. But there's a limit to how long and how far debt can be used, and this year the limit, with the Federal Reserve's help, has been reached.

People's standard of living is shrinking. Their uncommitted disposable income has shrunk, and they are forced to make tough choices when spending their money.

Obviously, going to the movies and spending money on books and magazines is not a high priority.

So publishers are now more and more living off their inventories of as yet unpublished manuscripts, and are cutting down on the number of new books issued each month.

The rest of this year, and at least half of 1981 will be lean and hungry for sf, fantasy...all of the writing and publishing world.

So it goes.

THE ROLE OF SFR...

is to review not just new books, but more and more important, to review as many of the heretofore unreviewed (for lack of space) sf and fantasy books published during the just past glut of '79-80.

Because sf/fantasy readers, unable to afford new books and magazines, will turn to the second-hand bookstores for their reading material, and will need to know what's good and what's lousy about as many recently published titles as possible.

In the past three months I have received at least ten-to-twelve linear feet of review books. Dozens and dozens of new novels, anthologies, collections that simply overwhelm the reader and reviewer.

During the next year I hope to be able to make a dent in this monstrous accumulation.

There seems to be an inherent limit to the number of books I have time to read and review during each SFR publishing cycle. So I'll need help from the regular SFR reviewers, and from new reviewers.

Keep them as short as possible, and don't pull punches or praise. Pay is a first class mail subscription to SFR. The subscription depends on how many of your reviews I accept. Ideally, I'd like to use one review per reviewer each issue.

See you all in #37.

BACK ISSUES

THE ALIEN CRITIC SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW 40 OTHER BACK ISSUES ARE AVAILABLE

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EACH ISSUE CONTAINS MANY REVIEWS.
EACH ISSUE CONTAINS LETTERS FROM
WELL-KNOWN SF & FANTASY WRITERS,
EDITORS, PUBLISHERS AND FANS.

THE FOLLOWING LISTINGS ARE OF FEATURED CONTRIBUTIONS

THE ALIEN CRITIC #5 Interview
with Fritz Leiber; "The Literary
Dreamers" by James Blish; "Irvin
Binkin Meets H.P. Lovecraft" by
Jack Chalker.

THE ALIEN CRITIC #6 Interview
with R.A. Lafferty; "The Trenchant
Blueground" by Ted White; "Trans-
lations from the Editorial" by
Marion Z. Bradley.

THE ALIEN CRITIC #9 "Reading
Heinlein Subjectively" by Alexei
and Cory Panshin; "Written to a
Pulp!" by Sam Merwin, Jr.; "Noise
Level" by John Brunner; "The
Shaver Papers" by Richard S. Shaver.

THE ALIEN CRITIC #10 An Interview
with Stanislaw Lem; "A Nest
of Strange and Wonderful Birds"
by Sam Merwin, Jr.; Robert Bloch's
Guest Of Honor speech; The Hein-
lein Reaction.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #14 In-
terview with Philip Jose Farmer;
"Thoughts On Logan's Run" by Will-
iam F. Nolan; "The Gimlet Eye" by
John Gustafson.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #15 In-
terview with L. Sprague de Camp;
"Spec-Fic and the Perry Rhodan
Ghetto" by Donald C. Thompson;
"Uffish Thots" by Ted White.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #16 In-
terview with Jerry Pournelle; "The
True and Terrible History of Sci-
ence Fiction" by Barry Malzberg;
"Noise Level" by John Brunner;
"The Literary Masochist" by Rich-
ard Lupoff.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #17 In-
terview with George R. R. Martin;
Interview with Robert Anton Wilson;
"Philip K. Dick: A Parallax View"
by Terrence M. Green; "Microcos-
mos" by R. Faraday Nelson.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #18 In-
terview with Lester del Rey; Inter-
view with Alan Burt Akers; "Noise
Level" by John Brunner; "A Short
One for the Boys in the Back Room"
by Barry Malzberg.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #19 In-
terview with Philip K. Dick; Inter-
view with Frank Kelly Freas; "The
Notebooks of Mack Sikes" by Larry
Niven; "Angel Fear" by Freff; "The
Vivisector" by Darrell Schweitzer.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #20 In-
terviews with Theodore Sturgeon
and Joe Haldeman; "Noise Level" by
John Brunner; "The Vivisector" by
Darrell Schweitzer; "The Gimlet
Eye" by John Gustafson.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #21 In-
terviews with Leigh Brackett & Ed-
mond Hamilton, and with Tim Kirk;
"The Dream Quarter" by Barry Malz-
berg; "Noise Level" by John Brunner.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #22 In-
terview with John Varley; "S-F and
S-E-X" by Sam Merwin, Jr.; "After-
thoughts on Logan's Run" by Will-
iam F. Nolan; "An Evolution of Con-
sciousness" by Marion Zimmer Brad-
ley."

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #23 In-
terviews with A. E. Van Vogt,
Jack Vance, and Piers Anthony;
"The Silverberg That Was" by Rob-
ert Silverberg.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #24 In-
terviews with Bob Shaw, David G.
Hartwell and Algis Budrys; "On Be-
ing a Bit of a Legend" by Algis
Budrys.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #25 In-
terviews with George Scithers,
Poul Anderson and Ursula K. Le
Guin; "Flying Saucers and the Sym-
nie Factor" by Ray Palmer; ONE
IMMORTAL MAN--Part One.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #26 In-
terviews with Gordon R. Dickson
and Larry Niven; "Noise Level" by
John Brunner; "Fee-dom Road" by
Richard Henry Klump; ONE IMMORTAL
MAN--Part Two.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #27 Inter-
views with Ben Bova and Stephen
Fabian; "Should Writers Be Serfs...
r Slaves?"; SF News; SF film news;
The Ackerman Interview; ONE IM-
MORTAL MAN--Part Three.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #28 Inter-
view with C.J. Cherry; "Beyond
Genocide" by Damon Knight; ONE IM-
MORTAL MAN--Conclusion; SF News;
SF film news & reviews.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #29 Inter-
views with John Brunner, Michael
Moorecock and Hank Stine; "Noise
Level" by John Brunner; SF News,
SF film reviews.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #30 Inter-
views with Joan D. Vinge, Stephen
R. Donaldson, and Norman Spinrad;
"The Awards Are Coming!" by Orson
Scott Card; S-F News; Movie News.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #31 Inter-
view with Andrew J. Offutt; "Noise
Level" by John Brunner; "On the Edge
of Futuria" by Ray Nelson.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #32 Inter-
view with Andrew J. Offutt, Part 2;
Interview with Orson Scott Card;
"You Got No Friends in This World"
by Orson Scott Card; "The Human
Hotline" by Elton T. Elliott.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #33 Inter-
view with Charles Sheffield; "A
Writer's Natural Enemy--Editors"
by George R.R. Martin; "Noise
Level" by John Brunner.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #34 Inter-
view with Donald A. Wollheim; "Har-
lan Ellison--a profile" by Charles
Platt; Charles Sheffield interview
Part 2; "You Got No Friends in This
World" by Orson Scott Card.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #35 Inter-
views with Fred Saberhagen and Don
Wollheim; "The Way It Is" by Barry
Malzberg; "Noise Level" by John Brun-
ner; "Coming Apart At The Themes" by
Bob Shaw.

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