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Next Issue.....

THE AFFAIR OF LOGICAL
LUNATICS
By Philip Jose Farmer

AN INTERVIEW WITH JACK WILLIAMSON

SELECTED ESSAYS FROM
THE ENGINES OF THE NIGHT
BY BARRY N. MALZBERG

A STRING OF DAYS
BY GREGORY BENFORD

BUT WHY DOES
GFS REALLY
WANT MY OLD
ZIP CODE ?



ALIEN THOUGHTS

BY THE EDITOR

ILLUSION AND REALITY, PART II

OF COURSE there are honest publishers, editors, agents. I would even go so far as to say the majority of them are honest and ethical and moral. It is a pleasure doing business with them.

But.

When you read THE WALL STREET JOURNAL every day...when you read BUSINESS WEEK every Saturday (if the post office has done its job)...you soon notice an alarming evidence and incidence of utter ruthlessness in the corporate world. I mean, these guys play for blood!

And as for corporate behavior toward the public!! They lie, cheat, shortweight, skim, mislead, you name it. Then when they're caught they deny, lie, obfuscate, stonewall...and if brought kicking and screaming to the wall by private or government evidence and lawsuits, will then reluctantly agree to a 'consent decree' which means they deny they done wrong but will agree not to do it no more. Sometimes they are fined a small amount (of their ill-gotten gains). Sometimes small corporations are even put out of business.

The point is that in a terribly large percentage of corporate executives' minds, ripping off the public, their employees, their suppliers...anyone...is okay---as long as they can get away with it.

Witness, for a small example, the misallocation a high executive in the Pocket Book organization who tried to steal writers blind with a new 'slave' contract. He was fired--not for the raw deal he was trying to give writers, but for failing, for misreading the outrage of SPWA and others and their power.

Now I'll quote some recent communications from an informant with special knowledge.

'SFR 36 received and digested. Thanks for not telling where you got the info in "Alien Thoughts." Only one inaccuracy: in the skimmer outfits (which is to say all of them) there is not two sets of books but three: one for the IRS, one for the laundering process, AND one for the writer. You don't think they tell the writer how many copies he actually sold, eh?



'At _____ they didn't mention a 2nd printing of _____
... No mention on the statement.
At _____ two extra printings took place---maybe another 40,000 copies is my guess---and were not even mentioned on the statement.

'The only defense a writer has is to lose, immediately and forever, the illusion that he can make it by himself---and find himself a tough mackerel like Engel or Jay Garon who can deal with the SOB's on their own terms. Those guys can make a man rich. They take a big chunk themselves but they earn every goddam bit of what they take.'

This man, a long-time, full-time professional freelance writer with many novels to his credit, who sells to the big-name pocket-book publishers, is speaking of two of those publishers above.

In another communication he has this to say:

'Somebody leaked me the paperback ratings from the BP report. Bantam is atop the market with \$93 million sales and 14% of the market---but only showed 6-7% profit (that's why Jaffe had to go). Harlequin is second at \$63-\$70 million, followed by Pocket, Dell, NAL, Fawcett, Avon, Ballantine. (But Harlequin showed pre-tax profit of 25-30%, highest of all. Wow.) Then come the also-rans: Berkley/Jove, Warner (which showed amazing growth during the year, going from \$24 million to \$33 million in sales), Ace, and the two bottom dogs, Pinnacle and

Playboy. Ace showed 20% growth (but is still in deep trouble). Pinnacle actually lost ground in sales during the year---and soon after that lost Patricia Mathews and Don Pendleton. Wow. Playboy's sales, worst in the business, amounted to \$6 million, which certainly qualifies as paltry. I do notice out here that Playboy actually has a hard time getting on some newsracks.'

This man himself has information and news tentacles that reach deep into the corporate and conglomerate guts of the publishing business.

Finally, from a writer friend in the East:

'You tell them all the truth in your editorial in this new SFR and good for you, but do you think they'll listen? Do you think they want to hear it or are capable of learning from it? Do you think we were? The only way to know the truth is to live it....'

I suppose learning things the hard way---the expensive way---is for most people the only way. Especially the young and inexperienced: they're taught so much idealistic shit in school to make them nice, tractable sheep for a lifetime of shearing.

Some rules to live by as a writer might be:

DON'T BELIEVE AN EDITOR UNTIL YOU HAVE A CONTRACT.

DON'T BELIEVE THE CONTRACT WILL BE LIVED UP TO BY THE PUBLISHER.

DON'T SPEND ADVANCE MONEY UNTIL YOU GET THE CHECK. (AND IF YOU WANT TO BE REALLY CAREFUL, DON'T SPEND THE MONEY UNTIL THE CHECK CLEARS.)

DO BELIEVE THEY'LL SCREW YOU IF THEY THINK THEY CAN GET AWAY WITH IT AND IT'S WORTH THE EFFORT.

DO TRY TO GET THE BEST, MOST POWERFUL AGENT YOU CAN.

There are probably more rules and possibly other writers can send in their favorites and most hard-learned.

I can't resist adding a few general life rules:

NEVER, EVER, BELIEVE ANY POLITICIAN.

DOUBLECHECK, AS SOON AND AS OFTEN AS YOU CAN, ANYTHING ANY LAWYER TELLS YOU.

The area of interpersonal relationships is a mine field I'll stay clear of at this time. I could write a book....

All I'm saying in these editorials is have no illusions about your fellow man and woman, especially where money is concerned. Don't make a big hairy point of it to anyone, just don't trust anybody who hasn't proven they deserve your trust. And even then....

Oh--the Fall, 1980 F AND SF BOOK CO. list [#128] contains this short comment on the current state of sf:

'For the first time since the early 1950s, there is a serious fall-off in the publishing of new science fiction. Hardest hit are the hardbacks as only DOUBLEDAY, HARPER & ROW and SIMON AND SCHUSTER have maintained full schedules for the upcoming period. DEL REY, ST. MARTIN'S and most others have cut their schedules back or stopped entirely. For the first time since its inception, there are no new DEL REY hardbacks scheduled for the Fall or Winter.'

MORE! MORE, I SAY!!

More what? More pages in SFR. because every damn issue I'm fighting to get in this or that--and every damn issue I get letters saying, "What? Only two pages of Geis this issue?"

They don't count all my pages of reviews, the churls. They want more pages of editorials like this.

But I am offered many goodies for SFR I cannot resist. Such as the 25 page ms. that Greg Benford sent today, "A String of Days"--a diary involving his professional lives of professor and writer. Excellent, fascinating, revealing.

I have to accept things like that...material by Benford, Malzberg, Farmer, Card, etc. etc.. And the pages dwindle down...to a precious few.... And in the back of my mind a voice says, 'Jesus, Geis, these guys are far better writers than you are! The readers would surely rather read their words than yours!'

['That's my voice, Geis! Actually, the readers would rather read MY words than yours, but you keep--']

Alter-Ego, you are in quarantine! I'll hear no more from you! [...censoring me and rejecting my ideas! Let me have my review column back! Let me--']

Alter! Damn you! Stop jiggering with my pituitary! How can I type with a fit of hot flashes making me lustful and sweaty and shivery and sick to my stomach at the same time?

['Just agree to bring back "The Alter-Ego Viewpoint" next issue. You'll have room.']

I-I-I...Oh, shit! All right! Turn off the gland, damn it! You can have one page.

['Two pages!'] ONE PAGE! Now that's it! Get the hell out of this editorial! Cut loose or I'll go to Doc Myers again and have him give me a special kind of injection....'

['N-no... Not Diexophenogrot-ifemiliporate again!']

Yesss! Now get back down into your hole in the afterbrain.

['All right, but you promised, Geis! One page!']

Yeah, yeah... Shit. Now, where was I?

['You were saying you were a lousy writer.']

Yes.... No! I was saying that when lots of goodies come in from Big Name Pros I naturally make room for their material by cutting back on my own writing. I'm naturally lazy.

Of course adding pages could result in my simply escalating to similar crises again, because there is always a desire to add one more page of book reviews...

But four more pages will be a great help. Adding a heavy cover will set off the Fabian so nicely....

I've wanted to do this---add a heavy cover using colored stock ---for years. I've done it several times as long-time subscribers will remember: #23, #15, the mimeographed editions, the half-sized issues.... Lost in the mists of time.

Each time---#15 and #23 especially, the extra cost made me flinch and retreat. I didn't think the subscribers and bookstore buyers would pay the extra cost willingly...would object.

But now by God, I think SFR is worth 25¢ more, and I think 99% of the buyers will feel that way, too.

So! This issue---as you can plainly see---the retail price of SFR ~~is~~ creeps up to \$2. per copy. I refuse to use the marketing psychology of 'make it \$1.95 ---that way the buyer gets a nickle back and feels better about spending two bucks.' This way it's simpler and honest.

The subscription increases can be seen on page 3. Everything simply goes up \$1. per year. 25¢ per issue.

In return for your extra 25¢ you get four more pages, a heavy 65lb colored cover stock that will

display the series of Stephen Fabian covers promised for the next year.

We are entering a new era for this nation---and for sf and SFR. So from now on---heavy covers and more Geis.

As for the nation---more financial and social crises and no end to obfuscating bullshit from the politicians.

ISN'T SOMETHING MISSING?

'The Affair of Logical Lunatics' by Philip Jose Farmer, scheduled for this issue, is not here because Phil wanted time to make some revisions and updates. I hope to have those in time to make #38.

Actually, Phil did me a favor. If he had gotten around to revising and amending "Lunatics" I'd have been unable to get all of the must-publish items that arrived for this issue into this issue, with the result...well, I'd have.... I might have added 16 more pages. Well, therein lies madness, suicide, bankruptcy and migraine headaches.

I'm not going to be making any money off this price increase, by the way. The printer has vulturously informed me that the heavy cover will cost about \$500. more. And when you add the extra postage that must be paid because of the extra weight.... And next July another big postal rate increase....

Listen, I'm going to quit this rat-race when I'm 62! Hear that? Only nine more years of this wonderful travail. [I assume Social Security will still be in place by then, paying benefits.]

FORM-U-LA...AND THE LIVIN' IS EASY....

I'm continually amazed, when I think about it, at the durability of fiction formulas. I'm amazed that I continue to watch and read and enjoy formula fiction after at least fifty years of non-stop consumption.

And God knows TV adventure, crime, and romance episodes are all formula.

THE MAN WITH THE COSMIC TRIGGERFINGER

AN INTERVIEW WITH ROBERT ANTON WILSON
CONDUCTED BY NEAL WILGUS

INTRODUCTION

Robert Anton Wilson is a much-interviewed author. There may be others but to my own knowledge interviews with R.A.W. have appeared in NEW LIBERTARIAN WEEKLY, CONSPIRACY DIGEST, CONFRONTATION, WEIRD TRIPS and SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW -- the latter being my first interview with him and in fact the first I ever conducted.

One reason Wilson is interviewed so often is that he's available and cooperative, but more important is the fact that he can be relied upon to give provocative and stimulating -- often outrageous -- answers. What's more, his comments are usually about something important and controversial -- and Wilson usually takes a strong position, often unpredictable, always witty, literate, urbane.

Wilson was born in Brooklyn in 1932 and suffered through the conventional upbringing and education of our times but somehow survived it all without losing that unique sense of self and universe displayed in his writing and interviews. In the early 1970s he worked as an Associate Editor of PLAYBOY where he met Robert Shea who was eventually to collaborate with him on that unique three-volume romp known as ILLUMINATUS! In the meantime Wilson managed to turn out numerous pieces on a variety of subjects for a variety of publications and to work on books such as THE SEX MAGICIANS, PLAYBOY'S BOOK OF FORBIDDEN WORDS, SEX AND DRUGS: A JOURNEY BEYOND WORDS and THE BOOK OF THE BREAST.

By the time ILLUMINATUS! was published in 1976 Wilson had left PLAYBOY and moved to California to try his hand at full-time freelance writing. One of the first (and best) results of this successful venture was COSMIC TRIGGER: FINAL SECRET OF THE ILLUMINATI (1977), a non-fiction, somewhat autobiographical treatment of many of the themes that have occupied him over the years, including the Crowleyanity of Aliester Crowley,

messages from the dog star, Sirius, the uses and abuses of drugs and sex, the secrets of synchronicity, Timothy Leary's cosmic mission, the illuminations of the Bavarian Illuminati and SMILE. He has also collaborated with Leary on a number of pieces, most notably several essays in Leary's NEUROPOLITICS (1978).

Like the characters in ILLUMINATUS!, Wilson is unpredictable, sometimes inconsistent, often brilliant, always entertaining. So here's yet another interview with the man with the Cosmic Triggerfinger. I don't think you'll be disappointed.



SFR: Why did you write ILLUMINATUS!?

WILSON: To make money. I have discovered that, contrary to Holy Writ, it is not true that with God all things are possible. It is not even true that with Zen all things are possible. And, despite what I may say at other times, it isn't even true that with cocaine all things are possible (it only seems that way). But with cash, brothers and sisters, all things are possible.

SFR: Was that your motive? Are you totally commercial?

WILSON: Absolutely. If I speak to you with the tongues of men and of angels and have not cash, it is as nothing. If I have faith to move mountains and have not cash, it is as nothing. For now abideth faith, hope and cash, these three; and the greatest of these is cash.

SFR: Aren't you a bit cynical and bitter?

WILSON: Not at all. I feel happy, joyous, vibrant and tranquil in every muscle, fibre, cell, molecule, atom and quark. I have arrived at the position where my chief commodity is wit, and as Bernard Shaw discovered before me, you can make a bundle in that market by simply telling the truth. People are so accustomed to lies and euphemisms that all you have to do is state the facts in plain, unvarnished language and you will immediately acquire a reputation as a most wickedly funny scoundrel.

SFR: Well, then, even if you claim ILLUMINATUS! was a totally commercial venture, you admit that it contains wit or truth, or is it truth disguised as wit?

WILSON: ILLUMINATUS! contains very little wit or satire; it is a simple documentary presentation of the basic gambits and strategies of primate politics. If it's a funny book, that's because there's something innately comical about the higher primates, such as chimpanzees, baboons and humans. Other classical studies of primate sociobiology, such as Ernest Hooten's APES, MEN AND MONSIES or Machievelli's THE PRINCE are rather funny, too, but they are also serious documentaries, like ILLUMINATUS! and not intended as satire.

GODDAMMIT, WILSON,
COMPLY WITH THAT
GUIDELINE OR I'LL UN-
LEASH THE TURKEYS
ON YOU!





SFR: George Scithers, editor of ISAAC ASIMOV'S SF MAGAZINE, summed up what you've said about commercialism recently by saying he's only interested in competing for "beer money" -- small change his readers might otherwise squander on booze. Without criticizing this policy -- it's his magazine after all -- don't you think there's more to writing than beer money and ego-boo?

WILSON: Fucking aye. I am passionate about style, which is the white heat that makes a sentence glow; the reflection in words of the mental intensity of the writer. I'd like to write the greatest novel of the 20th Century. Since James Joyce evidently beat me to that pedestal, I'll settle for writing the second greatest novel of the 20th Century, if I have it in me. My point is merely that I don't agree at all with those who tell us money is evil. To me, the supreme evil, the most cruel and obscene of all evils, is lack of money. I've talked to junkies about withdrawal symptoms and I don't think that's any worse than what the average husband/father goes through if his money supply is cut off abruptly.

I would predict that when we abolish poverty (by the National Dividend of Pound and Douglas, or the Negative Income Tax of Friedman, or through the economy of abundance arising out of the new technologies of people like Bucky Fuller and Gerard O'Neill) will be immediately be a dramatic, almost "miraculous" decrease in suicides, homicides, violent crimes in general, schizophrenias, neuroses, psychosomatic ailments and the swinish bad manners of Capitalist society. As Mae West said, "I've been rich and I've been poor, and rich is better". To me that's as axiomatic as "I've been sick and I've been healthy, and healthy is better".

My friend, Wayne Benner, has a single question by which he judges people: "If you could make everybody equally rich or equally poor, which would you do?" It's astonishing

how many Leftists answer that they'd make everybody equally poor. That's on all fours with saying that, if you could make everybody healthy or give everybody the bubonic plague, you'd give them the plague. I don't think any school of psychology can yet explain the left; it would take a bile specialist to account for them.

SFR: In a letter to SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW some time ago, someone named Boschen takes you to task for a book review in which you referred to Martin Gardner as "high priest of the Materialist Church". Boschen says you're a Materialist too and a member of the same church. Any comments on Materialism?

WILSON: In the immortal words of John Mitchell, I mis-spoke myself. What I meant to say, and usually do say (as on page 101 of COSMIC TRIGGER) is that Gardner speaks for the "Fundamentalist wing of the Materialist Church". If I'm a Materialist at all, I certainly represent the Liberal wing. But I would rather call myself an Operationalist than a Materialist, since Materialism is a body of dogma and I am allergic to dogmatism of all kinds. Operationalism is a method of thinking, a kind of semantic hygiene; a tool, rather than a doctrine. When I dissent from mystics and parapsychologists, it is not because I think that what they are talking about doesn't exist -- I know from experience that it does -- but because their terminology is operationally meaningless. I try to restate the facts about altered consciousness in precise scientific language, operational language -- which causes the mystics to call me a Materialist. Meanwhile the Fundamentalists of the Orthodox Church of Materialism, such as Gardner, would regard me as a mystic for thinking and writing about such subjects at all. But that's to be expected on a primitive planet. When you try to build a bridge between two gangs of rival fanatics, each side thinks you're preparing an invasion route for the other side to over-run and massacre them. The idea of communication and synergetic pooling of information just does not penetrate the dogmatic mind. Dogmatists are Senders in William Burroughs' terminology, not Receivers.

SFR: Perhaps that's a good way of getting deeper into your own philosophy expressed in COSMIC TRIGGER. Why did you write COSMIC TRIGGER?

WILSON: Primarily, to make money. Secondly, it's an exercise in guerilla ontology -- a calculated

assault on the monotheist "one reality" delusion. By taking one person of average intelligence (myself), I show many different reality-grids the brain can construct if you make a determined effort to break down all the imprinted, conditioned, learned and habitual reflexes that program perception into one static world-view. I believe that about 99.99999% of all human stupidity is caused by imprinted and conditioned perception-sets. As Tim Leary says, we have literally been robbed blind; we have literally taken leave of our senses. We are like badly-wired robots bumping into each other -- sleepwalkers, as Gurdjieff said. The practise recounted in TRIGGER of switching your reality-map frequently, over months and years, makes you aware of billions of signals usually screened out by habitual reflex-circuits in the brain. I regularly switch circuits from Materialism to Buddhism, from Buddhism to Sufism, from Sufism to something I've never tried before and each neurological quantum jump teaches me more. To remain stuck in one ego, one belief-system, one morality, one set of conditioned reflexes, is literally walking zombieism. We should be able to turn channels in our brain as easily as we do on our TV sets, or switch programs as efficiently as a computer technician. As the old Zen story has it, a monk asked a Zen Master, "How does one find the Tao?" And the Master replied, "Walk on!" Any place we stop or stick, any emotional or dogmatic hang-up, is a place where we have become deaf, dumb and blind to billions and billions of signals which would tell us of a much bigger and funnier reality, if we would only open ourselves to them. The universe is a Big Mother.

SFR: Following this line of thought, I'd like to protest against thought, "Never While While You're Pissing" concept from ILLUMINATUS. Isn't it more important to develop simultaneity -- both halves of our brains at once -- rather than such single-mindedness?

WILSON: Every yoga is worthwhile if it teaches you something new. The yoga of total concentration on pissing is not my invention; I got it from R.H. Blythe, who got it from a Zen Master whose name I don't remember. If you've learned all you can from that exercise, by all means try other programs. The human brain is a multi-purpose computer. Use it to the utmost; learn as many of its functions as you can. Mathematics is a more powerful brain-change device than LSD, for instance, but few people have discovered that yet --

despite the fact that the most important new ideas always come from mathematicians or from scientists trained in mathematical yoga. Doing every single thing you're afraid of is another good yoga. Since many of us are going to live 800 years or longer, it is very worthwhile to start using our brains better -- for fun and profit -- which is what Leahy means by Intelligence Increase or I2. I call it the H.E.A.D. Revolution -- Hedonic Engineering And Development. If you don't know how to enjoy your brain, longer life will just mean more time to get yourself into miserable and frustrated states.

SFR: I've been looking into the works of Aleister Crowley recently and was struck by the prophecy in THE BOOK OF THE LAW about the 1980s being another major conflagration. This ties in with the dire predictions I've been reading about in CYCLES OF WAR: THE NEXT SIX YEARS, by R.E. McMaster, Jr., which shows a variety of predictions for disaster in the 80s. Given these, and various other gloom-n-doom philosophies floating around, how can you seriously expound the optimistic SM2LE philosophy (Space Migration/Intelligence Increase/Life Extension) which predicts various world-saving revolutions coming up?

WILSON: In the first place, the future is up for grabs. It belongs to any and all who will take the risks and accept the responsibilities of consciously creating the future they want. Karl R. Popper wrote a book around 30 years ago called THE POVERTY OF HISTORICISM which is still, I think, unrefuted. Popper demonstrated, very rigorously, that there is no way any person or group of persons or any computer can predict the future exactly. His argument seems to me as sound as Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle, to which it is in many ways analogous. In the second place, I have never said that the SM2LE scenario must happen; I only say that it can happen. I am not in competition with the Delphic oracle. In the third place, there is no such thing as purely descriptive Futurism; future projections are always somewhat prescriptive. They are projections in the psychological as well as mathematical sense. My guess is that if you ran a battery of standard psyche tests on the gloom-n-doomsters, you would find that basically they are guilty, masochistic people. They don't like themselves much, and they like other human beings even less. (This is classically illustrated by one guy who wrote a denunciation of the Space Colony idea in CO-EVOLUTION QUARTERLY and said he thought humanity deserved to perish.) The

doom brigade wants a punishing future and hence declares it inevitable, by the same psychological trick by which Marx, who wanted socialism, declared it was inevitable. On the other side, I think rather well of myself (as you might have noticed) and of other people, and I think humanity deserves and has the wisdom to achieve the SM2LE mutation, which will give us all the Space we need, all the Time we need, and all the Intelligence we need to enjoy Space and Time. I admit this is as much a projection of my Hedonism as the doomsday scenarios are a projection of the masochism of their creators. The real issue is, to anybody not awed by authorities and dogmas: what kind of future do you want, and how hard are you willing to work to create that future?

SFR: In my book THE ILLUMINATIONS I do my best to make a case for the continuing Illuminati conspiracy, ala the John Birch Society etc., but I never came up with any real proof that Weishaupt's Bavarian Illuminati continued to function beyond 1787 when it was suppressed. Yet the myth persists (with who knows what core of truth) that the skull-duggery going on today is part of the same plot. Do you think the present Masters are direct descendants of Weishaupt's crew? Distant cousins? Different species?

WILSON: First of all, who are the present Masters? The Cowboys? The Yankees? The old boy network in England? I don't think any of these mammalian predator bands have anything to do with the Illuminati at all. You might as well say that a gang of chimpanzees combining ("conspiring") to drive another gang of chimpanzees off the turf are the Illuminati. These second-circuit territorial rituals have nothing at all to do with the real goals of the Illuminati, who are operating several evolutionary mutations beyond that. Specifically, a real member of the

Illuminati (whether he knew it or not) was John Von Neumann, who prevented World War III. How did Von Neumann do that? He devised mathematical game theory and invented the first programmable computer. As a result of these innovations, the primates now feed their war game strategies into remorselessly logical computers, which tell them over and over again that they can't win a nuclear exchange, and so war has been limited to symbolic (although still tragic) skirmishes over small areas like Indo-China. Von Neumann was using the basic Illuminati law that you can only change behavior radically by teaching the primates a new technology. Witness the dramatic changes in chimpanzee behavior after somebody taught them the simple manual technology of sign-language. Similarly, the Wright Brothers, Einstein, Henry Ford and such types have caused more behavior change than all the politicians, policemen, prisons and psychologists in the world, by introducing new technologies. And, of course, the new technologies of Space Migration, Intelligence Increase and Life Extension, if and when we achieve them, will cause more behavior change than a million operant conditioners like Skinner.

SFR: How is the cause of Discordianism coming?

WILSON: We already hold Northern California and have agents in all the media in America, France, England, Denmark and Germany. I confidently expect a Discordian President in the White House by 1984 and a Discordian Pope in the Vatican by the 1990s, if not sooner.

SFR: The usual objection to the concept of synchronicity and related ideas like the so-called 23 enigmas, the law of octaves and so on, is that the observer of such phenomena is choosing the data deliberately



to emphasize a "pattern" that might not otherwise be there. Do you think these things are objective reality or subjective selection? Paranoia? All of the above?

WILSON: I refuse to answer on the grounds that it might tend to incriminate me. I may have already given away too much by mentioning that Von Neumann was One of Us and that We control a large part of the media. Let's just say that "reality", so-called, is an evolving, ever-changing, quantum-jumping energy-dance, not a rigid and block-like box confining us. Those who know how to swing with the dance are co-creators of the next hour's reality, the next day's, the next year's, the next century's ... The reality of any instant is the temporary resultant of the ontological guerilla warfare between rival gangs of artists, technicians and magicians. John Archibald Wheeler of Princeton uses the term "participatory universe" to describe what I'm getting at here. It comes down to what Weishaupt said 200 years ago: we are all freemasons in the literal sense, builders of our own experience.

If this still isn't clear, I can say it in words of one syllable, citing the late Redeemer of Biblical fame: "Ye are all Gods". (John, 10:34.)

SFR: I understand you'll have a science fiction trilogy coming out soon and are working on an occult novel called THE DEVIL'S MASQUERADE.

WILSON: The occult thriller will be published first and is now called MASKS OF THE ILLUMINATI. It's set in Zurich, Switzerland, in 1914 and the principle characters are Albert Einstein, James Joyce and Aleister Crowley. It should be in the bookstores early next summer. The sci-fi trilogy is called SCHRODINGER'S CAT and is a kind of quantum comedy, based on the most literal possible reading of the Everett-Wheeler-Graham multi-universe interpretation of the Schrodinger equations. That is, it's the parallel worlds theme that's been done and redone and almost done to death in sci-fi, but I really think I have an unusually comical slant on it. That'll be out in winter '79-80, in some universe or other. The action or actions of SCHRODINGER'S CAT are set in various possible realities that might emerge by 1984 and, if the Everett-Wheeler-Graham theory is true, the publication of the trilogy should cause the readers' subsequent experience of 1984 to be more like my Hedonic projections than like the masochistic projections of the doomsayers. That is, the writing and publication of the trilogy is a magical and scientific experiment -- an attempt to de-

monstrate the creation of an alternative reality. It's very much like the old Marx Brothers routine: "There's \$1000 in the house next door". "But there is no house next door". "Then let's build one". I'm going beyond guerilla ontology to guerilla Futurism.

SFR: Do you really think a work of art can alter reality?

WILSON: Ideas alter reality. Very concretely, if you believe a certain woman won't ball you, you will not make a pass at her, and she will ball somebody else. If you think you can't get a job, you will not go in for the interview. If you think you can't pass the exam, you will not bother to study.

I feel that the writings of people who have lost faith in humanity are semantic poison. I heard one of these embittered authors on TV a few nights ago, saying explicitly what is obvious to any reader of his fiction: he doesn't like the human race. I think self-hatred and hatred of humanity are self-fulfilling prophecies which can very definitely produce all the worst gloom'n'doom scenarios, if enough people believe in them; but conversely, we can solve all our personal and social problems, if we believe in ourselves and in humanity.

Every minute you have a choice whether you will put out positive energy or negative energy. You alter your own future, without noticing it, by those little momentary decisions. You alter the whole future of humanity, even more obliviously, by the effect of those decisions on other people around you. No energy is ever lost. What goes around comes around, as some wise hippie once said

You give negative energy to B, B passes it on to C, C to D, and so on, forever, or until it comes to somebody conscious enough to refuse to pass it on. When that one conscious individual makes that decision and performs the alchemical transmutation of turning the bad energy into good before passing it on, a whole new chain of good energy is started. This is what the Sufis mean when they say we don't begin to understand our real responsibilities. Today is the first day of the rest of the universe.

Can art create reality? Dammned straight. I know people who are living in gloomy Naturalistic novels of the '30s, and people who get into the occult the wrong way are living the paranoia of THE EXORCIST, and people who are living in DAS KAPITAL, and people living in the New Testament, and so on. I prefer

to live in science fiction, which is the most exciting and funny reality to be in. Of course, I don't mean the misanthropic kind of sci-fi; I mean the cosmic and noble visions of people like Clarke and Heinlein and Olaf Stapledon. There is simply nothing better to live for than the idea that humanity has a noble destiny and that you can be part of the love-energy-brains network that will make it possible.

SFR: To you have any concluding thought?

WILSON: Yeah. As Ezra Pound once said, the only real enemy is ignorance -- our own.

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I PREFER THE SPELLING
'SCIENCE'.



as the retired rodeo champion and very much at home on a horse and on the range. Fonda as a TV reporter is a natural.

[Incidentally, we saw KID and HORSEMAN at the Mt. Tabor, the theatre which a couple years ago had a 99¢ Anytime admission, then went to \$1.25, then to \$1.75, then showed CALIGULA and other sex films at \$6 and \$3.75 per seat...and (after the newspapers started refusing ads for CALIGULA) has now switched back to the old 99¢ Anytime policy.

I'm happy to say they had a full house last night.]

THE CHILDREN (R)

destroys itself in the opening moments when it asks the audience to believe a tiny leak in a nuclear plant can create a transitory yellow fog which, hours later, miles away, can change the insides of children only (as a school bus passes through it) and make of them killer zombies. They are supposedly so "hot" that their embrace literally sears and cooks anyone they fully embrace. The resulting fried corpses are well-done. Lovingly photographed.

They terrorize a wealthy countryside, especially their parents and siblings. The local sheriff manages to kill most of them (if the children's hands are cut off they die. Nothing is explained. They are deadly when their fingernails turn black. They can only say "Mommy" or "Daddy" and walk like zombies and smile eerily.)

The movie has the gall to try to be symbolic as a new dawn comes and one of the surviving parents gives birth (with corpses strewn around the house) and life goes on.

Except---they couldn't resist it---the father sees with horror that his newborn, as it suckles at his wife's breast, has black fingernails.

The acting in this awful movie is adequate to horrible. There is one short nude sequence.

DO NOT PAY TO SEE THIS.

THE ORPHAN (R)

was teamed with THE CHILDREN and is a good, bizarre, multileveled, psychological/terror/horror film. Made in 1972 in England, I think, it shows the traumatized life of a 10-12-year-old boy who happened to see his mother accidentally kill his father and then in remorse impulsively kill herself.

Isolated on a large estate, looked after by his mother's bitchy sister, the boy loses his friends one by one as the woman "lovingly" sends the

servants away and makes plans to send him to an institution.

The boy suffers from a fixation on his father's African collection, especially a large statue of an ape, and is plagued by the memory of his parents' deaths, by his fearful imaginings, by his aunt's hatred of him.

Reality and imagination are intermixed as the film comes to its inevitable climax.

Very good acting by all, good suspense, excellent production values, a touch of nudity, a memorable line: "It was obvious she preferred his hand to his cock."

Written and directed by John Ballard. Could he be J.G. Ballard?

ZOMBIE (R)

is very explicitly, graphically gruesome, with extremely realistic rending of flesh, bone and gristle. It's a very harrowing movie, and if you're not ready to see throats torn out, an eye penetrated by a wooden splinter, horrible head wounds, open skulls, brains, guts...

Richard Johnson is the "name" actor in this Italian film (but produced by Jerry Gross). There is an actress named Tisa Farrow. The supporting cast are competent at screaming and dying.

The movie opens intriguingly as a small sailboat enters New York harbor apparently with no one on board. The Harbor Patrol boards her and a decayed creature---formerly human---bursts from a hiding place and bites open the throat of one of the officers. [You can see the severed artery shooting blood.] The creature heads for the other officer, who empties his revolver into it. The creature falls into the water.

The boat belonged to the heroine's father. A reported meets her and they agree to go to the island in the West Indies which her father had frequented on his cruises.

There they and another couple meet the dedicated doctor (Johnson) who has been trying desperately to solve the recent upsurge of zombies which has decimated the natives.

[One bite from a zombie and the victim dies very quickly and then becomes a zombie himself. Zombies move very slowly, cannot speak, seek only to bite and eat real people. They're not smart, but boy, are they persistent! The only way to "kill" them is to shoot them in the head or otherwise render the brain in twain.]

Only the heroine and the reporter survive to try to guide a motor cruiser back to civilization.

They hear a radio report of masses of zombies taking over New York... [That bitten Harbor Patrol officer had obviously "awakened" and taken bites...and those people in turn...]

End with a shot of thousands of zombies stumbling across a bridge toward...Brooklyn?

Some nice nude scenes with lovely young women in this film---before they succumb.

This is the goriest film I've seen yet, as far as intensity and realism are concerned.

THE HILLS HAVE EYES (R)

turned out (as the companion feature to ZOMBIE) to be the better of the two. Well acted, realistic, plausible...as a family of 7 in a station wagon with large travel trailer venture down a deserted desert road far off the beaten track and have an accident with the wagon.

They are then preyed upon by a small savage family of slightly mutated humans who have been in hiding for twenty-five years or so. (The atomic tests in the forties, fifties were responsible for a single mutated infant. Its father, enraged at the infant boy for having (because of its size) killed its mother at birth, put it out in the desert sun to die...but it survived, found a wife, raised a brood of savage kids who, with him and his daughter, survived by stealing from the few surrounding inhabitants and from the Army and Air Force installations.)

There is brutal, unhesitating murder here, the burning to death of the retired policeman father of the vacationing family, the slaughter and eating of one of the pet dogs, attempted rape, the intent to kill and cook and eat the baby of one of the policeman's daughters...

But the family fight back, one of their dogs (appropriately named Beast) cunningly kills two of the mutants' sons, and the youngest son and daughter of the cop kill the mutant in a vicious ending of the film.

Not a nice movie, but riveting, and well done. There are flaws and hard-to-swallow contrivances, but it has a gritty, hard-ball realism and very well acted characters.

THE OCTAGON (R)

is another Chuck Norris martial arts plotboiler. He still can't act.

THE BIG BRAWL (R)

puts tongue-in-cheek as Jackie Chan mauls his arts all over the place.

WE'RE COMING THROUGH THE WINDOW

BY BARRY N. MALZBERG

LETTER FROM BARRY N. MALZBERG
Box 61, Teaneck, NJ, 07666
June 24, 1980

'Going through the files (I do it every couple of years whether I need to or not) I came across the enclosed which I wrote as an introduction to my first published story which UNEARTH (now deservedly no longer with us) would have run in 1978 in their featured department of first stories except that I had the temerity to ask for a cent a word (for the new introduction, the story was gratis) and got it back with shocking haste. (Recrimination is about all that a middle-aged, middle-range writer has left; the collapse of UNEARTH later that year gave me that ten seconds of pleasure referred to in a different context in the essay.)

'Perhaps you'd like to run it. And perhaps you've read all this stuff before. (If you want to take it at your usual rates and you feel that breaking policy & running the 1200-word story itself would make it all of a piece you can have the reprint rights gratis & I'll mail tear-sheets. In fact I'll enclose tear-sheets herewith & save a round of correspondence.)

'SIGMUND IN SPACE in the new OMNI gave me fifty seconds of pleasure. I do concede.'

INTRODUCTION TO
"WE'RE COMING THROUGH THE WINDOW"

For the first seven years of what I call my Career I preferred to detach the real persona from that of the writer, telling all and sundry that the True Confessions could be found in the works themselves (I was right, folks, but not to the degree that it turned out; my work was one outraged, private scream but I did not know how much I was saying) and then I fell off the wagon in mid-1974 and since then have published autobiography everywhere.

I have told the story of this story at least three times, in the introduction to DOWN HERE IN THE DREAM QUARTER, in Richard Geis's SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW and in the introduction to the story itself where it was first reprinted in FINAL WAR & OTHER FANTASIES (Ace, 1969) but I will tell it again. The science fiction audience, as publishers know, turns over 90% every four years meaning that at best 10% of you were reading this wonderful stuff in 1974 and only a persistent 10% will still be glomming over the rockets in 1982. Then too, any genre writer remains shrouded in obscurity (any writer, period these days); I have never met

at a party in the suburb in which I live anyone who has read my work or even heard of me before, um, meeting me.

So, WE'RE COMING THROUGH THE WINDOW In the Ace introduction I put it this way:

"I had just quit a job for reasons falling outside any analysis of science fiction, had been out of work a month with no prospects of finding another job, found myself unable to sell anything of any description, had my wife at work and was taking care of my then seven-month-old daughter when in December of 1966, I wrote this story in one hour out of the blackest despair I have ever experienced. It became my first science fiction sale and I am assured by people I respect that it is very funny. Which only goes to prove that editors are right; keep them in constant pain if you want them to do any decent work."

Which tone is a little callow but essentially right on as we used to say back in 1969 (along with power to the people or dump the Hump). I would add to this that the "blackest despair" I had experienced as of eight years ago was a Mahler Land-

ler compared to the Mahlerian horrors which hit me later and continue up until this very moment but there is truth in the assertion: I did not feel very good about life when I wrote this story and I managed to use that misery as a source of energy which is one solution to the problems of creative writing (my most common solution) among many others. Fred Pohl paid me \$36.00, which after agent's commission (I had an agent; the first of several and probably the only decent human being among the lot) and charges it came to \$29.94 which amount gave me more comfort than I had to date ever received although two previous sales to a minor men's magazine had netted me almost ten times that amount. Still, they were miserable stories for a miserably obscure market; GALAXY was a respectable magazine and one which I could show to my parents and friends. My parents and friends did not mostly care, alas, (and it was only in 1968 or so that I learned to go on writing for my own reasons and not to make a proper impression upon the Folks Back Home) and by the time the story appeared in print subsequent rejections at that and other markets had minimized my hopes of continuation but January 11, 1967, the day of the sale, was a series of perfectly enclosed moments of joy which I would not sacrifice. I have never been so happy in that way again. Perhaps I have never been so happy in any way again. Certainly, I can no longer take any emotional satisfaction from my accomplishments; last year I received a low five-figure payment on a movie sale and my only concern was how soon or whether it would clear and how much time it would buy me off the wheel. (On the other hand I sold my sixth piece to ANALOG just ten days ago and received ten seconds of actual *joie de vivre*; all may not be lost. Old men in their sleep have random erections just like adolescents.)

I did go on from this story as you all know. My second SF sale, FINAL WAR, to G&Sf on 10/1/67, was a breakthrough 14,000-word novelle of sorts and by the time I sold my first SF novel, THE EMPTY PEOPLE, to Lancer in early 1969, I had sold another dozen short stories or so. Between January of 1967 and March, 1975 when I made a conscious decision to give up my career in science fiction (something I have discussed endlessly elsewhere; not here, friends, not here and besides there are signs that I might be drifting back slowly) I sold another 150 short stories in the genre and six collections and twenty-five novels; an output that by quantity will I think compare favorably with almost any writer in the history of a genre

characterized by prolificity. I have had a pretty decent run within the genre and even without (more than half of my published output is in other fields) and at least from the standpoint of the readers of UN-EARTH, have little reason to complain (and I don't, so there), but what interests me most in this context about WE'RE COMING THROUGH THE WINDOWS is that clean, polished, contained, neatly-put-together as it is, the story gives absolutely no indication of a significant career. It is pleasant filler of the sort which Horace Gold and his successors used by major writers or unknown at the fringes of their magazine and there is no basis upon which to conclude that the perpetrator of this story (K.M. O'Donnell by the way; I used a pseudonym in my early years for foolish reasons) would go anywhere in particular. Van Vogt's first story, for instance, was astonishing and perfectly foreshadowed his career; Ellison's first story (published in this magazine's first issue) with all of its crudities is clearly Harlan Ellison but WCTWTW is not Malzberg but the work of a hundred or two hundred writers. Milton Lesser or Robert Sheckley could have done this a little better or worse; Phillip Klass or James Stammers could have the byline. WCTWTW is perhaps characteristic of GALAXY but not of a writer.

Which means of course that I had become, at this early point, already a professional because I wrote this story sitting upon the individual voice (mixed metaphor; sorry), simulating instead the tone of a magazine. You have to make the scales, *avveggi* and intonation before the vibrato comes in; you don't do the Paganini 24th Caprice until you've done at least the earlier studies. There are a few writers who have broken into print in full maturity and in control of their gifts -- T.L. Sherred, maybe Alfred Bester -- but most of us start off learning to hold the fiddle.

I think WCTWTW holds the fiddle pretty well; I think it stands up, for its frail length, as well as it ever did and I can think of many people who would say that it shows a promising, minor facility, surely the best thing I ever did, before I became prostituted to gloom and pretension. Quarrel I not with these people; WCTWTW has the assurance of a writer who knows what he is doing and knows that what he is doing is right. Otherwise he would not have quit that job or been at home with his infant daughter or had his wife at work ... or called melancholia "black despair".

I haven't felt that sure about anything in years.

Christmas: 1977



WE'RE COMING THROUGH THE WINDOW

Dear Mr. Pohl:

Unfortunately I, William Coyne, cannot send you a manuscript for consideration due to reasons very much beyond my control which you will soon understand. All that I can do in the very limited time, and with the limited opportunities available, is to write things down as best I can in the form of this letter and hope that you will be patient and understanding enough to see the great story possibilities in my problem. Perhaps after you see how important and unusual the situation is here you will consent to write a story out of it yourself and keep 50% (fifty per cent) of the proceeds, which seems fair enough because you don't have to think up any ideas. Or, if you find yourself too busy to write it, you might turn it over to one of your regular authors in which case he will do the same thing and I will allow him only 40% (forty per cent) of the sale price. But since this is a million-dollar idea as you will see, there should be plenty of money in it for everyone if you'll only work fast.

Last week I, William Coyne, invented a time machine. That is correct, I created from my own notes the first time machine. I, William Coyne, 29 years old, unemployed and presently living in very cramped quarters. I built it by myself in these three furnished rooms on the West Side of Manhattan, running back and forth between the hall sink and my bedroom because, like my own body, the mechanism is 85% undistilled water. The machine worked out very well, considering that I know next to nothing about electronics and the only science courses I have ever taken were for my high school equivalency diploma. I am not very advanced, as they say. Instead, I just kind of fiddle around and I guess I fiddled myself into the machine.

It is a very simple device, Mr. Pohl, and a very successful one; the only trouble is that its range is extremely limited. At the present time it will take me back only four months into time or forward seventeen minutes, it is poorly calibrated and at no time can I leave the actual time field, which embraces

only five square feet. It is an early model and it will have to be refined then on part of the proceeds from the story you will write about me.

In spite of the problems though, it definitely works. Just last Tuesday I shot myself back three months in time, found the newspaper of that date lying on my desk and my own humble form, the form of William Coyne, tossing fitfully upon the bed. It was an eerie experience, meeting myself for the first time and it shook me up considerable. But when I came back to the present time, with the help of the machine, and before I could even look around, I was interrupted by the dashing appearance of my double who motioned me urgently and requested in a whisper that four minutes hence I would please go backward four minutes in time. Then he -- me -- vanished.

It was very frightening, let me tell you, talking to myself, William Coyne in my own rooms. But I counted off the four minutes and used the machine to go backward; then I met my earlier self and told him -- me, that is -- to go back four minutes in four minutes. Like that.

All right, Mr. Pohl. I know what you're thinking right now. You're saying that this is all old stuff for you and your writers (even though in my case, the case of William Coyne, it happens to be one hundred per cent (100%) absolute true fact) and that you've seen it a thousand (1,000) ways. I read science fiction, too, or I used to read it before I got into this mess. But stay with me, Mr. Pohl. There are a couple of things I haven't explained to you yet which will make clear why this situation is 100% sockaroo for a good man like yourself.

You can imagine how I got the plans for the time machine, of course. That's right, a few months ago I woke up in the morning to find all of them written out for me in my own handwriting on my dresser table (that was what I did when I shot myself back the first time). I just used them. So I guess I didn't really invent it -- or, that all of us invented it. But that is of little importance, Mr. Pohl, except to point out that I am not a creative genius and that is why I need help in my situation very, very fast.

You see the trouble is this: I told you that the machine didn't calibrate exactly and every time I go back to the present I don't get to the exact present but instead a few seconds or minutes off in either direction. So now, every time I jump around, I always come back to meet myself, and if I jump back, and try to come in exactly on time, I

just make more difficulties. The same thing happens every time I go back in time; I'm always meeting myself on the way.

Well, what it comes down to is this: I'm always coming across myself now and the more I try to straighten things out, the worse it gets. As a matter of fact, Mr. Pohl, I'm afraid to make any more jumps because the more I've tried to straighten out this situation, the worse it's become.

Well, the truth is that there are now about three hundred (300) of us in these rooms, Mr. Pohl, all of us fooling around with these small time machines and none of us getting along very well. I mean, I've stopped trying to straighten myself out but most of the others haven't yet ... they have to learn the hard way and in the meantime there are just more and more of us. Right now there are about 310 (three hundred and ten) for instance, just in the few short minutes I've been able to borrow the typewriter from the other 53 of us who all are trying to write letters for help.

As a matter of fact, we're about to be evicted for over-crowding, Mr. Pohl, and in the bargain there's just no food or space left here any more. And any time one of us goes out for food he seems never to come back with it ... not that it would do us any good because I had two cents (2¢) in my pocket when this all began and we would need several thousand of us to get enough food to feed ten of us if you see what I mean.

This is my situation, the situation of William Coyne. What can I (we) do? We need to make big money from the machine real fast, that's the point, but we can't get out of the field, so how are we going to make it? And then we just keep on meeting up with ourselves and having to explain things all over again and we're all dead broke. Please, please: would you have one of your writers, if not yourself, write a story about me (about us) and send the money just as soon as you can? We're all kind of desperate, here.

Hopefully,
WILLIAM COYNE
William Coyne
William coyne & ...

THE CORPORATION STRIKES BACK

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PS: Yes, the publication date has been put back one month. Paulette visited relatives for a month and I discovered (again) what bookkeeping and order filling are like. These filled my days and allowed no free time for Toi King and her travails. You now have 30 extra days to get in your advance order.

THE VIVISECTOR

BY DARRELL SCHWEITZER

INTERFACES, Edited by Ursula K. LeGuin and Virginia Kidd
Ace, 1980, 310 pp., \$5.95
(trade format)

LeGuin says this book began for her "with reading anthologies of science fiction and thinking, 'Why did they put this marvel and this trash together?'" So she teamed up with leading agent Virginia Kidd, and compiled an anthology. Actually they did rather well. INTERFACES is an above-average book in what strikes me as a very "average" (i.e. mediocre) period for science fiction, although at times I find myself asking the same question LeGuin did.

I wish editors would remember that a story, to be a story and not a Tour of Wonders or an anecdote, must have character development and character change. It also must, as Mark Twain put, "accomplish something and arrive somewhere".

Understand that there is no NEW WORLDS style gibberish here. I suspect all the writers had something they wanted to say, and they were trying to say them as well as possible, but ... sometimes things just didn't work out, I guess. For example, (speaking of NEW WORLDS) there is "Everything Blowing Up: and Adventure of Una Persson, Heroine of Time and Space" by Hilary Bailey, which is part of a sub-series of the Jerry Cornelius myths developed by Michael Moorcock and later by others, mostly in NEW WORLDS. The story has fairly elementary problems of point of view and focus, which surprise me, because I usually admire Bailey's work, but I think its real failing, and that of most of most non-Moorcock Cornelius stories is that the writers are content to just name the familiar names, shove in some of the familiar images and situations and assume that is enough. It isn't, any more than the non-Lovecraftian Cthulhu Myths stories which just name the Unnamables, quote a few more turgid books, and end with the last lines in italics are enough. Twain's rule is violated. The story arrives nowhere and accomplishes nothing.

John Crowley's "The Reason for the Visit" is far more coherent. It is a delicately written anecdote about a man who may or may not be receiving literary visitors from the past. One gets the impression that

the piece is written just so the prose may be savored, as an effect for its own sake, not because the writer has any idea of what to do with the material. This sort of thing can be impressive at very short length, but a real story can have all of its virtues and many more.

Ed Bryant's "Precession" was opaque to me. It communicated nothing.

Now, with the non-stories out of the way (and I'd say there are only three, despite a review I saw elsewhere which claimed there were virtually no complete stories in this book), we can consider the rest. Many of them fail for a variety of reasons, but there are some impressive successes. Not surprisingly for a book co-edited by LeGuin, several stories are of an anthropological cast. Another common feature is a tendency to move away from rational endings, into mysticism.

I imagine Robert Holdstock's "Earth and Stone", had it been published in, say, ANALOG, would have had some sort of scientific hocus-pocus to explain everything some where along the way. It's about a time traveler caught up in the mystery of a prehistorical people who bury themselves in the ground for long periods of time, during which they go into a kind of suspended animation, and have sexual intercourse with the Earth. (The men anyway. We are not told what the women do.) Since the story is about atavistic mysticism overcoming scientific reason, it is only appropriate that the protagonist should fade, at the end, into mystery. And because Holdstock depicts the setting (Ireland, 3rd millennium B.C.) so well, the result is a powerful tale.

Almost a parody of it, or of any of those stories in which one man goes into a strange environment and sends back reports while trying to understand the great mystery, is Michael Bishop's "A Short History of the Bicycle: 401 B.C. to 2677 A.D. ...". The explorer finds himself on a Platonic archetype world inhabited by grazing herds of bicycles ... The results are fully as daffy as those in "Rogue Tomato", of pleasant memory, and a bit more sustained.

These two are award quality, I think. I just recommended them for Nebulas.

SELF-SHAVING WHISKERS, A SELF-CLEANING ROBE, AND NOW AN AUTOMATIC NOSE JOB!

SOMEONE HAS IT IN FOR ME!



Nearly as good is Philippa C. Madden's "The Pastseer", in which a shamaness, who guides her tribe's migrations by sensing how previous folk have done on the same route in the past, suddenly starts receiving visions of a technological future. The setting and characters are superbly portrayed, but the lack of explanation this time, I think, falls in a way that the ending of "Earth and Stone" didn't. There is a difference between mystery and things happening for no reason. Nevertheless, Madden shows considerable promise as a writer. She is definitely better than she was a year or two ago.

I also liked "Set Piece" by Jill Paton Walsh, a fable about art. Gene Wolfe's "A Criminal Proceeding" is a clever reducto-ad-absurdum, although not a major effort. "The New Zombies" by Avram Davidson and Grania Davis, about hippies and a rejuvenating drug, is readable, although the hero and heroine are too much caricatures for the story to have much effect. "Household Gods" by Daphne Castell is a fairly good account of a trivial act which may later become the spark of rebellion against alien invaders. "The Summer Sweet, the Winter Mild" by Michael Coney is about caribou hunting, from the viewpoint of a telepathic herd with a group mind. These stories are all fairly good, although nothing to get excited about.

Some of the others are disappointing. "Hunger and the Computer" by Gary Weinberg is very, very slight. (A man starving in a spaceship gambles with the computer for non-existent food.) It's more something I'd expect to see as a fairly respectable first sale in one of the minor magazines. The author has a long way to go. Alas, there is less of an excuse for some washouts by

the big names. "Bender, Fenugreek, Slatterman and Mupp" by D.G. Compton is yet another one of those stories about the mousey little nerd in the regimented society who whimpers a bit, then goes off and kills himself. None too soon, says I. Vonda McIntyre's "Shadows Moving" is about an old woman who wanders into the desert, escapes into her own delusions, and dies. The writing is fairly good, but I fail to detect a point. James Tiptree Jr.'s "Slow Music" starts out beautifully, with some very lovely prose, but then begins to ramble. Virtually all of mankind have left this life for transcendent immortality. One woman wants to stay behind and have babies. She tries to persuade a man to stay with her. They take pills to have sex. Both times they do there happens to be a corpse nearby. (Symbolic, no doubt.) Ultimately, both transcend despite themselves, purely by accident. All of which might have meant something if the character



ters had any life in them. But they are no more than stick figures. The result is boredom.

We have here three superior stories (Holdstock, Bishop, Maddern), several okay ones and several less than okay ones. I don't know if you want to pay six bucks for this, but it will be a fairly good buy when it comes out in a mass market edition.

THE EDGE OF RUNNING WATER

By William Sloane
Ballantine, 1980, 240 pp., \$2.25

In 1929 William Sloane graduated from Princeton and went to work in publishing. Unlike the average literary young man just out of school,

he stayed in publishing, which may have been to the benefit of that industry, but was a loss for science fiction. Over the next few years, on weekends and at odd moments, he worked on his first novel, *TO WALK THE NIGHT* (1937), and his second, *THE EDGE OF RUNNING WATER* (1939). There were a few plays thereafter, but no more novels. He edited two science fiction anthologies in the 1950s. I would guess that his publishing work, particularly after he formed his own company (William Sloane Associates), simply took up too much of his time. Both of his novels can be honestly called classics. Both are excellent. They have seldom been out of print, and have been popping up over the years in a variety of editions, including one, an omnibus volume called *THE RIM OF MORNING*. I was first aware of them in the Bantam editions of the 1960s. Those, by the way, were clearly marketed as supernatural horror. The new Ballantine edition is one of the few to label *EDGE* (one assumes *TO WALK THE NIGHT* will follow; they're never far apart) science fiction.

THE EDGE OF RUNNING WATER might best be summed up as a slightly toned-down Stephen King novel of 1939. It is particularly interesting because it has absolutely nothing to do with either the science fiction or the horror traditions of its period. Pulp SF of the time was painfully emerging from the Gernsback Delusion, long-winded lectures, and pulp magazine stereotypes. Horror fantasy, what little of it there was, tended to be written in a Victorian breathless manner ultimately derived from Poe. Sloane wrote in a completely modern style which one would expect from the best mainstream novelists. He took time to develop his characters with great sensitivity. Both his mundane and his fantastic descriptions are convincing. This way the multi-dimensional vortex at the end is almost as convincing as the small Maine village in which the action takes place. At the same time, he was a little behind his contemporaries in that he continued to treat science fiction concepts as if they were supernatural. (Fitz-James O'Brien's "What Was It?" is a good example of what I mean.) The average science fiction story makes its premise clear at once, then follows it to some conclusion. A supernatural story often builds a great deal of mystery around what is going on, then only at the end reveals all, even then. Sloane took the latter course in both of his books. However, unlike some of the cruder horror story writers, he had enough sense to write more than an aborted

beginning. He didn't just build up to what the book was about, say "Boo!" and stop. There is a complete story, although we and the viewpoint character don't perceive everything happening when they do. As in a detective story, there is a secondary plotline going on underneath the surface one.

In the hands of a pulp hack, I suppose this would have been about a mad scientist who nearly destroys the universe before he gets his comeuppance and the hero can save his beautiful sister-in-law. But no, it is a gripping portrayal of a man obsessed with communicating with his dead wife by scientific means. Collaborating with his is a grimly determined spiritualist, a memorable, if unsympathetic creation. There are even lots of hostile and ignorant villagers, whom a lesser writer would have equipped with torches. I also suspect a pulp writer would have done it as a short story, since there isn't all that much "action". But this was one of those instances when not being part of a genre paid off. It is obvious why Sloane's books are still in print. They are still enormously powerful, and they haven't dated at all. A human story, literately written, always wins out over genre conventions.

The Ballantine text, by the way, follows that of the 1955 revision, which, as far as I can tell, involved changing two or three words to include references to radar and atomic energy, neither of which have anything to do with the story.

SCIENCE FICTION WRITER'S WORKSHOP-I

By Barry B. Longyear
Owlswick Press, 1980, 161 pp., \$5.95
Trade Paperback

This is a How To Write book, aimed at beginning writers. It is of interest to, for the most part, beginning writers (surprise!) and also those who are interested in Longyear's work. In the last year and a half he has made an astonishing entry into the field, rapidly becoming one of the most popular magazine authors and proceeding to collect a Nebula, Hugo and Campbell in short order. Some might argue that it's still a little soon for him to write a How To book, that success has gone to his head, etc. But people who argue that aren't likely to get much out of this book, because they tend to miss the point most of the time.

The point is that *SCIENCE FICTION WRITER'S WORKSHOP--I* was written while Barry could still clearly remember what it was like to be an amateur writer. Ten years from now

he could not have written it. As a result, he is able to provide more concrete advice on story mechanics than a more experienced writer, who, say, knows that you don't begin a story without a hook, or with a long and boring lecture, takes this for granted, then goes on to mumble vaguely about art. That's not much good to the beginner. Examples are needed. Fortunately Longyear saved all his false starts and rejects, and for every topic being discussed provides examples of how to do it and how not to. There is even a section called "Fatal Flaws" which consists of parts of rejected stories and explanations of why they were rejected. After each section there are exercises. This isn't the sort of book you skim through once, then put back on the shelf. Use it as a workbook. It is designed for writing workshops, and was used by Longyear at one at the Worldcons this year.

In short, this is the most sensible writing book I have yet seen. It is heavily into diagrams and out-lines, and not everyone may write that way, but still these things are useful. It makes the reader think about what a story is, what its parts are, and in what general order they go. If you think this sounds like formula, consider that Longyear's outline (hook, backfill, bright moment, dark moment, climax/resolution) not only fits most modern stories, it fits HAMLET very closely. Also OEDIPUS REX. In other words, some things about storytelling are fairly universal. For example, that a story must have a point and it must hold the reader's interest. Ignore that at your own peril.

My one objection is that on page 155 Longyear maligns Johann Gutenberg by describing a book as the most ineptly printed since Gutenberg. Actually the one example of the old boy's work I've seen was quite nice.



I HEAR VOICES....

BY THE EDITOR

AN HOUR WITH HARLAN ELLISON
Hourglass Productions
10292 Westminster Av.,
Garden Grove, CA 92643

A 60-minute cassette recording of Harlan in "Loving Reminiscences of the Dying Gasp of the Pulp Era."

Harlan is, as always, immensely interesting and entertaining. He is alone on this tape--no one else is needed--and his memories of his early days as a writer in New York...his encounters with editors and how starving (or near starving) writers managed to survive in the 50's...are funny, stunning, and nostalgic. Of greater interest to me are his comments on writing--his personal writing philosophy, his evaluations of his writings, his estimates of how his early life changed him... His basic tenacity and drive are here revealed again, and my admiration and respect are again reinforced.

For an amusing/serious look at writing for the pulps in the 50s, and for a look at the ever-naked Harlan psyche, this tape is required listening.



AN HOUR WITH ISAAC ASIMOV
Hourglass Productions

"Building a Firm Foundation" is the title of this tape, but the story behind the writing of perhaps the most famous sf story in the world--"Nightfall" is among the more interesting--and surprising.

Randall Garrett is the interviewer, but this is more a happy, funny conversation between old friends than an interview.

Asimov is a remarkable man and his memories, still green, of his beginnings as a writer--age 19--are fascinating, as are the stories and anecdotes he tells about various editors of sf forty years ago. His relationship with John W. Campbell, Jr. is recounted with fondness and detail.

Isaac is self-revealed as a Good Guy--good humor, good friends and good appetite. You'd love to know him. He doesn't hate anybody.

CITY

A selection, "Aesop", is read by the author, Clifford D. Simak
Caedmon TC 1649

As entertainment this isn't very good--Mr. Simak doesn't read dramatically at all well.

So you're left with the experience of listening to his story and becoming involved with it if you haven't read it previously.

"Aesop" is a good story about the problem of the inherent nature of mankind in a dog's world, and how a 7,000-year-old robot solves it.

INSIDE THE WHALE

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT ON THE SCIENCE FICTION WRITERS OF AMERICA

RESPONSES BY JACK WILLIAMSON, JERRY POURNELLE AND JACK CHALKER

TO "OUTSIDE THE WHALE" BY CHRISTOPHER PRIEST IN SFR #36

LETTER FROM JACK WILLIAMSON
Box 761
Portales, NM 88130
Sept. 4, 1980

'As a recent president of SFWA, I hope somebody answers the article by Chris Priest. I was tempted to try it myself, but I'm absorbed so completely in learning how to get my novel-in-progress into a new word processor (and safely out again), that I haven't time for all that might be said.

'I'm sorry Chris decided to quit---in a series of letters, a couple of years ago, I tried to persuade him to stay. I think he is rather too cynical about SFWA and its members, but I think most of his discontent comes from the fact that he looks at the organization from the viewpoint of the idealistic artist, not from the viewpoint of those who can't keep writing unless their art is paid for.

'The Nebula selection process is certainly not perfect---though I think we have improved it greatly, by going back to the three rounds of balloting we began with, and by restoring the Nebula jury. Like all such contests, it will always have one defect that can't be removed. Simply this: aesthetic judgements are necessarily subjective. One man's meat--- We'll never have objective evaluations, or total agreement about the most excellent.

'I'm not sure that the Nebulas have been any more valid than the Hugos, but I think both have justified themselves---if not by Chris's idealistic standards, at least by increasing the recognition and financial rewards for work that many readers have enjoyed.'

LETTER FROM JERRY POURNELLE
12051 Laurel Terrace Drive
Studio City, CA 91604
August 5, 1980

"Golly! Chris Priest can sure manage to sound moral over not paying his SFWA dues! 'Away and free', 'Outside the whale'---ye gods, I'd never noticed that SFWA made any attempt to enslave me. But let's look at his charges.

'1. "SFWA has encouraged decadence by putting 'market' considerations before literature, by concentrating on, say, the kind of success attached to making a lot of money rather than to the sort of success attached to writing well."

'Whatever this means, I expect SFWA is probably guilty. But how in hell can you organize writing well? I know a bit about how to extract money from publishers, and perhaps something about getting them to scrap yellow dog contracts. More than that I cannot do.

'2. Writers' organizations exist, according to Priest, in order (1) to lobby for the common good, (2) provide a context within which isolated writers can contact their peers, and (3) "to promote an ambience, both commercial and artistic, within which creative freedom is encouraged."

'According to Priest, SFWA has done well with the first and second of those tasks; it is in the third that we are "derelict".

'If so, then we've done pretty damned well; how much do you expect for forty bucks a year? Once again: I know something of lobbying for a better copyright law. I even know how to lobby against unreasonable censorship. Creating ambiances sounds pretty tough for unpaid officers who have their own books to write.

'3. Priest isn't happy with our membership requirements: particularly that we require American publication for membership in the Science Fiction Writers of America.

'Of course this is absurd. Mr. Priest says our policy "presumes that entry to the American market is the only test of professionalism", but has anyone ever been mad enough to claim that one cannot be professional without being a member of SFWA? If one hasn't much published over here, one might not want to be a member of SFWA. There isn't much the organization can do for overseas members---although Mr. Spinrad is at this moment trying to change that, and has proposed a by-law creating an overseas representative on our Board of Directors (which will result in vastly over-representing overseas members).

'Yet Mr. Priest simply cannot cease beating his straw man. He makes the point that there may be more SF writers per capita in Britain, or in Australia, than in the US, as if that were relevant to anything. But, he says, famous writers are "barred from entry to SFWA simply because American taste was not congruent with their work," meaning, I suppose, that they cannot find a US publisher. Yet---what does this mean? That if they visit a US convention they would not have the same privileges as SFWA members? Nonsense. We have always welcomed non-members to all our functions except our business meetings.

'4. Mr. Priest resents the truth: overseas members must be subsidized by US members' dues. Yet, resent it all he will, it remains truth. It costs us more to maintain an overseas member than that member pays in dues. For a while that wasn't true: for a while we had an overseas member who received our communications in bulk form sent

by air express, affixed local postage, and mailed them. Unfortunately, the member who was doing that proved unreliable, and a number of overseas members complained that they hadn't received their ballots until after the election was finished; and no one else has volunteered.

'So: although we retain overseas members, in the past we haven't been able to do much for them. No one in Britain has offered to be our negotiator; and when I headed SFWA Grievances, I thought it obvious I couldn't do much from here. I had some success shutting down Israeli and Taiwanese pirates, but in both cases that was done by working with the US Dept. of State, not with overseas members. Norman Spinrad wants to change all that by electing an overseas SFWA director. I wish Norman the best of luck, but I decline to bet much on his chances.

'5. And now we come, I am sure, to Priest's real complaint: the infamous Lem Affair. And worse: for we are accused not merely of incivility to a Famous Person, but of that most horrendous of literary crimes, censorship, which earns us, in Priest's words, "eternal dishonor."

'The best answer to that is a short one: bat pucky.

'If there is any censorship in the Lem Affair, it has been on the side of Lem's adherents: as for example the academicians, who will not let the affair die, but have yet to publish the actual facts of the case ---including my own letters.

'Yet the situation is, if not exactly simple, at least comprehensible.

'The SFWA by-laws used to provide for numerous classes of membership, only one of which, regular membership, voted in either SFWA elections or the Nebula Awards. I quote the final section of Article II on membership: "Any person not otherwise eligible for membership may be elected an honorary member by unanimous vote of the officers. A member so elected shall have all the rights and obligations of an associate member." It was elsewhere established that honorary members do not pay dues.

'During Poul Anderson's administration one of the officers proposed that Stanislaw Lem be made an honorary member. It was Poul's understanding that Lem would be unable to pay dues because of currency transfer restrictions, and thus honorary membership was appropriate. The officers were polled, the vote was unanimous, and Mr. Lem was duly enrolled as an honorary member, meaning that he got SFWA publications,

but paid no dues and could not vote.

'Anderson left office and I became President.

'We heard from Mr. Lem precisely once: he sent a letter to Forum inviting SFWA members to send copies of their published work to Mr. Lem's Krakow publisher, who would consider them for translation and publication. To the best of my knowledge he wrote nothing else whatever to SFWA.

'Then Ted Cogswell discovered, in a digest of overseas press articles, a translation of an article by Mr. Lem published originally in a German newspaper. Cogswell obtained permission to reprint the article and caused it to be published in the SFWA Forum.

'The article was, to say the least, unflattering. It said that American science fiction was "universally awful". Indeed, Lem found not one single exception. Furthermore, it transpired, he had only accepted honorary membership in order to "reform SFWA from within"; but he found that a hopeless task.

'Lem dwelt at great length on the mostrosity of "writing for beer money"---a phrase he had seen quoted by Poul Anderson (who originally heard it from Robert Heinlein). Lem seemed to believe the quip was original with Poul, and that it was some sort of official policy pronouncement by the President of SFWA. Mr. Heinlein had, on several occasions, warned his colleagues to "Remember, we're writing for Joe's beer money ---and old Joe likes his beer," a remark most of us interpreted to mean that no one has to buy science fiction; that we compete for the entertainment dollar, not the food dollar.

'Lem saw it otherwise. He detected the fatal flaws of capitalism in that observation. You could never write literature while competing with beer! Incidentally, I suspect

Joseph Conrad and William Shakespeare would disagree with that observation.

'There was considerably more. Some of it clever, most of it curmudgeonly. The article made no concessions whatever; there was not room in it even for civility. The tone was universal in condemnation. It fairly dripped with sarcasm, some of which was directed against Poul Anderson personally.

'At this point let's pause and note something: although Lem said in the article that he wanted to "reform US science fiction from within," which was the reason he accepted honorary membership in SFWA, he made no attempt whatever to do that. Indeed, the very article in question was published in a German newspaper and when Lem wrote it he had no reason to assume any American writer would ever be aware of it. It was only by accident that ATLAS picked it up, and only due to Mr. Cogswell's efforts that it was brought to the attention of SFWA members.

'Although the article mentioned Anderson, Heinlein, and several other US writers (all unfavorably), no copy was ever sent to any of them, in translation or in the original German---although Mr. Anderson reads German, and one might have thought that Mr. Lem owed Anderson that minimal courtesy. The first anyone other than Cogswell knew of the Lem article was when it appeared in the SFWA FORUM, and the first Cogswell knew of it was when he read it in ATLAS many weeks after its initial publication in Germany.

'So: at this point a number of members became angry. Mr. Priest attributes this to "an influential political faction within SFWA, conservative and regressive, one that feels threatened by ideas and minority opinions." I don't know who he means. Perhaps Poul Anderson and myself? But my reaction to the Lem thing was to send a rebuttal to

WRITING IS SUCH A PAIN!
WISH I COULD WRITE FOR SOME-
BODY BESIDES MASCOSISM TODAY.



ATLAS. (They Published it.) Poul did nothing. Mr. Heinlein did nothing.

'Philip Jose Farmer, not known for his dedication to right wing ideologies and not noticeably afraid of ideas. wrote to say that he was damned if his dues should subsidize a man as disreputable as Lem. Phil Dick, also not notable for his right wing notions, said much the same. Some members complained that they had, as Mr. Lem suggested they do, sent books---at considerable expense, air freight to Poland being what it is---to Lem's Krakow publisher, with no result whatever---and that their polite letters to Lem asking why they heard nothing from Krakow produced no replies. Thus, they asked, is it fair that this man continue to be an honorary member?

'There were, I suppose, a dozen or so complaints, with two Phils threatening to resign.

'There was also considerable evidence to show that Lem had already resigned from SFWA. Certainly the article implied it very strongly, when Lem said he'd only accepted membership in order to reform us from within, but now he saw that was hopeless.

'At this point the membership secretary read the by-laws: and Lo!, Stanislaw Lem was not eligible for honorary membership, because he was eligible for full voting membership. Furthermore, since he had books published in both the US and Canada, he certainly had funds in the US with which to pay dues---and for that matter, despite his low opinion of US science fiction, there were several US members more than willing to pay for him if there were the slightest difficulty on that score.

'Mr. Lem was therefore informed that he could no longer be an honorary member of SFWA, on the grounds that he was eligible for active membership; and he would be enrolled as an active member should he choose to apply. He made no reply to that letter.

'Now: how is this censorship? True, it is unlikely that anyone would, at that moment, have examined Lem's honorary membership in light of the by-law requirements had he not published his loutish essay. (Loutish not because critical of American SF, but because published without any regard for letting its victims, individual or collective, know of its existence. If you don't care for loutish, will backbiting suffice?)

'If he had not published that essay, it is very likely that by now---five years, after all---someone would have discovered that some

could no longer remain an honorary member, and have asked him to join as a regular member. There is no reason to presume that Lem would not ignore that, as he ignored the letter we actually sent. Would Priest and LeGuin have quit had it happened that way?

'So: I find the charge of censorship hard to sustain. Had SFWA revoked Lem's honorary membership and left no way for him to join the organization, then Priest might be correct in saying SFWA "was lowering itself to the level of the State-controlled writers' unions that persecutor and control writers in communist countries." Or would he?

'Good God no. Membership in a writers' union is a requirement for making a living in a communist country, but I never heard of a publisher refusing anyone's work because he was not a member of SFWA (although we have had some publishers make it clear they didn't much care for people who too prominently were members of SFWA). You can get many of the benefits of SFWA membership without joining: better standard contracts, higher standard royalties, better and more informative royalty statements, entry to the SFWA suite at conventions, etc. etc.

'But even if one presumes membership in SFWA to be necessary for economic survival, Lem wasn't deprived of it. Indeed, he was offered the opportunity to upgrade his membership from associate to full voting status. How, then, has he been harmed? It might be protested that he has been insulted, and that SFWA officers were themselves incivil, and that, I suppose, remains a matter of opinion, for Lem had, after all, worked fairly hard at winning hostility; but to say that SFWA threw him out when in fact we invited him to become a regular voting member is to say more than the facts will support.

'This, then, is the real story of the Lem Affair; and while it was "awkward and embarrassing", I'm not at all sure that SFWA need have a monopoly on feeling a bit ashamed---and I, for one, am quite willing to discuss the subject. It's Lem's defenders who won't print the facts of the case.

'6. Mr. Priest doesn't like the Nebula Awards. Sigh. We can't win. Harlan Ellison quit SFWA because we don't have a Nebula for dramatic presentations; Mr. Priest quits because Nebulae exist.

'The Nebula was originally invented as a way to make money for SFWA. It has long since outlived that function, although it does

bring in some revenue (through publication of the Nebula Award books).

'Periodically one or another member proposes that we abolish the Nebula, but only a tiny handful want to do that. The rest, a vast majority of the members, want to keep the award, flawed though it may be; and while tiths may be some kind of "collective view" and thus narrow-minded, the by-laws unfortunately do not permit the broad-minded Mr. Priest to over-rule the majority by his own fiat.

'Now Priest is right, the Nebula Award is fatally flawed, in that it is given by a fairly small number of people, few of whom have read all the works nominated, fewer still all those published. Worse, the better known writer, the less likely to have read the works (because the less time available for reading), and the less likely to vote; so that the Nebula is inevitably awarded by about 150 of the less-active members, and no rule change is going to do much about that.

'The Grand Master Nebula (invented by, ahem, me) is given in a more rational manner and seems not to be so controversial; but there will never be a good procedure for awarding the regular Nebulae.

'Yet---is this a good reason for abolishing SFWA? I presume that is what Mr. Priest argues for. Yet even he sees some good in SFWA, some moral purpose to the organization (although he left out perhaps the most moral of all SFWA's acts, its strong defense of JRR Tolkien ethical right to US royalties when through technicalities US publishers had no legal obligation to pay him a cent).

'As to our never reforming the world, I hadn't thought that was our purpose. I'm quite happy to have been president of the only writers' association ever to audit a publisher's books in favor of its members; and although he has ceased to pay dues, Mr. Priest will continue to enjoy our protection---quite possibly, if Mr. Spinrad's concentration on matters overseas bear fruit, in England as well as over here.'



4704 Warner Drive
Manchester, MD 21102
8/18/80

'Chris Priest on SFWA deserves comment, but I think I should make it clear that I am speaking as a fellow writer of SF (among other things) and not in any capacity as officer or Power That Is in SFWA. These comments are strictly my own.

'The sentiments in his article are hardly new to the SF community, but may be new to some of the readership of SFR and they deserve some commentary. It looks to me like Priest's major objection to SFWA is that it isn't what he wants it to be. I would feel a bit clearer on his objections if I could figure out just what it is he really does want SFWA to be---but the article itself is so contradictory I can't figure it out and doubt if he himself knows. Certainly I find his "I revolted, broke free, and am now unshackled from this tyranny" proclamation (that's the sense, anyway) that leads off puzzling. Nobody has ever been coerced into remaining. It is strictly a voluntary organization, and while membership in it might serve some individual interests it really has little effect on a career in writing. If you're good, you'll sell. To attribute any coercive powers to SFWA is to give it a lot more than it deserves---and yet, later in the article, he seems to decry the fact that it isn't a monolithic union of all writers which implies that very thing. You can't have it both ways. Let's look at his points in order.

"SFWA, like all writer's 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."

'The first SFWA in fact is. Whatever power and influence it has in the industry comes from its ability to create a lobby. You can still stiff a poor SF writer, but not without all the other writers knowing about it---and often taking action. The Pocket contract, the Ace audit, and quite a number of other less headlined items which Priest does refer to are real accomplishments. No other writers' organization was willing to stand up on these issues. We did. We won. And because we did this gives SFWA an awful lot more clout with the industry than competitive writing groups.

'The second point, about social context, I'm less certain about. It

seems to me conventions and fanzines provide far more of this. It is true that much of SFWA has been oriented towards social clubbing, but I have never considered that aspect to be important or relevant and it often receives too much attention by the membership.

'The third point is totally nebulous (no pun intended). I've read it several times and I still can not understand what he wants. SFWA never tells writers what to write, and that's creative freedom. We certainly can't tell editors what sort of manuscripts they must accept---then we simply substitute our standards for others. Is he saying that SFWA must make certain no one is rejected? Well, if so, then he'll have that decline in the field he sees in his opening remarks with the resultant flood of sheer shit. There's enough of that now. The only sense that I can make of that third advocacy is the implication by Priest that writers are currently not creatively free, something which I've not noticed considering current themes and treatments. Editors we shall have with us always, unless you publish your own books. I think the charge that we do not exist in an atmosphere of creative freedom is far too serious to be tossed off in a one-liner as Priest does. If he can be specific, we'll see, but I can't argue a line like that until I see evidence not provided.

'Since this is the area where Priest says SFWA has "failed" I think it would make a wonderful article detailing the evidence for this sort of charge. To charge SFWA with not paying attention to this when Priest never once detailed those charges and presented the evidence of a problem to SFWA says more about Priest than SFWA. Otherwise, this charge falls as something high-sounding and totally fabricated for lack of a real charge.

"'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.... SFWA 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."

'Oh, boy! The first sentence is another sweeping generalization which not only has no substance, it

has no point. The rest of the first point seems to be that SF is commercially now a successful medium and, as such, is decadent and in decline. If being a commercial success is such a horrible thing and great literature can only be written from the point of view of starvation from an attic garret then we must dismiss such folk as Shakespeare, Bacon, and, more recently, Hugo, Dumas, and Verne as evidence of decline, since all of them wrote for money and the commercial marketplace and the ones I named above were quite successful at it. Or did Shakespeare only decline when they made the first film of HAMLET? What utter nonsense this passage is---I doubt if Priest himself believes this. Chris, if you do believe this, then obviously what you do is obviously publish your own books at your own expense (cutting out editors and all that goes with them) and distribute as many copies as possible so your greatness can be discovered in the 22nd century. That's the only alternative.

'As for commercial success, SF is now in the same category as every other branch of fiction. Even his revered Lem has had several movies made of his work. If this success is decadence and decline, well, then, I defy Priest to come up with a single branch of literature that does not also fit his definition of decadence and decline. I can think of only one---poetry---and I haven't noticed that that is Chris Priest's major artistic form.

'Ah, but now we come to the SFWA charge and it's fascinating. SFWA is concerned only with the marketplace and not with the qualitative aspects of writing. Whose standards, Mr. Priest? Yours? Mine? The TIMES? Leslie Fiedler? Tom Clareson? George Hay? Who says what quality is? An awful lot of the best of literature, not just SF, was attacked as lacking quality when originally published. An awful lot of what what the critics said was major and important is so much dead paper now. The only test of quality in a work is that it lasts. Dickens was often dismissed by critics and even contemporary writers as a commercial hack writing thrillers. Obviously there is something in his works that is universal to mankind, that continues to speak to subsequent generations even through the technological revolutions. The collective which Mr. Priest abhors so much is the only arbiter of quality. No specific collection of humans can do it. My definition of quality writing would hardly tally with Priest's own, nor should it.

'And yet SFWA is asked to determine what is quality and nurture it. I submit that history is the only

judge of quality here; it can not be manufactured except by the individual creative talent doing the work and can only be judged or recognized after the fact. Nor is quality an absolute---there are not only graduations, there are so many kinds as to defy any two rational beings' definitions. Or is Mr. Priest charging that SFWA is not promoting his own concept of quality? I submit to you all---why should it?

'Or is he saying that SFWA should become the Famous Science Fiction Writer's School and teach everybody how to write better? Who's going to do the teaching, Mr. Priest? And to what end? I submit that talent, creativity, imagination, is not something which can nor should be taught. If it is, it becomes intellectual fascism. On the more mundane level, if Chris Priest ever dropped me a letter telling me how I should write in the future I might note his points but generally I'd tell him to stuff it. I suspect I'd get the same reaction should the reverse be true.

'Thus, SFWA can and must only be concerned with the marketplace. It can not and should not presume to define the field for that is certainly the opposite of "encouraging creative freedom," as Mr. Priest put it.

'An organization, World SF, was founded on those high-sounding and meaningless goals and principles I've discussed above. It's fallen apart without its founders even agreeing on whether or where to hold a meeting. Reason: no two members had the same idea of the objectives of the organization, and most members had the conviction that there were no objectives whatsoever to it. There weren't---and, therefore, there was no reason for it to exist.

'O.K. So SFWA is the Science Fiction Writers of America. Yes, it is---because the primary industry is here and because we can exercise some influence over it. We simply have no influence over the British, German, Japanese, etc. industries because we aren't there and don't know them well enough. However, if Britain has per capita more SF writers than the US (as well it might) then they should know their industry. Where then is the British SF Writers Association? Certainly that industry could use one. But we Americans can't organize it---we aren't there and we don't know the territory. If it did exist, then I'd join and it could handle my complaints with British publishers just as SFWA handles their complaints on U.S. publishers.

'In terms of non-English language works, well, the same applies. There

are different laws, different types of company set-ups we here are ignorant of. I'd like a German SF Writers Association because I really would like to find out a little bit about what happens to some of my work in translation. There isn't one---and why not? Why is SFWA supposed to do that work and how could it without major organization in Germany? It would seem to me that, rather than remake SFWA in the multinational image, the only solution to all this (and I think it's a good one) is for each nation to create its own counterpart of SFWA. Then we could affiliate. But you can't do it any other way.

'A novelist whose book appears only in German can join SFWA, contrary to what Priest says. The problem is that we can offer him nothing in the way of services. When and if his book is published in this country we can be of service---and that's the way most of our non-US members use the organization. It seems to me that Priest's main charge is that SFWA is not a multinational organization---yet look what happened to World SF. It's not a multinational organization because it doesn't work that way. This way it does. Nor is the entrance requirement a measure of professionalism. One might charge that, since SFWA does not take those who write historical novels or westerns exclusively that it does not consider them professional, either. The charge is nonsense. We'll be happy to take their money---but we won't be able to do much for them.

'In other words, his argument is full of shit.

'Now.... On page 18 ((SFR #36)) Priest, who the page before was talk-

ing about decadence of the field and literary decline and how we have to promote quality over the marketplace then says "The best-selling SF author lives in Poland, the world's best-selling SF series came from Germany." Lem is the Pole, of course---a man who admits he writes without creative freedom and has often been in hot water or failed to get published because of the content of some of his works. Those approved get heavy marketing and promotion in the entire Communist bloc which buys more books. That best-selling German series he's talking about is Perry Rhodan!!! Creative freedom and quality, Mr. Priest? And if both of those statements of yours don't emphasize marketplace over creative quality nothing does.

'Now, you can't have it both ways, can you? Or maybe you can if you doublespeak fast enough.

'Quoting individual members of SFWA is really not quite kosher, either. SFWA, like SF in general, and like human beings in general, has its share of nerds, reactionaries, whores, etc. It also has a lot of creative people of all political and other stripes and I wouldn't have it any other way. But quoting an individual member's asshole comments to indict the organization (something Priest said at the start he wouldn't do, but I think I have demonstrated by now he wasn't reading what he was writing) is easy---folks do it with the Bible all the time.

'I wasn't in SFWA when the Lem honorary membership was instituted. Had I been, I would have opposed it, mostly in deference to a lot of other non-US writers who weren't getting in free. The principle was



wrong. For the same reason I voted against throwing him out on the grounds that, once you've done it, you're stuck with it. It was wrong, ugly and unpleasant---but it's done. All the affair proves is that writers, just like everybody else, occasionally act like assholes. The incident, however, is treated in length as being symptomatic of the way SFWA regards non-English writers and that is unfair. Mr. Priest will either have to come up with an organization that didn't occasionally do stupid and wrong things or a pattern of SFWA doing such things for this to have any validity. Instead it's an isolated incident and I think SFWA learned a lot from it. Unless it's an established pattern it has no validity in Mr. Priest's argument---and no pattern is given.

'Ah, the Nebulas. Here Priest is more charitable than I am. The Nebulas were founded with at least a fair number of SPFWans thinking that an extra prestigious award was a good thing and meant more money. The Nebulas are and will remain a joke for all the reasons Chris Priest states---but we'll have them with us always. No would I vote to abolish them now, since that's where 50% of the income for SFWA comes from and it is badly needed. But I don't take them seriously nor hold them in high regard.

'On the other hand, Priest's overall indictment of the Nebulus might apply to any popular-vote award, Hugos included. Nobody can read everything, as he so rightly points out. I don't think this invalidates awards per se for several reasons, the most prominent of which is that Hugo nominators, on the average, read a hell of a lot, and good stuff tends to be fished in fanzines, SFPR, STARSHIP, you name it as well as the prozines. No award is perfect. On the other hand, if we're going to have awards at all, the alternative is some sort of blue ribbon nominating panel and look what happens there. Read Spinrad on the late, unlamented National Book Award Jury.

'The FORUM was absolutely free until a certain officer was elected. A majority elected him---and a majority reelected him. In democracy you rarely get the people that you need but you always get the ones you deserve. If Priest had renewed for this year he would have found that the FORUM is not at all censored now. I might say that the censoring officer was not immediately past---I doubt if Jack Williamson even knew the lid was on. But Norman took it off and I seriously doubt if it'll ever go back on again. And that is a more important fact than the FORUM's shackled past. SFWA and its members corrected its mis-

takes and did not institutionalize such practices. Again, it learns...

'And, finally, we come to the charge that SFWA has not fought the "decay of the spirit." Priest admits that it's a nebulous thing. I submit it's so nebulous as to be another straw man set up because of a lack of anything concrete. SFWA is given credit for its victories, at least the ones that made the headlines, but it is charged with not having continuous victories. Finally we get to the nub---Priest wants SFWA to become a union. But we can't have a union---not unless we're willing to blacklist, to strike, and to enforce that blacklist and strike on our membership---and that would create the intellectually fascist monster Priest claims throughout he's against and yet seems to cry for.

'Over the past 15 years or so, SFWA has grown from a tiny idea into the only writers organization I know that has actually influenced and moved the publishing conglomerates. When it was being grandiose or sweeping it failed miserably, becoming a fan organization much less exclusive than the Fantasy Amateur Press Association. Where it has limited itself to goals within its reach and tried to perform what services it could with what it had it has succeeded brilliantly.

'I'm sorry we don't have the personnel nor means to influence the British publishers, Chris, but, hell, Future threw me out of that party at SeaCon, too, and there wasn't a damned thing I could do about it....'



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AND THEN I READ....



BY THE EDITOR

THE DEAD ZONE by Stephen King
Signet E9358, \$3.50

The first King novel I've read, and maybe the last. This 402 page book about a young man with precognition and a kind of telepathic power (reception, and only by touching the other person) is long on padding and repetition, good at creating the illusion of reality, but thin on plot.

The story is actually a series of clichés with a predictable clever-twist ending.

Johnny Smith has so much trouble with his gifts, so much suffering, so much hassle resulting from his infrequent attempts to help people when his wild, disturbing talent forces him to reveal special knowledge, that the reading experience is a downer.

King does have a deep understanding of the human tragedy, the human condition, the human joys of love and need, and this makes his books rewarding and worthwhile.

I do wish he didn't have to keep producing these excessively padded monstrosities in order to allow the publisher to justify an outrageous cover price.

[But, the market prevails, and if enough people consider him worth \$3.50....]

FRANK FRAZZETTA, BOOK FOUR
Edited by Betty Ballantine
Peacock Press/Bantam, \$8.95
[\$9.95 in Canada]

If you wanted to mutilate this large-sized trade paperback (letter-size, heavy, slick paper) you'd do it in order to cut out and frame at least a dozen of the beautiful full-color prints.

Frazzetta paints lusty ladies, heroic men, horrific aliens, monsters...above all he paints action and gut-level emotion. There is humor, too, in the accompanying ink and color sketches.

But the main thrust in this collection is his newest full-color posters which he sells in large size from his home. In fact, this volume could be considered a catalog of his latest offerings. But this catalog is worth the money asked.

THE LAST IMMORTAL by J.O. Jeppson
Houghton Mifflin, \$9.95, 1980

A sequel to Mrs. Asimov's first novel, *THE SECOND EXPERIMENT*, this is written in the same comic-bookish juvenile style that turned me off before. It's all magic science, absurd, incredible...involving an immortal good-guy alien robot from another universe named Tec, an evil remnant few powerful aliens from his original Alpha universe....

The dust-jacket claims the author grounded the novel in the author's command of science and her Zen-like interpretation of modern cosmology.

Uh-huh. Too bad she won't write believable science, dialogue and action. Believable, that is, to an adult.

If you're thirteen years old, physically and/or emotionally/mentally, this will wow you.

DARK IS THE SUN by Philip Jose Farmer
Ballantine 28950, \$2.25

Phil Farmer does have a vivid, inventive, wild imagination. He can, as in this faaaaaa future sf adventure (the sun is dying, man!) detail a complex tribal society, left-over wonders, aliens, and some strange creations of long-dead tech civilizations so well you believe! The fate of mankind is at stake here, folk, and mankind can be so damned obstinate, superstitious and willfully ignorant!

The story is mostly taken up with young Deyv (of the Turtle tribe) and his chase after a Yawtl who has stolen his precious, status-rich soul egg [like a super Mood Ring. Remember those?]

Deyv meets others whose Soul Eggs [and equivalents] have been stolen by the damned Yawtl. One other is Vana, from another tribe. True Love comes... The group follow the Yawtl and reach the lair of a witch named Feersh the Blind.

Environmental and social invention follows invention as Phil leads the reader a merry, intriguing chase through this long [405 p.] novel.

Curiously, it is the two human characters who are least interesting

of the pursuing group. And I'll never forgive Phil for what he did to Deyv's intelligent, loving, loyal dog and cat.

THE MAN IN THE DARKSUIT

By Dennis R. Caro
Pocket Books 83153-4, \$1.95

A cleverly told tale of intrigue and improbable love in the future worlds of interstellar high corporate crime and punishment.

We have Bos Coggins, a sometime sportscaster and most-of-the-time investigator, and we have "Muffie" Bernstein, a foodaholic (and crash dieter) heiress and corporate Operator falling intricately in love as they try to discover the identity of the man in the darksuit who in turn is going crazy but who has enormous power.

What makes this novel exceptionally good fun to read is the very funny/clever dialogue between Bos and Muffie, as well as Bos's morbid interior dialogue. It all rings true-to-life in spite of a certain delightful absurdity.

THE SUNDERED REALM

By Robert E. Vardeman
and Victor Milan

Playboy Paperbacks 16732, \$2.25

Sword, sorcery, heroics, etc. with a difference: it's realistic, adult, and funny.

The hero--Fost Longstrider--is a courier and in trying to deliver a precious jug to a wizard becomes involved in a helter-skelter series of battles and chases that take him to a magically floating sky city, a plot-counterplot political-power struggle about heirs, thrones...

Sounds boring, the same old shit? Ha! There is a genie in the jug you wouldn't believe, the rape of a beautiful princess by a stone god, an aerial dogfight on the back of an intelligent giant war eagle...

I like this one and look forward to the two remaining novels which make up this trilogy--*The War of Powers* series: *THE CITY IN THE GLACIER* will be published in November, and *THE DESTINY STONE* in December.

FIND THE CHANGELING

By Gregory Benford and Gordon Eklund
Dell 12604, \$2.25

A Changeling can alter his body to mimic any living form he wishes,

and he firmly believes the nature of the universe is chaos and unpredictability. He is a dedicated, religious anarchist and he and his species-- few, growing fewer--are hunted and killed by humans, by the Earth Consortium, as they individually slip into a society and sow disorganization, riot, ruin.

Fain---the veteran Changeling killer, and Skallon, an idealistic anthropologist sent with him---arrive on the plague-infested colony planet Alvea in hot pursuit of a clever, ruthless Changeling.

These men go through personal emotional crises as they hunt the alien and try to escape the notice of the Earth-hating colonists.

The Changeling plays games with them, kills, adroitly seeds the fragile society with destruction... and in the end attempts the ultimate emotional destruction of its hated enemy--Fain.

Here's everything you want in a sf novel--action, sex, violence, pace, depth of characterization, an intriguing, terrible alien, a strange human society...and a thought-provoking philosophical problem to consider.

A superior science fiction novel.

THE SCALLION STONE
By Canon Basil A. Smith
Whispers Press
Box 1492-W
Azalea Street,
Browns Mills, NJ 08015

It must rankle some less-than-great professional writers to discover that an 'unknown' English Reverend, now dead ten years, was able to write some of the best ghost stories and/or occult stories I've read in a long time.

There are five long short stories in this well-made limited edition hardcover, and all are in a leisurely, often indirect style, in which most of the action and tension is off-stage or recounted afterward by a second-hand teller, and which seem structured as slices of English countryside life as well stories of ghosts, revenge, murder....

Basil Smith wrote with much grace and command and realism. You really have to believe his tales.

It is by avoiding the direct third-person NOW technique that he convinces you by second-hand accounts and accumulating detail that these odd, ghostly, occult events occurred.

Stephen Fabian contributed 10 full-page black and white illustrations. Very effective and moody.

Russell Kirk, who knew Basil Smith, wrote the Introduction.

The normal price for this book is \$12., but Stuart Schiff is giving SFR readers a special \$10 rate effective for 30 days after this issue of SFR is out: Approx. from October 26th to November 26th.

There is a signed (Russell Kirk) and slipcased edition available for \$25. This is Kirk's first limited edition and signed book.

SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY AUTHORS A Bibliography of First Printings of Their Fiction

By L.W. Currey
G.K. Hall & Co. \$48.00
70 Lincoln St.
Boston, MA 02111

This is a big, fat, well-bound hardcover. It is patently a reference book, for libraries, for the serious collector and aficionado.

Not all sf and fantasy authors are here included. Only approx. the 215 or so most well-known.

And it should be noted that the first printings are of books, not short fiction.

The fun section is the six pages of pseudonyms listed: for instance the collaborative team of Tom Disch and John Sladek published under the pseudo Thom Demijohn. And (from the first page, also) H.K. Bulmer wrote as Ken Blake; and Marion Zimmer Bradley wrote as Lee Chapman... In fact, as I page through these pseudos I note that Bulmer, Bradley and Barry Malzberg have quite a few pen names. And who would have thought that Bob Bloch was Collier Young!

A typical entry in this book might be this one for a John Brunner novel:

THE JAGGED ORBIT. New York: Ace Books, Inc. (1969). Wrappers. No statement of printing on the copy-right page. An *Ace Science Fiction Special* 38120 (1964)

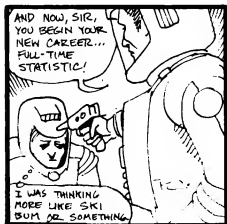
And so it goes for 571 pages.

TAKEOFF! By Randall Garret
Starblaze/Donning, \$4.95
5041 Admiral Wright Rd.
Virginia Beach, VA 23462

This is an "insider" book; most of its considerable humor is due to the reader's knowledge of many of the "classics" and classics of sf, knowing something of the leading sf authors, and also having a perverted sense of humor. All fans have a perverted sense of humor. And most pros do, too.

Garret writes a series of short stories in the manner of--E.E. Smith, Lovecraft, Eric Frank Russell, Asimov... There are outrageous Little Willie doggerals, a series of reviews of classic sf novels in poetic format--but they are very short on judgement and very long on recapping the plot, which will possibly ruin the reading of the original novel for the new-to-sf reader.

It's all good fun, well worth the reading, but, again, not for anyone without a long and deep background in sf.



THE TALKING COFFINS OF CRYO-CITY
By Shirley Parenteau
Elsevier/Nelson Books, \$7.95

A young girl student of the future is 'Sentenced to Freeze' in a utopian society because she impulsively caused a local weather machine to make rain instead of hot, dry weather.

The judicial system, dominated by a logical computer, is absurd, and her sentence a virtual death verdict, since almost all 'unsocial' acts are punished by cryogenic encapsulation and storage until future scientists find a way to safely thaw those frozen.

Kallie is rendered unconscious, put into the capsule...and wakes up minutes later with only a few more minutes' air supply.

What happens after that is pretty good story-telling. Formula, but gripping...if you ignore plot holes.

Throughout, this is a nice Juvenile novel, with a very moral heroine and a creaky, implausible plot.

Juvenile readers of any intelligence will be insulted.

Adult readers of any intelligence will curse Elsevier/Nelson for not labeling their product.

OTHER VOICES

WARHOON 28

Published by Richard Bergeron,
1 West 72nd St, NY, NY, 10023
Hardcover, \$25.00

Reviewed by Terry Carr

This is either the best SF-connected book of the year or the best fanzine of the year, depending on your definition. If a sturdily hard-bound volume of over 600 pages with embossed covers, endpapers and profuse illustrations in two-and-three-color lithography constitutes a book, then it must win next year's Hugo in the Non-Fiction category. On the other hand, if the 28th issue of what started as a fanzine that many years ago, which presents text and drawings by people known primarily as fans, strikes you and the next year's worldcon committee as a fanzine, then it must win the Hugo in that category.

But never mind the definitions: What's important for you to know is that you have to buy this volume... yes, even at \$25.00. The reason isn't just the stunning production, but the contents themselves, which consists of about 300,000 words of the best writing of Walter A. Willis. (Plus some other stuff: articles about Willis that admirably delineate his fan career, character and influence on fandom.)

There are, I'm sure, a lot of current readers who've never heard of Walter A. Willis -- or, if they have, they've never been fortunate enough to read any of his articles, columns or fannish stories. They have a revelation and a revel coming, for during the more than twenty years when he was an active fan Willis maintained a level of quality unmatched by any fan writer ever; he was, in fact, unsurpassed by any professional writer below the level of, say, Mark Twain.

You may ask, "If he was so terrific, why didn't he become a professional writer?" The answer is that he simply didn't want to; he instinctively realized what a lot of fans-turned-pro had to learn the hard way: that writing for money turns an enjoyable hobby into a job. Nonetheless, he did once publish a non-fiction book titled *THE IMPROBABLE IRISH* (Ace Books, 1969, written under the penname "Walter Bryan"; it was a well-researched witty history of and commentary on the Irish people).

His contributions to the fan press began with a printed fanzine titled *SLANT* that enjoyed the singular distinction of having several of its SF stories reprinted in professional magazines. His own written contributions to *SLANT* were usually short, but his deadpan article in the first issue, "Telekinesis and Buttered Toast", ranks as a classic. It's been reprinted several times and is included in *WARHOON 28*.

All the rest of Willis's best writing is here, too: "The Harp Stateside", "The Enchanted Duplicate", "In Defense of the Pun" and all 44 installments of his famous column "The Harp that Once or Twice" -- these will tell you not only what fandom was like in the fifties and sixties but also a great deal about the science fiction field itself. His analysis, in 1959, of why science fiction magazines were losing money and folding, was deadly in its accuracy; his criticisms of John W. Campbell and H.L. Gold were sharp but always much more in sorrow than anger, and his essay on the moral implications of the political ideas in *STARSHIP TROOPERS* was the definitive one, I believe.

Perhaps a few quotations would be useful to readers who've never encountered Willis's writing; in any case, I find the urge to quote irresistible. Here's an example of his humorously hyperbolic style, from his account of the 1952 worldcon, when Earl Korshak was introducing the celebrities among the attendees:

"Korshak's eyesight is on a par with his knowledge of present day fandom, and he spent more time apologizing for the first than displaying the second. After picking out a few notables in the front row he peered despairingly about the auditorium, finally being reduced to calling on just anyone whose name he happened to know. He had announced first that he was going to 'jump from table to table', a prospect which delighted those among us who felt that an acrobatic spectacle of this sort was what the Convention needed and were looking forward to a review of it in *THE BURROUGHS BULLETIN*.



But before he even started beating on his breast and swinging on the chandelier, Korshak unaccountably turned vicious, threatening to 'strike here and there at random' and to 'hit as many people at the tables as I possibly can'. Naturally this terrified the guests and they cowered in the shadows so that he could not find them. This seemed to infuriate Korshak even more. He knew they were there all right. He produced the registration lists to prove it, and revealed blackly that he was going to 'shoot up and down the list, picking out the highspots'."

Willis was in love with the English language, so it's not surprising that he was instantly aware of ambiguous phrases. Much of his writing concentrated on puns, especially "Willis Discovers America", his fictional account of his visit to this country in 1952, written before his actual trip. Unlike most Willis admirers, I consider this piece trivial, but I can't deny that some of the puns were memorable:

"The water level in the hold rises. The ship takes on a heavy list, which is checked."

"'Oh, bother,' says Willis. 'What a cell.' I've a good mind to retire from fandom in high dungeon."

"'You can't retire from fandom yet,' points out Shelby. 'You haven't even started on your memoirs. Lee Hoffman would never forgive you.'"

"'True,' says Willis. 'We must think of an egress.'"

(That last pun may be the bravest one ever committed, because Lee

Hoffman, a friend whom Willis valued highly, lived in the South when it was published in the early fifties. Willis later explained, "I knew she was of Illinois stock and took the chance.")

Willis was a master of all types of wit. In his report on his second visit to the U.S., when his wife, Madeleine accompanied him to the 1962 worldcon, he gave a rare example of the deadly way he could use irony, in a comment on a boorish social intruder:

"...Bloch invited us to lunch and en route to the dining room we were joined by Mike McQuown, an unexpected privilege. One had to admire the authoritative way in which he said 'Four, please' to the Head Waitress, and he was a great help in filling up the embarrassing pauses which tend to occur when you are trying to make conversation with a man as dull as Bloch."

The vast majority of Willis's writing, however, was warm, compassionate and perceptive. Here's his account of his first meeting with racial segregation in the South:

"On the way to Atlanta ... the bus had left several groups of Negroes standing by the side of the road because the back seats were full, though there was plenty of room at the front. Eventually it stopped to let a white on, and a colored woman with two little children followed. She and the children had to stand all the way to Atlanta, though there were still seats at the front. Now everyone in the bus must have known there was something basically wrong about this, but since nobody would do anything about it, all us whites had to choose between despising ourselves and resenting the colored woman, and presumably she had to make a similar choice with regard to the whites. This sort of thing must be happening several times a day to everyone everywhere segregation exists, and it seemed to me that the atmosphere of guilt and resentment in that bus pervaded the whole South."

Since WARHOON 28 presents Willis's writing in mostly chronological

al order, it becomes apparent while reading that through the years he became increasingly serious in his thinking and writing, and that the reason he left fandom ten years ago was neither weariness nor disillusion, but rather, his increasing concern for human problems, especially in his work in the North Ireland government. Considering the recent history of Ireland, this was understandable and inevitable.

Willis's "serious" writing progressed from the passage above, published in 1953, through his definitive defense and appraisal of fanish writing (1958), the previously mentioned piece about questions of ethics raised by STARSHIP TROOPERS (1961) and a superb essay on writing later that year, culminating in his 1969 analysis of The Irish Dilemma and his philosophical article written in 1975 in response to Robert Persig's novel ZEN AND THE ART OF MOTORCYCLE MAINTENANCE.

Most of Willis's humorous writing had a serious undertone; similarly, his more solemn pieces were always enlivened with wit. I repeat: He can be compared only to such a writer as Mark Twain. The operative difference is that you can read Twain for free simply by visiting a library, whereas in order to enjoy Willis you'll have to send \$25.00 to Richard Bergeron, 1 West 72nd Street, NY, NY, 10023. I recommend that you do both.

You'll also get to read Harry Warner's 12,000-word biography of Willis (which is excellent even though marred by minor errors of fact), Peter Graham's perceptive analysis of Willis's writing, Tom Perry's description of Willis in person and Bergeron's musings on the effects Willis had on him.

Plus sixty illustrations by Lee

Hoffman, Arthur Thomson, Shelby Vick, Bob Shaw, James White and Bergeron. There's also a page of photos.

THE GATES OF HEAVEN

By Paul Preuss

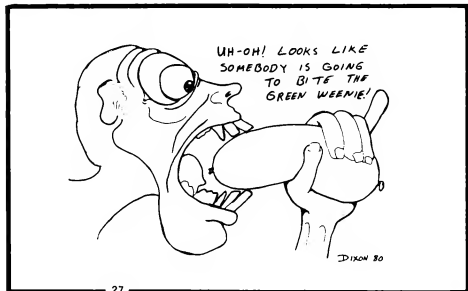
Bantam, 13409-4; c. 1980; Bantam edition, May '80; 210 pp., \$1.95

Reviewed by Steve Lewis

It is the year 2037. The search for extraterrestrial radio communications from the stars is dubbed Project Cyclops, but instead of the hoped-for discovery of alien life from another planet comes a signal from an experimental rocket ship from the rebellious colony on L-5, a ship thought lost forever, sucked into the open mouth of an uncharted black star.

The sudden shift in story emphasis is somehow unsettling. Some high-powered mathematical theories suggest that mankind is on the verge of finding a pathway at last to the stars -- if only administrative politics are kept from interfering! Much is made of testimony taken by the Senate Space Committee, but in the long run the problem it poses is apparently nullified by the quick expediency of simply ignoring it.

In fact, the book as a whole reads remarkably like one of those fictionalized docudramas that seem to pop up on television with increasing regularity. Without its supporting pseudo-historical backdrop, it is a story too weak and unsubstantial to stand as a novel by itself. The essence has been boiled away, before being served, as dead and yet unfinished as yesterday's newspaper.



THE MAKING OF STAR TREK THE MOTION PICTURE

By Susan Sackett

Wallaby trade paperback, \$7.95

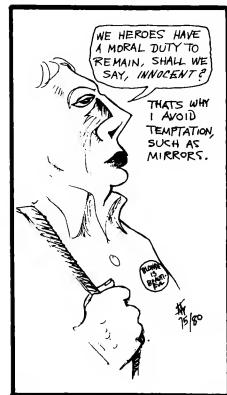
ISBN: 0-671-79109-5-795

Reviewed by James J.J. Wilson

This book is sort of a revised edition of Stephen Whitfield's 1968 book, THE MAKING OF STAR TREK, which is now in its twenty-first printing. The first book is all about how Gene Roddenberry developed ST, made the pilots, sold them to a studio, sold the second one to NBC, etc. It also has more information about ST, the TV series, and the people that made it than you'll find in any other one place. It deals so well with the backstage things that happen on a network TV show that I'm sure it's been read by more than just ST and SF fans.

Susan Sackett's new book is along the same lines but deals more with the movie than with the TV show. I only wished the book could have been written by someone other than Gene Roddenberry's personal assistant; I'd really like someone on the inside to explain how some of Shatner's worst performances got past the editing room. Or how some of the sillier things stayed in the film while other seemingly necessary details were cut.

This book, along with the Whitfield, is the most interesting of the non-fiction ST books to date. I think it would definitely be of interest to SF and ST fans whether they liked the movie itself or not.



These two books are far and away better than David Gerrold's mildly interesting books, THE WORLD OF STAR TREK, and THE TROUBLE WITH TRIBLES (which contains more non-fiction than fiction). Those interested in ST and SF conventions should look up Joan Winston's THE MAKING OF THE TREK CONVENTIONS (Playboy Press). The rest of the non-fiction ST books are far too flimsy to be of much interest. The Whitfield and Gerrold books, by the way, are currently available from Del Rey/Ballantine.

RHEA

By Russ Martin

Playboy Press Paperbacks

747 Third Avenue, NY, NY, 10017

ISBN: 0-872-16683-X

1980, 319 pp., \$2.50

Reviewed by Paulette Minare'

Pressed on all sides, both by her parents and her elderly, hated husband to produce a child, Rhea's mother deliberately, discreetly selected a suitable father for her baby. And so it was, without Lionel Carter being any the wiser, that Rhea Carter was born in 1796.

By the age of three, Rhea was incredibly intelligent, which gave her indifferent mother the excuse to send her to Cameron's Boarding School.

At age three-and-a-half, Rhea began learning Greek and Latin. On her fifth birthday she bought a folio-sized antique Latin book entitled LIBER DE MALO (THE BOOK OF EVIL), a set of instructions.

Rhea was unhappy on her weekends at home because of the tension between her parents. She followed some simpler instructions in her Book, carefully drew a pentagram on the basement floor and read the words of an incantation. Her actions summoned up a demon, and she asked that her parents love each other. When Rhea came home the next weekend the air of tension was gone from the house, her mother, Elaine, had moved her clothes into the master bedroom with Lionel. Now both parents seemed almost unaware of Rhea, spending much time together, whereas her father had doted on her -- his love does not seem to include Rhea now.

Rhea retreated to her world of books and started writing Latin, so her Book became more meaningful to her. When she learned she was to have a brother or sister, seven-year-old Rhea summoned the demon again and asked that she never have any brothers or sisters. The deed was accomplished by Elaine's fall downstairs. In a drugged state after

the fall, her mother revealed to Lionel that Rhea was not his child. Lionel promptly went to his study and shot himself.

At fifteen all young men were falling at Rhea's feet, but they bored her -- the one who did not bore her rejected her, and Rhea exacted a horrifying revenge.

Rhea Carter reached her mid-forties and wished to be youthful again, but rejuvenation could not be granted -- there was only one diabolical way it could be done.

Now, how in 1980, has Rhea been able to stay youthful, beautiful and sensuous for over a hundred years? And how has she always managed to have wealth at her disposal? Rhea has left a trail of cruelty since her early childhood. Her life has been sexually interwoven with highly interesting characters of both sexes, always with appalling consequences to them, their families and others.

Will Rhea be able to continue to control others and herself, by her demonic powers, throughout eternity? Russ Martin's style is often brutally realistic. RHEA will keep you captivated until you've read the final page.

THE DEVIL WIVES OF LI FONG

By E. Hoffman Price

Ballantine/Del Rey, Fantasy, \$1.95

Reviewed by Mark Mansell

First of all, the title -- egg! Sounds like a 1950's B-movie. Besides, THE SERPENT WIVES OF LI FONG would be more descriptive. But, moving to more important things, this book marks the return of E. Hoffman Price, WEIRD TALES and other pulp magazines' author, to broad readership. Price, who had known such pulp greats as Lovecraft, Robert E. Howard, Clark Ashton Smith and others, gained the small press spotlight a few years back with the publication of his immense collection FAR LANDS, OTHER DAYS by Carcosa, but this is his first (to my knowledge) incursion into the mass paperback realm.

Looking over the book, we find the story to be set in ancient Cathay, and is about a poor apprentice's apothecary who marries two beautiful, wealthy and sorcerously talented women, whom he later finds out to be transformed serpents, though he still loves them anyway. From then on, the book tells of their struggles against two monks, one holy and fanatical, the other greedy and cunning, who, for different reasons, seek to destroy the serpent women.

Price, whose pulp stories in the 1930s were known for their local color and detail about eastern places and customs, is generous in some parts with his descriptions of Chinese ways and mores, as well as a well-painted-in background of the political and social customs. However, and this may be the shortcoming of someone used to the China portrayed by Ernst Bramah with its polite and canny dragons and mandarins, it just doesn't taste like China (if you can make any sense of that). Touches like including prefixes such as Mrs., Miss, Dr. and Reverend don't help much, I'm afraid.

The plot is more straightforward, though it tends to get bogged down in descriptions of Li Fong's matrimonial bliss (or occasional lack thereof). The motivations of some of the antagonists, especially the very holy monk, get a little confused, as well. However, in the end the suspense builds up and climaxes with a very satisfactory ending.

So, in summing up, DEVIL WIVES is a good novel, though it probably will not rate as a classic in anyone's book. I guess this sounds presumptuous, for a neophyte to criticize a book by one of the legends of the field, but I look forward to seeing future novels that are able to work out some of the shortfalls of this one.

IF YOU COULD SEE ME NOW
Pocket Books, 328 pp., 1977, pb, \$2.50

GHOST STORY
Pocket Books, 567 pp., 1980, pb, \$2.95
Both by Peter Straub

Reviewed by Donn Vicha

"The terror that mounts and mounts ..." Stephen King. This is just one line from three pages of blurbs at the opening of GHOST STORY. Peter Straub is going to spend most of this spring and summer on the paperback bestseller list with this spellbinding novel. The people in this supernatural thriller are fresh and human, and for the most part, Straub places you among the inner circle of his cast to share their nightmares and the growing realization that the ghost stories of their past are only a part of a larger, more sinister ghost story. By never straying far from the rational explanations for what occurs throughout the book, he plays on what could be called our intellectual fear of the unknown, that perhaps, anything is possible.

There were originally five members of the Chowder Society: two

lawyers, a doctor, a journalist, and an aging playboy. Over the years, the Millburn townsfolk came to call their bi-weekly meetings in proper evening dress to smoke cigars, drink brandy and discuss world affairs, the Chowder Society. But at a party given by the doctor, the journalist dies. And for the past year, their conversation has always evolved around the question, "What is the worst thing that ever happened to you?" Their "ghost" stories are, in and of themselves, disturbing and seem to play on their unexpressed guilt over an event fifty years before.

As their unassignable fears grow into nightly dreams of doom, the doctor inexplicably dies and the son of the dead journalist arrives on cue to play his part and add his ghost stories to the puzzle. The winter weather plays against them and upstate New York can have some terrible winters, but never has Millburn had so many fatalities. While the occurrences have supernatural overtones, you share with the characters a sense that there is a rational explanation for what is happening. But beyond that fragile shell of reason and their decades-old feeling of guilt awaits a supernatural creature of stupendous power and ruthless cunning and whose patient vengeance enfolds the entire town. Few are safe in day or at night.

GHOST STORIES makes THE SHINING read like Dick and Jane Visit a Haunted House.

And Peter Straub's earlier novel is leaner and faster paced. In IF YOU COULD SEE ME NOW, the style is first person narrative and Miles Teagarden is not an instantly likable protagonist. He presents a prologue wherein he and Alison Greening make a promise to meet again at the quarry in twenty years. Something happened that night that Miles leaves for us to uncover when he begins his story almost twenty years later. He has returned to his cousin's farm in Wisconsin, intending to write a book and recover from a tragic marriage. The day he arrives the news all over the sparsely populated but closely knit valley is that a young woman has been brutally murdered. As a stranger (from the past more than in actuality), he is a suspect. In self-defense, Miles plays detective and learns the dark secrets concerning his cousin, a teen-aged hellraiser, the sheriff of the county, his grandmother and his cousin's indolent daughter, named after Alison Greening. There are more deaths and his work is interrupted by dreams haunted by the specter of his twenty-



year promise to a dead woman. As the anniversary of what seemed an innocent promise draws near, Miles becomes convinced that Alison Greening will return, her words still echoing in his head, "If you forget, I'll come after you. If you forget, God help you."

Again, Straub puts you in the bind of believing in Miles and sharing his hope that there is a natural, if grotesque, explanation for what is occurring yet the overtones make you consider as he must, that the unthinkable is going to happen on the eve of that supernatural anniversary. The ending grabs you from behind and, as with the ending of GHOST STORY, you're gonna love it.

THE FADED SUN: KUTATH
By C.J. Cherryh
DAW, 1980, pb, 255 pp., \$2.25

Reviewed by Martin Morse Wooster

C.J. Cherryh is one of the fast-rising stars in science fiction today. From her first novel (in 1976) she has earned two Hugo nominations, and one Hugo, for the short story "Cassandra". (Her novel nomination, for THE FADED SUN: KESRITH was deserved; her Hugo was not.)

Her popularity appeals to a diverse audience; she is one of the few writers who has achieved strong sales as well as high recommendations from the Science Fiction Research Association. For Cherryh is, on the

one hand, traditional in her approach to SF (none of her work would offend the Third Foundation, and Lester Del Rey regularly raves about her, as if on cue), but Cherryh is a conservative intellectual, something more than Alan Burt Akers or Anne McCaffrey. For her novels concern themselves more with traditional form rather than escapist content; she is a neo-classical SF author, not a late romantic. (To use an analogue from classical music, Cherryh is a Walter Piston to Poul Anderson's Carl Nielsen.)

Cherryh's major work, thus far, is *THE FADED SUN*, a long novel divided into three parts: *THE FADED SUN*; *KESRITH* (1978), *THE FADED SUN*; *SHON'JIR* (1978) and this volume. The work describes a war between humanity and regul. (So little is known about the regul that humans are unaware of any reguli borders save for the ones with humanity.)

The regul have hired mri, a race of soldiers, to fight reguli wars. In *Kesrith*, the mri are annihilated, save for two; in *SHON'JIR*, the mri, accompanied by renegade technician Sten Duncan, hijack a ship and return to their home planet; *Kutath* describes mri attempts to fend off both human and regul invaders.

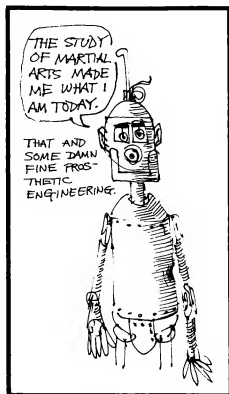
It has been argued that this series is a desert epic in space, Lawrence of Arabia with blasters. This is not the case. Duncan is not the leader of the rebellion, but a rather insignificant follower; if he were mri, he would be ignored. He is also neither the hero or the protagonist of this novel; Duncan is merely a catalyst of events, and lacks the preening egoism that so disfigures Lawrence's life. (Lawrence's account of his Arabian adventures, *SEVEN PILLARS OF WISDOM*, is still worth reading, provided one takes it as a novel, with as much authentic history as the adventures of Conan.)

The key theme here is one of "going native", of abandoning the civilized world for the joys of a militaristic, feudal order. The fundamental image is that of retreat: retreat from the warships of galactic powers, retreat even from the computers which provide *Kutath* with most of the contact between its increasingly barren cities, retreat into the caves and the joys of an unknown race. It is as if the fleeing warships were pulling Duncan's humanity away from him, leaving Duncan, isolated, nearly friendless, but pure. This narcissism places Cherryh squarely in the intellectual currents of our time.

KUTATH is not Cherryh's best book. That honour remains with *KES-*

RITH, powerful in its relentless account of the mri's destruction. But *KUTATH* has its own strengths, particularly in the accounts of the biology and anthropology of the alien races described here. Cherryh is also the best stylist to enter the field since Ursula LeGuin; her Latinate prose is strong, graceful, and a pleasure to read. (She has stated that she learned most of her writing skills from translating Virgil -- an admirable model.)

THE FADED SUN: *KUTATH* is not of Hugo calibre, but is nonetheless a solid novel well worth reading. Cherryh is not flashy, and does not, as of yet, have her own claque; but her quiet competence will continue



to be appreciated for many years, to come.

THE SPINNER
By Doris Piserchia
SF Book Club, DAW Books
184 pp. (SFBC)

Reviewed by Steven Edward McDonald

A very odd book from a usually odd and usually very entertaining writer that unfortunately leaves a very sour taste in the mind.

Basically, *THE SPINNER* is the old story of the small town hit by an alien-something, a la *INVASION OF THE BODYSNATCHERS* and several

thousand good, bad and indifferent stories since and otherwise. What Ms. Piserchia does is to take the story and turn it inside out -- while there's the usual cast of characters such as the police chief and the cop with woman problems, there's some very strange changes rung on them -- the maverick inventor whose trans-dimensional device creates the problem is an agoraphobe; his wife is trying to cure him; an old man who appears to be a derelict is actually part of a group of old people whose way of life is odd, compelling, romantic, mildly funny and ultimately chilling. So forth. However, in too many cases, Piserchia indulges in moralising, resulting in unbelievable characters and incidents.

The story moves along at a fairly good clip, with alien (deliciously horrible in its spideriness) wreaking grand mayhem and plotting to produce more of its own kind. In between the alien havoc, there's the havoc wreaked by the trapped inhabitants of the town, plus the odd goings-on of the senile old men and women ... which provide the key to the book's finish.

Accepting the mayhem and the annihilation of damn near the entire cast isn't so hard to take (being a trick used by your average bestseller, mini-series, disaster, whatamathingy), nor is the eventual trick-and-sacrifice ending. Up until the last page, the book is acceptable alien mayhem stuff, for all the minor flaws.

What kills it dead and leaves the sour taste is the forced irony of the ending -- one of the few surviving characters escapes finally, with the town going up behind him. When he goes to kill the last of the aliens, he's shot dead. Bang. Awful, ain't it?

The ending sure as hell is. Forced irony of that type, rather than a properly laid horror ending (hero survives, alien escapes and goes to ground) is an amateur trick; I'm surprised an editor of DAW's caliber would let it pass.

Ms. Piserchia has an obvious, effective, colorful talent; it's better displayed in a book like *EARTHCHILD*. *THE SPINNER* can be read, but: caveat emptor. That ending sucks.

DRAGON'S EGG By Robert L. Forward
Del Rey-Ballantine, \$9.95

Reviewed by Gene DeWeese

What kind of beings could evolve on a neutron star, where the temp-

erature is over 15,000⁺, the gravity is 67 billion times Earth's, and the magnetic field is a trillion gauss?

You'll find out in considerable ---and authentic---detail in DRAGON'S EGG. The beings are small, a few millimeters across, and can barely move, except in the direction of the magnetic lines of force.

They live a million times as fast as we do, so that once they are contacted by humans they prove to be very fast learners, resulting in an ending reminiscent of a sort of inside-out 2001.

The Dread Empire Series:

A SHADOW OF NIGHT FALLING

OCTOBER'S BABY

ALL DARKNESS MET

All by Glen Cook

Berkley, \$1.95 for each book.

Reviewed by Kathleen D. Woodbury

Cook calls these three books a series, and I believe that that is a better term than trilogy. I would not be surprised if there is at least one more book someday, because Cook leaves one or two minor loose ends, plus one rather large indication that more can follow.

The first book deals with the love of two men, Varthlokur and Mocker, for one woman, Nepanthe. The second and third books deal with the love Bragi Ragnarson has for his country, Kavelin. The protagonists in the first book are supporting characters in the second and third and Bragi is a secondary character in the first book. The first book can be read without going on to the second and third, and the second and third can be read without having read the first. They are complete enough in themselves.

Magic figures heavily in the series. In the first book Varthlokur uses the magic he has learned from the leaders of the Dread Empire to destroy the Empire of Ilkazar in the West, an act of vengeance for his mother who had been burned as a witch by the emperor's wizards. In the second and third books, Bragi, a mercenary commander, and his men come to the aid of the Queen of Kavelin when her throne is threatened, and end up fighting the Dread Empire to prevent its march on the Western World. Along with his cavalry and infantry he has a coven of wizards directed by Varthlokur who attempt to combat the wizards of the Dread Empire.

The distribution of ethnic types is similar to our world. Scandinavian-types in the cold North, Arabian-types in the desert South and

Chinese-types in the Far East. These last are the citizens of Shinsan, the Dread Empire, whose destiny they consider to be the domination of all the world.

The characters in the stories are real people; so real, in fact, that good-guy-bad-guy distinctions do not exist except perhaps between the West and the Dread Empire, and even the Shinsanese have what they consider justification for their actions.

Cook created an interesting hero in Bragi Ragnarson. The man is very human and makes mistakes that he pays for with dignity, and he never ceases to keep on in his fight to protect Kavelin. He is one of the few humbled heroes I have encountered. He is not just a soldier, but a strategist



and a philosopher as well. His depth of character is unusual.

Mocker is another interesting character. He is very intelligent and clever, but comes across to most people as a fat buffoon. He manages to mutilate every language he knows, including his "native tongue" and this adds to his foolery. He and Bragi, along with a friend from the deserts to the South, Haroun bin Youisf, worked together in their youth for several different employers. Mocker, with his foolishness, managed to distract many an enemy from the inside while Bragi and Haroun conquered from the outside. His convoluted chatter adds an element of comic relief to the often tense and suspenseful plot.

Cook does a good job. My only complaint would be that he broke up the story train every so often to do

a chapter on background and this was sometimes confusing.

Cook has the ability not only to grab my attention and not let go, but to make me care about his characters, even those who don't have much to offer. His novels have a great deal to offer and much to think about.

The books spoke to me of dedication: Varthlokur's Nepanthe and Bragi's to Kavelin. They spoke of how people who cannot trust each other under ordinary circumstances find that they can and must do so to achieve a greater good. They spoke to me of destiny and how even though it seems as though we may seem to be without choices, we can decide how we will face the trials of our lives.

I heartily recommend the Dread Empire Series.

THRICE IN TIME By James P. Hogan
Del Rey-Ballantine, \$2.25

Reviewed by Gene DeWeese

Not quite time travel, but time communication via a computer terminal in this one. Paradoxes that result from trying to change the past are given a new look, but that is only the beginning.

There are also miniature black holes orbiting within the Earth, threatening to destroy it. There are messages from future universes that apparently do not exist. There is even an explanation for the Big Bang with which the universe theoretically began several billion years ago. There may be a bit too much concentration on detailed scientific theory, but those sections can be skipped, and the remaining 90% is still a mind-boggler, like all of James Hogan's books to date.

THE ARTIFICIAL KID By Bruce Sterling
Harper & Row

Reviewed By John Shirley

This is Bruce Sterling's second novel; his first was INVOLUTION OCEAN (Pyramid). Sterling has expanded my mind. He is not something on blotter paper that you dissolve under your tongue. He's better than drugs--you feel like you've taken them but there're none of the nasty side effects.

But THE ARTIFICIAL KID is not plotted hallucinogenically, nor is its setting mere delirium. Sterling has done a good job of what Paul Anderson calls "planet building."

Sterling has given us an elaborate interstellar culture, focusing particularly on the planet Reverie, and the island city Telset. Reverie is orbited by numerous city-sized "one-ills."

Reverie has had its ecology complicated by its being stocked with flora and fauna from other worlds (including Earth), and by the presence of the bizarre and gigantic quasifungal living INA-recombination experiment, The Crossbow Body, a sort of vast Petri dish devising variations of everything that comes its way.

The decadent population of Reverie is supported by the profits of an interstellar corporation founded by the legendary Moses Moses, who devoted much of his multicenturied lifespan to mining the metal-rich planet Morning Star.

Many of the book's characters



are centuries old, and must make desperate psychological adjustments ---or even periodic memory wipes--- to combat a sort of cosmic ennui and death-hunger.

The Reverids spend much of their time editing their lifetimes. A chief Reverid obsession is the business of videotaping one's life, with hovering globe-shaped cameras programmed to get all the best and most dramatic angles, to be later edited into exciting sequences which they sell to subscribers in the oneills. Here is where some of the mind-expansion comes in. Sterling's descriptions of the integration of videotaping with Reverid culture brings to light a new dimension of time relative to human living. There is the subjective dimension, as Sterling's pugnacious hero The Artificial Kid lives it, and there is the constant overview of his life, external but influenced by his editing, provided by the perpetual monitoring of his cameras.

The Artificial Kid is Reverie's premier Combat Artist, Bruce Lee style, bound by a strict Code to fight using only his body and his nunchucks, grandiloquently flinging and accepting challenges in the Decriminalized Zone, where the Combat Artists melodramatically mangle one another for the sake of audiences watching (after editing!) the videotapes. There are various gangs of combat artists; Arti (as his friends call him, for short), began as a member of the Cognitive Dissidents.

The book's plot involves a power struggle between a Scientific elite who believe with the force or religious fervor in the deterministic chemical nature of all Being, and those backing Professor Crossbow, who believes that in addition to chemical concatenation there is a Gestalt holding within it the real meaning of life. Here again Sterling provides mind-expanding observations, through his characters, making the sense of gestalt and secret realms of being all the more real.

There is rumination on the texture of prolonged life, and the inevitable degeneration process of consciousness that accompanies it, that is terrifying in its profundity and sense of verisimilitude. This, like other sections of Sterling's complex book, has a feel of self-exploration (accompanied by the reader's sense of recognition) characteristic of classic literature. Further underlining that quality is Sterling's prose which, while not self-conscious, is beautifully classic, composed of strong, ringing sentences and chillingly lucid imagery.

The planet Reverie---which I have sketched only faintly here---is both intricate and believable, and takes its place beside the more memorable alien worlds in SF, such as Varley's Titan and Vance's Big Planet.

Like its hero, the novel is imperfect. Its resolution is satisfying but too pat. The story contains a few nagging discrepancies, at least one bit of scientific implausibility, and a few talky narrative lumps. But Sterling's ceaseless inventiveness, colorful scene creation, and insight into the human condition carry us through. Here is a fascinating and thoroughly entertaining vision---a visionary adventure that will have your pulse and your mind racing.

STAR GOD By Allen L. Wold
St. Martin's, \$9.95

Reviewed by Gene DeWeese

A neutrino cloud several light years across appears and humans and members of two nearby interstellar civilizations begin having visions

Three mutually exclusive factions form. One blames the visions on collective insanity. One insists they come from God. The third believes they come from the cloud, and that the cloud is a new life form. The search for the answer is engrossing.

There are problems with the novel, however, including a certain pre-tentiousness. It is reflected in, among other things, character names like "Satinas" and "Luxiferos." Also, the hero is supposed to be a mental superhero who keeps getting more super every few chapters, although he never does anything more brilliant than your average high school dropout.

For that matter, the aliens he meets and from whom he receives necessary information are far less alien than their fanfares lead you to expect.

Despite the shortcoming, STAR GOD holds your interest and gives your windblown a good tingle now and then.

SCAVENGERS

By David J. Skal
Pocket, 204 pp., \$1.95
Cover by Gerry Daly

Reviewed by Steven E. McDonald

A novel dealing with social effects of RNA memory-injections, or, as in the book, personality-injections, in which society crumbles while the new drug is made from the processed brains of famous people, artists, musicians, in-people, whoever ...

In which Brian utilises Tracy to try and bring back Kelly, an artist who was his lover. As it's told from two different first-person viewpoints (with the occasional interruption from a first-person viewpoint in italics belonging to Kelly herself), all in the present tense, reading like the production of an ORBIT writer filled with air, one might expect it to be hard going ... which it is. Worth it? Not really. Skal is a capable writer, but his artistic notions tend to get in the way of his story, which is basically kidnap-by-insane-jerk. The needed element of psychological manipulation fails to materialise properly; all the charac-

ters are unsympathetic -- Brian's a jerk, Tracey's a total incompetent, Kelley's a bitch -- so that no one really cares what happens to whom, or why. Social desolation background is unconvincing, Brian's descent into insanity is both silly and contrived (very much mad-scientist, with upward-directed lights in the face and giant hypodermic syringe), and the narrative totally without forward drive.

As for it being the ultimate novel about cults (Edward Bryant's bacovert blur), it doesn't even bother to do more than mention the Church of the Extended Mind, the organization supposedly behind the brainstormers, and, presumably, the collapse of society as we know it.

Bad book from a new author.
May he do better next time.

STAR DRIVER

By Lee Correy
Del Rey/Ballantine, 1980, 244 pp.
\$1.95

Reviewed by Dean R. Lambie

The accurate author's bio at the end is a spoiler here, for I would have loved to see a few downy-cheeked youth "discover" Lee Correy as a new writer with fresh ideas. The more grey of tooth will recognize this work as the first new SF novel by G. Harry Stine in over 20 years -- complete with all the off-beat science that Stine has offered as non-fiction in ANALOG and elsewhere for some time.

Mike Call, an out-of-work astronaut and crop-duster pilot, is hired by the strange research division of a heavy equipment company. Mike's new laboratory colleagues have just discovered a radical space drive, and plans are made for a flight to Mars by these Heinleinian individualists who have only contempt for the military-industrial complex. Surprise, the new invention is a "Dean Drive" that inertialess wonder that would drive Newton to applejack and Einstein back to the patent office. Corporate backstabbing and industrial spies soon force the intrepid adventurers to lower their sights, however, and the space drive finally makes its public debut with a Piper Cherokee overflight of a 727's flight lane. Even engineers apparently accept some realities.

The love affair between Mike and Tammy Dudley adds dimension to otherwise stock characters, and for all the old hat of half-baked notions from which Stine has drawn his plot, STAR DRIVER is entertaining, is a good read.

LORD OF THE TREES/THE MAD GOBLIN
By Philip Jose Farmer
Ace Double Novel, 374 pp., \$2.50

Reviewed by Steven E. McDonald

Double-format reissue of inter-linked Lord Grandrith and Doc Caliban novels, dealing with Farmer's revamp of Tarzan and pastiche of Doc Savage. The former is closer to parody with Lord Grandrith coming across as a total braggart, while the latter is too close to the prototype to be really comfortable. In the meantime, the Silent Seven have gained two members and departed from the Shadow series to become the over-all menace in both books. Other characters appearing include Moriarty from the Sherlock Holmes series.

On an overall basis, I can enjoy Farmer's adventure writing -- he can keep a good pace and produce effective prose (more than many adventure writers, who often just have the pace) -- but these books just don't swing that thing; the Tarzan inversion doesn't come off funny enough, and the Doc Savage imitation is just that: If Doc Savage is what you want, go get Doc Savage -- there's almost a hundred of the novels available now, in new and secondhand editions, and another eighty-some to come. Farmer's exercises in crossed genealogy are fun in books like TARZAN ALIVE and DOC SAVAGE: HIS APOCALYPTIC LIFE, but here they're just wearisome.

GOLDEN VANITY

By Rachel Pollack
Berkley, 1980, 225 pp., \$1.95

Reviewed by Dean R. Lambie

If you were to cube Heinlein's PODKAYNE OF MARS, take Pohl & Kornbluth's THE SPACE MERCHANTS to the tenth power, you would have a reasonable indication of the starting point of Pollack's dramatic first SF novel.

The galaxy, seeded long ago with humans, is completely controlled by rapacious cartels. Jaak, chairman of Company One, violates one of the few laws enforced on the cartels and this illegality leads to a Screamer, a growing hole in spacetime. While Jaak deals with arch-enemy Loper to stop the Screamer, he sends his teenage daughter, Golden Vanity, to safety. Vanity, thoroughly disgusted with her father's corporate rape of humane market worlds, escapes her guardians and jumps through non-space to a newly-discovered humanhome -- Earth.

On Earth, where society has be-

gun to crumble in the face of the yet-benign star visitors, Vanity hides out with Humphrey McCloskey. New Yorker McCloskey and the golden alien are soon on the run, however, as Jaak's minions, evil Loper and Earth's authorities, hunt the alien girl. In their flight across chaotic North America, Vanity and McCloskey come to understand and love each other, as they strive to retain their freedom and preserve Earth from slavery to Jaak's company. The solution discovered, while certainly not new to SF, is skillfully presented and transcends the inherent message of the novel.

A fine hand draws even the secondary characters here, and plot development carries breadth and depth. Very nice job -- watch this writer.



THE OGDEN ENIGMA By Gene Snyder
Playboy Press, \$2.50

Reviewed by Gene DeWeese

Despite the hokey cover blurb-- "...based on astonishing fact!"-- this is one of the better "governments-will-stop-at-nothing-to-suppress-the-truth" novels.

In this case the "truth" is a UFO stashed in a secret government hanger at Dugway in Utah, and the "nothing" they won't stop at includes lots of spying, lots of killing, and lots of chasing of the innocent involved hero, his New York editor or girl friend, and his blind math prodigy daughter whose braille-trained fingers and math genius are instrumental in deciphering the markings embossed on an artifact from the UFO.

The story moves fast, keeps you guessing, and ends with all the spies, killers and chasers being identified and more or less disposed of but leaving the UFO suitably unexplained and mysterious.



SHATTERDAY

By Harlan Ellison
Hardcover, Houghton Mifflin Company
Boston: Nov. 1980.
ISBN 0-395-28587-9

Reviewed by James J.J. Wilson

Ellison's earlier collections of generally excellent short fiction, as good as they were, lacked a sense of unity, of a single purpose. This gradually changed. The stories of 1974's *APPROACHING OBLIVION* were fine and whole, yet for the first time, the package added something, became an entity unto itself. No longer were Ellison books indistinguishable from other Ellison books. Then, in 1975, *DEATHBIRD STORIES*. In 1978, *STRANGE WINE*. Now, *SHATTERDAY*. These books add new dimensions to the concept of bookness. You have to read *SHATTERDAY*, feel it, experience it, to know what I mean.

Harlan Ellison is obsessed with the concept of time and all its implications, as with his award-winning 1965 tale, "'Repent Harlequin!' Said the Ticktockman". Several of the stories in *SHATTERDAY* are evidence of this. The first, "Jeffy is Five", is among Ellison's most popular and famous stories; it deals with one aspect of Ellison's time-obsession: recapturing the past. It glorifies the trinkets cherished by a child growing up in middle-class America in the 1930s and 40s. Ellison first dealt with this in his 1959 story "Free With This Box" (Collected in his 1961 classic book, *GENTLEMAN JUNKIE*). Be it a Captain Midnight Secret Decoder Badge, Pep

bubbles or tattered copies of *JINGLE JANGLE COMICS*, they're all links to a world that never did or ever will exist: the world we refer to as the past but which consists only of the happy, imprecisely remembered aspects of childhood. The story also has a similarity to Ray Bradbury's 1953 story, "The Dwarf", about a boy who never grows up, mentally or physically. Ellison carries the idea much further than Bradbury.

Another *SHATTERDAY* time story is "Shopper Keeper", about one of those shops where you can buy eye of newt, Aladdin's lamp, or whatever and, once you leave the store, it disappears and you never see it again. Behind the story is Ellison's idea that there is a universal scorecard recording everyone's wasted time so that penalties might be assessed. Similarly, in "Count the Clock that Tells the Time", the penalty for wasting time is banishment into a sort of limbo. This one, though, has a more hopeful ending.

"In the Fourth Year of the War" is a time story only in that the main character, finally driven mad by his inability to cope with the present, takes revenge on all the people from his past who ever caused him pain.

"All the Birds Come Home to Roost" is about someone's past coming back to him decidedly against his will. This story, as well as "Would You do it for a Penny?", "Opium", "The Other Eye of Polyphemus" and, to some extent, "Shatterday", is about people's inability to communicate with those supposedly closest to them.

"The Man who was Heavily into Revenge" is a story of justice in which one man gets back at another for ruining his life. The injustice is that he is never able to know that he has taken revenge.

The main story of *SHATTERDAY*, according to Ellison, is the longest piece in the book, "All the Lies that are My Life". This is a new story which is also appearing in the current (as this is published) issue of *FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION*. The main character, Jimmy Crowstairs, bears a greater resemblance to Ellison himself than most of his past fictional characters. Larry Bedloe, the other main character, is a thinly disguised Robert Silverberg. Ed Bryant and Ellison's former assistant, Linda Steele, make appearances under different names, and Ellison's housekeeper and Haskell Barkin (co-author of "Would You do it for a Penny?") appear under their own names (this information is in the galley review copies of the book.

There's always the possibility of editing before the book is published. I don't know whether it's because I've read so much of Ellison's non-fiction or because it is so obvious an attempt at using real people as characters, but I found this story a little unsatisfying. The story is wonderfully written, especially the tragically futile death scene, but the character of Crowstairs (and of Bedloe for that matter) never seems to be resolved.

The final story is "Shatterday". There are some superb stories in this book, but this story and "Jeffy is Five" are certifiable masterpieces. This is the story of an advertising man who is such a schmuck that his bad side and his good side become separate individuals. The conversations between these two are studies in the way we perceive the "real world" and ourselves as a part of it.

Harlan Ellison is one of the few masters of the short story. Some say he is mellowing, becoming less potent as the years pass. Rather, he is maturing, refining his art, aging like a fine, strange wine.

This book is not to be missed. But *SHATTERDAY* scarcely belongs next to those by Clarke, Niven and Pohl. It is much more at home with books by Hemingway, Bierce and Borges. It is an event.

THE MASK OF THE SUN
By Fred Saberhagen
Ace, \$1.95

Reviewed by Elton T. Elliott

THE MASK OF THE SUN, I'm happy to report, is one of those rarities in SF: a rollicking good action/adventure story which at the same time poses some serious questions for the reader.

The story begins when Tom Gabriel, a sunken treasure hunter, finds off the coast of Florida an Indian artifact (a mask which when worn gives the wearer visions of strange events which have not yet happened). He attempts to sell it. When he suddenly disappears, his brother Mike attempts to locate him.

Mike finds the mask and discovers that its visions are warnings of doom and ways to prevent it from happening. Guided by the mask, Mike escapes three men who attempt to murder him, and through a series of fortuitous circumstances, ends up in an alternate world fighting along with the Incas to prevent Pizarro from conquering that part of the Western hemisphere. He is helped in

his quest by the Incas from the 23rd Century in that alternate world and opposed by forces from another alternate world which represent 23rd Century Mexico under the Aztecs.

Meanwhile, lurking in the background is a mystery man by the name of Esperanza who seems to know an awful lot and who pops up in the strangest places in the oddest disguises at oftentimes crucial moments. To complicate matters further, the mask that Mike wears is more than a simple tool, as all the sides involved are out to get it, and if that isn't enough, it appears that Pizarro has a mask just like it.

The action moves along quite rapidly; one never quite gets a feel for the primary character. The power of the book comes from its relentless view of Pizarro and his men as amoral barbarians despoiling a civilization that if given half a chance could mature into something quite beneficial to the future of this alternate Earth. The Aztecs are not viewed in so friendly a light; they make Nazi Germany seem civilized by comparison. But the primary power of the book, aside from the complex, smoothly-handled plot, is the portrayal of the Inca empire being ravaged by the conquistadors:

"Mike had expected the city to be changed, but still the reality was shocking. Random rubbish was strewn about, and animal droppings spotted the pavement. Here and there Spaniards' graffiti marked the superb masonry of the walls.

"But the worst changes of course were in the people. Inca beggars had begun to lounge in front of the Casana and elsewhere, asking for food when a Spaniard or Pakoyok passed. Idlers not quite beggars sat at gates and sills along the streets. The children passing were often dull-eyed and fat with the starchy obesity of the ill-fed.

"... Gone, of course, were the golden llamas, with their herders, the rows of maize, the altar -- the treasure all gone, like stuff that dreams are made of.

"At the edge of a pile of rubble where a wall had recently been knocked down, a young priest of Christ, in a brown habit, stood arguing with a minor priest of the Sun."

These are the scenes that the history books like to ignore, but thank heaven Mr. Sabersagen doesn't.

The gritty realism, and the Incan way of life combined with the exciting plot make THE MASK OF THE SUN much, much more than just a rollicking good yarn. They make it a nov-

el that should be considered when Hugo, Nebula or American Book Award time rolls around.

WEB OF ANGELS

By John M. Ford
Pocket Books, July, 1980, \$2.25

Reviewed by Paul Harwitz

From WEB OF ANGELS, one infers that Ford is an expert on computers, for he has convincingly extrapolated "phone-phreaks" and "computer-freaks" into a future where unauthorized manipulation of the "Web", a galaxy-spanning, inter-active cybernetic system, is frowned upon by the authorities to the point of rendering uncautious suspects quite seriously dead.

Grailer, the protagonist, is a child-prodigy who grows up in a painful but enlightening fashion as he learns to exploit his natural-born talents more and more.

The author weaves in sidelights of fandom in an imaginative and entertaining way. Tarot cards of the future are not still-lives but ever-changing pictures. Other original touches include the current Regency dance-craze taken to an extreme: if you miss a step, you die.

Better editing would have honed this book into an even finer novel, but it is still well worth buying and reading. It is refreshing to see a decent science fiction original paperback again.

FANTASY FOR CHILDREN: AN ANNOTATED CHECKLIST

By Nadelman Lynn
R.R. Bowker Co., 288 pp, \$14.95

Reviewed by Tom Staicar

This is a scholarly reference work aimed mainly at the needs of librarians and book collectors. It is a checklist of notable children's books in the field of fantasy, most of them written at the reading level of grades 3-8, but others suitable for all age groups. Some of the latter include Richard Adams' WATERSHIP DOWN and SHARDIK, Baum's Oz books, Dickinsons' THE BLUE HAWK, LeGuin's trilogy about Earthsea, Tolkien's novels, Swift's GULLIVER'S TRAVELS and Joy Chant's RED MOON AND BLACK MOONLAIN.

Even some of the children's level books sound intriguing. I might have a look at James Thurber's THE WONDERFUL O, which Lynn describes in

this way: "Wicked Black and his pirate crew decide to destroy everything spelled with the letter 'O.'" As children usually ask for another book like the one they just enjoyed, the compiler has arranged the material in sections by subject. There are sections covering alternative worlds, allegory and fable, mythical beings and creatures, time travel and talking animals, among others. These areas are of obvious interest to adult fantasy readers, although most of the titles described are for young readers.

This is not intended to be a complete encyclopedia or handbook, and contains nothing to set the sub-categories in perspective. Single line plot summaries are all that are provided for the 1,650 books in the checklist, along with an index to authors and titles and a directory of publishers' addresses.

Those with children, librarians involved in any way with children's literature, and fantasy readers whose interests include children's fantasy will find this book a useful one.

REVIEWS IN HAND FOR NEXT ISSUE

THE JULES VERNE COMPIAN
SCHRODINGER'S CAT: THE UNIVERSE
NEXT DOOR

THE BARBIE MURDERS & OTHER STORIES
ALIENS! / THE BUG WARS
BLACK HOLES AND WARPED SPACETIME
GENESIS REVISITED
MEDUSA'S CHILDREN
SPACE WARS -- WORLDS & WEAPONS
HAN SOLO'S REVENGE
THE DEMETER FLOWER
WILD SEED / KILL THE DEAD
DUNSTON WOOD
THE SPACE MAVERICKS
DRINKING SAFFIRE WINE
And Others....

Hmm. Additives have finally
come out of the closet.



UNITIES

IN DIGRESSION

By Orson Scott Card

To begin: A quotation from Darrell Schweitzer's review of Elizabeth Lynn's *THE DANCERS OF ARUN* in *SFR* #36:

"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."

When I first read that passage of lucid critical comment, it struck me that perhaps Mr. Schweitzer might have been referring to my own review of *WATCHTOWER* and *DANCERS OF ARUN*, by Elizabeth Lynn, in *ETERNITY* #2. But after carefully reading Mr. Schweitzer's comments and my own review, I can only conclude that Mr. Schweitzer was commenting on someone else's review of Lynn's book; and not just any review, but the sort of review that might be written by a person of few accomplishments, a halfling as editor, as writer, as reviewer, and as wit. For if Mr. Schweitzer's comments had been intended to refer to my review, it would bespeak in him an ineptness as a reader that would make one suspect that he reads all other works with equal unintelligence, something that we must reject out of hand, for Mr. Schweitzer's record as a reasonable, fair-minded, and clear-thinking critic makes his work the very acme of the sort of work he does.

However, there are some readers who, having read my review and Mr. Schweitzer's comments, might leap to the conclusion that he was referring to me. This would be unfortunate, for it would make them think less of Mr. Schweitzer's ability, something that should be avoided at all costs.

Therefore I will devote a short amount of space to demonstrating that Mr. Schweitzer could not possibly have been referring to me.

I did express grave disappointment in Ms. Lynn's two books. However, at no time did I give her any sort of warning or suggest that she "get her act together." Ms. Lynn and I have been publishing for exactly the same amount of time, and I think it would be presumptuous for a writer to give "warnings" or adopt a superior tone toward someone whose record is at least as distinguished as his own. All that I expressed in my review was my great liking for her work and respect for her talents, and a personal fear that she might not grow in those areas in which she is not yet excellent. But the only penalty that I implied was the terrible punishment of not having me like her work--not much of a threat or warning there, I think. I ended my comments on her work by saying that I hoped she would not be seduced by the siren of critical praise into writing mediocre books for the rest of her career. But how can my personal hopes be construed as a warning by a person of good will?

The most telling point, however, against the untenable claim that Mr. Schweitzer was referring to my review is the fact that the reviewer he is writing about said that "the problem" with *ARUN* "was that she didn't pick up where she left off in *WATCHTOWER*." Now, in my review, of course, I never said that was a problem with *ARUN*. I said it was a problem with *WATCHTOWER*, a book which had serious problems with the unity of its plot. *ARUN*'s problems were not with the fact that it didn't close the open ending of *WATCHTOWER*, but rather that it repeated the same mistake of promising one book and delivering another. Indeed, I can sum up my views on Lynn's books by adopting the structure of Mr. Schweitzer's elegant last sentence from the passage quoted above:

The character, the dilemma, and the skill in writing at the beginning of *WATCHTOWER* and *DANCERS OF ARUN* held the reader's interest enough that the reader read on with the hope of a fulfilling experience; and if the author got sidetracked into martial arts as a solution to all life's problems and gave her book a climax and catastrophe that had nothing to do with the epitasis of her book, and if the reader then grew frustrated and disappointed at this betrayal of promise, then that is too bad.

It should be obvious to all but the most obtuse reader that Mr. Schweitzer and I are not at all in disagreement, except over a very minor point that I shall refer to later. After all, Mr. Schweitzer himself refers to the "sidetracking" in *WATCHTOWER*--he knew those things weren't intrinsic to the plot. And he declares that *ARUN* lacks even the plot of its predecessor. No, those future critics who examine the works of Mr. Schweitzer will have to reject the theory that he was referring to me in that quoted passage, and instead will have to devote much effort to finding some review, somewhere, to which Mr. Schweitzer's comments would be appropriate.

The Book the Author Meant to Write

Reviewers are always doing such unfortunate things. Like reviewing a book on the basis of what it should have been, instead of what it was--as Mr. Schweitzer so aptly put it, "trying to review the book he wants the author to write, not the one the author wanted to write." Just like those comments Robert Bloch made about *THE SCIENCE FICTION ENCYCLOPEDIA* in *SFR* #36. He wrote as though he thought the compilers of the book should have got their facts right! What effort! Obviously, they wrote the book they wanted to write. Obviously, their facts are wrong. Therefore, they plainly meant to write a book with wrong information,

and it is so petty of Robert Bloch to fault them for failing to do something they never meant to do.

Some will say, of course, that the plain fact that a book is called an encyclopedia shows that the compilers want the readers to think they are getting something accurate and something complete. And if they don't want us to believe those facts, what in hell did they write the book for? If we were to follow those who feel this way--and for the rest of this essay, we'll do just that--we would have to conclude then that it's perfectly fair to expect a book to deliver what it promises to deliver, and that if the book raises certain expectations in a clear, undeniable way, then a critic can reasonably fault the author for failing to fulfill those expectations.

I plan to use Lynn's books as a launching point for a discussion that follows. This is not because KATOWITOWER and ARUN are unusually badly written--in most ways they are very well written. What flaws they have are not so glaring that the books deserve playing at such length; I hope Elizabeth Lynn herself, an unfailingly decent person, will forgive the criticism and accept my liking and respect for most aspects of her work.

Rules and Compensation

In a recent episode of "Stayin' Alive," Norman Spinrad's column in LOCUS, he quite correctly lashed out at the notion that there are "absolute standards" by which literature may be judged. I agree with him. I can't think of any literary rule that can't be broken, to good effect, by a good writer.

But this does not mean that there are no rules. Rather, it means that the rules are descriptive, rather than prescriptive; that is, that while it is quite possible to look at the works of good writers and find principles that govern the works--the best works--of the overwhelming majority of them, these principles are rules only in the sense that Einstein's proscription of faster-than-light travel is a rule. If you design and build a spaceship that breaks that rule, you won't be punished--you will be greeted with applause, prizes and high taxes. If, however, you design and build a spaceship that tries to break that rule but fails, then you will quite properly be ridiculed for your ignorance of the laws of physics.

What are some of those rules? Why not begin with those classic whipping-boys of our unfettered time: the three unities. Much sport has been had at the expense of poor Cor-

nielle and the other French and English writers who insisted that the unities must be observed: the unity of time, declaring that there must be a perfect relationship between stage time in drama and the real time represented' the unity of place, declaring that there must be a perfect relationship between the dimensions in which the events of a play take place and the dimensions of the stage; and the unity of action, declaring that the characters and dilemma with which the play concerns itself at the beginning must be the characters and dilemma with which the play concerns itself at the climax and through the denouement.

Now, the first two unities, of time and place, are obviously not observed by anyone. Even Neoclassic writers themselves had to strain at the edges of those restrictions, and the best English critics of the time observed that violations of them weren't so bad. But I submit that those two unities are perfectly valid: that is, the writer must either follow them or compensate for breaking them.

When you're watching a play, for instance, wouldn't you be annoyed if, suddenly, without changing scenery or interrupting the dialogue, the actors did things that could not possibly have been done in that space or that amount of time? If a woman was impregnated in line 10 and gave birth in line 53? What would happen to your willingness to believe in the proceedings?

But no playwright does that without compensating for it. If the play is realistic, and time must pass or place must shift, the action stops and the set is changed, and the dialogue at the beginning of the next scene informs you how much time has passed. Or, if the play is not realistic, the manner of the play lets you know that from the outset. For instance, ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN ARE DEAD begins with a flipped coin that turns up heads time after time, defying the laws of probability. The dialogue is brisk and funny and absurd. You are signalled, clearly, that the playwright is messing with the laws of cause and effect: you should not expect probability to play a very strong role in the events to come.

We see that sort of compensation in science fiction all the time. We don't begin our novels with dreadfully long disquisitions on what the planet the story concerns is like, or with detailed explanations of dates. (Well, unless we're playing games, as George Lucas was with STAR WARS's long-ago-in-a-galaxy-far-far-away opening.) Yet we carefully observe the unities, showing within each scene only events in real time and in a single place, and whenever we must skip time we either leave a line space or mention the passage of time, and whenever we must change places we make it clear that we have moved and, usually, where to.

In other words, we have not proved that the unities of time and



place are unimportant---we have merely become skillful at compensating for regularly breaking those rules. The only mistake that the Neoclassicals made was in treating those rules prescriptively, and criticizing those works that broke the rules without regard for whether the writer compensated for his violations of the unities or not.

Unity of Action

This digression was not irrelevant, for now we come to where the third unity, the unity of action, applies directly to WATCHTOWER and DANCERS OF ARJUN.

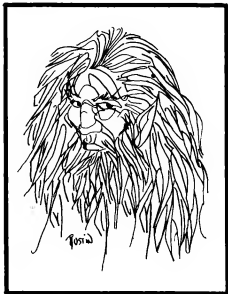
In both books, Lynn makes it clear that she is writing within the traditions of the novel and the romance as they have usually been written: That is, she is not playing games with reality; her style, though effective, is not eccentric, and the reader is meant to stay close to the work and identify with characters in the traditional manner. If she had played some of Kurt Vonnegut's stylistic games, for instance, we would have known to expect the writer to play tricks on us, and instead of watching the characters, we would be watching the writer perform. Lynn does not do this: there are no signals whatsoever that she means to be cute.

So the reader, quite naturally, begins to identify with Ryke, the point-of-view character in WATCHTOWER. He is faced immediately with a fascinating dilemma in loyalty: Because of his loyalty to his lord, he would do anything to help his lord's heir, Errel. His conqueror, Col Istor, threatens to kill Errel if Ryke doesn't serve him. So, for his late lord's sake, Ryke vows to help the man who destroyed him. And Lynn doesn't stop there, for she then skillfully reveals Col Istor as a man of sensitivity and feeling, one that a man could serve loyally and with love. Yet Ryke chooses to stay with his earlier loyalty. What will this do to him later? When he betrays Col Istor, what will happen? What price will he pay? What will Col Istor do about it?

All these questions are ignored. The climax demanded by this rising action is some sort of confrontation between Ryke and Col Istor. Instead, Lynn drops Ryke entirely except as a pair of eyes through which we see the story of Errel and two androgynous women. Is there a confrontation with Col Istor, the strongest character in the book? No---we only learn about his killing offstage after the fact, as if it didn't matter. Do we see what this conflict of loyalties does to Ryke? No---we don't know a damn thing about him, except that he's still alive. What

do we get for climax and resolution, then? Why, we get Errel's decision not to rule in Tornor because he has accepted the philosophy and discipline of the chearis. But was that a dilemma the writer led us to care about? Not at all. Until it was resolved, it was hardly even important. Errel was only a minor character, one we never much cared about.

Lynn is not alone in getting sidetracked by a character into betraying her book. Irwin Shaw's NIGHT WORK, for instance, starts with a fascinating character who gets a once-in-a-lifetime, highly illegal and dangerous opportunity to be fabulously wealthy---and he takes it. The reader cares immediately what will happen to him, how it will all turn out. But how does the novel end? With the death of a



fairly interesting minor character. I sat there, puzzling out what Shaw was doing, until I finally realized that he was expecting me to respond as if I loved that minor character. And that, if I did, the ending would be quite satisfactory. But I didn't love that character. I had identified with the character who began the book and provided the point of view throughout.

Likewise, with Lynn's work. She began WATCHTOWER with one action, and ended it with another.

Does the book fail just because it breaks a rule? Yes and no. Yes, because the book certainly fails and it certainly breaks the rule. No, because it's quite possible to submerge an interesting point of view character and follow a different thread and still have a very satisfying book. But the writer must compensate in order to bring it off.

Once the reader has thoroughly identified with a character, the writer must exert special efforts to switch the reader to following another thread.

For instance, Lynn could have compensated by making Errel fascinating and contradictory, and giving him a dilemma that merges with Ryke's and finally overpowers it, and by making Ryke himself become an untrustworthy narrator by doing things that the reader sees are stupid or wrong, and by submerging Ryke's personality (as Doyle does with Watson in the Holmes stories).

But Lynn uses none of these or any other directly compensatory strategies. Instead of getting more interesting, Errel gets more and more reflective and boring. Instead of a dilemma, Lynn gives us a boring utopia in the land of the killer dancers (and it need not have been boring, had she only made the place a little less unbelievably perfect). Instead of merging with Ryke, Errel diverges from him, moving off the center of the reader's interest. Instead of making Ryke untrustworthy, Lynn continues to give him just the reactions the reader would have---bafflement and subconscious rejection of these hollow, dull earnest people who have become monomaniacs about dancing to the exclusion of all other intellectual, spiritual, or physical pursuits, except old-time farming and a bit of communalism. And instead of retiring Ryke entirely, she keeps him up front enough that the reader can't help but hope that she will eventually get back to him and resolve his original dilemma.

In short, Lynn not only broke the rule of unity of action, but also did nothing to compensate for it.

Here, of course, is where Mr. Schweitzer and I will disagree. He found that her language was good enough and the rather puerile device of the utopian dancers was interesting enough to compensate, so that on balance he liked the books. I found that these things did not compensate at all, but rather deepened the disappointment, felt at the artless ending. This is a subjective response, and where I could only hope that a very talented writer would not come to believe critics who said she was writing masterpieces, Schweitzer could quite sincerely state that she was already writing books with only trivial flaws. We agree on what the flaws were, more or less---we merely disagree about whether they ruin the book.

Shackles Everywhere

There are many other rules, some

general to all literature, some unique to prose fiction, some peculiar to science fiction or fantasy. Writers remain ignorant of them to their peril. For instance, a large number of imitators of Tolkien have seen that he characterizes shallowly, not realizing that he compensates by deliberately using a powerful mythic and archetypal underpinning that his imitators are incompetent to bring off. Stephen R. Donaldson and Patricia McKillip, however, understood this, and instead of the hollowly derivative SWORD OF SHANNARA, they wrote the intensely characterized Thomas Covenant books and the wonderfully mythic (and also well-characterized) Riddlemaster Trilogy.

Where a rule is broken, a work must either compensate or fail. Which is why I repeat my hope that Lynn will not be fooled by too much approval from the literary set into thinking that good style is enough. This is not a warning. She can have a very satisfying career with lots of respect and other payoffs if she stands pat and doesn't grow ---look at how well some writers have done with that policy. And experimenting and changing have their risks---look at some of Dammul R. Delany's glorious botches or Zelazny's tendency toward fitful incompleteness. Personally, I think that I would rather err with the experimenters who are trying to grow than with the stand-patters who sing the same songs to the same audiences year after year. Which way Lynn will choose is entirely up to her; there are ample precedents for both choices, and the possibility of failure is no greater in one than in the other. We still read the works of experimenter DeRoe and stand-patter Swift (not a fair generalization, actually), remembering the first for being the start of a powerful new genre, and the second as being the zenith of the ancient art of satire.

My real reason for hoping Lynn paches up the weak places in her work is selfish: I like so much about her work---her language, her ability to create character and evoke scenes, her manipulations of stock elements to serve new purposes---that if she wrote a book that did better at plotting effectively or compensating for plot lapses, it would be that rare reading experience: an excellent book. And that's not a warning. That's a plea.

Rules do not shackle anyone, except those who are ignorant of them. For the ignorant will either follow them blindly, never knowing what they're actually doing with their work, or will break them unwittingly, without taking the necessary

steps to help their work survive the flaw. I know too well what happens then: my own first novel flagrantly violates the very principles I'm criticizing WATCHTOWER and DANCERS OF ARUN for breaking. And the work fails, for that reason. Though there are readers who have found other values that compensate for the flaws, I am not one of them. It's one of the loveliest things about being a living writer. I can get better as I learn more. It's also one of the best parts of reading new works by writers whose previous works you have read: the ones who don't endlessly imitate themselves are always growing, and while you may hate the results of the latest experiment, the next work or the one after may show you in success what the others failed at trying to accomplish. If the plotless IMHARGREN is the price I had to pay to

complaint.

And if I gave offense by hoping that the errors in WATCHTOWER and THE DANCERS OF ARUN would give rise to similar growth rather than repetition and stagnation, it was only in the well-founded hope that Lynn has it in her to be as excellent a writer as Delany, Wolfe, Crowley, or McKillip. They do her no favor who tell her that she has already arrived.

[P.S. In fairness to Elizabeth Lynn, I should point out that while I believe my assessment of the flaws in these two books is accurate, my opinion that they outweigh the good points of the books may be colored by some bias. Elizabeth Lynn's first nomination for the Campbell Award was the same year that I won, and I have had ample opportunity to hear how many people felt that if God were in his heaven, Lynn would have won. This was before I read anything of hers; and I was not immune to being hurt by some of the more cruel assessments of my work in comparison to hers.

[This was, naturally, in the back of my mind as I approached my first reading of Lynn's novels. Don't suppose that this made me a hostile reader: I very rarely bother reading a book I know I will not give a fair reading to, and ever since my unfair and rather stupid pan of SImak's MASTODONIA in these pages a couple of years ago, I have refused to review a book I approached with hostility unless the book won me over despite that hostility.

[In the case of Lynn's books, I honestly didn't feel any conscious antagonism toward her or her work---why should I, when she has never been anything but unfaulingly courteous to me? And when I began reading I was enthralled, pleased by the style, fascinated by the situation and characters---in short, I reacted like a totally accepting, unbiased reader. However, when I started noticing flaws, how am I to be sure that, while the flaws were real enough, I didn't let some unconscious resentment magnify the importance of those flaws in my estimation?

[I am not unsaying anything I said above. I am merely warning you---under penalty of missing out on some very fine reading---not to let my lengthy discourse on the problems of Lynn's books unduly discourage you from trying them. I used her work illustratively---to show my point, not because her novels really warranted such lengthy dissection. Lynn may well have compensated better than I think she did.]



*"Oh, how cute! May I keep it, Mother?
All my friends have one."*

be able to read TALES OF NEVERYON, then it was worth it. If the density of THE FIFTH HEAD OF CERBERUS led to the layered beauty of THE SHADOW OF THE TORTURER, then I'd gladly read a thousand CERBERUSES. If the impenetrable mysteries of THE DEEP and the clumsy opening of THE FORGOTTEN BEASTS OF ELD could always lead to ENGINE SUMMER and the Riddlemaster Trilogy, I would gladly read flawed works without

SHORT FICTION REVIEWS

ANALOG

Reviewed By Patricia Mathews

The June, 1980 issue of ANALOG begins with THE HUMANOID UNIVERSE by Jack Williamson. For those who have never read THE HUMANOIDS, this will give them a very good idea of what they have missed. Those who have, might find that it covers the same ground as the earlier book.

The rest of this issue could be selected as a "typical ANALOG" for a time capsule. There is a competent mystery-in-space, "Given A, Then Bee", with an interesting gimmick that the title gives away. Spider Robinson has a Callaghan's Bar story that ends in a hilarious in-group pun. There's a story, "Rings of Death" about the pure researcher who discovers the Ultimate Weapon, told by the worldly buddy who informs him of what he has done; a time-travel story, "One Time in Alexandria" with the researcher from the future causing the disaster he set out to save something from; and the tale "Down East Encounter", of the alien in improbable disguise showing himself to good old Howie the town loafer; it's a fish story. In short, there is one of every kind of ANALOG (or ASTOUNDING) story and the dateline could have been anything from 1935 to 1995. Give this one to your friends who want to know what ANALOG is all about.

The non-fiction in the July, 1980 issue is better than the fiction, which ranges from B-plus quality to absolutely crummy.

By far the best story is Timothy Zahn's, "The Dreamsender", despite a slow start and an overly fast wrap-up. The combination of telepathy and mysterious goings-on worked well, in the best of the ANALOG tradition.

The serial, ANASAZI, by Dean Ing, had its flaws, including overdone characterization of the villainous aliens and the freaky second-leads.

On the good side, Ing has obviously been in the Southwest and has been around a real pueblo, the setting of the story, long enough to observe it closely. I was overjoyed by the enclosed map of Pueblo country, but kept looking for his fictional pueblo of San Saba. I want to read the next installment.

Gary Allan Ruse's "Girl in the Attache Case" is a negligible bit of fluff about a college boy who invents a matter transmitter. "Gambler's War" by Marcia Martin and Eric Vinicoff, opens with three paragraphs of heavy exposition in italics and gets no more readable as the story progresses. The point, that one of the contact ship crew and the aliens are trying to contact both have a penchant for taking risks, seems

hardly worth all the labor. "Toadstool Sinfonia", by Laurence Janifer, is simply dreadful despite an extremely clever -- ANALOG-clever -- technological gimmick. If Janifer wants to imitate Raymond Chandler he should read some Chandler first, and then not bother trying to update him.

August, 1980, finishes the serial, ANASAZI, by Dean Ing, begun in July. Friends, it is good. The wrapup was totally unexpected; I, for one, had predicted that the reservations's Clown Society would take care of the aliens, since the truth was too unbelievable to tell the white man's justice; the three heroes wrapped up the job themselves, with the help of the Southwestern landscape. Even the personal interactions, which I had found irritatingly overdone in the first installment, wound up very neatly. The postlude was unnecessary.

Gordon Dickson has the story of a reluctant rebel on an alien-conquered Earth in "The Cloak and the Staff". Dickson has created in the eight-foot persons of the Aalaag the perfect nightmare version of boss, conqueror, or for that matter, parent or husband: they can't be reasoned with, for they don't grant you the status of a reasoning being; there is no way to make any sort of physical, moral or emotional dent on them whatsoever, and they have overwhelming numbers, armed force and control. Dickson deals in archetypes and in this one he has a dilly.

Going strictly from the top to the bottom, we have the nasty little Randist parable, "Scrooge in Space", about a private-industry hero come to set a failing government installation right. Propagandist Sam Nicholson lumps refusal to fire alcoholics, with equal opportunity for men and women, a rotation system to be sure nobody hogs the Rim seat on a space transport, a flight attendant of fifty, and a



cumbersome translation system, as if they were all evidence of gross decay. A good propagandist should at least have a sense of proportion.

James White's "Federation World" was a nice, readable tale of the galactic civilization's induction and examination center, and of an Earthman who takes the test. Not an obvious ending, either. "Fit to Print", by David Lewis, is the story of the struggling newspaper publisher whose printing press brings back tomorrow's story today. Not bad!

While this is a fiction review, let me mention the Tombaugh tribute. I graduated from New Mexico State in 1964, so it would have been 1962 that I took his course in astronomy. I should have taken more. If there is anybody in that class who didn't love him, I never met him/her/it. If there was anybody who didn't learn, or doesn't remember, I don't know who it would be. He took us all out to see his backyard telescopes and to look through them; I seem to remember sketching what we saw. If Brad Smith didn't seem to hold the only position open in astronomy for miles around (it is, and was, a shoestring major; I thought of Smith vaguely as Tombaugh's graduate student; note singular) I would have been tempted to major in it. Being dreadfully careerist in those days, I passed up the chance, more fool me. At any rate, it's the one thing from NMSU I'll carry with me the rest of my days, that I took a class from Tombaugh.

The September, 1980 ANALOG has neither high points nor low ones. So, in order: "Tactics of Despair", the lead story by Edward Byers, has a pigheaded military man (of high honor and courage) causing disaster for himself, a friendly alien race and everybody concerned, by trying to force a situation he has not taken the time to understand, against the advice of the viewpoint character, the First Contact Envoy. If Byers had told it from the colonel's standpoint instead, he'd have had high tragedy rather than "I told you so".

Charles Sheffield's "The New Physics" is a farcical rehash of the Galileo situation. This sort of thing is funny the first time you see it.

"The Struldbrug Solution", by Susan Schwartz, is bitter farce about a non-tenured teacher in a college with no right to exist, in a world where the Redundancy Corps drags off failures to be sterilized, rendered mindless and set to doing society's shittwork. But a chemist

friend finds a Solution that renders one immortal and forever senile -- perfect for removing roadblocks. No resemblance to anyone or anyplace we know, right?

Mack Reynolds, in "What the Vintners Buy", has as usual some very clever ideas, a comic-book level of narration and dialog, and a better grasp of theoretical politics than of human behavior. He can, however, plot reasonably well.

"The Olmec Football Player" is a slight piece by Katherine MacLean that brought a smile as she explained the Olmec heads' appearance in terms of a college player with a time machine and a taste for being a Great Black God to a pack of primitives. He was likeable enough to make it, too.

"Faraway Eyes", by Rudy Rucker, is another story of a waste disposal invention that involves other dimensions, again semi-farcical treatment. A girl disappears; considering her employer and her boyfriend, the leading characters, it was a sensible move. C-minus, and that's being generous.

Barry Malzberg has "John Campbell: Another Remembrance". One page, small type on dark gray paper. Didn't Bova want anyone to read it?

"Corley", by Gary Alan Ruse, is an old-man-in-the-path-of-the-free-way tale; the purpose is to break up an offworld colony's Master Plan for colonization, which equates it with urbanization. Rating: not bad.

Stephen Gould's "A Touch of Their Eyes" could have been great if he'd untangled his plot after writing the story. The CIA throws a psychic (empath?) Something very similar into a desert survival test and tries to recruit him, but he's had a clairvoyant vision for years of where that will lead. The real story is in Johnny Galighy's life, and Gould tried to throw the whole thing into one short incident.



"Standards", by Richard K. Lyon, is a fairly standard ANALOG jest; Campbell used to publish them by the ton.

Rating for the issue as a whole: not bad.

The October, 1980 issue of ANALOG is good, in the rather dry tradition of post-Campbell ANALOG. The non-fiction leads off with a Schmidt editorial on how to write science articles he will buy; "The Physics of Haunting" is either a Campbellian proof-of-psi or a magnificent put-down. Algis Budrys analyzes ASTOUNDING in his day and earlier, with a look at the An Lab scandals of his day, and Jerry Pournelle calls May's guest editor a liar on dark grey paper. Best is Dr. John Brigen's very good article on GALAXY formation.

The fiction ranges from excellent to abysmal. Tops is Steven Edward McDonald's "Ideologies", pitting a space station security chief against a terrorist she knows painfully well has a message that must be heard. A-plus for honesty in treating a high tragedy that is normally given the goodies-versus-baddies treatment; A for execution.

"Moment of Inertia", by Charles Sheffield, which leads off this issue, is a gimmick story: a physicist with a new space drive takes his test ship on a shakedown cruise and must be rescued by old-buddy space pilot. The science was hard to follow and impossible to assume-and-go-on-from-there; a totally silly subplot involved a reporter who was also a President's Daughter (Oh, Planet Stories!) and by her mere presence (qua female, not reporter) loused everything up; they never said how, but the tale was interestingly told.

Christopher Anvil's "The Gold of Galileo" reversed this with plausible but dull characters, a dry style, but a worthwhile technical mystery which more than carried the story. The science was easy to follow, granted the basic assumption; the basic assumption was easy to swallow. The ending was bigger than the basic situation.

Charles Aments' "Self-Evident Truths" was a polemic, with a pack of hysterics for characters and extremely bad science at its heart; his contempt for the common person's brain reeks throughout the tale. In "Truths" a psychologist, by blatantly circular reasoning, has created a "fair" IQ test in which everybody gets 100. A severely retarded teenager's mother is thrown in to ram the point into the ground. The one person who tries to uphold some standards of achievement is mobbed

by people carrying "No Racism, No Sexism" signs -- supposedly, then, the enemies of racism and sexism are also the enemies of competence and the intellect. Does he provide barf bags with this, or Nazi membership cards?

Look. In beginning lab science, the first thing you learn is that if you want to test for substance A, your test must filter out or ignore anything that is not substance A. If you want to test for raw native ability, you must filter out educational and cultural factors -- for which there are many very good tests already -- and try to isolate ability per se. It may not be possible. To describe the attempt as Arents did is both false and foolish.

A NOTE ALONG THE WAY

One thing ANALOG has done sur-

prisingly well is the portrayal of strong and individualized female leading characters. I'm overjoyed to see the lie given to the old saying that while women can write believable male characters, men have a very hard time writing female characters beyond a fixed range of rather stupid stereotypes. Gordon Dickson, in May "Tightbeam", described his long career writing in that tradition and the effort it has cost him to grow beyond it in middle life.

I have the sneaking suspicion that in some cases the ANALOG authors may have taken a common male character and put him/her in a female body, changed the pronouns throughout, and sent it off: "Moment of Inertia" may well be such an effort. But to the extent that their idea of a human being was automatically male, the sex-change has worked; human beings are human beings in most of what we do,

given a similarity of profession and lifestyle. ("Inertia's" Captain Jean Roker works, except for a moment of confusion about her sexual preferences.)

Of course, to the extent that their only picture of a human being was automatically masculine, the effort is completely silly, but it's a pit that ANALOG writers have managed to keep from falling into for the most part.

Fellows -- congratulations.

(Now do something that the totally dreadful secondary female characters you've been using as a dumping ground for all your dead stereotypes -- see Nina Velez in "Inertia" for one of the lesser examples.)

ASIMOV'S

Reviewed By Robert Sabella

Let me begin with both a warning and an apology. The warning: I tend to be a harsh critic. Precious few stories are so finely-wrought that no areas could be improved. I feel obligated even when dealing with stories I like to mention their failings. Please keep in mind that I will waste neither space nor effort on any story that I do not consider worthwhile reading.

Next the apology: Because of a slight deadline problem I am able only to deal with the September issue of IASFM here. In future columns I will review all intervening issues since this column.

On to the criticism.

A popular gimmick among science fiction magazine editors is to buy a piece of cover art and commission a story around it. This is actually good business practice for two reasons: First, an attractive cover is a prime selling item for magazines whose chief product is "sense of wonder" and who need to attract the casual newsstand perusers; second, the accompanying stories are usually commissioned to name writers who, spurred partially by the guaranteed sale, can whip out a decent story in two-to-three days. This has the added advantage of getting those popular names onto the cover of the magazine.

There is a disadvantage to this practice. Even the most talented

writers cannot always churn out a high-quality story on demand. In the mid-sixties Fred Pohl used to commission such stories from people like Roger Zelazny and James Blish and the results were among both their weakest stories.

Undeterred by this practice's flaws, or perhaps encouraged by its values, George Scithers has carried it one step further. The September issue of IASFM contains five stories (totalling approximately 60% of the issue's fiction) written around a cover painting by Alex Schomburg. Only one story is by an experienced writer (Jack Haldeman) while four are by relative newcomers (John M. Ford, two by Sharon Webb, and Somtow Sucharitkul).

Alas, for all of Scithers' good intentions, the gimmick fails. Four of the stories are notably uninspiring. This may be partly due to Schomburg's cover. Although cleanly drawn and fairly colorful it does not inspire any "sense of wonder". I wonder what Scithers saw in it that made him want to center an issue around it.

The only cover story worth reading is Somtow Sucharitkul's "Dear Caressa" and even it is flawed. It is concerned with a parallel universe patterned after one woman's pre-occupation with popular romance novels. The story was written in a

tongue-in-cheek style which usually shouts at the reader that all events are farcical and not worth taking seriously. In this instance the style actually benefits the story because of its underlying theme. The protagonist, who keeps dropping into the parallel universe against his will, is torn between believing he is in the midst of a great adventure and fearing he is going crazy. When he tries to share his experiences with his family, their skepticism only increases his self-doubts. This is something which is missing from nearly all science fiction set in the contemporary world. How many people living in America circa 1980 could be thrust into a science fiction universe and accept it as other than mental delusion? Sucharitkul addresses that problem and, in doing so, makes thoughtful reading out of a story that is otherwise pure hokum.



Of the four stories unrelated to the cover, only Lisa Tuttle's "A Spaceship Built of Stone" is recommended. Lisa Tuttle has never written a bad story; some have merely been less good than others (and how many writers can make that claim?). She is most adept at creating a sneaky feeling of horror. A typical Tuttle story will unsettle the reader soon after it begins, causing a

lowkeyed unease that sneaks up your spinal column as the story progresses. This time she is talking about alien invasion -- or is she? Does an invasion necessarily mean taking control of another people's homeland by military force or can it mean subtly infiltrating the populace and gradually increasing your influence until you have achieved your goals peacefully? Lisa has done some ser-

ious thinking about alien invasions rather than merely rearranging the same old clichés that too many writers use. Someday an enterprising publisher will assemble a collection of Lisa's short fiction and that book should sell like cheap gasoline, as well as ruining at least a few nights' sleep.

F&SF

Reviewed By Russell Engebretson

"Among the Cliff-Dwellers of the San Andreas Canyon", the September cover story by Felix Gotschalk, is full of Besteresque glitter and bombast, but short of substance. The setting is California in the year 2073. The San Andreas Fault, now a canyon, contains a community of ninety-seven people. The surface about the canyon is covered with virulent spore cultures, huge toadstools placed there by the Russians after the demonstration war of 1990. What starts out as a survival story with love triangle, degenerates into a wish-fulfillment fantasy with hero and heroine literally screwing in the clouds. Gotschalk is not a bad writer, but conflict is resolved too easily.

"The Fear that Men Call Courage" by James Patrick Kelly, is a predictable but competent horror story in which four hunters who have killed a fawn are picked off one at a time by a supernatural agency.

In "The Curse of the Mhondoro Nkabele" by Eric Norden, we are treated to a fictitious correspondence between the editor of F&SF, Mr. Edward Ferman, and an African SF fan raised on 1940s pulps. Mr. Ferman is hexed, Isaac Asimov plugs his latest book ASIMOV'S GUIDE TO HEALTH, HAPPINESS AND REGULARITY THROUGH SELF-NEGATION, and Harlan Ellison is eaten by a boa constrictor. A very funny story.

Jane Yolen presents a more serious story, "The Sleep of Trees". It concerns the erotic encounter of a vain actor and a druid, a confrontation of the sacred and the profane. It's a fine story written with grace and style.

Two more stories worthy of note are "Spidersong" by Susan C. Petrey and "Getting Back" by Jeffrey W. Carpenter and Barry Malzberg. "Getting Back" is a grim comment on human nature. Astronauts returning from long stays in space have become used to

decent behavior and orderly surroundings; they must be reaccustomed to the vicious everyday life on Earth. Spo, the protagonist, becomes a bit too well-adjusted. It becomes apparent that "Getting Back" is a double-edged title.

"Spidersong" is a fairytale about Brenneker, a female spider who spins her web in a lute and plays melodies on the strands of webbing. Laurel is the owner of the rather cheaply-made instrument; she is a young girl at the story's beginning who decides to become a musician. A story that seems on the surface to be a juvenile becomes an adult's struggle to realize her dreams. When Laurel must choose between a musical career and her husband-to-be, she opts for music and the choice is not an easy one. "Spidersong" is a touching, even poignant story of a woman's battle to shape the course of her life.

The October issue celebrates F&SF's thirty-first year of publication. All the authors, with the exception of Bob Leman, are established names in SF, but this issue is weaker than the last.

"Echo" by Walter Tevis, author of THE MAN WHO FELL TO EARTH, is based on the premise that the main character's mind is recorded and stored on a tape. The story goes nowhere from there, but relies on a trick ending which will surprise no one. The title is a giveaway, too. Although the prose is polished, the idea is trivial.

"Tell Us a Story" is a continuation of the People saga by Zenna Henderson. It didn't do a thing for me; however, being a confirmed agnostic, I am irritated by constant references to Christian deities. The story comes too close to breaking the science fiction writer's First Commandment: Thou Shalt Not Preach.



On the positive side, Henderson does a fine job of characterizing the protagonist, Nathan. She also paints a vivid picture of the harsh landscape and the rigors of living off the land.

Richard Cowper is one of my favorite authors, but "The Attleborough Poltergeist" is a minor piece. The ending is a new twist on an old idea and does have impact, but the story seems too many pages long to lead to such a climax, as is often the case with surprise endings.

"Wolfland" by Tanith Lee is yet another werewolf story, but well-handled and suspensefully written. It reads like a darkly original version of "Little Red Ridinghood" and in this version the main character takes on the mantle of wolfdom passed down from her grandmother.

Ian Watson gives us a sardonic and blackly humorous view of SF fandom in "The World Science Fiction Convention of 2080". The long-winded speech of the Grand Old Man of Science Fiction, Jerry Welter, is a triumph of high sarcasm.

My favorite in this issue is "Feesters in the Lake" by Bob Leman. The title is obviously a parody of H.P. Lovecraft. The story itself, however, is imbued with the shade of William Hope Hodgson, especially in the eerie and powerful description of Howard's Lake and the deserted house that stands next to it. Not only is "Feesters in the Lake" frightening, it is also a moving story of the physical and mental decay of the narrator's Uncle Caleb, a decent man who was just dealt a bad hand. This one grabbed me by the throat and shook me. I could nit-pick at a small flaw here and there, but it would be nit-picking. You owe it to yourself to read this one.

DESTINIES

Reviewed By Patricia Mathews

Ace Books, pb, 352 pp, \$2.50

The Summer, 1980, issue of DESTINIES is a Heinlein-lover's delight, featuring large chunks of his latest book, EXPANDED UNIVERSE, and an adulatory essay by Spider Robinson to lead off the issue (of which, more later). The other non-fiction includes Dean Ing on nuclear survival. Jerry Pournelle on spacesuit design, Frederick Pohl on particle physics, and the L-5 Society with a highly technical discussion of a proposed lunar treaty.

The fiction is so-so. G.E. Cogshall has a story about a sentient rat and a spaced-out technician called "Frankie the Rat Man and Baron Von Ronk".

Larry Niven's "Retrospective" sends four tourists back to the reconstructed scene of a natural disaster, although fear nor horror was evident, although they should have been.

Charles Sheffield's "Man Who Stole the Moon" brings in the Mob as the only organization free to indulge in space-travel without a myriad of petty regulations; the hero ends outlawed but triumphant.

And in "Vital Signs", by Dean Ing, a bounty hunter is sent out after a ferocious alien who is ravaging the countryside and terrorizing everybody; the bounty hunter manages to communicate and must face his guilt in the alien's death, since that death was made certain both by the bounty hunter and by the fact that the alien acted more ethically than she needed to. Unfortunately, the author saw fit to make the alien

more "understandable" to us ignorant readers by throwing in a totally inapplicable Terran stereotype "spoiled ... young" that took away from the very real dignity the alien showed in the story and was a jarring false note.

The best of DESTINIES this issue is in the Heinlein excerpt. It is a magnificent potpourri of pure opinion; the heart of this part was a series of predictions written in 1950, updated in 1965, and re-updated in 1980. Fascinating.

Spider Robinson's article apparently was designed to prove that Heinlein can do no wrong, as a man or as a writer. He tackles every piece of criticism and shoots it down, valid or not. For example, that Heinlein "preaches". He first cites the fact that EXPANDED UNIVERSE and the NOTEBOOKS OF LAZARUS LONG are selling well; then he continues with a disquisition on the Literature of Ideas. But even the Victorians knew that stopping the story to preach a sermon is not Literature of Ideas. I intend to buy both of Heinlein's books-of-opinion; I like editorials. But I prefer them as is and not embedded in fiction.

Again, that "All Heinlein's characters are Heinlein himself". He reads off a long list of male characters from Heinlein's early and middle works, all of whom are distinct individuals, to disprove this. But the criticism is leveled against the Late Heinlein, where I, for one, can often hardly tell who is speaking in

some of these. Nor do I really want to know.

He counters charges, as second-from-last on his mindlessness list, that Heinlein is a male chauvinist. (It would be amazing if a man of our culture and his years bore no traces of the weaknesses common to men, but let that pass.) He refutes it, again by reading off a long list of female characters and their virtues. True, and all to the good, but beside the point; he petulantly adds that they are all beautiful and want babies, which is what the feminists dislike, proving that he has totally missed the point. (And knows damned few feminists.) The point is, do these women have a freely chosen purpose of their own? Or is their only role to serve, love, adore and stand by the men? To the extent that this is true, the author is acting as a male chauvinist. (There is one dreadful low point in "Time Enough for Love", where the men at Lazarus Long's house sit and eat while the women, members of the family, pop up and down every two minutes so that all the men get their share of attention. Any man who asks what's wrong with that can do the popping up and down next time while the women eat in uninterrupted comfort.) Spider forgets what he himself said earlier in his article: Heinlein is not an infallible god. He'd be the first to tell you so, very rudely. He is a man. What's wrong with that?

GALAXY

Reviewed By James J.J. Wilson

This is the first issue of GALAXY to appear in many months. It is also the first issue under the editorship of Floyd Kemske. It does not follow the "strataform" page design widely discussed when the publishers of GALILEO and SCIENCE FICTION TIMES took over the publication, but it is the same large size as GALILEO as promised (although this issue contains a meager 72 pages). It is evident that the main thrust of the magazine is non-fiction.

A major portion of this issue is

devoted to installment number five of Fred Pohl's American Book Award winning novel, JEM. The serialization was begun two years and several editors ago in a much different GALAXY. Since the serialization was begun, as I'm sure you know, JEM has been published in hardcover, reprinted in paperback and has won and been nominated for several awards. In view of this, further review here is pointless.

"In the Days of the Shubbi Arms" by Steven Utley and Howard Waldrop,



is a very short story about the people of Earth who, after suffering under the control of conquering aliens for several decades, devote their time to coming up with jokes and puns to spring on their masters as a means of regaining control of Earth.

"The Colony" is a short, 1930s-type trick-ending story which uses the idea of aliens leaving an ant trap device in space to exterminate humans. This story belongs in the box of a 1939 issue of SUPER SCIENCE STORIES.

Now for some of the good stuff. "The Night Machine", about an obscure

space hero, is a sensitively written story which deals with people and emotions rather than ideas and hardware. The author, Dona Vaughn, a fairly recent discovery, is someone to watch. While still developing her talent and her style, she may remind some readers of Cordwainer Smith.

The remaining fiction in the issue is "In the Days of the Steam Wars" by Eugene Potter and Larry Blamire. This is an alternate universe story set in the late 1800s in which the U.S. did not acquire the Louisiana Purchase from France. Rather, it and most of what we know

as Canada was controlled by a country called Normandy. In 1895 engineers in Normandy invented a "traction-bearing drive". What it all comes down to is that land-battleships in the form of giant robots were developed and used in the wars between the U.S. and Normandy. This fascinating, tightly-written story is the first of a series.

The next issue, a Thirtieth Anniversary issue co-edited by H.L. Gold, should help to set GALAXY back on its feet.

OMNI

Reviewed By Margana B. Rolain

Fictional insanity seems to have become an OMNI specialty of late. Take for instance, three stories from the June and July, 1980, issues: "Sigmund in Space" by Barry N. Malzberg (July), "Marchianna" by Kevin O'Donnell, Jr., and "Return from the Stars" by Stanislaw Lem (both June).

In the first, we find insanity as a collective problem of the members of a space exploration crew. In "Marchianna" emotionalism and instability make up the personality of a machine. And in the third story, insanity may well exist as a possible risk for the reader, induced as a reward for persistence.

Actually, unlike the other two stories, Lem's "Return" does not deal specifically with psychology. The psychology is in the handling, a subtle but faintly nagging presence.

In the story specifically, Hal Bregg has returned from a hundred-plus ("... a hundred and twenty-seven years, Earth time, and ten years, ship time") expedition to Fomalhaut, to find that Earth has changed in a somewhat bizarre way. Bizarre because the change involves, for one thing, that age-old relationship between the sexes.

After a beginning that describes Bregg's pickup, presumably from a bar, by Nais, and their relocation to Nais' apartment, the story becomes one long, tortuously indirect conversation between the two. Bregg first tries to establish a common bond of interest between them, or at least a basic introduction, but he soon finds this impossible simply because he doesn't understand anything of what she means. So then he tries to find out what she's offering him -- or denying him, as it

turns out. With her introduction of brit, a mild drink which Bregg confuses with milk, and the ensuing confusion over its significance, Bregg discovers that he has stumbled unexpectedly onto the matter of involuntary sexual control for men.

There is a great deal of ambiguity which allows many of the statements by both characters to be interpreted in more than one way, and the author has Nais explain her strange terminology for whatever it is that goes on in her odd world in a way that is really not an explanation at all. The reader is left to guess along with Bregg what she means. With Nais' reluctance to explain the reasons for betritization -- a peculiarly unexplained operation -- a terrible urgency enters the story, and the reader knows that the final and most ominous revelation is about to be made. The suspense is killing. I enjoyed this one the most of the three, but I also found it to be the most frustrating. I mentioned the ambiguity; but also the ending was something of a letdown, particularly after the suspense that went before it. Perhaps I am no longer sufficiently indignant about compulsory mass control. Nevertheless, there is a kind of grace to the simplicity of the language -- in spite of the fact that that very simplicity and economy of words is what helps create the sense of ambiguity -- and absorbing from an intellectual point of view.

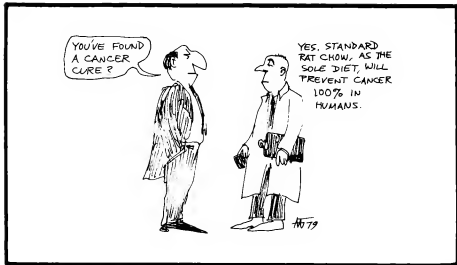
"Sigmund in Space" is, in contrast, an overt psychiatric study of a problem to be formally solved, but a satiric study at that. Dr. Sigmund Freud is brought back from oblivion, through an unexplained

science (or perhaps magic, who knows?) for the purpose of curing the collective neuroses and manias of the crew of the space probe ship, the *Whipperley IV*.

The author's ironic bite provides an amusing picture of Freud as he worries about his professional success on this mission, obsessed the meanwhile about one-upping his twentieth-century rivals, Adler and Jung, whom he suspects, with reason, have been called upon before him. The story follows Freud as he proceeds to try to retain objective calm while he feels out the individual hysterias of the crew, and in the meantime also keeps at bay the all-powerful administrators who released him from "the dream cube". His ultimate solution is in itself satirical, since the cure Freud chooses is precisely the opposite of what the administrators want and what medical ethics dictate. And the ultimate irony is that although Freud has succeeded over his fellow "reconstructs", Adler and Jung, it is from their concepts that his solution is born.

Although there are no surprises in "Sigmund", the facetious character portrayals, such as that of the *Whipperley's* paranoid captain, make this one entertaining reading. A specific knowledge of Freudian and also of Jungian and Adlerian psychology backgrounds would probably be helpful to many readers.

The last of the three, "Marchianna", is also a psychological tale but less deft than "Sigmund". More accurately, "Marchianna" is a revision of the ancient tale about the sculptor who fell in love with his own creation of the "perfect woman" -- with some twists. Marchianna is a "female" machine, and her beloved and fastidious master is humanly male only in Marchianna's eyes.



Most of this tale dwells heavily on the details of Marchianna's duties on board the uranium-mining spaceship which she and her master inhabit, and on her subservient adoration of Nakamura-san. There are also passages of her alienated, passion-warped, maudlin and self-loathing analyses of Nakamura-san and her relationship to him. (Or her lack of a relationship to him.)

For an inanimate consciousness, Marchianna behaves very unmechanically, kowtowing, indulging in sentimentality, and projecting her own weaknesses onto her "human" idol.

There is a brief, abortive conflict at the end of the story between her and Nakamura-san. Descending into space madness caused by loneliness (or such is Marchianna's conclusion), Nakamura-san orders Marchianna to destroy herself by leaping into the "reaction-mass exhaust tube". Marchianna refuses eventually, but this event serves to hurry her into a decision which comes as no surprise to the reader: to make her master a wife to combat his loneliness. Which decision serves to usher in, of course, the final twist which is the apparent reason for this story: that the servile robot is actually the builder of her own task-master.

Presumably, this story is meant to be a comment on the old question of whether the separation between man and machine? Personally, I found it hard to get past Marchianna's schoolgirlish masochism, although someone else might argue that it showed an appropriate shallow immaturity befitting a machine that is trying to become human. Believability is in the eyes of the beholder.

"Firestarter", a two-part excerpt from Stephen King's novel in the July and August issues, is an-

other tale about the corruptive nature of power. This time the power is pyrokinesis, and the one fascinated by its dread lure is a girl-child named Charlie.

Charlie is able to start fires with her mind, so the story goes, because her parents were part of a secret government experiment with a hallucinogen dubbed Lot Six. The drug not only bestowed psi powers on its victims; those powers were genetically inheritable. Naturally, CIA-type agents are out to get Andy McGee and his daughter. The McGees take refuge on a remote farm, where the agents catch up to them. The predictable result is a rip-roaring government-agent roast that threatens to take the good guys along with the bad guys.

"Firestarter" with its hallucinogen-psi-powers premise may qualify it as SF for OMNI, but the mood is more similar to the occult horror novels for which King is known. Once the drug experiment is explained, the story becomes a countdown to the inevitable showdown, complete with its morality ending.

The other August stories are Robert Sheckley's "The Future Lost" and Paul J. Nahin's "A Father's Gift". The former is a dull rehash of the "sex makes the future a utopia" theme. And the latter is an unconvincing yarn around the idea that Jesus Christ was actually mummified and buried in Egypt, to be found in more modern times by a Doubting Thomas as professor of philosophy in the Egyptian Museum at Cairo.

September's stories have mostly grimly humorous twists. Or perhaps it was my mood.

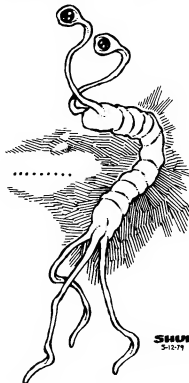
"In the Hereafter Hilton" by Bob Shaw, posits what might happen if

a humane society must enforce capital punishment, which has been reinstated. The protagonist pits his wits against an apartment designed solely for administering death by surprise, on the grounds that foreknowledge of one's own end is the unkindest cut of all.

I won't reveal the ending, but there's a good deal of suspense about the eventual cause of Renfrew's potential demise which will keep any reader hanging on.

"Our Lady of the Sauropods" by none other than Robert Silverberg finds us dumped with his marooned heroine into an artificially recreated dinosaur world, thanks to advanced methods of cloning. The story, in the form of the heroine's diary, takes her on a survival safari that ends in a near-fatal fall from a tree. The dinosaurs nurse her back to health; she tunes into their collective consciousness, and becomes their missionary for a new universal conquest.

A reader grounded in sauria reference material will greater appreciate the references to early paleontologists and have a better picture of each of the sauropods described. Even so, there are some great descriptive moments, such as the heroine's frog-catching attempt. Some of Silverberg's haranguing about the greatness of the dinosaurs as opposed to the puniness of man, however, can be almost as difficult to swallow as the heroine's lunch of raw corythosaurus meat.



SHAW
5-12-79

PLAYBOY

Reviewed By H.H. Edward Forgie

"The Apotheosis of Myra"
By Walter Tevis
PLAYBOY, July, 1980

Judging from two recent Walter Tevis' shorts, he's not only a master of the classical dissection of the man-woman relationship, he's also a master of the creation of a fetching and convincing milieu. That's something that takes most writers three hundred pages. Three hundred, at least.

Tevis reminds me of John Cheever, that is Cheever with nicely rendered science fiction and fantasy woven in. Whatever the resemblance, Tevis has his own voice, his own style and it works.

"Rent Control", published last year in OMNI, finished 12th in a LOCUS readers' poll of short stories. "The Apotheosis of Myra" is better, far better.

Edward MacDonnell, a grotesquely self-centered expatriate Earthling,

is simmering biliously with dissatisfaction, isolated on a distant, sparsely inhabited Belson, saddled with a chronically arthritic and alcoholic wife, Myra. And he's going to kill her.

We're given a front row seat into the inner workings of Edward's cold and demanding mind, a mind bordering on what seems a self-willed psychopathology. It's a third-person, over-the-shoulder, in-the-mind point of view. Not only can we see Myra, we can see Edward seeing Myra. Myra is far more than the pathetic creature Edward believes he's married to, and as he plunges ahead with his malevolent plans, this discontinuity of perspective fires up the dramatic tension at the same time it fore-shadows the ultimate irony at story's end.

The planet, Belson, with its two suns and moons, enthralling rings, obsidian cliffs and singing grass, has never had a murder. Myra is to

be the first. A planet with a trillion blades of grass singing the same chorus is not bound to take its first murder lightly.

Eventually, murdered Myra (killed in a particularly poignant scene) does become "apotheosized", and if the story has any problems, it is after Myra's death. Tevis' imagination seems to fade out for a moment, not enough to ruin the story, just enough to give a sense of a disconcerting diminuendo.

That minor quibble aside, Tevis' prose is rich and packed with luster, (perhaps luster is spread rather than packed). The story is structured for maximum effect and with the exception of the slight wavering toward the end, it's clean clear through.

Read it tonight!

ORIGINAL ANTHOLOGIES

Reviewed By David A. Truesdale

THE BERKLEY SHOWCASE, Vol. I
Edited by Victoria Schochet & John Silbersack, 280 pp., \$1.95, Apr., '80.

THE BERKLEY SHOWCASE, Vol. 2
Edited by Victoria Schochet and John Silbersack, 200 pp., \$2.25, August, 1980.

DESTINIES, Spring 1980, Edited by James Baen, 320 pp., \$2.25.

DESTINIES, Summer 1980, Edited by James Baen, 351 pp., \$2.50.

NEW VOICES III, Edited by George R.R. Martin, 258 pp., \$1.95, April, 1980.

NEW DIMENSIONS 10, Edited by Robert Silverberg, 188 pp., \$10.95, August, 1980, Harper & Row.

Of the forty-two stories considered above, there were a dozen or so worthy of some special merit, few real turkeys, and a vast majority of competent entertainers with nothing particularly unique to recommend them.

THE BERKLEY SHOWCASE volumes gave the greatest overall pleasure, with several stories by Karl Hansen ("Sergeant Pepper", Vol. 1, and "Doll's Eyes", Vol. 2) and one by Howard Waldrop ("Billy Big-Eyes", Vol. 1) both using bio-adaptation/mutation as the focal point for their fresh speculations in societies where continuing and absolute mutability are an integral part of daily existence, of life itself.

The strength of Waldrop's piece, which has a weak storyline and a telegraphed ending, is in his excellent use of consistent viewpoint, as much of the story is related through the eyes of the bio-mutation "Billy Big-Eyes" as he searches for a lover, lost and probably dead after a cosmic disaster has cut short her discovery mission. The beauty and poetry of how Billy Big-Eyes sees his universe as he continues his sad and fruitless search, makes the story memorable. Strong imagery is the attraction here.

Hansen's two pieces (they share the same future world) are just strange enough to make the reader

take note. His "recomb" people are so fascinating and bizarre, not to mention so full of fictional potential, that I fully expect them to gather the acclaim that Barry Longyear's "Circus World" stories have. Hansens' peepheads (peppers) are reconstructed to produce a broad spectrum of neuropeptides ingeniously secreted in various ways to give any emotion needed or desired. They are respected and feared, loved and hated, powerful and lonely, and while "Sergeant Pepper" is more of a straight-forward adventure tale introducing his creations, "Dolls Eyes" examines more closely one of the personal drawbacks of being a lonely, manipulated recomb. I'm awaiting more of these bizarre little tales.

Janet Morris, in her first short story, gives us a well-told fantasy ("Raising the Green Lion", Vol. 1) with a philosophical bent and a comfortable alchemical framework. It concerns old magics, sorceries, a scheme gone awry, all told with rich and convincing prose. A satisfying venture and fine companion to Glen Cook's fantasy in Vol. 2, "Soldier

of an Empire Unacquainted with De-feat". This is another of his Dread Empire tales, and one I found to be a worthwhile examination of personal tragedy, sacrifice, love and the roots of courage.

"Song of Mutes" by Ross Appel (Vol. 2) is noteworthy for its study of isolation cum schizophrenia, as is Pat C. Hodgell's "Child of Darkness" for its mutant off-worlders waging a violent battle against Evil, set, of all places on a post-holocaust college campus.

The last two issue of DESTINIES this year have offered only eight pieces of fiction and probably just as well, for in many cases all they offer are fictionalized treatments of the ideas presented in the various non-fiction articles in same, as well as G. Harry Stine's, THE SPACE ENTERPRISE and others of that sort. Therefore, the characters merely mouthpiece the obvious in dry restatements of what futurists advocate today.

An example of this is "The Man Who Stole the Moon" by Charles Sheffield (Summer, Vol. 2, #3). It is an account of governmental bureaucracy, redtape, stupidity and how some might, out of frustration, turn to organized crime to advance the space program. It is, however, too short; it hurriedly outlines the idea rather than giving the depth that might make it truly interesting to read.

"Vital Signs" by Dean Ing as the lead novella in the same issue is nothing more than an unoriginal first contact story where it is again pointed out that we humans are the uncivilized barbarians and the reverse is true of the "invading" aliens. Ing does have a good novelet in the Spring issue, "Why Must They All Have My Face?" It is powerful and frightening, but may not be as obvious a choice for award nomination as Editor Baen thinks. It is depressingly pessimistic in its picture of the upcoming violent future of our inner cities, but the pair of contrasting protagonists who must fight during the day against each other just to survive and who love each other at night, makes the picture all the more convincing.

NEW VOICES III leads off with another of John Varley's Eight Worlds

stories and it is a good one. "Beatnik Bayou", in as many of Varley's pieces, uses sex changes freely and this time it is for the furtherance of the educational system. To be precise, it is not the sex that is changed, per se, but the minds of teachers who are transferred by contract to a child body (male or female) in order that they may thereby guide their charges more efficiently in the difficult task of growing up. The kicker in this one is that one of the instructors also has an incognito instructor who has been watching and guiding him to insure his emotional stability. All of Varley's sparkle and flash is again evident.

"Haute Falaaise Bay" by Brenda Pearce is almost a carbon copy of what transpired in Wells' WAR OF THE WORLDS. A slimy blob of an alien lands in a cave in "Haute Falaaise Bay" and before anyone can locate the creature it dies from earthly organisms. Pearce's point is that because of our reticence (from haggling endlessly over what to do with the creature once it is found), the possible knowledge to be gained from the alien is irretrievably lost. Ho-hum.

Alan Brennart, who no longer writes SF, has penned two of the more mature and sensitive pieces in the whole book and quite expectedly they're not SF. "Stage Whisper" tells the story of an aged, ailing homosexual playwright and how one of his students must come to grips with the meanings of life as revealed through his art. "Queen of the Magic Kingdom" speaks of loneliness as a lady moves from one to another in the many settings in a Disneyland of period sets, searching for something she is destined never to find in any of the fantasy worlds she inhabits. It's a shame Brennart no longer pens SF; his talent is obvious!

NEW DIMENSIONS 10 is difficult to assess. There are many new names, first sales, and even an above-average story or two, but after turning the final page it seemed that no one piece was memorable, at least in a positive fashion. "A Chrysalis Unbroken" by Peter Santiago C. did strike a chord in me, however. It is a sad piece, written sensitively, of one Mr. Sediki. He is, it turns out, nothing more than a genetic experiment who, once his part has been played, is more or less abandoned. He searches for his past for many years and discovers what he is and what he was designed for on a far

distant world. But even bearing the burden of his loneliness and insignificance Santiago C. leaves him, and by extension, us, hope and strength. A worthwhile theme, handled quite smoothly, gives the piece the feel that many of the other selections did not.

Oh, Carter Scholz offered the second installment in the continuing adventures of a time traveler gone back to learn of Beethoven, "Amadeus", but clever and superficially entertaining as it was in the revelation of more historical data concerning Beethoven, I found it nothing but a redundant reprise of the popular first piece from 1978.

As fine a writer as John Kessel is becoming (he deals now more maturely with subject matter equal to his talent), his "Animals" left me rather disappointed. It was intriguing and kept me interested, although somewhat baffled, but the ending failed to answer the many questions thrown out, by implication, along the way. Perhaps a little less obfuscation and a trifle more straight storytelling would quell my frustration with his chosen style.

Overall my gripe with this volume is not with the quality of writing, nor with the varying fresh approaches (in most cases) in treating the subject matter, but lies more in the area of the moral or the point made by the stories not being worth the effort (i.e. -- Felix Gotschalk's whimsical, outdated "A Presidential Tape" and Marta Randall's tired and ho-hum "Circus").

TALK ABOUT DEGRADATION.
TWO WEEKS IN THIS DAMN
DUNGEON, AND THE HAND-
CUFFS ARE RUSTED
SHUT!



SMALL PRESS NOTES

BY THE EDITOR

OVERLOAD #3 Summer, 1980, \$1.75

Edited by Don Chin.

1951 Quaker St., Eureka, CA 95501.

[price is \$2.25 by mail.]

Subtitled *The Fantasy Humor Magazine*, it is a comicszine, full of not-quite professional picture stories, mostly intended to be funny, a few of which are, mildly.

Essentially for the under-18ers.

It is 48 pages, offset, letter-size, color covers, heavy stock.

HONOR TO FINUKA #3 Summer, 1980

\$1.00.

Edited by K. Cockrum and M.X.

Koester, 309 Allston, #16,

Boston, MA 02146.

Notable for the first half of a KPFC (radio) interview with Jack Vance. Second half next issue.

PALADIN

Edited/published by David Lubkin and

Eileen Roy. 404 Michigan, East

Lansing, MI 48823

[\$6. by 3rd class mail. \$6.25 by

UPS. \$7. by first class mail.]

What we have here is 11 short stories 'using the characters and backgrounds of specific TV shows of the past: THE YOUNG REBELS, WILD, WILD WEST, HERE COME THE BRIDES/STAR TREK, MAN FROM U.N.C.L.E., M*A*S*H, THE QUESTOR TAPES, THE MOD SQUAD, STARSKY & HUTCH. All written, I believe, by beginning/admiring writers. There are also two articles.

The artwork is excellent, good, and bad. PALADIN is offset, letter-size, 114 pages.

THE NEW ADVENTURES OF JESUS

By Foolbert Sturgeon

Rip Off Press, \$6.95

POB 14158

San Francisco, CA 94114

It mocks, it japes, it satirizes...not Jesus, but hypocrisy and pretentiousness in the world...including the organized world of religion. Frank Stack has written and drawn a real man Jesus with a tinge of irreverence, a lot of humor, and a jaundiced eye toward civilization.

This volume is a collection of previously published episodes: *Stories From the Good Book; Somebody We All Know Rides Again (Jesus in the wild west); Jesus Goes to the Movies; Jesus Meets the Armed Forces; Jesus Joins the Academic Community; Jesus*



Goes to a Faculty Party; The Daily Grind; and Jesus, Saviour of the World.

And, as God says in exasperation in the final episode, "I AM THE CREATOR, NOT THE REPAIRMAN!"

We'd better get our act together.

THE CARTOON HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSE

Book One: From the Big Bang to Baby-

lon. [Includes volumes 1 & 2 of the comic book series, revised, edited, and with a couple new jokes!]

By Larry Gonick

Rip Off Press, \$6.95

Probably the finest comicbook project of educational value ever published. Funny, real, accurate, wonderful. What a delightful way to learn!

THE S.F.P.A. POETRY POSTCARD SERIES

is something new. Edited by Robert Frazier, this first series is a package of 15 cards, postcard size, with a poem decoratively printed on one side. There are five copies each of three original poems by: Joan D. Vinge: "There Are Songs"; Ursula K. Le Guin: "To Siva the Un-maker";

Gene Wolfe: "On Lyra III".

I liked Gene's poem best.

These are necessarily short poems; the Wolfe is longest at 12 lines.

You can have 15 copies of a single poem, if you like, according to the info provided with this review set.

Cost: \$2.25 postpaid.

From: Science Fiction Poetry Association, Rt.4, Box 192-E, Huntsville, AL 37240.

THE DENVER FANZINE MONITOR #1-2-3

Edited & Published by Eddie Abel who also owns and operates The Second Foundation---The SF Collector's Bookshop, 521 East 14th Av., Stall #18, Denver, CO 80203.

Eddie is new to the fanzine, sf game, but he's eager to learn and a grizzled veteran of life, having served a long term in federal prison on a pornography rap, and is an American Original---much like Jack Woodford in writing style: cantankerous, brutally, cynically honest, direct, wild, neurotic, maybe a bit crazy: a "character".

He is serializing his book, *PORNOGRAPHY: THE MENACE THAT NEVER WAS*, in the MONITOR. His story of how he got involved with porno, how he was busted and prosecuted is breathtakingly honest. This man doesn't give a shit what he says about himself or others!

These Monitors cost \$1. each, and worth it. Read this man while you can; he may be jailed for slander any day now.

MASQUERADE -- The Magazine of Science Fiction Costuming. \$4.

Edited and Published by Mike Resnick, 11216 Gideon Lane, Cincinnati, OH 45242.

Essentially a How-To magazine, with lots of photos...with a definite slant to the nude/semimale costumes of past years, though Carol Resnick makes the point that too much bare flesh distracts from the costume, and judging is of costumes, not bodies.

THRUST #16 (Fall, 1980) \$1.95

Edited and Published by Doug Fratz 11919 Barrel Cooper Road, Reston, VA 22091

40 pages plus covers...7 pages of ads... Not too much for the price, to my mind. But you do get an interview with Joan Vinge, columns by Ted White, John Shirley, Michael Bishop, David Bischoff, and good quality artwork. A few letters from pros which clear up some misinformation in a previous issue, and which comment on items...a few book reviews....

FANTASY NEWSLETTER #30 Nov. 1980

Published and Edited by Paul C. Allen 1015 West 36th Street Loveland, CO 80537

32 pages including covers, about

4 pages of ads. The price is due to increase with the December issue to \$1.95 from \$1.50. Regular and 1st class subscriptions increase to \$15 and \$22. Overseas subs to \$15 surface and \$29 air. The schedule is monthly, but this man has been maintaining it for several years now, constantly upgrading and improving his magazine's coverage, until now it is a very attractive magazine indeed, with the added benefit of small cover reproductions of upcoming titles.

This issue features a profile of Colin Wilson by Wilson and Jeffrey Elliot. Also featured are "On Fantasy" a column by Karl Edward Wagner, and "Collecting Fantasy" by Robert Weinberg. There is also a report on "The British Scene" by Mike Ashley.

A HISTORY OF THE HUGO, NEBULA, AND INTERNATIONAL FANTASY AWARDS --- \$4. Including complete lists of nominees and winners, 1951 through 1979/80
By Donald Franzen and Howard DeVore

A valuable reference!

SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY PSEUDONYMS --- \$2.50

Compiled by Barry McGhan
Approximately 2500 entries, cross-indexed. A reprint of the 1973 edition plus a 1979 supplement.

A must for collectors and aficionados. More complete than the L. W. Currey lists.

The above two books are available from Howard DeVore
4705 Weddel St.
Dearborn, MI 48125

RBCC #151 \$3.95
Harlan Ellison Special Issue
Edited and Published by
James Van Hise,
10885 Angola Road
San Diego, CA 92126

RBCC used to stand for Rocket Blast Comic Collector. But the quarterly is now mature and adult and the juvenile sound of the old name don't cut it no more, so Jim has kept RBCC on the cover, but those letters now stand for "A Reader's Blend of Creative Commentaries."

Awkward, sort of phoney-sounding...but he wanted to keep the RBCC, so...

Anyway, so what? This is a really fine large-size, offset, 128 page + covers magazine of very high quality. This special issue is devoted, lock, stock and barrel,

to Harlan Ellison, and is complete with a long, wide-ranging interview in which Harlan is so simply flat-out direct and un-phoney it is sometimes breathtaking and always a delight...a 19-page section of photographs of Harlan's exceptionally well-appointed home---appointed with a lifetime of sf, fantasy, etc. memorabilia, art, books, awards, special constructions... Incredible. There are installments from THE HARLAN ELLISON HORNBOOK, a long radio interview from WSHE in Miami, a never-before-published article by Harlan, "Aaarghh! Help! The Giant Ant Ate My Maidenform Bra!" as well as reprints of "Basilisk" (with graphic story artwork) and a comic strip version of "Soldier"... another interview....and more. I weary.

The artwork in RBCC is fine to excellent.

If you are an Ellison fan you will HAVE TO get this issue of RBCC. If you are curious and want your mind blown you should get this issue. If you hate Harlan, buy a copy and burn it...after reading it.

THE NATIONAL FANTASY FAN, V.40, No.4

Edited by Owen K. Laurion
6101 Central NE,
Albuquerque, NM 87108

The major organ of The National Fantasy Fan Federation. This venerable organization offers zillions of outlets for the new fan to contribute, get to know the fan world, from politics to artwork, from welcoming new fans to publishing. Anything you want to try...

"JOINT" CONFERENCE #10 \$2.00
Special Science Fiction Issue
Edited by Kathryn E. King
King Publications
POB 19332
Washington, DC 20036

"JOINT" CONFERENCE is an 'Inmate-written literary magazine. Of the nine stories in this issue one or two show genuine talent and a neo-pro at work: K.A. Houston, for one. Michael Knoll for another.

Supporting this magazine is for a good cause, not for its value as entertainment. Editor King seems rather casual about it all, perhaps because "JOINT" is published because of a grant from the Coordinating Council of Literary Magazines. That means govt. money and this is part of the welfare press.

This Publication...



is Available in MICROFORM

For Complete Information

WRITE:
University Microfilms International

Dept. F.A.
300 North Zeeb Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48106
U.S.A.

Dept. F.A.
18 Bedford Row
London, WC1R 4EJ
England

In his book **PIRATES OF VENUS**, Burroughs had his hero wind up at Venus instead of Mars because the moon got in the way. Burroughs wrote:

"With all our careful calculation, with all our checking and rechecking, we had overlooked the obvious; we had not taken the moon into consideration at all."

Many times over the years I have wondered if such a SNAFU was really possible. And so on 16 July I had my answer. I now will quote from VOYAGER MISSION OPERATIONS STATUS REPORT FOR THE WEEK OF 11 July thru 17 July, 1980. R. Amorose writes....

"On 7/16, DSS 61 lost downlink lock from Voyager 2 for approximately two hours due to an unexpected spacecraft occultation by the earth's moon. Investigation is in process to determine why advance notice of the occultation was not made to the project."

---EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS
WAS A HARD-CORE STF
WRITER
a one-shot zine from:

Harry J.N. Andruschak
P.O. Box 606
La Canada-Flintridge, CA 91775

LETTERS

LETTER FROM BUZZ DIXON
7058 Hazeltime Ave, #22
Van Nuys, CA, 91405
15 May 1980

"I must say I like your new (old) layout and format. I agree with your thinking, most of your readers buy SFR through the mail or know it well enough to pick it up automatically. New readers will be referred to it by others and probably not buy it simply because it has a name author mentioned on the cover.

"I especially like clumping all the letters together in a good, old-fashioned letter column as this makes cross referencing them easier (but more on that later).

"I realize you like Steve Fabian's work, Dick, but for a little variety why not use somebody else? Oops, excuse me, the cover was by somebody else, it only looked like Fabian ...

"Re Computer magazine sales, etc. Right now the way the cable stations and the soon-to-be introduced disc video people are battling piracy and unauthorized taping is by offering their films at far cheaper prices (\$2.00 to 25¢ per film on cable and \$15 for disc as opposed to \$40 for a video cassette). Perhaps if the charge for reading a computer stored article was cheaper than the cost of storing it oneself the problem might be solved.

"Another method of combating computer literary piracy may be in a resurgence of fine book binding and high quality magazines. Books may become a status symbol and an investment, going for high prices in original editions before dropping down to a few cents a read via computer (needless to say, some period of time may pass before a book is available in computer storage, thus encouraging people to buy the books). Another method is to have several private computer storage firms (publishers) plus an open government and/or public storage firm which carries all written material the publishers won't buy. Thus everyone can get published if they so desire. Likewise, if every literary property is on file and the holder of said property is known, fabulous rewards can be offered to anyone turning in a pirate.

"For years I had Barry N. Malz-

berg pegged as a cranky, whining, sorry excuse for a writer with little or no talent and absolutely no sense of critical judgment. "The Way It Is" in SFR #35, has shattered that belief.

"Now, parts of it I disagree with strongly, but on the whole Malzberg has made several rather astute observations. Nothing is wasted if it adds a new outlook or perspective. With this single article Malzberg has redeemed his literary worth.

"His interpretation of science fiction as junk is extremely thought provoking. I've been involved in many a discussion on science fiction in which the topic of the really great, truly literature science fiction came up. Inevitably the discussion starts by naming several of the truly excellent works in the field.

"Then, gradually, the parameters and standards are lowered. Books that aren't particularly great are included because of historical or conceptual importance. It usually takes about thirty minutes to go from naming THE STARS MY DESTINATION as a great book to including Doc Smith on the list. "sigh" We look for junk, we desire junk. When we do have an opportunity to confine ourselves to really exceptional works we invariably choose not to.

"Yet I wonder what the real motives behind this are. I strongly disagree with Malzberg's statement that "only weak people -- modern psychology has led us to understand -- want out of the world". Modern psychology is like science fiction, 90% garbage. Or maybe Malzberg views himself as weak and since he likes science fiction all those who do must be as weak as he is. Such oversimplification is a gross flaw in an otherwise thought-provoking essay.

"Personally, I think nostalgia is a prime reason for returning again and again to junk. I've yet to meet a science fiction fan or enthusiast who didn't have a conceptual rush when he/she first started reading science fiction. Since most fans start at very basic levels (juveniles, movie tie-ins, Star Trek books, "classic" reprints by name authors, the mass magazines, etc.) it isn't surprising that their first favorable impressions are linked to low quality writing. As a reader



grows more sophisticated and appreciative of fine writing, there's the problem of becoming too critical. A book that would enthral and thrill a teenager may be only mildly amusing to an older reader who notices several flaws in it.

'A similar situation exists for me and the movie DONOVAN'S REEF (no, not DONOVAN'S BRAIN, DONOVAN'S REEF). This is an atrocious movie by John Ford featuring lots of fist fights and corny dialog with John Wayne and Lee Marvin. When I saw the film at age twelve or thirteen, I thought it was great. Today I realize it's a real piece of trash, totally worthless and noisome -- junk, as it were. But I still can't avoid staying up to 2 a.m. to watch it because of the nostalgia value.

'In the next part of Malzberg's article, he goes way off into left field in regards to his supposed "taboos" in the science fiction field. Taboos #2, #3, and #5 are non-existent. Taboos #1 and #4 are semi-true, while there is a prejudice against doom-and-gloom stories and mood pieces, there have been far too many of both published in too many magazines and original anthologies for them to be taboo subjects.

'His cliché plots were hilarious. Two, however, (The Vigilantes and Hold That Tiger) have long since fallen into disuse in America. It's easy to see why the others are cliché today -- in their original conceptions they were very entertaining and enthralling stories. Since success is always imitated, we shouldn't be surprised that four good plot outlines were used over and over again to the point of becoming cliché and tiresome.

'The Japanese kabuki theatre has an interesting approach to plots. They have a set standard of plots and characters, each with specific actions and phrases to be depicted with incredible exactness. Audience going to a kabuki theatre know the plot well in advance, they simply want to see how well the actors perform them. Western opera works on the same principle, too.

'On to other things. You are an excellent film critic, Dick, with a keen eye and a ready wit, capable of dissecting and effectively critiquing contemporary cinema in an erudite fashion (i.e.: I agree with you a lot).

'Your comments re THE BLACK HOLE, SATURN 3 and BEYOND WESTWORLD were all on the nose. SATURN 3 is an entertaining film if you arrive after the first reel and leave before the last one. There's a terrific idea buried underneath that mess.

The background details (especially the terraformed Earth which we first see as a toy globe Kirk and Farrah play with) was terrific and well extrapolated. I saw this film about two weeks after I saw BRAVE NEW WORLD on TV; the two seem to fit hand and glove. Pity it wasn't done better.

'Please inform J.J. Pierce there was a sex guild for long sea voyages in ancient times. They were called cabin boys (see George MacDonald Fraser's FLASH FOR FREEDOM for details. No, it's not a porno novel, it's part of his excellent series of FLASHMAN historical novels).

'Time to close, all hell is breaking loose here at work. Steve Gerber (he of HOWARD THE DUCK fame) and I are writing scripts for an animated, futuristic Conan-esque Saturday morning series called THUNDARR, THE BARBARIAN. It looks like it will either lay down and die or be a smash hit. More on THUNDARR and Company later.'

((Yes, as it has been said, "The golden age of SF is 13. And it follows that the golden age of westerns is 13. Some genres may require a higher emotional/intellectual age for their "golden" period--mysteries, for instance. Maybe historicals, too. Would the gothic novel "golden age" be 22? Could be the "golden age" of porno novels is 44. Ahhh, cynicism...))

LETTER FROM TOM STAICAR
2288 Hardy Court
Ann Arbor, MI, 48104
July 13, 1980

'I recall that when PENTHOUSE publisher Bob Guccione announced plans to publish OMNI, the SF world was buzzing with rumors of other publishers who might start their own versions. TIME-LIFE just sent out a mailing of advertising brochures which describe their entry into the OMNI market: DISCOVER. Litton has already put out issues of their magazine, NEXT, and a magazine called SCIENCE & LIVING TOMORROW has been out for a few months.

'The most striking feature of the new magazines is the lack of science fictional content. It had always been confidently assumed by SF people that OMNI "proved" that big bucks await the promotion of an SF/science package magazine on glossy paper. Now it might turn out that, ironically, science fiction is not the key

factor at all. If NEXT and the others make it, they will have done it by using the science orientation of SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN combined with the color photos of SMITHSONIAN and the lack of scientific language which might have turned off the general reader who found SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN obtuse.

'It is interesting to note that SCIENCE & LIVING TOMORROW ran a reader survey in the Spring, 1980, and the results were: least read and enjoyed -- science fiction content of the first issue.'

((I wonder if science and science fiction are basically incompatible? Or is this a further evidence of the trend to specialization/special interest magazines?))

LETTER FROM MARK J. MCGARRY,
EDITOR-PUBLISHER OF EMPIRE
Box 967
New Haven, CT 06504
11 August, 1980

'Frankly, I'm rather disappointed in your publication of I.G. Penhall's letter in the 36th issue of SFR. I am also rather disappointed in Mr. Oenall not including in his letter one very important bit of information: He states that he enclosed a check for a year's subscription to EMPIRE SF in his correspondence. Was that check ever cashed?

'You, Dick, did not ask him. You also did not ask me (which, using a postcard, would have cost you 10¢---far less than the value of the paper and ink used to bring 6000 copies of Penhall's letter to the American public) if I had ever heard of Mr. Penhall.

'I have not. And it may interest you to note that in August of 1978, when Mr. Penhall sent his correspondence from Australia, I moved from Albany, New York to New Haven, Connecticut. I would not expect you to remember this, though we have corresponded while I was at both the Albany and New Haven addresses---but again, a postcard would have cleared up the letter nicely.

'To reiterate: EMPIRE SF never received correspondence from I.G. Penhall. If he sends mail to the Albany address we will never receive correspondence from him in the future. And, since Mr. Penhall sent his letter in August of 1978, we have fulfilled several hundred subscriptions without a murmur of complaint.'

((You overestimate by far SFR's print run. And it cost about \$2.00 to print his letter.

((Obviously Mr. Penhall sent his letter to you first class. The post office has a firm policy of forwarding first class mail when an address moves and they are informed of the new address. Did you neglect that little duty? The post office especially, I am informed, will exert extra effort to deliver foreign first class mail rather than send it all the way back across an ocean.

(I assumed Penhall's check had been received and cashed; it is a natural assumption. I see that you have sent a copy of your letter to Mr. I.G. Penhall as well, so my publishing his letter did bring a response to him. I now await word on the check--~~was it cashed?~~))

CARD FROM ORSON SCOTT CARD
1079 East 600 North
Orem, UT 84057

9 July, 1980

'I'm glad you found the (final) column useful. I was more than a little afraid it would be too eccentric.

'And I'm more than glad you liked SONGMASTER. I'm not surprised that it seemed implausible to you that a human voice can do all that. It can't. With SONGMASTER I finally realized that I am well over the edge into fantasy. I'm afraid that I can't bring myself to care much about science in my stories anymore, which is why SONGMASTER is my last novel that will be marketed as science fiction. Might as well get the labels to fit the product. The more my work becomes fantasy, the better it gets, and vice versa. Again, thanks for liking it and saying so.'

((My problem as a reader is that even as fantasy, SONGMASTER annoys my credibility bone. Wasn't there some way you could have made those voice effects more plausible? Maybe linking the voice to specialized psi powers? The result of mutations?))

The Zelazny and Heinlein interviews were concise and revealing, in particular Heinlein's comment about his being semile. Priest's article pointed out in public what I've been hearing from various people in private ever since the Lem episode. Schweitzer's comments about the age of people buying SF jibe with my own observations, but lacking any determinate data I shan't forward any conclusions.

'As to your comments about the publishing industry, I might add that the La Cosa Nostra have their fingers deeply into the distributing end of the publishing business. Some rumors hinted that one former SF magazine owner was up to his ears in mafia loans. No way to prove this. Pity. I've been told by reliable sources that the Federal Trade Commission is engaged in a losing battle to prevent the mafia from taking over independent distributors in large cities. Some people even say that the attempt on HUSTLER publisher Larry Flynt's life was because he was moving into the distributing business and was resisting efforts by the mafia to gain control of his company. Who knows. With the mafia involved, who wants to?

'I also have comments on Mack Reynolds' article, but those are so long and involved, I think I'll save them for an article titled "SF's Shortcomings: An Abridged List". Thus does one join the ranks of the angry young men. Ah, well, so it goes.'

((I've suspected for many years that the Mafia has/had powerful leverage in Washington---to the point of (in past years, at least) being able to "immunize" certain porno publishers from prosecution, while "targeting" others in the Justice Dept. and Post Office, to eliminate some competition. This use of the federal government isn't unusual, of course; the megabanks and favored oil companies do it all the time.))

LETTER FROM NEVILLE J. ANGOVE
POB 770, Canberra City ACT
Australia 2601
July 10, 1980

'Your comments about costs almost caused me apoplexy. Current Australian postal imports average out to three and four times greater than those you suffer, and with a poorer service, too. For example, it takes only two months for SFR to

reach me by sea-mail but it takes over three months for a similar magazine to travel the same route in reverse.

'\$1400 for printing SFR!!!!!! The lowest printing quote I have received from an Australian printer for 3,000 copies produced in a similar fashion is \$3500 -- at one stage I had planned to put together a vaguely similar magazine (although the similarity would be slight, what with the absence of REG from the contents) comprised of the best from Australian fans, and found out it would be cheaper to produce a hardcover book!

'Speaking of book production -- I agree with Darrell Schweitzer's comments about current book production values: paperbacks are meant to be now thrown away (and since some \$9.00 mass-market ones have started appearing on the bookshelves, that's a bloody lot to toss out), and the hardcovers do not normally retain any of their quality appearance even after a single reading. But I don't believe it is a matter of cost so much as a combination of marketing policies and convenience. A poorer quality book can be produced a little faster and at the same cost, and can therefore reach the market ahead of rival titles. And if a book falls apart sooner, if you want to retain a copy for your library, you just have to buy another copy.'

((Is it possible the Australian post office is still using sailing ships?

((I imagine most of the paper used in Australia is imported, which must up the cost of printing tremendously. Perhaps labor costs are relatively high...perhaps modern, cost-cutting printing equipment is rare.

((Reading may soon, for most people, be priced out of their reach. At least as a regular entertainment. And book collecting....))

LETTER FROM JOHN SHIRLEY
20 Av. A, #2-I
New York, NY 10009
August 19, 1980

'Re your remarks on NY publishing: Yeah things are grim, but I'm told this is something that happens at intervals and is purgative. I just hope I'm not one of the purged. I seem to have gotten in under the wire. I just got my first royalties ever (except for royalties on short story reprints) for my 1st two books. Have various foreign editions in print. An article on me in

LETTER FROM ELTON T. ELLIOTT
1899 Niessner Drive NE
Salem, OR, 97303
July 23, 1980

'Congratulations' are in order; #36 was a superlative issue.

'In short some reactions: Philip K. Dick's asseverations were entertaining as well as illuminating.

the next HEAVY METAL, by the way. It makes me out considerably punkier than I am---actually I'm a progressive rock-composer/singer with New Wave (rock--not sf) analogues. I attempted to sell a concept for an original anthology you would have liked (especially as I was going to solicit a story from you...I will if it ever happens) BEHIND THE STARS: SF stories about conspiracy. Cosmic conspiracy, paranoia. Hoping someone might hit on the truth! But the take-no-chances publishing atmosphere squelched the antho's chances.

'My agent tells me that if the truckers who deliver the new books to bookstores don't like the way the cover looks---they won't deliver it! And it languishes in the warehouses, eventually going out of print! Supposedly this has doomed many fine books...because the redneck CB nuts didn't like its looks! What a fucked up industry! There's a book by Jeremy Rifkin from Viking called ENTROPY that reminded me of your viewpoint. I recommend it. Very relevant stuff. The Platt Profiles are the best of all the interviews, ever!'

((The truckers' influence must be the reason for the recent increase in the nakedness of the naked ladies on sf covers, as well as the increasing numbers of nudes. Here I thought it was merely a resort to hard-sell basics by the publishers. I, of course, do not need encouragement in my cover choices.))

'As Priest says, the Nebulas were a great idea in the abstract, but like a Mafia victim at the bottom of a river, they don't look so good in the concrete. Hoping you are the same ---'

((You may be mortified to see the extent the Nebulas have been defended---not by the publishers, but by writers. I wonder if you've cemented any friendships by your remarks? Were you plastered when you penned them? Stoned? Stop me before I find a use for sand, gravel, lime and water. Hmmm...if you added gin...))



that yourself. THE CLAW OF THE CONCILIATOR has already been sold and scheduled, as you know. The third book, THE SWORD OF THE LICTOR, should be in David Hartwell's hands around mid-September. As well as I can judge, I'll be working for the better part of a year on the fourth, THE CITADEL OF THE AUTARCH.

'I realize I don't represent the audience to which "Illusion and Reality" was addressed; but it seems to me that you are -- at least to some extent -- doing the sort of thing Ripley & heirs do in "Believe It Or Not". They show you the picture of some building, and say something like, "The old charterhouse, Wixshire, has stood for three hundred and fifty years although it was built without mortar".'

'Certainly there are some dishonest agents, editors and publishers. But I have been around a good many different businesses, and writing-and-publishing is as clean as any I've seen. (Have you ever been around an industrial plant during a hard-fought strike?) I don't know how the boys out in Oregon wash their dope money, but "the boys" around Chicago practically always use a business outside the U.S. A foreign business is much harder for the FBI (or whoever) to check on, and the "earnings" on which taxes must be paid are taxed by the foreign government at much lower rates. The boys are in porn to some extent, but I've heard no indication that they're into any other form of publishing -- because their overhead is so high, they pretty much have to stick with high-markup items. Currently the big thing is chop-shops. You steal a new car, you tear it apart for the high-cost parts, you sell the parts and if you don't know the right people, you chase an old engine block to the bottom of Lake Michigan. Now that's a tough, merciless, often heartbreacking life.

'I agree with some of the things Christopher Priest has to say; but unless I am misreading him, he thinks that science fiction writers in other countries (unpublished here) should be welcomed in SFWA because SF is big in their own countries. Well, let's see... SF is certainly big here in the U.S., where I live, so I ought to be admitted to the Science Fiction Writers of Japan, where (to the best of my knowledge) I have never been published. It seems funny. It would seem funnier still if I hadn't learned from Philip K. Dick that Japan never existed until I went there briefly, and that it has since been torn down to make room for Oklahoma.

'Speaking of which, I just pulled out my SFWA Membership Directory. Although Oklahoma boasts such writers

CARD FROM ROBERT A. BLOCH
2111 Sunset Crest Drive
Los Angeles, CA, 90046
August 1, 1980

'Christopher A. Priest's article on SFWA is extremely persuasive, particularly in his comments on the Nebula Awards. I have never voted on them because I've never been able to read all the nominations -- but I've made it a point to read most of the prize-winning entries and found that in my opinion a rather alarming number of them were sophomoric, pretentious imitations of Patchen, William Burroughs, Hesse and other obscurantists beloved by the publish-or-perish academics

'It will be interesting to see just how the Nebula system is defended after Priest's analysis. But defended it will be: too many publishing have touted too many "award-winning" efforts and their investment precludes any thought of backing down now.

LETTER FROM GENE WOLFE
Box 69, Barrington, IL, 60010
August 11, 1980

'Thanks for the review. I appreciate your taking the time to read my book thoroughly (as you obviously did), and I'm glad that you enjoyed it so much. You're the first reviewer thus far to comment specifically on the scene with Master Ultan in the library stacks, which is one of my own favorites.

'(How's this for coincidence: When your magazine arrived, I was reading THE SINFUL ONES, by Fritz Leiber. It's one of the best short speculative fiction novels ever put on paper, and it also has a scene in the stacks of a big library.)

'I wish I could give you some meaningful information here about sales and so forth, but I don't know any more than you, at this point. SHADOW is #9 on the LOCUS hardback list, but you will already have seen

as C.J. Cherryh and R.A. Lafferty, it has fewer SFWAns than England, and only one more than Australia. Quiz question: What do Greece, Holland, Hungary, Jamaica, Japan, Mexico, Sri Lanka and Sweden have in common? Answer: Each of those countries has more SFWAns than the combined total of Alaska, Arkansas, Delaware, Hawaii, Iowa(!), Mississippi, Nevada, N. Dakota, Rhode Island (in happier days the home of H.P. Lovecraft), S. Dakota, Vermont, Wyoming and the District of Columbia.

'To close this letter on a somewhat happier note, let me recommend the movie I saw last night, THE FIENDISH PLOT OF DR. FU MANCHU. Peter Sellers (this was his last), robot spiders, Sid Caesar, a flying cottage, elixir vitae, a sinister orchid, Chinese acrobats and much more. (Since we were talking about gangsters, maybe I should mention that Sid Caesar plays an FBI man named Joe Capone.) Also recommended: THE BLUES BROTHERS.'

((As a matter of fact I don't receive LOCUS; Charlie Brown doesn't trade with fansines, and I have never felt the urgent need to subscribe to LOCUS since I do trade with the other sf newsmagazines. I'm very glad to hear the SHADOW OF THE TORTURER is doing well.

((Why not grant honorary memberships in SPWA to those states without exalting members? They could appoint a few fans, perhaps, to make sure there is no sexism and prejudice and parochialism and xenophobia in SPWA. That seems democratic and fair. If necessary, perhaps some SFWAns could be bussed from California and New York.))

LETTER FROM CHARLES R SAUNDERS
Box 3261, Station C
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, K1Y 4J5

'At the risk of incurring some ascerbic comments from you concerning the proliferation of awards and organizations, I'm enclosing a list of the winners of the 1980 Small Press Awards, sponsored by the Small Press Writers and Artists Organization (SPWAO). I've also enclosed a flyer describing SPWAO. Perhaps you could find room in your next Small Press Notes to give us a plug. In a weak moment, you might even consider joining SPWAO. We'd be honored to have you.

'The winners were:

Best Magazine (Circulation under 1000) SPACE AND TIME, Edited by Gordon Linzner.

Best Magazine (Circulation 1000 and Above) WHISPERS, Edited by Stuart David Schiff.

Best Magazine, Small Press Comics ELQUEST, Edited by Wendy and Richard Pini.

Best Writer, Science Fiction Jon Inouye.

Best Writer, Fantasy/Sword and Sorcery, Charles R. Saunders.

Best Writer, Horror/Weird Galad Elflandsson.

Best Writer, Non-Fiction Charles R. Saunders.

Best Writer, Poetry Steve Eng.

Best Writer, Comics Dave Sim.

Best Artist: Science Fiction Stephen Fabian

Best Artist, Fantasy/Sword and Sorcery, Tim Hammell.

Best Artist, Horror/Weird Allen Koszowski.

Best Artist, Small Press Comics Wendy Pini

Best Cover Artist Gene Day

Best Overall Artistic Achievement: Gene Day.

The Dale Donaldson Memorial Award for Service to the Small Press Field: C.C. Clingan.

'So that's who won this year, based on work done and magazines published in 1979.

'All for now, and I do hope you have the room and inclination to print this stuff.'

-- Charles R. Saunders
President, SPWAO

((This is the first time I've ever heard of the organization. I find it curious/odd that all the winners have a sf/fantasy fandom or comic orientation. Yet I know the small press world in the U.S. holds hundreds of non-sf/fantasy zines and books; have you misnamed the organization? I'm sure those in SFR's readership who are interested in SPWAO will contact you.))

LETTER FROM ALEXIS GILLILAND
August 11, 1980

'SFR #36 is in hand ... and speaking of hands, the hand of the naked lady on the cover leaves a little to be desired. Bianchini seems to be coming from comic art, since the rest of the drawing is anatomically correct.

'The Christopher Priest article is reasonable enough in tone, but some of his underlying assumptions are curiously displaced from my own. His notion of decadence, for instance I have always felt that literature, especially great literature was decadent popular entertainment.

'This case is actually pretty straightforward to make. The process is that the popular entertainer becomes discontent with his audience, and begins to write (or sing, or paint) for other popular entertainers ... his most discriminating audience. This process continues, so that eventually, instead of an entertainment briefly enjoyed by many, you have an entertainment enjoyed indefinitely by a very few ... or, in the extreme case, enjoyed forever by nobody.

'So much for the "decadent symbols of a declining literary form". I hope that it is obvious that science fiction will only become decadent when it starts to produce literature.

'I am also informed, by Sontow Sucheritkul, secretary of SPWA, that since Priest's article was written, SPWA has mended its ways, and will confer membership for English and French publication.

'It is regrettable that I don't have more cartoons to send you, but as I may have mentioned, serious writing inhibits my cartooning. And after taking care of the rewriting for THE REVOLUTION FROM ROSINANTE, due out in March the last I heard, I started on the sequel, ROSINANTE LONG SHOT. The first 19,500 words of which break out very nicely as a novella, THE CONTRA DARWIN CONSPIRACY, which I am polishing up preparatory to submission. My wife, who proofed it, congratulated me on my typing, so there is at least something right with it. Is there sex? A little. Is there violence? Yes. Off stage, on stage, remembered from before the story begins, and running on after the story ends. The major



loose end is a one-megaton guided missile that is shot off and never heard from again. Of course, it gets taken care of in the novel.

'Possibly at Noreascon 11 I can get into the cartooning mode again, worldcons have often had that effect on me. Meanwhile I am having a good time turning my hand to writing.'

LETTER FROM ROBT. A.W. LOWNDES
717 Willow Avenue
Hoboken, NJ 07030
September 8, 1980

'All thanks (however belated) for STAR WHORES, which I read twice and enjoyed thoroughly, no less the second time when I read it to see how well it stood up after I knew all the secrets. You did a very good job of balancing the science, mystery and explicit erotic elements, none of the latter seeming as if they were there just to provide obligatory sex interest. Not a masterpiece but a damned good, competent story -- and that alone puts it way ahead of the crowd.

'So I have no hesitation whatever in ordering a copy of THE CORPORATION STRIKES BACK and here's a check for it. I'll be looking forward to read more about Toi King and hope (though not expect or demand) that there's a good mystery in this one, too.'

((I suppose there are editors who, out of modesty, would not print your letter. I am not among them. I should mention here for the information of others that STAR WHORES is sold out. Several copies are in the hands of an agent, seeking a wider audience.))

LETTER FROM LARRY NIVEN
August 7, 1980

'Steve Barnes and I have turned in a 110,000-word novel, DREAM PARK. It was an ambitious project: a detective story wrapped in a fantasy wrapped in a science fiction story. The plot: Dream Park is a mid-21st-Century entertainment park. Entertainment includes what amounts to Dungeons and Dragons games, made as realistic as possible with the aid of actors, movable landscaping, computer-programmed battles, holograms and other tricks. The South Seas Treasure Game is a four-day game set in 1965, in which the New Guinea



I'm not saying I'd like to see all
Hell break loose, but I wouldn't
mind escaping myself for a few
days.

natives finally figured out how to get Cargo Cult magic working. Some player left the game on the first night to commit some industrial espionage and wound up leaving a dead guard behind him ... It'll be published by ACE, date as yet unknown.'

((Sounds like a winner; I salivate.))

LETTER FROM RONALD R. LAMBERT
2350 Virginia
Troy, MI, 48084
August 17, 1980

'I recant. Although in the past I have boosted Creationism, I am willing to admit that the weight of evidence favors Evolutionism, and I can accept evolution theory at least as an operational hypothesis.

'The Oklo uranium mine is what did me in. This site in the Gabon Republic in Africa shows unmistakable signs of having undergone nuclear fission as a natural reactor for a minimum of 100,000 years, and most likely for two million years. The distinctive fission products, their relative quantities, the time required for the evident reactions to have occurred, simply make the case inarguable. Radiocarbon dating I can get around, rock stratification I can get around, fossils I can get around -- but I cannot get around this. There is no reasonable alternative explanation.

'Nor can I make a distinction -- as many people try to do -- between the obviously vast age of the physical Earth and the duration of life on this planet, as if Genesis were valid only for describing the origin of life. There are carbon seams associated with the uranium strata in the Oklo mine and the carbon almost certainly is organic in origin.

'I feel like the Frenchman who immigrated to England and became a British subject. Before, Waterloo had been to him a defeat. Now it was a victory.

((Hmm. Would that natural reactor have given off significant amounts of radioactivity...and could that radioactivity have--long term--caused quickening mutations among the animals and proto-humans on the surface above?))

'Going on to another subject, have you followed any of the controversy surrounding Dr. William Shockley and his views on race and genetics? I would like to point out a couple of things I think has perhaps been overlooked -- by Shockley and his detractors.

'Dr. Shockley expresses concern that natural selection may be working to remove high intelligence from the human species. The more intelligent people are having fewer and fewer children on average, while the less intelligent people are proliferating like gerbils. If this keeps on, he fears, ultimately genius will be crowded out, and we will become a race of neo-neanderthals, and descend from the bloody road back to savagery.

'There is something wrong with this scenario, however. Dr. Shockley is, I believe, overlooking the fact that high intelligence and low intelligence humans occupy what can truly be called different environmental niches. Biologically, it is no surprise that low intelligence humans proliferate: it has ever been a law of nature that any species or subspecies will multiply until it overpopulates its environmental niche. This is one of the driving forces in evolution, for it is in the crisis of overcrowding that evolution becomes necessary (evolution cannot

occur in a stable environment).

'What happens when a species overpopulates its niche is that some individuals with the ability to adapt to new niches are driven out to occupy those niches, while the rest undergo famines, diseases, or internecine warfare until their population is reduced to a level that the niche can support.

'Some may question my calling the estate of low intelligence humans an environmental niche. Another thing to call it, some might say, is segregation. However, as history has shown, you do not get people out of their environmental niches by breaking up ghettos and legislating integration. There are only certain things that a person with an I.Q. of 85 can do. No amount of affirmative action will enable him to become a nuclear physicist. The environmental niches are real, irrespective of segregation/integration.

'There are people stuck in the overcrowded low-intelligence niche who do succeed in breaking out and occupying new, less crowded niches. These are the ones who manifest the required ability for adapting to the new niches: high intelligence. As for the rest, who remain stuck in the old niche -- the crunch must inevitably come. The riots of 1967 were a precursor. Society may introduce reforms to ensure that ghetto dwellers receive better justice and try to provide more job opportunities and make food stamps generally available. But there is a limit to what can be done to ameliorate the situation, and nothing we do can solve the real problem, which is biological and ecological in nature.

'Getting back to Dr. Shockley's chief concern, high intelligence people are in no danger of being supplanted by proliferating low intelligence people. This is because high intelligence people occupy environmental niches that low intelligence people are unable to enter. Therefore the low intelligence people cannot compete with them.

'What we call the trades and professions actually constitute environmental niches. The medical profession gives the doctor his food, shelter, security and everything else that is characteristic of an environmental niche. No matter how many children the low intelligence people have, they can never displace the doctor in his niche.

'Another error I believe Dr. Shockley makes is in implying, or at least allowing it to be inferred from what he says, that he believes the black race is inherently inferior in intelligence to the white race. The average I.Q. test score

for blacks is indeed lower. And the same holds true even for parts of an I.Q. test that culturally should favor blacks, or at least not favor whites. Culturally neutral tests have been applied, with virtually identical results. However, all this proves is that the average I.Q. is less for blacks. And the reason for this is simply that the low intelligence segment of the black race has reproduced at a faster rate than has the comparable low intelligence segment of the white race. While the average intelligence may be lower, thus, this does not mean that the black race is inherently lower in intelligence.

'The one really positive thing in all of this actually involves one of the factors that causes Dr. Shockley so much concern. That is the tendency of high intelligence people to have less children. This is a truly incredible phenomenon whose real significance has been entirely missed by most people. It is a phenomenon, furthermore, that is not related to race. Even black women, when they leave the ghetto and obtain college degrees, on average have only 1.9 children. Whatever is functioning here can only be a direct consequence of high intelligence.

'Humans with high intelligence represent the first species that has ever existed on earth which was able to restrain itself voluntarily, and occupy its environmental niches without overpopulating them. No other form of life in the history of the planet has ever been able to do this. It is totally unprecedented.

'This surely represents a tremendous evolutionary advance, and may in fact prove to be the ultimate biological justification for the existence of high intelligence.

'Someone might question whether the fact that high intelligence people are not overpopulating their niches also means that for them, evolution has stopped. In the biological sense, it may mean just this. However, I believe that evolution is now concerned with mental attitude more than with genes. People with the right attitude can thrive on the kind of rapid change that technology introduces into our lives. These are the people who are going to the stars. They have adapted to the future.

'People with the wrong attitude, however, suffer from "future shock". They probably represent an evolutionary dead end -- and the irony of it is that it is entirely voluntary, entirely involved with the way they choose to think and look at things, and has nothing to do with genetics.

'High intelligence people have

reached the point where they are literally capable of infinite development as individuals. All they need is to have their lifespans extended. They do not need to evolve biologically any further. They have already reached the threshold of infinity. Evolution can do no more. Henceforth, any changes humans want to make in their physical form or in their mental equipment can be achieved through direct, deliberate manipulation of the DNA in our cells.

'Comment?'

((A niche in time saves nine? But seriously... You have the danger, as seen in Cambodia, of an intelligent but fanatic group, in their power niche, systematically killing off all other peoples within their power who are also intelligent and educated. The human species is still---intelligent and stupid alike---largely controlled by emotions. Our "feelings" wag our intelligence too often in crucial times. This is our DNA talking, and how you can alter this internal, structured, instinctual power-balance is the key question/problem for mankind. We are our own worst enemy, be we genius or moron, and our cure and our blessing---our emotions' power---is the core of our future. Any attempt to alter the power balance would be fiercely resisted on an instinctual level.

((I don't worry about the uncontrolled breeding of morons; as you say sooner or later there is a weeding-out process---famine, war, pestilence, etc.---and the intelligent will be able to survive such disasters better than the lesser intelligent, irrespective of race and creed and color.))

LETTER FROM F. PAUL WILSON
662 Rolling Hills Ct.
Briek Town, NJ, 08723
August 23, 1980

"And what is that socioeconomic system?

"Feudalism.

"They don't even have capitalism."

-- Mack Reynolds
SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #36

'Even?' I like the way Reynolds zapped that in there, the implication being that capitalism is just a step above feudalism. I've got to put in a dime's worth (pre-1964) of comment on that.

'But to do it right, let me begin by trying out a new political spectrum -- the old Left-Right axis never did work. (For instance, Hit-

ler is "Right Wing" and Stalin is "Left", but their means, methods and end results were identical -- and let's not forget that the word Nazi derives from the German National Socialist Party.) Instead, I propose an up-down scale. At the bottom we'll put all the systems resulting from the mystical/collectivist/statist axis -- the religious oligarchies, the Marxists, the fascists and the feudal bully-boy systems -- where the church/group/regime is the center of concern and the individual cogs (people) are merely a means to an end. At the top of the scale is the individualist society which feels that if the sovereignty of the individual is preserved and protected, all the rest of the social order will take care of itself.

'Capitalism is the only socio-economic system compatible with the top end of the scale. Laissez-faire capitalism is the economics of personal freedom. You can dispose of the fruits of your labor/life as you wish, sharing them or hoarding them. The choice is yours -- no one will make you do either. You are given free reign in choosing your goals, to do what you feel is important, not what someone else thinks is in the best interest of the church/collective/state.

'That scares the hell out of a lot of people! Think about it -- actually being handed your life to do with as you will and can.

'What about equality? The brainwashed asks. Look around you. Look at history. Systems that put liberty ahead of equality (like capitalism) tend to do more for equality than systems which supposedly put it first (like Marxism).

'But capitalism? That's a heavy word! All sorts of nasty dark shades hovering about it. And of course when one says the word, the American system is immediately brought to mind. Wrong. The mongrel American economy is not capitalist, but a mix of socialism and capitalism (placing it somewhere in the middle third of our up-down spectrum) with the former steadily overgrowing the latter like mildew.

'Pure capitalism doesn't exist. In fact, in no country at any point in history have people been allowed to practice laissez-faire capitalism for any length of time. It's a suppressed philosophy. The vast majority of economics courses in this country are taught with Marxist/Keynesian texts by teachers who hate and fear the free market. But the suppression is not limited to the educational establishment; the mass media have certainly proven themselves to be anti-capitalism, and as for our glorious politicians --

res ipso loquitor.

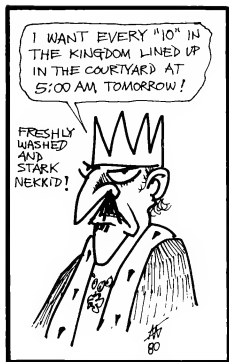
'They're winning. What little we had of a free market is on the run. Decade by decade we have moved further from the capitalist ideal and closer to the Marxists ideal. And year by year the average American's pride in his society and in his work has dwindled along with his self-esteem. He feels increasingly impotent about controlling the course of his life. Much of it is our own fault. As a people I think we have always lacked the inner resources to fend off the seductive appeal of the statist/collectivist philosophies of Europe (Marxism, Fabianism, and the other craps) which promise to relieve the individual of responsibility for this, and then for that, until we're completely dependent on Big Brother and can't imagine life without him.

'There are a number of roads we can follow down to the final obliteration of the individual. We can end up like USSR, a country glued together by its secret police -- a week or two without the omnipresent KGB and the Russian government would crumble. Or we can look forward to our children becoming like those vacant-eyed, blue-tinted automatons waving little red books of Mao-thought whom people like Shirley MacLaine gush about on return from China.

'I agree that SF should face these issues. I've done my share. But Marxism is too much a part of today's world to have much place in SF. Let's speculate on something really different ... something that's never had a chance -- Laissez-faire capitalism.

'PS: May I suggest a brief bibliography for anyone who wants to find out what capitalism is really about? Try ECONOMICS IN ONE LESSON by Henry Hazlitt; or CAPITALISM: THE UNKNOWN IDEAL by Ayn Rand; or FOR A NEW LIBERTY by Murray Rothbard. These'll get you started.'

((If as you say pure capitalism has not 'been allowed' to exist for any length of time in human history, I would suggest there is a reason beyond greed for power by the church/state/collective. I suggest an instinctual social dynamics that automatically keeps human societies from extremes for very long. We in the United States are clearly sliding down into ever more pervasive central government controls. We are willing to trade freedom for promised security. But the in-built, unavoidable stupidities and inefficiencies of centralized government spreading to more and more areas



of the individual's life, guarantee an eventual discontent of such intensity and magnitude that a revolt will occur. The more extreme the central control, the greater the revolution. Cycles...cycles...cycles....)

LETTER FROM RICHARD S. MC ENROE
Assistant to the Editor
ACE BOOKS, 51 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10010
September, 10, 1980

'Help.

'Ace Science Fiction is looking eagerly to contact a young(?) man (?) named David A. Smith. Over a year ago (well over) he sent a terrific novel for our consideration -- and absolutely no return address. At first we thought the fellow would have to drop a line or call us or something to find out what we thought of his work -- but he hasn't.

'If anybody out there knows Smith or his agent or his friends or warden or keeper: TELL HIM WE WANT TO TALK TO HIM.'

LETTER FROM CLAY KIMBALL
1441 Delaware, Eden, N.C., 27288
August, 1980

"If the day ever comes when the shriek movie is a really major type, right up there with, say, the pre-

tentious Western, the implications for the future of democracy will be bad."

--C.M. Kornbluth
From THE SF NOVEL!

LETTER FROM ORSON SCOTT CARD
1079 East 600 North
Orem, UT 84057
6 August 1980

'I just saw in the Noreascon Progress Report that some fans are trying to amend the Hugo rules to, in effect, ban LOCUS and SFR from consideration for the fanzine Hugo -- on the grounds that they're so successful that they actually can afford to pay some people something. Such stupidity! That's like banning beautiful girls from taking part in the Miss America pageant, on the grounds that they already get a lot of dates. Why don't other fanzine editors recognize that SFR and LOCUS did not always win the Hugos. Once upon a time they didn't even exist. How did they reach their exalted state? By being good. And not just good -- by being a hell of a lot better than anybody else. And if someone else wants a fanzine Hugo, I offer the perhaps unreasonable suggestion that they be as fast and accurate as LOCUS while having the good writing and eccentric but intelligent outlook of SFR. And then, having met the high standards of competition, find something else to do that none of the others are doing. But no -- this is the age of regulation and if competitors are too tough, we Americans know that the way to beat them is to regulate them to death . . . '

((ECCENTRIC??!!))

LETTER FROM CHARLES PLATT
9 Patchin Place, NY, NY 10011
July 30, 1980

'I was interested in your views on the publishing industry. I noted that your only concrete example of idea-theft is Harlan's case, which of course was brought against a TV company, not a publishing company. It is odd that my own experiences, here in New York, are so much at odds with yours. I find most publishers surprisingly honest and many of the editors I know are decent people whom I consider friends. My literary agent has higher moral principles than I have myself (she never tells even white

lies) and the only publishers who appear to have shortchanged me on foreign rights or royalties are the ones nearest the sleazy end of the market. The big conglomerates which you dislike so much seem to me to have entirely more respectable accounting practices than small companies using tactics of expediency. I do sometimes wonder, Dick, where your deep suspicions of the world, the future, business and government are leading you.

'You've been increasingly pessimistic over the last few years. Characteristically, you prophesy great doom for the publishing industry at the same time that you complain that they are producing so many books you don't have time to read them or even get other people to read them. Evidently things cannot be quite as bad -- at least not yet -- as you are saying.

'My own experiences with New York editors at present suggests that they are certainly buying fewer books by lesser-known authors at the moment, because money is tighter, because lists have been trimmed slightly and because inventories in many cases are full. But what's wrong with this? The field was already heading for trouble, overwhelmed with so many new books that no one could keep any grasp of what was good and bad. A cutback must at the same time entail some raising of standards, I would think. I do not know anyone in New York publishing who shares your dark pessimism and I certainly don't, if only because editors keep suggesting new projects to me, admittedly outside the SF field.

'I am tempted to buy a year's subscription to THE ECONOMIST, in hopes of tempering your outlook of gloom and also your attachment to the ethos of monetarism, which I'm convinced will be discredited within the next ten to twenty years, at least as a system which can be successfully followed in its purest form. However, you'd just tell me that THE ECONOMIST was being run by men of power trying to allay the fears of the electorate . . .

'I do like your pieces of opinion, Dick, but I worry about where the opinions are leading you. Please don't get too paranoid.'

((In my case the proof of the world's reality and its future is in the events which are happening and will continue to happen in the next few years. Admittedly, I foresee doom (But not absolute doom--only a terrible financial collapse, a form of dictatorship, depression, riots,

etc. But life do go on, and even in 1933-34 75% of the people had jobs, more or less.) So if the economy does not deflate and/or collapse, if we do not end up with a dictatorial president, and if we do not reach 30% inflation... then I'll be happy to tiam in my membership card in the Doomayers Club and meekly keep my big mouth shut ever after. In the meantime I'm enjoying the Iraq-Iran war, the election farce, and the terrible quandary of the Federal Reserve Board as it finds its every move will either lead to greater inflation or a deepening recession.))

LETTER FROM STUART DAVID SCHIFF
WHISPERS/WHISPERS PRESS
Box 1492-W Azules Street
Browns Mills, N.J., 08015
July 30, 1980

'I recently was the recipient of bad news when I learned Frank Uptal died on July 12th. His major fame in our field came from his long-time association with Arkham House and his illustrating Howard Phillips Lovecraft's first book (the 1936 Visionary Press edition of THE SHADOW OVER INNSMOUTH).

'Of course, I shall remember him as a good friend and contributor to WHISPERS magazine. I will always treasure the covers he did for me.'

LETTER FROM NELSON W. BLACK
9-23-80

'By the way, the folks at the Science Fiction Bookshop in NYC think you have thrown in the towel again but I assured them that is highly unlikely. I hope they're confusing you with another mag.

'Don Wollheim sounded testy in that interview....'

((A few days before your letter arrived Elton Elliott called and said he'd heard a rumor from the East that I'd folded SFR. It would be interesting to know where this story originated. As I told Elton, if I ever decide to stop publishing SFR I'll give the subbers two years notice.))



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.

COMMENTARY THE RECESSION -- Part I

For over a year now pundits have been telling us that the publishing industry and in particular science fiction is in a recession, but recent industry figures show sales up twenty percent over a year ago, and even during the recession SF appeared to be less affected than was feared at the beginning.

The question is: How did the recession affect the field? Among magazines, the all-SF digest magazine as *ANALOG* or *FGSF* is on the way out. Oh, to be sure a handful will remain, nurtured by Joel Davis and Ed Ferman, but the field will never have more than a half-dozen magazines. Even if venture money was there, the hard fact is there isn't enough newsstand space, for digest magazines will limit new entries.

As for the *TIME* or *NEWSWEEK* size, there are two ways to orient such a magazine. One is to stick to the old format like *GALILEO*, as *ASIMOV'S SF ADVENTURES* did and *GALAXY* will be. Here the problem is not lack of space but stiff competition and the larger budget that such a format requires.

Part of the competition will be coming from the new generation of magazines whose primary orientation is not fiction but some related aspect. Some, like *OMNI*, concentrate on science but print several short stories per issue. Others like *ARES*, concentrate on SF war and role playing games while still printing a

few pieces of fiction per issue. Still others like *STARLOG*, concentrate on films and print no fiction. The paperback field also provides fiction "magazines". Examples are *DESTINIES* and *THE BERKLEY SF SHOWCASE*. Although this area is more fragile (i.e., if the editor of a publishing house leaves, the magazine might die), it still is an area for SF magazines which remains virtually unused.

Science fiction in magazine form is booming, but because the form is so untraditional we oftentimes don't recognize it. We expect *ASTOUNDING* and instead we get *OMNI* with a circulation ten times that of *ASTOUNDING* at its height. Of course, the amount of fiction is drastically reduced, but again the market for novels is four or five times what it was a decade ago. Better yet, there is evidence that the original anthology market (depressed all during the boom of 1977-79) is beginning to recover from overproduction during the early seventies.

A word of caution: Should our foreign oil supplies be cut off and mandatory rationing imposed, the resulting depression in the country might bring the entire publishing industry to its knees and force suspension of many a good magazine, but excepting such a drastic situation the SF magazine field should continue to branch into new areas bringing new readers to SF.

Next issue I will consider the book area of SF publishing and how the recession affected it.

ORYCON '80 -- November 14-16 at the downtown Portland Hilton -- will have Duane Ackerson, Norman E. Hartman, Ray F. Nelson, George Outridge,

George R.R. Martin, Elizabeth A. Lynn, John DeCamp, Walt Curtis, Richard Purtill, M.K. Wren, Eileen Gunn, Poul Anderson, Steve Perry, Jessica Amanda Salmonson, Ursula K. LeGuin, Jean Auel, Vonda N. McIntyre, Edward Bryant, Susan Petrey, Dean Ing, Elgin Busby, Mildred Broxon, Victoria Poyser, Richard Kearns along with special phone interviews with Robert Silverberg and Arthur C. Clarke.

The Guest of Honor is Fritz Leiber, Toastmaster is F.M. Busby and Yours Truly (for whatever bizarre reason) is the Fan Guest of Honor. Ah, sweet egoboo!

For more info write:
OREGON SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTIONS, INC.
POB #14727
Portland, OR, 97214

If you haven't reserved your hotel room, it will probably be too late by the time you read this. I hope to see you there.

MAGAZINES:

ASIMOV'S and *ANALOG* are going to thirteen issues a year. This follows the trend of other Davis magazines. The effect will not be noticeable until summer when both magazines will appear near the middle of the month. Both will carry the day, month and year of issuance. The move was reportedly made to facilitate printers and distributors, who are often rushed by the large numbers of magazines at the first of each month.

DESTINIES remains quarterly (see the article following the Ace list).

FANTASY and *SCIENCE FICTION* remain monthly. *FANTASTIC* now combined with *AMAZING* will appear bimonthly. *ETERNITY* is scheduled to appear quarterly. *THE BERKLEY SF SHOWCASE* is on a thrice-yearly schedule. *ARES*, the game magazine from Simulation Publications, is a bimonthly.

GALAXY, according to news reports has appeared, although *Looking Glass Bookstore* in Portland, a very reliable outlet for SF publications, did not have a copy in as of October first, though they had ordered it some time ago. When it appears it will supposedly be a bimonthly. Same for *GALILEO*.

OMNI which is doing so well it has spawned a host of imitators, appears monthly with a seven-figure circulation. One of the new competitors, *DISCOVERY*, published by Time-Life, is considering the inclusion of science fiction. Most of the others cover science and closely related areas but print no fiction. According to a report in *BUSINESS*

WEEK and several other publications, Bob Guccione, publisher of OMNI, PENTHOUSE, FORUM, VARIATIONS and producer of CALIGULA, and Kathy Keeton, president of Omni International, plan to spin two magazines off OMNI. One is reportedly a "straight SF magazine" with a heavy emphasis on fiction; some reports say the other magazine could carry fiction as well; no word on their editorial staffs or dates of appearance.

Unsubstantiated rumors abound about paperback houses starting their own magazines or "house" anthologies.

THE HUGO AWARDS:

Novel: THE FOUNTAINS OF PARADISE
By Arthur C. Clarke
Novella: "Enemy Mine"
By Barry B. Longyear
Novelette: "Sandkings"
By George R.R. Martin
Short Story: "The Way of Cross and Dragon"
By George R.R. Martin
Non-Fiction Book: THE SCIENCE FICTION ENCYCLOPEDIA
Edited by Peter Nicholls
Dramatic Presentation: ALIEN.
Pro Artist: Michael Whelan.
Editor: George Scithers.
Fanzine: LOCUS.
Fan Writer: Bob Shaw.
Fan Artist: Alexis Gilliland.
John W. Campbell Award (for new writer): Barry B. Longyear.
Gandalf: Ray Bradbury.

The 1980 WORLDCON was held in Boston. The site for next year's event is Denver. The 1982 convention will be in Chicago.

Warner Books, the only major paperback house without a science fiction program, has started a science fiction line. Nancy Neiman, former Avon SF editor, has been hired as a senior editor, and will head the new SF line.

More information next issue.

James Patrick Baen, SF editor at Ace, resigned his position and left at the end of August. He will join Thomas J. Doherty, former executive vice president of Ace Books and a prime mover behind Ace's strong SF program at the beginning of the Seventies, in a new publishing program. The books will be published in cooperation with Richard Gallen and Pinnacle Books and distributed through Warner.

The first titles will appear in May: a book from Fred Saberhagen and another from Andre Norton. The

second month will feature as the lead book a new novel from Harry Harrison. They also have an agreement to buy Andre Norton's next book as well.

Doherty, Baen and another editor (who will handle non-SF) will have complete control over the titles, including cover artwork, contents, contracts, packaging and promotion. Richard Gallen is providing the financial backing.

Although the line will start with only two books a month, Doherty is quoted in SF CHRONICLE as wanting to "... build a line that is at least the equivalent of what we had at Ace and hopefully better".

Working as a book packager with Gallen, Doherty plans to bring out a Flash Gordon book and a Popeye book based on the two new movies to be released in time for Christmas. He already has signed with the Juvenile Book Club for over 500,000 copies of each title.

Poul Anderson has just returned from abroad. He reports that there are plans to revive SF in Denmark, where it has been dormant for some time and that an early part of the project is a collection of all his Ythrian stories.

Of his novel, THE DEVIL'S GAME, coming out in November from Pocket Books, he says, "be warned (it) is something of a shocker, quite different from my usual sort of thing".

The Scandinavian Science Fiction Convention is being held October 24-26 in Copenhagen. If you are interested in some of the many SF activities, the committee's official address is: FABULA 80
POSTBOX #329
DK-1500 Copenhagen V
Denmark

Barry Longyear will have four stories in ASIMOV'S: "Catch the Sun" (Novella); "What's Wrong with this Picture?" (short story) with John M. Ford and George Scithers; "Bloodsong" (Novelette) with Kevin O'Donnell; "House of If" (Novelette); and from ANALOG, "Collector's Item" (short story).

He also has upcoming a hardcover novel, CIRCUS WORLD, from Berkley-Putnam. Berkley also has published his CITY OF BARABOO and MANIFEST DESTINY. The latter sold to Japan. He is currently working on a new novel, BULLHANDS, "a two-hundred-year epic tracing the generations of bullhands (elephant handlers) who took to the star road with O'Hara's Greater Shows".

William Gibson has sold a story to UNIVERSE #11; a collaboration with John Shirley has been sold to SHADOWS 4; another short to NEW WORLDS #216, and a short "Johnny Memonic" to OMNI.

The director of the Michigan Space Center at Jackson Community College, Jackson, Michigan, Mr. Charles E. Gass, has proposed an "international entertainment and education center for the collection, preservation, exhibition and study of SCIENCE FICTION".

"This \$75-million-dollar entertainment-educational center is planned for opening in 1987 and will contain over \$80 million dollars in rare science fiction and unique science fact exhibits and displays."

Also planned are an Ackerman Wing, to house some of Forry's Col-



lection. Forry reports that the "Director of the MICHIGAN SPACE CENTER (a \$20 Million Complex) has presented this proposal to the Mayor's Office in Los Angeles in conjunction with my offer to the City of my Collection. My Ghod, you should see what this man envisions! -- a Space Ark resembling nothing so much as the Mothership from CLOSE ENCOUNTERS!"

Craig Anderson reports: "Michael Caine's upcoming horror film, THE HAND (Orion Pictures, directed by Oliver Stone from his own screenplay) will be delayed in release by months. The reason: the special effects by Carlo Rambaldi were not adequate and much footage will have to be reshot. The principle photography wrapped in June '80 with an anticipated release date of February '81. It appears that this release date will not be met". (This was originally from Marilyn Beck's column.) Rambaldi did the gangly-looking alien at the end of CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND.

THE SEATTLE ANTIQUARIAN BOOK FAIR will take place November 21-23.

M. Taylor Bowie, Chairman, announced that over 50 dealers from the U.S. will be there. "Each dealer has expertise in a special field of literature with subject matter running the gamut from THE WIZARD OF OZ to SHERLOCK HOLMES" as well as many other subjects. He goes on to state, "Our dealers will have first editions, autographed books, old photographs, prints, rare documents and other unique printed matter with prices ranging from \$1.00 to thousands of dollars". For information contact:

Jeri McDonald & Associates
1818 Westlake N., Suite 415
Seattle, WA, 98109
(206) 282-7596

John Shirley has sold two mainstream/horror/occult novels to Avon, due out in '81. The titles are THE BRIGADE and CELLERS. Shirley is now living in Manhattan and performing rock music, has just released a single from Park Avenue Records, is the lead singer of FirstTongue and has recently been signed by the same man who "discovered" Bob Dylan and Bruce Springsteen.

Jack L. Chalker, currently teaching SF course at Goucher College in Maryland, is working on a time-travel novel tentatively titled DOWNTIME THE NIGHTSIDE, plus another entitled THE MESSIAH.

Keith Laumer has sold a novel, STAR COLONY, to St. Martin's.

Boris Vallejo has sold an erotic illustrated fantasy, MIRAGES, to Ballantine.

Charles L. Grant has sold two Occur novels to Popular Library.

Stephen Spruill has sold a "semi-fiction book", THE LOCH NESS PROBE, to Playboy Press. He has also sold them a horror novel, HELLSTONE. THE EMPEROR PLOT, sequel to THE PSYCHOPATH PLAGUE, has been sold to Doubleday.

Jack Dann has just sold a new novel to Harper & Row, THE MAN WHO MELTED.

Clyde Caldwell sued his former agent, Roy Torgeson for failing to pay for covers and other art assignments. Caldwell also asked for the return of artwork that Torgeson had in his possession. Caldwell acted through Vincent DiFate, grievance person of the Association of SF Artists, and was represented by Walter Little, the legal advisor for ASFA.

The case came rapidly to trial and Caldwell won the judgment. At this time Torgeson has not yet appealed; however, SF CHRONICLE reported in its August issue that collection of damages is proceeding rather slowly. Legal action contemplated includes garnisheing Torgeson's income from professional activities in the SF field.

Torgeson has been associated with Zebra Books for some time, served as consultant for their SF line and edited two anthology series, CHRYSALIS and OTHER WORLDS for them. He is the owner of Alternate World Recordings, a record company which produces recordings of SF authors reading from their own works.

Stanton Coblenz has completed a new science fiction work, his first in several decades. (This information from FANTASY NEWSLETTER.) Mr. Coblenz was a regular contributor to AMAZING STORIES in the late Twenties and early Thirties. Among his many classic novels are AFTER 12,000 YEARS, THE SUNKEN WORLD and INTO PLUTONIAN DEPTHS. The latter was reprinted by Avon in the early Fifties and is now a much sought-after collectors' item.

Rumors have it that network executives at ABC-TV were so impressed with excerpts from the first hour of COSMOS, the new PBS science documentary narrated by Carl Sagan, that they offered Sagan a prime-time show on ABC. Several weeks later they telephoned with an even better idea: How would Sagan like to rescue BAT-LESTAR GALACTICA? Sagan, according to reports, was mortified and declined the offer.

Harlan Ellison has reached a satisfactory settlement with ABC-TV/Paramount. Plans to sue Ellison over his remarks about the plagiarism suit have been dropped.

The Terry Carr "Best of the Year" anthologies have been dropped by Del Rey Books. Reason given: low sales figures. Pocket Books has purchased the series. THE BEST SCIENCE FICTION NOVELLAS OF THE YEAR will be combined with the original anthology, THE BEST SCIENCE FICTION OF THE YEAR, which will be expanded from 125,000 to 150,000 words, with annual publication date moved to May or June; at Del Rey it was July or August after most of the competing "Best of the Year" anthologies were already out. The novellas volume was only tried for two years, and apparently was commercially unfeasible. (The above info from LOCUS.)

Pocket Books now has both of Terry Carr's "Best of" anthologies, having recently picked up THE YEAR'S FINEST FANTASY (retitled THE FANTASY ANNUAL) after Berkley dropped it.

THE 1980 LOCUS AWARDS:

Science Fiction Novel: TITAN

Fantasy Novel: HARPIST IN THE WIND by Patricia McKillip

Novellette: "Sandkings"

By George R.R. Martin

Short Story: "The Way of Cross and Dragon"

By George R.R. Martin

OTHER WINNERS: Anthology, UNIVERSE #9 Edited by Terry Carr; Single Author Collection, CONVERGENT SERIES by Larry Niven; Art (or Illustrated), BARLOWE'S GUIDE TO EXTRATERRESTRIALS by Wayne Barlowe and Ian Summers; Artist, Michael Whelan; Magazine, F&SF, Edited by Edward Ferman; Publisher, Ballantine/Del Rey; Editor, Judy Lynn del Rey; Fantasy Editor, Lester del Rey; Related Non-Fiction, THE SCIENCE FICTION ENCYCLOPEDIA edited by Peter Nicholls. (Above information from LOCUS #235)

Craig Miller formerly head of

Fan Relations at Lucasfilm Ltd., where he worked for three years promoting STAR WARS and THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK, has started his own promotion company. His company, Con Artists, has been signed by Warner to distribute their upcoming SF films ALTERED STATES and SUPERMAN II.

Ted White is no longer editor of HEAVY METAL. Reportedly there were differences regarding the future direction of the magazine, among rumors that it was more due to "office politics".

Thomas M. Disch won the 1980 Campbell Memorial Award for his novel ON WINGS OF SONG. Second place went to ENGINE SUMMER by John Crowley, third to J.G. Ballard for THE UNLIMITED DREAM.

DEATHS:

Arthur R. Tofte, 77, died of cancer on May 21, 1980, at his home in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin.

He had two SF novels published by Laser Books in 1975, CRASH LANDING ON IOXNA and WALLS WITHIN WALLS. An SF juvenile, SURVIVAL PLANET, was published by Bobbs-Merrill in 1977.

Charles Percy Snow died July 1, 1980 in London at the age of 74.

A scientist as well as a novelist, his essay, "The Two Cultures" which explicated the split between the sciences and the humanities and called for understanding, particularly on the side of humanities, was a major influence on many SF writers. He was knighted in 1957.

It seems that Harper & Row forgot to spend the \$35,000,000 advertising money on LORD VALENTINE'S CASTLE that the contract called for. I hope to have a comment from Robert Silverberg for the next issue.

John Varley is completing the screenplay for the movie version of AIR RAID for MGM. The title of the movie and the novel version for Macmillan has been changed to MILLENNIUM. Varley is set to do the script as well as the screenplay and novelization.

The third book in the series

that started with TITAN and continued with WIZARD, will conclude with DEMON.

Harlan Ellison was approached to rewrite Frank Herbert's screenplay for the Dune movie. He refused. It has been reported that Irvin Kershner, director of THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK, has been signed to direct the I, ROBOT movie for which Ellison has written the screenplay. No confirmation is available as this column goes to press.

Nominations are now open for the Prometheus Award, the Award given to the book which best exemplifies Libertarian values and philosophy, i.e., a belief in personal and economic freedom.

This is the one Award that has tangible value. It consists of \$2500 in gold. The 1979 winner was WHEELS WITHIN WHEELS by F. Paul Wilson, and from the time of the announcement of the winner to the actual presentation, the value of gold increased over 30%. For information about any aspect of the Award write: L. Neil Smith, 626 S. Meldrum, Fort Collins, CO, 80521.

Mr. Smith is the author of THE PROBABILITY BROACH, is quite active in Libertarian politics and has written quite a few articles on various aspects of Libertarian philosophy. His latest article is entitled "Radically Decentralized Defense". His next novel is THE VENUS BELT.

SMALL PRESS:

ARKHAM:

During the winter/spring of 1980-81, the following will be released:

THE THIRD GRAVE by David Case concerns "a small English village, and the mysterious Lucian Mallory's quest for ancient Egyptian methods of resurrection". Illustrated by Stephen Fabian.

DREAMS AND DAMNATIONS by Richard L. Tierney is a story collection that ranges "from star-flung opalescent realms of cosmically conceived grandeur, to the tomb-spawned terrors that lurk beneath the earth in eon-vanquished megaliths of alien antiquity". Illustrations by Jason Van Hollander.

TALES FROM THE NIGHTSIDE by Charles L. Grant is this Nebula Award winner's first major story collection, consisting of 14 stories -- tales of

"Hawthorne Street and Oxrum Station", a foreword by Stephen King, interiorillos by Andrew Smith and a jacket painting by Michael Whelan.

Both the Case and the Tierney volumes are priced at \$6.95; the Grant collection at \$11.95; all 3 volumes can be advance-ordered by sending the appropriate amount to: ARKHAM HOUSE PUBLISHERS
Saucy City, WI, 53583

THE SOLAR PONS OMNIBUS by August Derleth and MASTER OF SHADOWS by Margery Lawrence, listed in previous catalogs, have been indefinitely postponed. Arkham will honor requests from all those who advance-ordered the above two titles by transferring their credit to other titles or by refunding.

Arkham has bought a short-story collection from Greg Bear.

BOROO:

Their all-review magazine, SCIENCE FICTION FANTASY BOOK REVIEW, has folded. Subscriptions were taken over by FANTASY NEWSLETTER for completion.

Their Milford Series on SF writers, of which I have seen one: AGAINST TIME'S ARROW: THE HIGH CRUSADE OF POUL ANDERSON by Sandra Miesel, is reportedly unaffected. They have the first volume of Darrell Schweitzer's EXPLORING FANTASY WORLDS.

OWLSWICK:

Already out is SCIENCE FICTION WRITER'S WORKSHOP I, by Barry Longyear, plus a volume of essays edited by Jack Williamson titled, TEACHING SCIENCE FICTION, in which Mr. Longyear has an essay entitled, "Science Fiction in the Primary School".

STARMONT:

One of their latest releases in the Starmont Reader's Guide series is one on Philip Jose Farmer by Mary T. Brizzi, the third in a series which will include volumes on such writers as: Poul Anderson, Alfred Bester, Ray Bradbury, Arthur C. Clarke, Gordon R. Dickson, Frank Herbert, Fritz Leiber, Ursula K. LeGuin, H.P. Lovecraft, Andre Norton, Clifford D. Simak, J.R.R. Tolkien, Jack Vance and Roger Zelazny.

STARBLAZE/DONNING:

Beginning in the summer of 1981, will be released the first of two art books illustrating the heroines and heroes of SF. Volume I, THE HEROINES, will be illustrated with 52



"You bungled the first half of the incantation, Holcroft, but not the second. I'm not Helen of Troy...but I am horny as hell."

full-color paintings especially commissioned by a variety of artists; each book will feature text and an introduction by David Bischoff.

In November they will publish *THE MOON'S FIREATING DAUGHTER*, a novel by John Myers Myers, a sequel to *SILVERLOCK*.

Darrell Schweitzer has a story collection, *WE ARE ALL LEGENDS*, and a novel, *THE SHATTERED GODDESS*, coming from Starblaze.

BOOK NEWS:

ACE

November:

Rudy Rucker *WHITE LIGHT*
Eileen Kernaghan *JOURNEY TO*
..... *APRIL 10TH*
Robert Asprin (Ed.) *TALES FROM*
..... *THE VULGAR UNICORN*
..... *(THIEVES' WORLD II)*
George Warren *DOMINANT SPECIES*
Ursula K. LeGuin *CITY OF ILLUSIONS*
Andrew Offutt *WHEN DEATH BIRDS FLY*
Andrew Offutt *THE MISTS OF DOOM*
Andrew Offutt *SIGN OF THE MOONBOON*
(Last 3 are Cormac Mac Art Books.)

December:

Larry Niven *THE PATCHWORK GIRL*
Dean Ing *ANASAZI*
Harry Harrison *MAKE MAKE MAKE*
Arden Damey *THE SPLINDID FREEDOM*
Philip Jose Farmer *MAKER OF*
..... *UNIVERSES*
Andre Norton *FORERUNNER FORAY*
H. Beam Piper *SPACE VIKING*

Susan Allison, the new editor at Ace, told me that she foresees "no drastic change" in the Ace SF program, although there will be a "bit more fantasy and less non-fiction". The line is inventories for the next year-and-a-half.

As for *DESTINIES*, she reports that Baen will edit it on a freelance basis until its inventory (of 3 or 4 issues) is used up. She wants to assure writers that "nobody's stories will be returned"; that if they have been accepted, they will be printed.

Then she indicated *DESTINIES* will cease, although Ace will remain a short-story market as she has plans to begin another magazine or "house" anthology, entirely different from *DESTINIES*. As for the recession, she said Ace was "not as affected by financial ups and downs" because of their policy of low advances, and will continue to issue seven or eight titles per month.

Upcoming titles include: an untitled collection of H. Beam Piper's work; an occult witch novel by Lynn Abbey, *THE GUARDIANS*; a sequel to Callahan's *CROSSTIME SALOON* called *TIME TRAVELERS -- STRICTLY CASH* by Spider Robinson and a new anthology of high fantasy edited by Terri Windling.

Ms. Windling, who illustrated *BASILISK*, edited by Ellen Kushner, is now the Ace editorial assistant.

Other titles include *OCTAGON* and *SPECIMENS*, both by Fred Saberhagen. *SPECIMENS* was originally published by Popular Library, but as soon as the rights reverted it was sold to Ace.

Richard McEnroe has sold a "Buck Rogers" novel to Ace; this series is not connected with the TV show. Mr. McEnroe was recently hired at Ace Books.

Charles Sheffield has sold Ace a novel, *MY BROTHER'S KEEPER* and two story collections, *ERASMUS MAGISTER* and *HIDDEN VARIABLES*.

AVON

November:

Francine Mezo *THE FALL OF WORLDS*
(The first book of a trilogy)
Brian W. Aldiss *REPORT ON*
..... *PROBABILITY A*
(Part of a Brian Aldiss promotion;
Avon will be reprinting several
other Aldiss titles over the
next few months.)

Avon has bought a package of 14 James Blish books from his estate, to start appearing in early '81:
TITAN'S DAUGHTER, *STAR DWELLERS*, *QUINCUNX OF TIME*, *DOCTOR MIRABILIS*, *JACK OF EAGLES*, *FALLEN STAR*, *WELCOME TO MARS*, *THE NIGHT SHAPES*, *ANYWHEN*, *THE VANISHED JET*, *THE DAY AFTER JUDGMENT*, *WARRIORS OF DAY*, *SO CLOSE TO HOME* and *MISSION TO THE HEARTSTARS*.

BANTAM

November:

Harry Harrison *HOMEWORLD*
(First in the To the Stars trilogy;
WHEELWORLD follows in March and concludes in July with *STARWORLD*.)
Ed Naha *THE PARADISE PLOT*

December:

Michael Beryln *THE INTEGRATED MAN*
L. Sprague de Camp *CONAN AND THE*
..... *SPIRIT GOD*
(Fifth of the series although it
appeared after #6: *CONAN THE*
RIBEL by Paul Anderson)
Trish Reinus *THE PLANET OF TEARS*
(An allegorical fantasy)

January:

Janet E. Morris *HIGH COUGH*
..... *OF SILISTR*

Upcoming titles: *THE BEGINNING* PLACE by Ursula K. LeGuin, *VALIS* by Philip K. Dick, *RE-ENTRY* by Paul Preuss, *MOCKINGBIRD* by Walter Tevis, *THE HUMANOID TOUCH* by Jack Williamson, *SYZYGY* by Frederik Pohl and a "period piece anthology" by Forrest J. Ackerman. Others are: *KALEVIDE* by Lou Gobel, *SLOW FALL RISING* by Stephen Leigh, *LETHIAN LAMENT* by Kev

in O'Donnell Jr. and an erotic fantasy by Robert Nye, titled MERLIN.

BERKLEY

November:

Eric Van LustbaderTHE SUNSET
.....WARRIOR
(First book of a trilogy)
Phyllis Ann Karr FROSTFLOWER
.....AND THORN
Charles Platt (Ed.).....DREAM MAKERS:
THE UNCOMMON PEOPLE WHO WRITE
SCIENCE FICTION
(Interviews with 29 SF writers)

From Berkley's newsletter about SF, WORLDS AHEAD, comes word of an all-out bidding war for the right to film Frank Herbert's SOUL CATCHER. On one side is Robert Redford, on the other a partnership between Marlon Brando, Jane and Peter Fonda and the Confederation of American Indian Nations.

Upcoming titles include a new fantasy novel by Orson Scott Card, HART'S HOPE; the first two books, DREAM DANGER and CRUISER DREAMS of a trilogy by Janet E. Morris, a Battletar Galactica novel by Michael Resnick and a trilogy by Kevin O'Donnell.

DAW

November:

Tanith Lee DAY BY NIGHT
Doris PiserchiaTHE FLUXER
Lin Carter (Ed.).....THE YEAR'S BEST
.....FANTASY STORIES: 6
E.C. Tubb WORLD OF PROMISE
(Dumarest of Terra #23)

December:

Ian Wallace THE LUCIFER COMET
Alan Burt Akers (Kenneth Bulmer) ...
.....REBEL OF ANTARES
(Dray Prescott #24)
Pierre Barbet COSMIC CRUSAIDERS
(Contains BAPHOMET'S METEOR and its
sequel never before published in
America, STELLAR CRUSAID)
Richard Purtill...THE STOLEN GODDESS

January:

Jack VanceTHE BOOK OF DREAMS
(Fifth and final book in the
Demon Prince series)
Jack Vance DUST OF FAR SUNS
(Original title, FUTURE TENSE, a
collection of four novelettes)
Jack Vance...TRULLION: ALASTOR 2262
Jack Vance...MARINE: ALASTOR 933
Jack Vance...WYST: ALASTOR 1716

DAW Books recently purchased a new 140,000-word novel from C.J. Cherryh, DOWN BELOW STATION, plus a collection of six original novelettes. Josephine Saxton sold them a ten-story collection.

DELL

November:

Gregory Benford & Gordon Eklund....
.....FIND THE CHANGELING
Harlan Ellison.....DEATHBIRD STORIES

December:

Andrew M. Stephenson...WALL OF YEARS
Gordon R. Dickson.....WOLFLING

January:

Jack DannJUNCTION
John BrunnerTIMESCOPE

DEL REY

November:

Clifford D. Simak THE VISITORS
James Kahn .. WORLD ENOUGH, AND TIME
L. Frank Baum.....TIK-TOK OF OZ
L. Frank Baum...THE SCARECROW OF OZ
L. Frank Baum.....RINKITINK OF OZ
Leigh Brackett.....THE STARMEN
.....OF LLYDRIS

December:

Frederik Pohl..BEYOND THE BLUE EVENT
.....HORIZON
(Sequel to GATEWAY)
Frederik Pohl.....GATEWAY
John Brunner PLAYERS AT THE
..... GAME OF PEOPLE
Daniel da Cruz.....THE GROTO OF
.....THE FORMIGANS
C.L. Moore ..THE BEST OF C.L. MOORE
L. Frank BaumTHE LOST PRINCESS
..... OF OZ

They have bought two new novels
by G. Harry Stine (Lee Correy): SHUT-
TLE DOWN is one of the titles.

DOUBLEDAY

November:

Charles Grant (Ed.)SHADOWS III
Eric Van LustbaderBENEATH AN
.....OPAL MOON

December:

Manly Wade Wellman AFTER DARK
Roy Torgeson (Ed.) CHRYSALIS 8

January:

Grant CarringtonTIME'S FOOL
Walter Tevis FAR FROM HOME
(Short-story collection)

Also due in January is Jack L. Chalker's mainstream novel, THE DEVIL'S VOYAGE, about the sinking of the U.S.S. Indianapolis, the ship that delivered the A Bomb. Another title set for later in '81 is CHANNEL'S DESTINY by Jacqueline Lichtenberg and Jean Lorrach.

FAWCETT GROUP

FAWCETT CREST

November:

Andre Norton HOUN OF THE HORN
THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST by Robert A. Heinlein has over 200,000 copies in print.

PLAYBOY

November:

Vic Milan & Robert Vardeman..CITY IN
.....THE GLACIER
(Second book in the War of Powers
trilogy; the first published by
Playboy in October was the
SUNDERED REALM)

December:

Vic Milan & Robert Vardeman ... THE
..... DESTINY STONE
(Final book in the trilogy)

January:

Jacqueline Lichtenberg & Jean Lorrach
..... FIRST CHANNEL
(Third in the Gen-Sime series)

Other upcoming titles include:
SAVAGE EMPIRE: THE WHITE WOLF by
Jean Lorrach, and MOLT BROTHER, first
in a new series by Jacqueline Lichtenberg.

POCKET

November:

Poul Anderson.....THE DEVIL'S GAME
Damien Broderick.....THE DREAMING
.....DRAGONS
A.E. Van Vogt...MISSION TO THE STARS
Ted White..... BY FURIES POSSESSED
Virginia Kidd & Ursula K. LeGuin....
(Eds.) EDGES
(Original anthology: Stories by
Gene Wolfe, Avram Davidson, Thomas
M. Disch, Damien Broderick and M.J.
Ingh among others)

In other news from Pocket: Keith
Laumer has delivered his long-awaited
Retief novel. They have bought a
new novel from Philip K. Dick, VALIS
REGAINED and one from Marta Randall,
the sequel to JOURNEY, titled MISH,
for around \$20,000.00.

SIGNET

November:

Zach Hughes.....CRUSHER MAN
January:
Irwin & Love.....THE BEST OF TREK #3

SIMON & SCHUSTER

November:

Jerry E. Pournelle KING DAVID'S

.....SPACESHIP
(Set in the same universe as THE
MOTIE IN GOD'S EYE, although at
an earlier time)

ZEBRA

November:

Mike SirotaTHE TWENTIETH SON
.....OF ORNON

January:

Lin Carter (Ed.)WEIRD TALES

FINAL WORDS:

Sometimes the latest publishers' information about upcoming releases doesn't make it in time for this column. If any of you want information about titles not covered in the latest column, send me a SASE with the information desired, and I'll do my best to reply.

Next ish, a report on the effect the recession has had on the book industry and a market report.

Thanks once again for your kind comments on the column; they are greatly appreciated. See you next issue.

ALIEN THOUGHTS CONTINUED FROM P.5

Some authors have taken one formula, written it dozens of times at novel length, and become rich.

The only real challenge a formula writer has is in varying his characters, background and bits-of-business enough from one novel-story-episode to another.

It's easy to see, too, how many writers can get sick and tired unto death of this kind of writing, and why they are virtually forced to try changes in the magic, golden plots, and even go bonkers and write non-plot fiction--and call it literature.

There is a kind of terrible irony to writing commercial fiction: if you're intelligent and talented enough to master the techniques and formulas of commercial fiction, sooner or later your talent and intelligence will drive you away from it. And if for financial reasons you are forced to keep on writing formula against increasing revulsion for it...you will probably end up popping pills, drinking heavily, or going into some kind of emotional disorder.

Some people do write formula fiction all their professional lives, like it, enjoy it, would do nothing else--they're happy as clams with what they probably consider a sure-fire money-making ritual. They may not even feel any contempt for the public who consume these monstrous quantities of the same old shit.

I suspect these happy clams are of a rare type of character and personality--those who are just intelligent and talented enough to do the job, but who know their limitations and who are also unwilling to take chances, who are of a stoic, phlegmatic temperament.

But the phenomenon of the universal appeal of fiction formulas, and their power to virtually compel attention and involvement, remains.

Why is this possible? What does this say about the human mind/brain? Are there innated structures in the brain which are instinctual in nature, which respond to certain story elements automatically? Have story-tellers and fictioneers over the eons discovered these sure-fire formulas and now on a mass scale, are feeding a need in the human mass mind?

Does the sun come up in the East?

Oh, yes!

Of course some "consumers" of the formulas become more demanding as they mature, and are more discriminating, and may even get sick and tired of fiction for long periods. But the structured-in power of fiction dynamics endures. We can't deny it, and can't avoid it when dealing with large numbers of people seeking "entertainment" and "escape."

In a way, the fiction writer is taking advantage of his audience; he's pushing their buttons. The greater his intelligence and skill, the easier it is for him to dance his fingers into their brains and make the money come out.

That's cool. That's okay. Nothing to be ashamed of. It's value for value; the need has to be filled. There are spiritual needs other than religious, and the need for fantasy, for "satisfying" stories, is one of them.

Just as the religious establishments minister to the in-built need in humans for a god, so writers of fiction (and editors and publishers) minister to human needs for entertainment in story form.

Is this parasitic? Is this unfair? No. The strong always eat the weak. The intelligent always take advantage of the stupid. That is the natural order of things. It will not change! There may be masks over the truth, but under the masks, behind the facades, the same old human relationships endure. THAT'S THE WAY IT IS! So accept, incorporate the truth in your world view--if you can--and be happy with reality. In the end you'll sleep better and be far better able to cope.

You might even live longer.

BACK ISSUE MADNESS

"So why do you charge only \$1.25 for back issues?" people ask.

The answer is that I see no value in an entire wall of my basement being forever lost to view because there are several hundred boxes of back issues stacked there.

The early back issues cost me far less than the recent issues, so I'm content to try to clear out as many as possible at a low price.

However, I'm afraid starting next issue there will be a two-stage price: SFR #36 and lower will continue to be \$1.25. SFR from #37 will be \$1.50.

THE HOLIDAY SEASON

Is upon us, and I wish to take this opportunity to wish you all a Happy Polly Holiday.



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